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CULTURAL COMPONENT REPRESENTS YUKON AT 2006 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

WHITEHORSE – A dance troupe under the leadership of Leaping Feats has been selected to represent the Yukon at the 2006 Arctic Winter Games as members of Team Yukon, announced Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor.

Dancers Karl Loos, Nick Robinson, Ben Robinson, Alex Robinson, Riley Simpson-Fowler and Rob Westberg from Groundwork Sessions, and Melissa Kwok and Jenny Freeman from Leaping Feats will integrate culture with sport at the games slated to take place March 5 – 11 in Kenai Peninsula, Alaska.

“The Arctic Winter Games has always embraced cultural exchange and friendship as one of its major cornerstones and the Leaping Feats group will play a strong role in celebrating northern culture at the games,” Taylor said.

Athletes, coaches and staff will participate in cultural performances, sport competition, and social exchanges including daily arts workshops with their counterparts from the circumpolar north, including Alaska, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik/Quebec, Alberta North, Greenland, Samiland (northern Norway-Sweden-Finland), and the Russian Region of Yamal during the week long event.

The Yukon cultural component will travel with chaperone and Leaping Feats Artistic Director Andrea Simpson-Fowler. The group is skilled in breakdancing, hip-hop, modern and jazz, and all eight members have performed together on a number of occasions. Supported by Culture Quest – Decade of Sport and Culture funding, they have carried out extensive training, choreography and collaboration while touring Yukon communities and Whitehorse schools.

“We are very proud to be sending eight dancers to represent the Yukon’s cultural contingent at the 2006 Arctic Winter Games,” Simpson-Fowler said. “Our dancers are excellent at many styles of dance and they have been trained to choreograph and instruct as well.”

Simpson-Fowler stated that the group looks forward to having the opportunity to inspire other young athletes to discover their own creative side.

“Because of the unique style of our dancers and their tremendous athleticism, it’s a perfect match between arts and sports,” Simpson-Fowler added.

This past summer, Nick Robinson, a member of Team Yukon, represented the Yukon at the 2005 Regina Canada Summer Games as a member of the National Artists Program and performed at the closing ceremonies for the national event.

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