



Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada reports on the most successful International Aboriginal Tourism Conference in its history

Nov. 9, 2017, Tsuut'ina Nation, Treaty 7 Territory (Calgary, Alberta) –More than 500 delegates from across Canada and the USA met in Calgary this week to focus on the continued growth of Indigenous tourism nationally and globally, during the sold out sixth annual International Aboriginal Tourism Conference (IATC), co-hosted by the Tsuut'ina Nation, in Calgary, Alberta, on their traditional land in Treaty 7 Territory.

The two-day conference at the Grey Eagle Resort & Casino in Calgary, Alberta, brought together delegates from First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, as well as representatives and supporters from global Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism organizations. The theme of this year's conference was "Raising Our Voices: Building Economy through Indigenous Tourism and Community Stories."

Highlights from the 2017 conference included the official name change of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), as well as the 2017 Aboriginal Tourism Awards Gala which recognized leaders and businesses who have showcased their ongoing dedication to increasing the profile of Indigenous tourism experiences in Alberta and throughout Canada. Presentations outlined significant aspects, strategies and accomplishments of the second year of ITAC's Five-Year Plan "*The Path Forward 2016-2021*" and its pillars: Leadership, Partnership, Product Development and Marketing; new and renewed partnerships with the World Indigenous Tourism Association and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association; and keynote addresses from national Indigenous leaders Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chief Commissioner of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada and filmmaker Cowboy Smithx who shared messages of the importance of authenticity and Indigenous-led economic development.

Along with Tsuut'ina First Nation as the co-host, conference partners and sponsors included Destination Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Parks Canada, Government of Alberta, Travel Alberta, Tourism Victoria, World Indigenous Tourism Alliance, Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and the Adventure Travel Trade Association, Tourism Calgary, Tourism Edmonton, Tourism Saskatoon, and the Calgary Stampede. Further highlights and photos from 2017 IATC may be found at <http://www.iatc-canada.ca/>.

Following the conference, ITAC also held their Annual General Meeting where the following executive and directors were confirmed for the board:

- Brenda Holder (Alberta – Mahikan Trails), Chair
- Dave Laveau (Quebec – Quebec Aboriginal Tourism), Vice Chair
- Brady Smith (BC – Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre), Treasurer
- Jeff Provost (Manitoba – Eastside Aboriginal Sustainable Tourism), Secretary

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada Board of Directors (term):

- British Columbia – Brady Smith, Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (2017-2019)
- Alberta – Brenda Holder, Mahikan Trails (2017-2019)
- Saskatchewan – Dana Soonais, Wanuskewin Heritage Park (2016-2018)
- Manitoba – Jeff Provost, Eastside Aboriginal Sustainable Tourism (2016-2018)
- Ontario – Kevin Eshkawkogan, Great Spirit Circle Trail (2017-2018: 1 year appointment)
- Quebec – Dave Laveau, Quebec Aboriginal Tourism (2016-2018)

- New Brunswick – Patricia Dunnett, Metepenagiag Heritage Park (2016-2018)
- Nova Scotia – Robert Bernard, Wagmatcook Cultural Centre (2016-2018)
- Prince Edward Island – Charlie Sark, Indian Art+Craft of North America (2017-2019)
- Newfoundland and Labrador – Jillian Larkham, Nunatsiavut Government (2016-2018)
- Yukon – Shirlee Frost, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (2017-2019)
- Northwest Territories – Kylik Kisoun Taylor, Tundra North Tours (2017-2019)
- Nunavut – Gene O'Donnell, Arctic Bay Adventures (2016-2018)

The ITAC board provides oversight and recommendations on implementation of the organizational five-year strategy, as well as reporting on successes back to members and stakeholders.

“The sixth annual International Aboriginal Tourism Conference and successful AGM would not have been possible without the support of our co-host, the Tsuut’ina Nation,” says Keith Henry, President & CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. “Together, we welcomed more than 500 delegates, members and stakeholders to their traditional territory where we established a framework for continued growth for Indigenous tourism in Canada and globally.”

About the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) was formally established as a national non-profit Indigenous tourism industry organization in 2015. Today, ITAC includes representation from 15 Indigenous tourism industry representatives and organizations. Through a unified Indigenous tourism industry voice, ITAC focuses on creating partnerships between associations, organizations, government departments and industry leaders from across Canada to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada. For more information, visit www.indigenoustourism.ca.

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