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**First Annual Yukon Tourism Champion Award Presented to Exceptional Yukoners**

WHITEHORSE – The first annual Yukon Tourism Champion Awards were presented today to Jeane Lassen and Ramesh Ferris for their selfless promotion of Yukon in Canada and abroad, by Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor.

“We are very proud to honour these two well-loved Yukoners,” Taylor said. “Jeane and Ramesh have travelled far and spoken with many. They have raised Yukon’s profile with their consistent message of its beauty and friendly people. They did this not for any personal gain, but simply out of love for their home and a desire to share that with others.”

The department created the award in 2008 to recognize those individuals whose actions, energy and enthusiasm have been instrumental in promoting Yukon to outside audiences.

“It has always given me a sense of pride to represent the people of the Yukon,” award-winner Jeane Lassen said. “While I’m a proud Canadian, I’m a Yukoner first and foremost. To be recognized as a tourism champion for my home territory means so much to me.”

“I’m honoured to have been selected,” Ramesh Ferris said. “Because of the immense generosity and the thousands of hearts that fill this beautiful territory, the Yukon is not only a place where we can dream our dreams, but we can live them out as well. I’m truly honoured to be part of this great community and I will continue to boast about our larger than life territory to the rest of the world.”

These awards were presented as part of Tourism Week which runs June 1 to 7.

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