

### **Eeyou Istchee Tourism Receives Accolades at Rendez-vous Canada**

Montreal, Quebec. The 40th edition of Rendez-vous Canada (RVC)—the largest tourist trade show in Canada—took place at the Palais des congrès de Montréal from April 24 to April 27, 2016. This annual convention, which gathers travel buyers and travel trade media from all over the world, is designed to promote Canadian tourism products. This year the aboriginal tourist industry was a standout. Representatives and members of Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) attended RVC and received accolades for their tourism offerings.

A lunchtime presentation showcased the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Inuit of Nunavik, and the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. Cree program animator Pakesso Mukash showed a video that highlighted Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a tourist destination. Anna and David Bosum of Nuuhchimi Wiinuu in Ouje-Bougoumou gave a demonstration of Cree crafts. The audience was clearly impressed by the authenticity of the Cree culture and the passion of the Cree presenters.

Anna and David Bosum also promoted their tourism product and the packages that they have developed at a kiosk hosted by the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada. They welcomed many attendees, including the Honourable Bardish Chagger, the federal Minister of Small Business and Tourism, who expressed admiration for the unique product that the Bosum family offers.

The EIT team, meanwhile, publicized the beautiful region of Eeyou Istchee at their own kiosk. They were seen busy at work in a reportage that was broadcast on TVA.

RVC is Canada's premier international tourism marketplace, and this year's convention brought a record number of delegates—1,680. Buyers who had come from twenty-eight different countries to learn more about exceptional Canadian tourism offerings met 582 tourism providers from across the country.

According to several research studies, the international demand for aboriginal tourism is steadily increasing. A survey conducted by the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) indicates that a significant percentage of people considering Canada as a tourist destination are interested by aboriginal tourism products. This interest is particularly strong in France (85 per cent), Germany (72 per cent), and the United Kingdom (46 per cent). For travellers from these places, a sense of discovery and of adventure are crucial for a genuine tourism experience.

"This was our first time at RVC," Robin McGinley, the director general of EIT said after the convention, "but it certainly won't be our last! We were able to attract people's attention. We also got to know the competition, which is important. We felt very proud to have

participated and presented our culture and tourism products. We encouraged people to visit us, and we raised the profile of EIT as a tourism association and of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James as a tourist destination."

Indeed, the EIT team considered RVC such a success for tourism in Eeyou Istchee Baie-James that they are already looking forward to next year's convention in Calgary.