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News item

Yellowknife, NT – Rio Tinto sustainability award includes presentation of northern artwork

The US\$1 million Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability, awarded earlier this month to US-based Trees, Water & People, also included the presentation of a uniquely northern piece of art carved by Inuit artist and Yellowknife resident Joe Jaw Ashoona. A fourth generation Inuit artist, Ashoona carved a polar bear from kimberlite rock donated by Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., the Rio Tinto company which operates the Diavik Diamond Mine.



Ashoona described the kimberlite, comprised of diamond indicator minerals including garnet, chrome diopside, and olivine, as well as mantle xenoliths (inclusions from deep within the earth between the planet's core and crust), as challenging and rewarding to carve.

Diavik, with a strong northern sustainable development commitment, is extremely pleased to have assisted in this initiative, which highlights a talented northern artist. Ashoona, alongside his parents Goota Ashoona and Bob Kussy, and his cousin Koomautuk Curly, create artwork from stone and whalebone at their Yellowknife studio. A member of the Ashoona family of artists from Cape Dorset, Nunavut, Joe Ashoona's grandfather is master carver Kiawak Ashoona, whose works are part of art collections around the world.



Rio Tinto commissioned the carving, presented June 9 with the US\$1 million prize at the 2009 International Economic Forum of the Americas (Conference of Montreal) to US-based Trees, Water & People, which works on community reforestation, watershed protection, renewable energy, environmental education, and carbon offset programs in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and the US.

The Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability is open to all not for profit, civil society and non-government organizations working to advance the goals of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Rio Tinto's association with the prize began with its acquisition of Alcan in 2007, and provides Rio Tinto with an opportunity to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to sustainable development. Further information on can be found at www.riotintoprizeforsustainability.com.

The Diavik Diamond Mine is located 300 km. northeast of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories and is an unincorporated joint venture between DDMI (60%) and Harry Winston Diamond Limited Partnership (40%). Both companies are headquartered in Yellowknife, Canada. DDMI is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto plc of London, England, and Harry Winston Diamond Limited Partnership is a subsidiary of Harry Winston Diamond Corporation of Toronto, Canada. For further information contact Doug Ashbury, Acting Principal Adviser, Communications at Tel: (867) 669-6500, or visit the DDMI website at www.diavik.ca.
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