

FOR RELEASE #07-082
May 2, 2007

YUKON COMMEMORATES ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

WHITEHORSE – Yukon Archives and Yukon Human Rights Commission have partnered in the creation of a three-panel display commemorating Asian Heritage Month, announced Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor.

“The launch of the display entitled *Hidden Histories: Asian History of the Yukon* celebrates and acknowledges those of Asian ancestry who chose Yukon as their home,” Taylor said. “By sharing stories, images and achievements, we recognize the social and economic contributions persons of Asian heritage made to Yukon.”

The display launch takes place Friday, May 4 at the Elijah Smith Building, with welcoming remarks by Taylor beginning at noon. The public is invited and refreshments will be served. A brochure highlighting the interesting facts from the display will also be available.

“It is through partnerships such as this that we can truly see and promote our shared responsibility in celebrating our people, our history, our diverse ethnic identities and our values,” Taylor said. “The Yukon Government is pleased to be able to support these kinds of partnerships.”

The National Association of Japanese Canadians also provided financial support for the project.

The three panels highlight Asian history, culture, contributions and challenges. One panel is dedicated to honouring Jujiro Wada, a Japanese dog musher, prospector and adventurer who traveled throughout Yukon, Alaska and the Northwest Territories at the turn of the century.

Wada learned his survival skills and travel routes from the aboriginal people in the north. He was respected for his hardiness, dog care and good character, while dealing with the stigma of racial discrimination at a time when social inequalities existed for many.

“While discriminatory laws and attitudes prevailed, many Asian people managed to be active participants and contributors to the development of their communities,” Lillian Nakamura Maguire, public education specialist at the Yukon Human Rights Commission, said. “For me, it has been a rewarding experience to work with the Yukon Archives to uncover some of the stories of these early pioneers.”

The display honouring Asian influence in Yukon will be at the Elijah Smith building in Whitehorse from May 4 through May 11, and at the Whitehorse Public Library from May 28 through June 30. It will also be displayed in Mayo and Dawson City between May 12 and May 28.

In July, the display will be made available for circulation from the Yukon Archives to schools and other interested groups who want to showcase the panels in their communities.

-30-

Contact:

Roxanne Vallevand
Cabinet Communications
(867) 633-7949
roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca

Karen Keeley
Communications Officer, Tourism and Culture
(867) 667-8304
karen.keeley@gov.yk.ca

Lillian Nakamura Maguire
Yukon Human Rights Commission
(867) 633 – 7623
maguire@yhrc.yk.ca