



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

PRESS PASSES AVAILABLE

Contact **Liz Anderson**

eanderson@aianta.org

Office: (505)724-3578

Cell: (904) 237-1285

Native American Fashion Designers Link Clothing to Cultural Heritage Tourism at 15th Annual American Indian Tourism Conference

*American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association Welcomes Three of the Fashion
Industry's Elite Designers to Tulsa September 24*

Albuquerque, New Mexico (September 11, 2013) – The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) presents the session “Tourism Trends: Indigenous Fashion” at the 15th Annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Tulsa, September 22 – 26.

Fashion is an important part of every community and can be a valuable product for tourism programs. The panel consists of three Native designers work with traditional, historic and contemporary fashion. These ladies will describe their journeys in clothing design and how their works are used in living history re-enactments, cultural demonstrations and mainstream fashion events.

“My culture has influenced my work so much and has given me more of a voice in the fashion industry,” said Margaret Roach Wheeler of Mahota Handwovens and costume designer for Chickasaw Nation. “There is an excitement among people over fashion and designs that relate to cultural history. I’m able to design pieces that reflect tribal traditions, yet make them edgy and modern for today.”

Fashion Speakers:

- **Margaret Roach Wheeler, Mahota Handwovens**
- **Tonia Hogner-Weavel, Cherokee Heritage Center**
- **Lisa Rutherford**

Margaret Roach Wheeler, a Chickasaw textile artist discusses her early work, the textile pieces she is creating for the Chickasaw Nation. At the Chickasaw Arts Academy, she teaches fashion design to high school students. Each year, the Academy provides two students with scholarships to the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She is a descendant of the Chickasaw-Choctaw tribes.



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

Tonia Hogner-Weavel has been called a living cultural treasure by Cherokee Nation for her historic research. She designed the period clothing for Diligwa, a living Cherokee Village based on 1710, and the Cherokee tear dresses for the Cherokee Nation Youth Choir. She is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

Lisa Rutherford is an award-winning artist recreates southeast appliqué Cherokee beadwork and clothing, using materials as authentic as possible from the late 1700s to early 1800s. She collaborated with Navajo designer Orlando Dugi who took her traditional southeast feather cape and made it haute couture on the runway. She is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

The annual AITC strives to provide attendees with a quality educational forum to help you with your travel and tourism initiatives. Other sessions this year include tour packaging, attracting tour operators, creating itineraries, positioning your tribe for the international tour market, protecting intellectual and cultural property, working with state and federal agencies, and more.



Hand-woven Flax Chickasaw coat, dress with poncho and bags by Margaret Roach Wheeler. Photo Credit: Greg Hall.



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association



Hand-woven flax Chickasaw hunting coat, pouch and turban by Margaret Roach Wheeler. The hunting coat was worn by Chickasaw men at time of removal 1830s. Photo Credit: Greg Hall.

About AIANTA:

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit association of American Indian tribes, tribal tourism, cultural and private sector representatives, representatives from the tourism industry, Federal, State and local governments, colleges and universities, and friends that was incorporated in 2002 to advance Indian Country tourism. The association is made up of representatives from six regions: Alaska, Eastern, Midwest, Pacific, Plains and the Southwest. AIANTA's mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian and Alaska Native tourism that honors and preserves tribal traditions and values.

The purpose of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association is to provide our constituents with the voice and tools needed to advance tourism while helping tribes, tribal organizations and tribal members create infrastructure and capacity through technical assistance, training and educational resources. AIANTA serves as the liaison among Indian Country, governmental, educational and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of Indian Country tourism. By developing and implementing programs and facilitating economic development opportunities, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.

###