



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

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Best Tribal Destinations Awarded at American Indian Tourism Conference

*Enough Good People Award Ceremony Honors the Best in the Indian Country
Tourism Industry*

Albuquerque, New Mexico (September 22, 2014) - Last week, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) hosted the Enough Good People Awards Banquet and Silent Auction at the 16th annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) in Marksville, Louisiana, honoring the best tribal destinations in the tourism industry.

The proceeds raised from this annual silent auction are used to award scholarships to Native American students interested in pursuing careers in the hospitality and tourism industry and culinary arts.

Each year, AIANTA, as the national organization representing the tribal hospitality and tourism industry, recognizes the best of Indian Country travel and tourism. 2014 awards went to CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation for Excellence in Customer Service; Alaska Native Voices for Best Cultural Heritage Experience; and Chickasaw Country for Tribal Destination of the Year.

Winners of these prestigious awards are selected by a panel of judges including AIANTA staff and board members, as well as other experts in the tourism industry including Roger Saterstrom with Tauck Tours and James Dion with the National Geographic Society. Nominees must meet a host of standards for each award category, while also working to advance AIANTA's mission to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors traditions and values.

Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated, also known as CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation, which received the Excellence in Customer Service Award has previously been acknowledged with numerous customer service awards from its partners and customers. As an Alaska Native regional corporation created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, CIRI strives to share Alaska's history and culture



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with guests through art, culinary traditions, recreation and tours - all while exceeding expectations in customer service.

Taking home the Best Cultural Heritage Experience Award was Alaska Native Voices, which is owned by Huna Totem Corporation, an Alaska village corporation owned by approximately 1,350 people with aboriginal ties to Glacier Bay and Hoonah Alaska. Here, they share a cultural perspective of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve with visitors. Alaska Native Voices excelled in this award category, as their guides contrast historical and contemporary Tlingit culture through presentations, song, storytelling, language, informal interaction, art and craftsmanship, and provide personal perspectives, allowing visitors to grasp a greater sense of place and a meaningful understanding of Native culture.

The Best Tribal Destination of the Year Award went to Chickasaw Country in Oklahoma, which is devoted to sharing the spirit of their nation with guests by offering a destination enriched with culture, nature, recreation and entertainment. Across the region, they have established a host of hotels, spas, casinos, restaurants, and cultural attractions.

AIANTA members are encouraged to nominate tribal destinations, tribally owned businesses and enterprises, employees of tribally owned enterprises and businesses, and tribal members who best exemplify the hospitality and tourism industry.

In addition, AIANTA recognized individuals who have been instrumental to the organization and the success of Indian Country tourism, with Enough Good People Awards.

2014 Enough Good People Awardees include Vicki Dixon, Program Analyst, Office of the Secretary - Intergovernmental and External Affairs, Department of the Interior; Jana Prewitt, AIANTA Organizational and Development Advisor; John Echohawk, Executive Director, Native American Rights Fund (NARF); and Diane Chalfant, Deputy Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park.



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Pictured Left: Enough Good People and Destination Awardees from Left to Right: Mark McKernan, Alaska Native Voices, Huna Totem Corporation; Paige Williams, Chickasaw Nation; Melody McCoy (on behalf of John Echohawk), NARF; Roberta Caenepeel, CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation; Diane Chalfant, Grand Canyon National Park; Jana Prewitt, AIANTA; Edward Hall III, BIA

About AIANTA

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit association of Native American tribes and tribal businesses that was incorporated in 2002 to advance Indian Country tourism. The association is made up of member tribes 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 AIANTA 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 between Indian Country, governmental and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of

Indian Country tourism. By developing and implementing programs and providing economic development opportunities, AIANTA helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.

To learn more, please visit www.aianta.org. For current updates, like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@OfficialAIANTA](#)).

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