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L'nuey Announces 2nd Annual Reconciliation Recognition Awards on eve of Indigenous Awareness Week 2022

Indigenous Awareness Week, which takes place May 24-28 this year, offers a great opportunity to celebrate the Mi'kmaq of Epekwitk (PEI), home of the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

This week provides us with the chance to share our Mi'kmaq language, culture, and history, with a view to our future. This future is one where we envision reconciliation at the forefront as we build a better and stronger tomorrow together.

This year, the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils, through L'nuey, is continuing its Reconciliation Recognition Award initiative as part of Indigenous Awareness Week activities to show its appreciation for the work being done to advance reconciliation by individuals, businesses, governments, and organizations here on PEI.

The “Reconciliation Recognition Award” is given to recipients based on a series of criteria that serves to recognize, respect, and include the Epekwitnewaq (PEI) Mi'kmaq people, stories, history, or land in such a way that it creates a positive and inclusive Island community with lasting impacts for future generations.

Today, the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils hosted its second annual Reconciliation Recognition Award ceremony. This year's recipients received their award at a small ceremony held in the Assembly Chamber of the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils building.

The four award recipients for 2022 are the Town of Stratford, the Town of Kensington, the Rural Municipality of West River, and Receiver Coffee – Brass Shop. More information on the initiatives for which each of the four recipients were chosen is included in the backgrounder section.

“We want all recipients and likeminded Islanders to know that we respect and welcome their efforts,” said Chief Junior Gould of Abegweit First Nation, Epekwitk Assembly of Councils Co-Chair. “Epekwitk will only grow and prosper if we work together, and the recipients of these awards have provided true examples of recognition and respect for Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq (Mi'kmaq of PEI).”

“It is inspiring to see groups and individuals here in Epekwitk taking initiative to support the Mi’kmaq and create a more inclusive and respectful Island community through real actions that make real change,” said Chief Darlene Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation, Epekwitk Assembly of Councils Co-Chair. “The Assembly is pleased to be able to recognize these special recipients and acknowledge the work and effort that has gone into initiatives that advance Reconciliation.”

Nuta’ykw Ila’matuti - “We all need Reconciliation”

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Sean Doke at sdoke@lnuey.ca or 902.330.4420

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Backgrounder

Epekwitk Assembly of Councils (EAC) 2022 Reconciliation Recognition Awards (RRA) Recipient Citations

Town of Stratford (Mayor Steve Ogden)

The Town of Stratford is being recognized for a Reconciliation Recognition Award for actions taken towards reconciliation by acknowledging the contributions of the Mi'kmaq through various initiatives and activities. This includes the installation of six Mi'kmaq place names during National Indigenous History Month 2021, which acknowledge and appreciate the history of the community as a Mi'kmaq summer camping location. This was a welcome complement to L'nuey's signage initiative with the Province, extending Mi'kmaq place names to recognize our language and presence on this Island.

Other actions taken by The Town of Stratford include a history of incorporating Mi'kmaq elements during various events, highlighting achievements including the Michael Thomas statue erected in 2017 and commemorating the first annual National Truth and Reconciliation Day last September.

Town of Kensington (Mayor Rowan Caseley)

The Town of Kensington is being recognized as one of the recipients of the 2022 Reconciliation Recognition Award for establishing a true path toward reconciliation by focusing efforts on building a strong and lasting relationship with the Mi'kmaq. This included Kensington's mural unveiling ceremony at the Schurman Gazebo in May 2021 which features Mi'kmaq as well as other cultures and landmarks, recognizing the Mi'kmaq presence on Epekwitk; and other initiatives such as raising the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Flag at last year's Treaty Day event.

Municipality of West River (Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail)

The Rural Municipality of West River has been working towards reconciliation with the Mi'kmaq particularly in recognition of being the first municipality in PEI to adopt both English and Mi'kmaq names for its electoral boundary wards. In 2021 when looking at ward changes, the Electoral Boundaries Commission recommended that Mi'kmaq names should be used in addition to English names and numbers. The EAC approved the use of these names and changes to the areas, boundaries and names of the wards come into effect for the next scheduled election later this year. Additionally, West River, is part of this year's Provincial signage initiative and has had a new Mi'kmaq place name/sign (**Ji'ka'we'katik**), installed.

Receiver Coffee – Brass Shop (co-owner Colleen MacKay)

Receiver Coffee – the Brass Shop is being recognized as one of the recipients of the 2022 Reconciliation Recognition Award for a special initiative last summer to work with the Mi'kmaq community to showcase Mi'kmaq talents and culture with the public featuring basket weaving, dancing, drumming, and quill making. For four weeks every Saturday last August, this business hosted artisanship, music, and entertainment at its Water Street location. With this wonderful opportunity, Epekwitk community members had a beautiful location to showcase their talents and share their culture - that was only topped by the gracious way the staff looked after them with food, water, supplies and everything they needed to present their art.