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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum Receives 2021 Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility

August 31, 2021

Edmonton, Alberta - The Alberta Museums Association (AMA) is pleased to present the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum with the Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility in recognition of its work to integrate social responsibility into all aspects of museum practice.

The Award recognizes the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum's work to be a welcoming gathering space that grows with and for the community it serves and to join with local organizations to expand its reach. The museum partners with and supports other social service organizations in Wetaskiwin City, County, and Maskwacis, demonstrating deep engagement with the community and an understanding of the importance of collaboration to make limited resources stretch further. The small staff at the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum are able to offer diverse activities, programs, and services that they tailor to meet the changing needs of the community. This was especially evident in the museum's Youth Network and commitment to maintaining support of the community in the face of the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The staff at the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum have truly embedded the museum into the community. They have deeply examined the role of the museum within their evolving community and ensured that they were a welcoming space that addresses their most pressing needs," said Meaghan Patterson, Executive Director / CEO. "Because of the authentic and meaningful connections they have developed, both the museum and the community are working toward each other's health and sustainability. The Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum is a model of a socially responsive and integrated museum for small museums across Alberta."

A previous recipient of the AMA's Leadership Award for Sustainability in recognition of its integral role as a service provider, supportive resource, and community leader, the Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to embedding social responsibility and sustainability into all aspects of its work. The museum's collaborative leadership stands out as a model for other institutions, especially for similar small and rural museums.

Historically, the Award is presented at an Awards Ceremony held as part of the AMA's Annual Conference. In light of COVID-19 and public health requirements, the 2021 Annual Conference is taking place as a four-part virtual Conference Series. The Wetaskiwin and District Heritage Museum's achievements will be celebrated during the AMA's Annual General Meeting, taking place virtually ahead of the September Conference Event on September 16, 2021.

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Background

The Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility is the vision of Robert R. Janes, PhD, created to support and further the work of museums that are solving community issues and promoting health and well-being. Together with the AMA, the ambitious goal of the Award is to create vibrant and sustainable communities by investing in programs that effect real social and environmental change, and which have the potential to create public benefit on a larger scale. The recipient of the Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility receives a financial contribution to investigate drivers for success, scale up activities, and create a model for others to follow, thereby contributing to the long-term impact of museums in their communities. For more information about the AMA Awards Program, please visit museums.ab.ca.

The Alberta Museums Association provides a variety of programs and services to over 500 museums and museum professionals across Alberta. Through its focus on community engagement, social responsibility, and sustainability, the AMA utilizes its funding, accreditation, awards, and professional development opportunities to support institutions in their vital role as leading contributors to the social, cultural, and educational fabric of Alberta. The AMA believes that museums can leverage their positions as trusted institutions to encourage respectful dialogue, provide educational opportunities, and bring awareness to some of society's most pressing issues.

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