

**Red Lake Woodland Arts Festival:
A Tribute to Norval Morrisseau and the Woodland Artists**

Media Release

Red Lake, Ontario, February 26, 2008 - From July 4-6, 2008, Red Lake (pop. 5000) will host the **Red Lake Woodland Arts Festival: A Tribute to Norval Morrisseau and the Woodland Artists**. The festival will take visitors on a special journey as they discover the untold story of the artist's life, from 1959 when he arrived in Red Lake to work as a miner, to when he left the area around 1973, the father of seven children and internationally famous as the founder of the *Woodland School of Art*.

Also honoured will be the members of the Triple K Cooperative, an Aboriginal print shop that operated in Red Lake between 1971 and 1980. Triple K artists included Norval Morrisseau, Goyce Kakegamic, Joshim Kakegamic, Saul Williams, Barry Peters and Paddy Peters. Triple K became the largest and most successful Aboriginal economic development initiative in Northwestern Ontario, providing an infrastructure that resulted in many artists having their work exhibited and acquired by prominent art galleries and museums in Canada and around the world. Also acknowledged during the festival will be Carl Ray, a well-known artist from Sandy Lake who preceded Triple K and is considered a trail-blazer in the Woodland art movement.

The festival will feature a variety of activities and events, including story-telling, guided walking tours, plays, dance performances and art workshops. Also planned is an art fair, an art exhibition, audio-visual presentations and panel discussions. In addition, there will be ample opportunities for young people to meet the guest artists informally.

Organized by the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre, in collaboration with local Aboriginal organizations and artists from across Ontario, the festival will also bring together senior, mid-career and emerging Aboriginal artists, family members, art lovers, collectors, gallery owners, writers, art historians and many others.

For nearly 13 years, Morrisseau lived in small, cramped houses, where he depicted Ojibwa legends on birch bark, plywood, mill paper, canvas, and entire walls. Major international exhibitions were painted in places such as a housing development for Aboriginal families who worked at the Cochenour Mine, as well as on McKenzie Island, in Red Lake, and in McMarmac. In the late 1960s and early 70s Morrisseau also painted in the basement of the P & M What Not Shop in Red Lake and at the old Red Lake Curling Rink. His first sale took place in 1960 at Fergus McDougall's Store on McKenzie Island.

While many of Morrisseau's early paintings, as well as those of the Triple K artists, were acquired by prominent national and international cultural institutions, hundreds more were purchased by Red Lake residents where some can still be found, either displayed in public buildings or in private collections.

"I think it will be very exciting for visitors to have the opportunity to experience first-hand the landscape that inspired the Woodland artists, and to meet many of the people who knew them and supported their development", says Michele Alderton, Director/Curator of the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre.

Norval Morrisseau passed away on December 4, 2007, at 76, shortly after attending the opening of a major solo exhibition entitled **Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist**, at the National Museum of the North American Indian in New York City. Organized by the National Gallery of Canada, the show travelled in Canada and the United States for two years, where it received rave reviews. The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre contributed to the exhibition by loaning *the thunderbird* a painting from its collection, for the show, and providing photos and other archival material about the artist's Red Lake years for the exhibition catalogue.

Norval Morrisseau's seven children all grew up in Red Lake and except for David who lives in Toronto, they have stayed in Northwestern Ontario. They all plan to attend the festival to represent their father.

The Red Lake Woodland Arts Festival is already generating a great deal of interest across Canada and abroad. To avoid disappointment, interested visitors are strongly advised to make their travel arrangements and book their accommodation as soon as possible. Information about the event can be found on the Heritage Centre's website, at www.redlakemuseum.com

As of February 26th, festival sponsors included the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, the Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Power Generation, Linda Lundstrom, Maslak McLeod Gallery and Kinsman Robinson Gallery.

For more information, please contact:

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