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For Immediate Release

AtBC Launches New Five Year Plan – Forecasts Significant Growth to 2017

(West Vancouver, BC) The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC) is a non-profit, stakeholder-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Aboriginal tourism industry. AtBC continues to be a national and international leader in the development of an authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in British Columbia.

Today the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in BC provides an estimated 3.8 million visitors opportunities to experience Aboriginal owned accommodations, restaurants, galleries, outdoor activities and attractions. The interest in authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism continues to increase and AtBC has designed our new five year plan to meet the growing consumer demands.

AtBC CEO Henry stated, “We are excited to release the new AtBC Five Year Plan that identifies our six priorities from 2012-2017. Aboriginal tourism visitors spent an estimated \$203 million between 2006 and 2011 and we expect future visitor revenues to spend an estimated \$320 million between 2012 and 2017. Therefore the new plan requires a new \$10 million dollar investment to support our industry push for market readiness, building and strengthening partnerships, focus on online marketing, focus on key and emerging markets, focus on authenticity and quality assurance, and a more regional based approach.”

AtBC CEO Henry added, “We are most proud of the fact that the new AtBC plan was designed by our industry for our industry and we believe our plan aligns well with the recent Provincial and Federal Government tourism strategies released in the fall of 2011.”

AtBC Chairperson Brenda Baptiste stated, “We understand the significance of having a sound vision supported by our experience, proven track record, and clear plan to meet the current market opportunities. What we also realize is that the tourism industry supports continued cultural revitalization and strong personal growth for so many of the Aboriginal youth in the Aboriginal communities.”

AtBC CEO Henry concluded, “This plan will ensure the continued growth of our industry. Our industry grew from \$20 million in 2006 to \$42 million by 2011. We now have a plan to continue growth from \$42 million in 2012 - \$68 million by 2017. By 2017 we also expect no less than 100 authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses, up from approximately 60 in 2011, which are market ready as well as 4000 full and part time employment positions, up from approximately 2300 in 2011. These economic and social benefits are substantial and our industry is proud to showcase this plan today.”

The AtBC Five Year Plan - ***The Next Phase 2012-2017*** can be viewed on the AtBC website. More information about the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia is available at www.aboriginalbc.com.

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