



# AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native  
Tourism Association

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association Secures a Full Board of Directors at 2014 American Indian Tourism Conference**

*New Representatives from Louisiana, Wisconsin, Alaska and New Mexico  
Join AIANTA Leadership*

**Albuquerque, New Mexico (September 29, 2014)** – The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) secured a full Board of Directors at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) held at the Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, Louisiana earlier this month.

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.

New to the AIANTA Board, Lora Ann Chaisson, Vice-Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation (UHN) was appointed to represent AIANTA's Eastern Region. Chaisson, of Houma Heritage and living in the Houma community in Louisiana also serves as the Chairperson of the UHN Personnel Committee, is the UHN delegate to the National Congress of American Indians and serves on the Government Committee. In addition to these roles, Chaisson continues to support the UHN as a traditional basket weaver, while also working with the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, where she has been employed since 1994.

Mario Fulmer, Visitor Programs Manager at Huna Totem Corporation/Alaska Native Voices was elected as AIANTA's new Alaska Regional Representative. Fulmer is a Huna Totem Corporation shareholder descendant, an ANCSA corporation from the village of Hoonah, Alaska. He is from the Tlingit tribe, specifically from the Xúna Kaawu, born a raven into the T'akdeintaan (black-legged kittiwake) clan, born under the Raven Nest House, and a child of the Chookaneidi (brown bear) clan. Additionally, he is an active participant in the Yees Ku Oo Dance Group from Juneau, performing locally as well as throughout Alaska. Fulmer brings to AIANTA vast experience in tourism as a Certified



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Interpretive Guide with the National Association for Interpretation and an Alaska Tour Guide Certified Trainer with the Department of the Interior.

Also new to the AIANTA Board this year is Ernie Stevens III, Executive Director of Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW), elected as Midwest Regional Representative. Stevens is from the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and is passionate about empowering Indian Country through economic development, in various creative ways like Film and TV, entertainment, and other forms of mass media. With Steven's election, AIANTA Board veteran Kirby Metoxen, Tourism Coordinator at Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin finished his long service of 15 years on the AIANTA Board.

Emerson Vallo, Director of Acoma's Sky City Cultural Center and Haak'u Museum was elected to serve as the new Southwest Region representative alongside AIANTA President Sherry L. Rupert. Additionally, Vallo has been appointed to the New Mexico Tourism Department as a Commissioner by Governor Susana Martinez and is the Native representative for tourism in New Mexico.

### **AIANTA Board of Directors:**

#### **Alaska Region**

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

#### **Pacific Region**

Leslie Johnson, Squaxin Island Tribe Tourism, Shelton, WA  
Rowena Akana, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Honolulu, HI

#### **Southwest Region**

Sherry L. Rupert, Indian Territory, Carson City, NV  
Emerson Vallo, Sky City Cultural Center Haak'u Museum,  
Pueblo of Acoma, NM

#### **Plains Region**

Jackie Yellowtail, Crow Tribal Member, Garryowen, MT  
William D. Lowe, Muscogee Creek Nation, Okmulgee, OK

#### **Midwest Region**

Ernie Stevens III, Native American Tourism of WI, Oneida, WI  
Aimee Awonohopay, St. Croix Chippewa Indians of WI, Cumberland, WI

#### **Eastern Region**

Janee' Doxtator, Consultant, Towson, MD  
Lora Ann Chaisson, Vice-Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation, Houma, LA

#### **At Large**

James Surveyor, Moenkopi Legacy Inn & Suites, Tuba City, AZ  
LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Standing Rock Administration Service Center, Fort Yates, ND



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## **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, 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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