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YUKON PROVIDES FUNDING FOR ACCREDITED VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM IN DAWSON

DAWSON CITY – The Government of Yukon today has announced over \$500,000 dollars to support the development of a new visual arts foundation program in Dawson City. The program will be developed and managed collaboratively by Yukon College, Dawson City Arts Society and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

“The Government of Yukon is committed to providing the necessary education and training for Yukoners so that they can seize local economic opportunities as they arise,” Education Minister John Edzerza said. “I’m confident that the partnership steering the development of the visual arts foundation program will tap into the resources and skills of each organization involved and will create a program that is both culturally valuable and culturally relevant.”

Students undertaking the visual arts foundation program in Dawson City will earn Yukon College credits. The program will provide post-secondary students with a year of instruction in the fundamentals of visual arts and will be transferable to institutes outside of the territory.

“I join with the other partners in this exciting new program in thanking the minister of Education for his support. The Yukon will have its first university level fine arts program,” Miranda Atwood, Yukon College director of Extension Services, said. “Dawson City is the perfect location for this initiative, with its vibrant arts culture, and long-standing community partnerships. Yukon College is proud to engage in programming that serves a whole new student clientele and helps to build capacity for the cultural industry.”

“Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in is pleased with the establishment of its cooperative partnership with Yukon College and the Dawson City Arts Society. The establishment of a new arts school in Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Traditional Territory and the City of Dawson is an example of the benefits our community can achieve through working together,” Tr’ondëk Hwëch'in Chief Darren Taylor said. “These partnerships pave the way for the First Nations to have increasing input on how future educational dollars are spent in Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Traditional Territory. We would like to thank the Government of Yukon for providing the financial support for the development of this important community initiative.”

“This show of support from Government of Yukon for our accredited school of arts initiative is a huge step towards fulfilling Dawson City Arts Society's vision,” Greg Hakonson, Dawson City Arts Society president, said. “I believe the unique, co-operative partnership between Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, Yukon College and ourselves in this initiative will be viewed with envy by all organizations in Canada and will be the benchmark to achieve. My thanks to all those that worked hard to make this happen.”

The Government of Yukon funding will cover the costs of curriculum development, facilities, as well as staff and student recruitment. The visual arts foundation program will be offered in fall 2007 and will be housed in the soon-to-be-renovated Old Liquor Store building in Dawson City.

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