



Summer Solstice Indigenous (Virtual) Marketplace Re-Opens Summer Solstice Festival’s Support of Indigenous Artisans Timely

ITAC Report says COVID seriously Impacting Indigenous Tourism Sector

For immediate release

Ottawa, Ontario, November 12, 2020: According to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), at least 1,699 Indigenous businesses participate in Canada’s Indigenous tourism sector. In 2019, over 36,000 people worked in the sector’s associated industries. Their combined direct economic footprint in 2019 was estimated to exceed \$1.6 billion in GDP. New 2020 estimates point to drastic losses in direct employment and GDP have resulted from COVID-19’s impact on the Indigenous tourism sector. The assessment projects a 65.9% decline in direct GDP, down to \$555 million.

*“Our (read ITAC) combined survey research and economic assessment in 2020 indicate that the pandemic has had a deep and serious impact on most businesses in the sector. Based on our research it is estimated that at least 714 (out of 1,699) could be at serious risk of closure in 2020-2021. Specifically, the arts and heritage sector is looking at a 43% closure rate.”**

The Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival has always been a mainstay for Indigenous artisans in Ontario, offering them the opportunity to sell their work at the Festival during its typical 4-day June run in Ottawa. With the pandemic, the Festival, like others, moved its programming online over a 21-day period. The annual **Indigenous Marketplace** likewise transformed to an online store that showcased indigenous artisans from the province to an even wider audience through the end of July. The collaboration has been a huge success, providing the sole pandemic income for some artisans. Festival Executive Director, Trina Mather-Simard is thrilled and determined more than ever to help the Indigenous community as much as possible.

“Canadian Indigenous artisans rely on festivals and events to sell their crafts. With many of these shut down this past year, our people have lost considerable income. In fact, many rely on events like Summer Solstice to keep them financially stable. I am grateful we are re-opening the Virtual Marketplace not only for visitors looking for unique seasonal gifts, but that we can also continue supporting artists in the Indigenous community,” says Mather-Simard.



Over 30 indigenous vendors are now registered on the Marketplace – all returning artisans who participated in the Festival this past June with more from across Ontario being added. Selection is diverse with **representation from Ottawa Gatineau and area including bead artist Pamela Wolfe-Roberge and painter/photographer Patrick Cheechoo**; as well as returning artists from Kanata, Smith Falls, and Greely; into Quebec from Akwesasne and Vaudreuil; to Southern Ontario from Deseronto, Minden, Richmond Hill and Toronto; to Kamloops, British Columbia. Beadwork, jewellery, woodwork, paintings, herbs, copper crafts comprise some of the artisans’ offerings – each unique and blending ancestral stories with individual talents. Returning as well is Indigenous-owned Gopher It Deliveries for fulfillment: offering next day local delivery and cross Canada shipping.

Summer Solstice Virtual Marketplace is produced in collaboration with Indigenous Tourism Ontario and Ottawa’s Indigenous Experiences, producers of Summer Solstice Indigenous Festivals.

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Website Links

Summer Solstice Indigenous Marketplace: <https://ssif-virtual-marketplace.myshopify.com/>

Summer Solstice Festivals: <https://summersolsticefestivals.ca/>

Indigenous Experiences: <https://indigenous-experiences.ca/>

Indigenous Tourism Ontario: <https://indigenoustourismontario.ca/>

Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/SolsticeFestivals/>

<https://www.instagram.com/solsticefestivals/>

<https://twitter.com/ottawasolstice>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYnmJIZdwcGa-6nB6L4mJqA?view_as=subscriber

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https://indigenoustourism.ca/corporate/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CBOC_ITAC-COVID-19_FINAL-DRAFT.pdf

