



# AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native  
Tourism Association

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association Secures a New Board Leadership at 2015 American Indian Tourism Conference**

*New Representatives from Minnesota and Oklahoma Join AIANTA Board of Directors*

**Albuquerque, New Mexico (September 22, 2015)** – The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) secured new board leadership at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) held at the Sky Ute Casino Resort in Ignacio, Colorado last week.

The AIANTA Board of Directors (AIANTA Board) is composed of two representatives from six designated regions: Alaska, Eastern, Midwest, Pacific, Plains, Southwest and two At-Large positions to represent all of Indian Country. Each representative is elected by their respective region to serve a three year term and At-Large representatives are elected by the entire AIANTA membership. Each member of the AIANTA Board brings a multitude of varied expertise and resources to the national nonprofit organization.

Travis Owens Senior Manager of Planning and Development for Cherokee Nation Businesses, was appointed as AIANTA's newest At-Large Representative. Owens manages all aspects of development associated with Cherokee Nation's cultural resources. While working for the Cherokee Nation, Travis has worked to develop restoration plans from multiple historic properties, managed the development of gift shops, welcome centers, museums and historic properties. Before joining Cherokee Nation Businesses, Travis worked for the Cherokee Nation Commerce Department focusing on rural community development through tourism.

Sonja Tanner, President of the Native American Tourism Office of Minnesota (NATOM), was elected as AIANTA's new Midwest Regional Representative. Tanner opened Native Tours in 1999, working with both domestic and international tour groups coming into the U.S. She is currently working with the 12 Minnesota tribes to start a non-profit entity to work as the liaison between the tribes and the State of Minnesota in a cooperative effort to increase visitors and provide education on tribal tourism opportunities.



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After serving on the AIANTA Board since 2013, James Surveyor, At-Large Representative, and Manager of Marketing and Sales at Moenkopi Legacy Inn & Suites, was voted in as the new Board Secretary.

The AIANTA Board continues its search for a qualified representative for the vacant seat in the Eastern Region.

## **AIANTA Board of Directors:**

### **Alaska Region**

Mario Fulmer, Alaska Native Voices, Huna Totem, Juneau, AK  
Rachel Moreno, Board Vice President, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka, AK

### **Pacific Region**

Rowena Yeahquo, Northwest Technical Assistance Program, Spokane, WA  
Rowena Akana, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Honolulu, HI

### **Southwest Region**

Sherry L. Rupert, Board President, Nevada Indian Territory, Carson City, NV  
Emerson Vallo, Pueblo of Acoma, Acoma, NM

### **Plains Region**

Jackie Yellowtail, Board Treasurer, Crow Tribal Member, Garryowen, MT  
LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Standing Rock Sioux, Fort Yates, ND

### **Midwest Region**

Ernie Stevens III, Oneida, WI  
Sonja Tanner, Native American Tourism Office of Minnesota,  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, MN

### **Eastern Region**

Lora Ann Chaisson, Vice-Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation, Houma, LA

### **At-Large**

James Surveyor, Moenkopi Legacy Inn & Suites, Tuba City, AZ  
Travis Owens, Cherokee Nation Businesses, Catoosa, OK

## **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



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is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian 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.

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