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For Immediate Release

Aboriginal Tourism Excellence Celebrated at Canadian Tourism Awards

(Algonquin Territory – Ottawa, Ontario) History was made last night at the Canadian Tourism Awards in Ottawa, when Québec's Musée des Abénakis received the inaugural National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award for 2014.

Musée des Abénakis was selected from a number of submissions from across the country and their Aboriginal cultural experience was recognized given their 50 years of success as one of the best authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences in Canada. Keith Henry, in his role as chair of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada (ATAC) attended the gala awards event, along with executive committee member Trina Mather-Simard from Aboriginal Experiences in Ottawa and ATAC member and executive director from Québec Aboriginal Tourism, Dave Laveau.

"This was an incredible evening and Aboriginal tourism took our rightful place within the industry," said Henry. "The awards recognized Canada's top tourism experiences and individuals, and history was made with the first ever National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award as part of the Canadian Tourism Awards."

ATAC members sponsored the inaugural National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award as part of this prestigious event which included a number of Federal Government politicians, tourism leaders and operators of the best tourism experiences from across Canada. The Canadian Tourism Awards were established in 2003 to recognize success, leadership and innovation in Canada's tourism industry, and to honour those people, places, organizations and events that have gone above and beyond to offer superior visitor experiences to travellers in Canada. Showcasing the nation's best tourism products, services and experiences, the Canadian Tourism Awards ceremony has become an annual highlight of The Tourism Congress, Tourism Industry Association of Canada's (TIAC) annual convention.

"Congratulations to Musée des Abénakis and their representatives including Michelle Bélanger who accepted the award with grace and humility. I know the ATAC members are all proud of the accomplishments and success the museum has realized with approximately 50 years of experience. Also, thank you to outgoing TIAC CEO and President David Goldstein and their TIAC staff for the work and partnership to make history happen with this first-ever award. There has never been a National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award since the awards began in 2003. ATAC is proud of our industry and we continue to take our rightful place for the future," said Henry.

ATAC members were also pleased to witness the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Culture/Heritage and Tourism Initiative National Cultural Tourism Award to Dakhká Khwáan Dancers from

Whitehorse, Yukon. The Dakhhá Khwáan Dancers provided a world-class Aboriginal dance performance and showcased the importance of Aboriginal culture to tourism in Canada.

For more information about please view at www.aboriginaltourismmarketingcircle.ca.

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