

For Immediate Release

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## **ABEX 2017**

### **Community Leader of the Year Award - Chief Tammy Cook-Searson**

In recognition of her tireless efforts in her community, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson will be the first recipient of the ABEX Community Leader of the Year award. This award is new for 2017 and is proudly sponsored by SaskEnergy. The award recognizes someone who has made a positive contribution to the community through volunteerism and philanthropy, the individual will have taken a lead role in developing solutions to social challenges in Saskatchewan.

Chief Tammy Cook-Searson is a respected figure in Saskatchewan society, a fluent Cree speaker and is exceptionally proud of her First Nations Heritage. She is the first woman to lead the Lac La Ronge Indian band, and has done so for her second three-year term. Chief Cook-Searson has worked as a social worker and an elected Band Councillor, and is the president of the President of Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership. While she serves on numerous boards throughout the province, and has served as Director of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Chief Cook-Searson is also an entrepreneur, owning and operating a marina.

Chief Tammy Cook-Searson has been recognized for her community service in 2002 with the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal, and in 2012 with the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal for her committed leadership and contributions to the community.

"It is a pleasure to award Chief Tammy Cook-Searson the ABEX Community Leader of the Year award. The commitment she has to her communities and her exemplary professional life is an inspiration to the people of this province," said Steve McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

### **Business Leader of the Year Award - Geoff Gay**

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is honoured to name Mr. Geoff Gay as the 2017 ABEX Business Leader of the Year. Sponsored by Saskatchewan PolyTechnic, the Business Leader of the Year is awarded to an individual who has shown leadership strength and achieved business success.

Mr. Geoff Gay has worked for northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca region since 1998 and has served as executive leader of Athabasca Basin Development since its inception. In the late 90s, the seven communities in the northern region came together with a vision and formed an entity that later became Athabasca Basin Development, an Indigenous-owned investment company. As CEO, Geoff continues

to follow the original vision of the Athabasca leadership and is responsible for evaluating new opportunities and monitoring existing investments and operations. The company has grown to include complete or partial ownership in twelve companies providing a wide range of services, has appeared in the Top 100 Saskatchewan Companies list, won the inaugural Skookum Jim award by the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, and was recognized as the 2014 Business of the Year by SaskBusiness Magazine. In addition to his duties as CEO, Geoff sits on numerous boards and has also been an active member of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, participating in northern tours and initiatives such as the Northern Business Task Force. Geoff lives in Prince Albert with his wife Lori, and their three children.

“It is an honour to award Geoff Gay as Business Leader of the Year. The work he has done and continues to do in northern Saskatchewan is truly remarkable. Saskatchewan has – and will – continue to benefit from his efforts,” said Steve McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is honoured to award Chief Tammy Cook-Searson and Mr. Geoff Gay at the 2017 ABEX Awards on October 21<sup>st</sup> at TCU Place in Saskatoon.

Tickets for ABEX 2017 can be purchased online at: [www.saskchamber.com](http://www.saskchamber.com).

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