



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIANTA Brings Indian Country's Diversity to European Market

National tourism association heads to Showcase USA-Italy & ITB Berlin this month with 7 tribal entities from across the country

Albuquerque, New Mexico (March 1, 2016)—As international travel to the U.S. and especially to Indian Country continues to grow, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) along with tribal nations and businesses from across the country, are continuing outreach overseas this month, attending Showcase USA-Italy and ITB, Berlin - one of the world's largest travel tradeshows.

Travel and tourism is one of America's largest industries, accounting for \$927.9 billion spent directly by domestic and international travelers last year. These trends are also visible, in Indian Country, where visitation by overseas travelers grew by nearly one million from 2007 to 2014. According to the Department of Commerce, National Travel & Tourism Office, of the 35 million total overseas visitors to the U.S. in 2014, a record 1.65 million visited Indian Country (5%)

To bring this valuable European travel market information and visitation back to Indian Country, and to expose that market to authentic, native tourism destinations, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) will be participating in Showcase USA-Italy for the second time, this year being held in Turin, Italy March 6-8, 2016.

Showcase USA-Italy is a tradeshow organized by the U.S. Commercial Service and Visit USA Association Italy. As the only marketing event exclusively dedicated to promoting Italian tourism to the United States, Showcase USA-Italy provides AIANTA the opportunity to research the Italian tourism market and form valuable partnerships for building business. At this year's 19th annual edition, U.S. participants will meet individually with more than 30 major Italian tour operators, 80 travel agents and 25 trade journalists.

Immediately following their Italian outreach, AIANTA will attend ITB, Berlin, from March 8-13, for the eighth consecutive year, representing Indian Country tourism and all of its diversity. ITB, Berlin is the world's leading travel trade show with more than 170,000 visitors, 113,000 tourism professionals and 11,000 companies from 180 countries.

This year, AIANTA will host a total of seven tribal entities in its award winning pavilion, providing a training opportunity for tribes and businesses new to the European market, and helping develop partnerships and resources for those who already have experience there. Led by AIANTA Board President Sherry L. Rupert, of Paiute and Washoe heritage from Nevada and AIANTA Executive Director Camille Ferguson, Tlingit native from Sitka, Alaska, the tribal delegation attending ITB



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includes the Keepers of the Sacred Tradition of Pipemakers, the Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise, Monument Valley Simpson's Trailhandler Tours, the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, and OPOS (Our People Our Stories) Tours.

The following entities joined AIANTA at ITB 2016:

The Keepers of the Sacred Tradition of Pipemakers believe in preserving their tribal arts and culture by educating their own people and sharing it with the world. They are based near the home of the Great Pipestone Quarries of Minnesota, a place where tribal people have come to obtain the famous red stone for their prayer pipes for more than 1,000 years. The Pipemakers annual pow wow and culture camp are open to the public as is the Pipestone Heritage Fest July 17-23 where wood working, bead making, basket making, hide tanning and many other arts and crafts are showcased.

The Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise returned to ITB this year to announce a new venture they have entered into with the National Park Service. The tribe has undertaken a major renovation of the Sacred Canyon Lodge inside the towering, historical walls of the mighty Canyon de Chelly. Renamed the Thunderbird Lodge, the 69-room property is the only lodging option inside the enchanting canyon walls, and the early spring reopening offers visitors completely modernized rooms, a restaurant, trading post and the starting point of vehicle tours of the national monument.

Inside the USA's most iconic place, an area rich in color, geographic marvels and native culture, all **Monument Valley Simpson's Trailhandler Tours** are led by Navajo people who know every crevasse, crater and canyon in their motherland. Simpson's guides lead visitors through this land of petroglyphs, pictographs, ancient dwellings and magical landscapes in open-air safari like Jeep tours, or on foot. There are also opportunities to enjoy a traditional Navajo dinner and spend the night inside a Hogan.

The Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma offers significant historical and modern attractions for visitors. The Chickasaw Cultural Center is the largest tribal cultural center in the United States and offers demonstrations, exhibits and an amphitheater for singing and stargazing. South of the Sky Bridge along the path to the Traditional Village of the Center, a butterfly garden recently opened. The Chickasaw Nation has taken significant strides to restore the monarch butterfly population as their land is in a critical position along the migration route. Visitors can get up close with the beautiful black, orange and white flyers.

OPOS (Our People Our Stories) Tours also came to Berlin from Minnesota. The group offers visitors rare looks into native culture. Their tours, all lead by local guides, feature a look at indigenous lands, language, food and history as seen through the eyes of the many generations who have lived on their lands. Travelers witness scenes and listen to messages OPOS has created with respected elders, tribal and spiritual leaders and community members. OPOS tours are primarily in the Midwest but do range across the USA and as far away as Hawaii.

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



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and the Southwest. AIANTA's mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors 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.

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