

# Media Backgrounder and Fact Sheet

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
Government of British Columbia

## ***MADE IN B.C. – ABORIGINAL BUSINESS BLENDS TRADITION AND COMMERCE***

British Columbia has more Aboriginal entrepreneurs than anywhere else in Canada. Aboriginal businesses such as Haida fashion designer Dorothy Grant are challenging stereotypes and winning awards for their innovations. From cultural tourism to high-fashion, Aboriginal British Columbians are creating successful businesses that incorporate Aboriginal values.

- Twenty-two per cent of all self-employed Aboriginal Canadians are located in B.C.
- In British Columbia the percentage of Aboriginal entrepreneurs under 25 is twice that of non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs (seven per cent versus three per cent).
- Aboriginal cultural tourism is growing faster than traditional tourism in B.C. Today, the Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C. has 60 members, including world-class cultural centres, Aboriginal owned and operated resorts and guided adventure tours.
- Aboriginal business has helped build the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Over 100 First Nations-owned companies benefitted from \$53 million in Olympic-related contracts, including Squamish First Nation joint venture Newhaven Projects and Lil'wat First Nation joint venture Resource Business Ventures.
- For the first time ever, the Four Host First Nations have an official Olympic merchandising brand, which promotes and supports authentic Aboriginal art and design.
- 21 Aboriginal businesses were recognized at the inaugural Aboriginal Business Awards in January 2008, delivered by the B.C. Achievement Foundation. Award winners included world-renowned fashion designer and Haida artist Dorothy Grant.
- The Aboriginal BEST program provides young Aboriginal entrepreneurs with the skills and tools to identify viable business ideas and make them work. Since its inception in 2004, over 500 students have completed Aboriginal BEST training and 64 per cent of previous participants are currently employed or self-employed.
- Aboriginal businesses such as Metlakatla Development Corporation and Takaya Developments are creating stronger communities by building quality homes and services that honour Aboriginal values.
- The Nk'Mip Cellars, North America's first Aboriginal winery, combines Aboriginal entrepreneurship and innovation with respect for tradition and culture to produce one of Canada's best kept secrets – award-winning B.C. wine.

## CONTACTS

### **Tewanee Joseph**

CEO

Four Host First Nations

778-327-5775

[info@fourhostfirstnations.com](mailto:info@fourhostfirstnations.com)

The Four Host First Nations Society (FHFNS) strives to represent the Nations and to facilitate engagement between the Nations and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) in order to ensure that the Games are successful and that the Nations' languages, traditions, protocols and cultures are meaningfully acknowledged, respected, and represented in the planning, staging and hosting of the Games.

[www.fourhostfirstnations.com](http://www.fourhostfirstnations.com)

### **Keith Henry**

CEO

Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC

604-921-1017

[KHenry@aboriginalbc.com](mailto:KHenry@aboriginalbc.com)

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (ATBC) is a non-profit, membership-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Aboriginal tourism industry. [www.aboriginalbc.com](http://www.aboriginalbc.com)

### **Dorothy Grant**

Owner/Operator

Dorothy Grant Ltd.

604-681-0201

[info@dorothygrant.com](mailto:info@dorothygrant.com)

Dorothy Grant Ltd. is First Nations owned and operated. The company is designed to share the richness of Haida Culture through contemporary fashion, and to create a vehicle for transformation. [www.dorothygrant.com](http://www.dorothygrant.com)

### **Marlane Christensen**

President

Industry Council for Aboriginal Business

604 483-2261

[marlane.christensen@icab.ca](mailto:marlane.christensen@icab.ca)

Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (ICAB) aims to realize economic opportunities for its members through collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses. ICAB also works to increase Aboriginal business access to mainstream markets through activities such as promotion and mentoring. [www.icab.ca](http://www.icab.ca)

## VISUAL RESOURCES

- Photos and streaming video of the 2009 Aboriginal Business Awards Gala:  
<http://www.bcachievement.com/aboriginalbusiness/2009>

### WEB RESOURCES

- The Official Four Host First Nations website includes background on the Aboriginal Pavilion, the Aboriginal 2010 merchandise and the partner First Nations.  
<http://www.fourhostfirstnations.com/>
- Description of the Aboriginal Business Awards program, including news releases, and 2009 recipients' biographies. <http://www.bcachievement.com/aboriginalbusiness/info.php>
- The official website of Individual Achievement Award recipient Dorothy Grant.  
<http://www.dorothygrant.com/site/>
- Since its inception in 2004, over five hundred students have completed Aboriginal BEST training, which comprises twelve free training sessions on all aspects of business planning.  
<http://www.smallbusinessconsultant.ca/best/index.html>
- The Aboriginal Business Directory is a list of self-submitted businesses owned and operated by Aboriginal people across Canada.  
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/ccc/sld/cmpny.do?tag=248&profileId=381&lang=eng>

### MEDIA COVERAGE

- A Legacy of the Games, Financial Post, July 14, 2009, <http://www.financialpost.com/small-business/story.html?id=1787663>
- First Nations Firms Join 2010 Games Job Mix, Vancouver Sun, April 11, 2009,  
<http://www.canada.com/vancouvernews/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=fb640bc0-3522-4314-9129-06db04c5cd6b>
- Aboriginal computer firm keeps it in first nation family, Vancouver Sun, June 17, 2008,  
<http://www.vancouvernews.com/Aboriginal+computer+firm+keeps+first+nation+family/828569/story.html>
- Enjoying the fruits of the vine in beautiful British Columbia, Vantage Canada Magazine, November 08 [http://www.wizardofwords.net/samples/BC\\_wines.htm](http://www.wizardofwords.net/samples/BC_wines.htm)
- Aboriginal mission a success, Times Colonist, November 2008,  
<http://www.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/business/story.html?id=b4ebf894-fe47-4439-88d2-83e6be524b7c>
- Former PM Spearheads Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Fund, CBC News, March 11, 2009,  
<http://www.cbc.ca/money/story/2009/03/11/aboriginal-entrepreneurs.html>
- Metlakatla praised for business successes, Prince Rupert Daily News, December 10, 2008,  
[http://www.canada.com/story\\_print.html?id=0692f6c1-978a-4bc6-b40f-ae71c38d922e&sponsor=](http://www.canada.com/story_print.html?id=0692f6c1-978a-4bc6-b40f-ae71c38d922e&sponsor=)

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#### **For assistance or more information:**

**Maria Wilkie**

Communications Director

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

250-953-3211

[Maria.Wilkie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Maria.Wilkie@gov.bc.ca)