



News Release

March 6, 2017

For immediate release:

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR SASKATCHEWAN TOURISM AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Tourism Saskatchewan is pleased to announce the names of 33 finalists for the *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence* for 2016.

There were 100 nominations received in the 12 award categories that acknowledge quality in marketing, service, business practices, human resource development and other areas.

The finalists and award recipients will be honoured at the 28th annual *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala*, which will be celebrated on April 5 at the Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel. The gala will be held in conjunction with the *HOST Saskatchewan Conference*, which takes place on April 5-6 in Saskatoon.

The three recipients of the Tourism Builder Award will also be honoured that night. Introduced last year, the Tourism Builder Award recognizes individuals who have made tourism an important part of their life's work and have helped position Saskatchewan as a welcoming destination.

"The impressive list of finalists and Tourism Builders speaks to the diversity, innovation and leadership among Saskatchewan's tourism sector," Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan Jeremy Harrison said. "These individuals and organizations have earned their place in the gala spotlight. The Government of Saskatchewan is pleased to acknowledge their accomplishments and their commitment to industry growth and delivering exceptional hospitality and visitor experiences."

"Hosting the annual *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala* is one of the highlights of our work," Tourism Saskatchewan CEO Mary Taylor-Ash said. "It is a privilege to welcome industry representatives and stakeholders from every corner of the province, who come together to celebrate the achievements of their peers. Our sincere congratulations are extended to the 33 finalists and three Tourism Builders. We look forward to officially recognizing their contributions to tourism on April 5."

Tickets for the *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala* are available for \$120 (plus GST) or \$800 (plus GST) for a corporate table of eight. The evening will start with a cocktail reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner service at 6:30 p.m. and the award presentations at 8 p.m.

To order tickets, visit store.industrymatters.com/events. For more information on the *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala*, visit IndustryMatters.com or contact Nancy Hubenig at 306-787-9844 or awards@tourismsask.com.

The *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence* finalists for 2016 are:

**Business of the Year Award
(Over 20 Full-time Employees)**

Sponsored by The Western Producer

Park Town Hotel, Saskatoon

Regina International Airport, Regina

The Resort at Cypress Hills, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

**Business of the Year Award
(Under 20 Full-time Employees)**

Sponsored by Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority

Harvest Eatery and Fresh Market, Shaunavon

Last Mountain Distillery, Lumsden

Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, Regina

Community Event of the Year Award

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Arts Board

Country at the Creek Music Festival, Big River

Mid Summer's Art Festival, Fort Qu'Appelle

Symphony Under the Sky Festival at Motherwell Homestead, Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site, Abernethy

Marquee Event of the Year Award

Sponsored by Bell Media Saskatchewan

Craven Country Jamboree, Craven

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival, Saskatoon

Yorkton Film Festival, Yorkton

Fred Heal Tourism Ambassador Award

Sponsored by Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Gail Kessler, Cypress Hills Destination Area, Maple Creek

Angela Schmitt, Redwillow Outfitting, Carrot River

Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, Watrous/Manitou Beach

Gil Carduner Marketing Award

Sponsored by Phoenix Group

Cypress Hills Destination Area, Maple Creek

Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Regina

Saskatchewan Fashion Week, Regina

Rookie of the Year Award

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club

Café Terra, Eastend

Cowtown Kids Toy & Candy, Maple Creek

Grotto Gardens Country Market, Maple Creek

Service Excellence Award

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce
Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw, Regina/Moose Jaw
Regina International Airport, Regina
Skyxe Saskatoon Airport, Saskatoon

Tourism Employee of the Year Award

Sponsored by Harvard Broadcasting Regina
Heather Curry, Park Town Hotel, Saskatoon
Kristine Scheller, Cypress Hills Destination Area, Maple Creek
Matthew Growden, Waskesiu Marina Adventure Centre, Waskesiu Lake

Tourism Employer of the Year Award

Sponsored by Transcontinental Printing
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Conference Centre, Regina
Park Town Hotel, Saskatoon
Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Saskatoon

Travel Media Award

Sponsored by Vendasta
Ashlyn George, Saskatoon
Jenn Smith Nelson, Regina
Robin and Arlene Karpan, Saskatoon

Tourism Builder Award

Sponsored by Tourism Saskatchewan
Trent Fraser, Regina
Irene LeGatt, Saskatoon
Steve McLellan, Regina

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Tourism in Saskatchewan is a \$2.15-billion industry, employing nearly 65,000 Saskatchewan residents.