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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **High Prairie & District Museum to Receive 2023 Leadership Award for Engagement from the Alberta Museums Association**

September 5, 2023

Edmonton, Alberta – The Alberta Museums Association (AMA) is pleased to announce the High Prairie & District Museum as the recipient of the AMA’s 2023 Leadership Award for Engagement, in recognition for their work to engage local settler and Indigenous communities in truth-telling and healing through the development of their Truth and Reconciliation Gallery and the *peyak mikwan – One Feather* exhibit.

Situated in a community home to one of Alberta’s largest Métis populations, neighbouring multiple on-reserve communities, and near the sites of three former Indian residential schools, the High Prairie Museum began their work on a truth and reconciliation project in 2014. In partnership with Elders, community members, and the local Native Friendship Centre and Children’s Resource Centre, the museum worked to become a local leader for education and truth-telling about the area’s residential schools. This project culminated in the opening of a permanent gallery space in September of 2022. The Truth and Reconciliation Gallery presents Indigenous histories, artifacts, and the stories of community residential school survivors, with a focus on community accessibility and creating a space for education and healing.

Through the development of the Truth and Reconciliation Gallery, the High Prairie Museum demonstrated the integral role that small community museums can play in fostering community engagement and supporting, developing, and sustaining community values and social responsibility. This is exemplified in the gallery’s inclusive and thoughtful approach to telling sensitive and deeply personal histories. The gallery space was constructed to be a ‘living gallery’ that changes, evolves, and grows in response to the needs of the community and responds to community input. With ample seating, areas to reflect, and room to host events, the space provides opportunity for the community to gather and acknowledge the stories held in the gallery.

The High Prairie Museum engages their community in new and inspiring ways and does so with the limited resources and staffing available to a rural community museum. The museum’s commitments to community, to truth, and to healing provide an example of the power of museums to connect communities and share important histories.

Nominations for the Leadership Awards are adjudicated by the Leadership Awards Committee, comprised of Individual Members of the AMA. The Award will be presented at an Awards Gala during the AMA’s 2023 Fall Gathering, presented in partnership with Heritage



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Park Historical Village. The High Prairie & District Museum's achievements will be celebrated at the Gala, taking place on Friday, September 22, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Gasoline Alley Museum at Heritage Park.

## **Background**

The Leadership Award for Engagement recognizes those who cultivate museum and community interaction. Recipients in this category are continually searching for ways to engage the public with culture. They see museums as a fundamental part of society - as something to be accessed and embraced by everyone. They lend their space and ideas to engaging programming and other activities that take museums outside their traditional roles in society and encourage inclusive conversations. They create opportunities for reconciliation, hope, and healing. They seek to connect people to museum collections in unusual and daring ways. They advocate for museums as evidenced through their everyday work. They engage various communities to tell exceptional stories that could otherwise be overlooked. These initiatives provide meaningful experiences for Albertans to discover more about the stories of the people and cultures that define our history and shape our modern communities.

The AMA Leadership Awards recognize the exceptional work of Alberta museums and museum professionals in creating value, accessibility, and relevance in their communities. The Leadership Awards recognize excellence, innovation, and creativity in Alberta's museum community in three categories: Engagement, Education, and Sustainability. More information about the AMA Leadership Awards can be found on the [AMA website](#).

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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