



# News Release

September 11, 2015

For immediate release:

## **RECORD NUMBER OF SASKATCHEWAN FINALISTS FOR THE 2015 CANADIAN TOURISM AWARDS**

Saskatchewan's tourism industry has earned its highest ever number of *Canadian Tourism Award* finalists. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) recently announced the finalists for the 2015 awards, which will be celebrated in Ottawa in December. Out of 42 finalists from across the country named in 14 award categories, Saskatchewan received five nominations.

"This impressive showing of Saskatchewan tourism businesses and employees speaks to the strength and quality of our province's tourism industry," Minister responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan Jeremy Harrison said. "The five *Canadian Tourism Award* nominations from our province reflect the exceptional hospitality and experiences that Saskatchewan tourism operators are known for the world over."

"Tourism Saskatchewan is absolutely thrilled by the record number of finalists from our province," Tourism Saskatchewan CEO Mary Taylor-Ash said. "All of the finalists from Saskatchewan are leaders in the industry and so deserving of this acknowledgement. Their deep pride of place and passion for Saskatchewan contribute to great guest experiences and to the memorable stories that visitors to our province are so eager to share. Congratulations are extended to these fine representatives of Saskatchewan's tourism sector."

The five Saskatchewan finalists are:

**Ness Creek Music Festival (Big River) – *Event of the Year Award***  
(Presented by Metro Toronto Convention Centre)

Since 1991, the Ness Creek Music Festival has been an annual showcase of great music and performances in a beautiful northern setting. Today, the festival is one of Saskatchewan's signature summer events and attracts more than 4,000 attendees from across the province, Canada and elsewhere.

**Michelle Blakley (Tourism Moose Jaw) – *Tourism Employee of the Year Award***  
(Presented by Intercontinental Hotels Group)

Tourism Moose Jaw's primary frontline employee, Michelle Blakley, applies an extensive background in human resources, accounting and retail management to motivate colleagues and create unparalleled guest service experiences.

**Natalie Matheson (Waskesiu Marina Adventure Centre) – Tourism Employee of the Year Award**  
(Presented by Intercontinental Hotels Group)

As Waskesiu Marina Adventure Centre's Lead Guide, Natalie Matheson delivers personal, corporate and school group water-based guided tours. She applies impressive knowledge and a positive attitude to deliver a guest experience that exceeds expectations.

**d3h Hotels Inc. (Saskatoon) – Tourism Employer of the Year Award**  
(Presented by Intercontinental Hotels Group)

d3h Hotels owns and operates seven properties across Saskatchewan. Since its establishment in 1998, the company has valued employee development, both personally and professionally, resulting in a workforce that is passionate about serving guests with integrity and pride.

**Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel (Saskatoon) – Tourism Employer of the Year Award**  
(Presented by Intercontinental Hotels Group)

The Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel, family-owned and operated by Cavalier Enterprises Ltd. and franchised under Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, employs over 250 full- and part-time associates who are deeply committed to the property.

The *Canadian Tourism Awards*, presented by *The Toronto Star*, recognize success, leadership and innovation in Canada's tourism industry, and honour those people, places, organizations and events that have gone above and beyond to offer superior visitor experiences to travellers in Canada. The *Canadian Tourism Awards* have become the standard of excellence for businesses and organizations in the travel industry, showcasing the nation's best tourism products, services and experiences.

The awards will be presented at a gala dinner ceremony at the Westin Hotel Ottawa in Ottawa on December 2, 2015. The *Canadian Tourism Awards* gala is an annual highlight of the *Tourism Congress*, TIAC's industry conference. For a complete list of the *2015 Canadian Tourism Award* finalists, visit [tiac.travel](http://tiac.travel).

- 30 -

**For more information, contact:**

Susan Parkin  
Communications and Marketing Specialist  
Tourism Saskatchewan  
Regina  
Phone: 306-787-2927  
Email: [susan.parkin@tourismsask.com](mailto:susan.parkin@tourismsask.com)

*Tourism in Saskatchewan is a \$2.12-billion industry, employing 57,000 people throughout the province.*