

## **Very interesting perspectives for northern tourism**

UMIUJAJQ, QC, Jan. 13, 2012 /CNW Telbec/ - At the end of a tour of the Baie-James, Eeyou Istchee and Nunavik regions, the Minister of Tourism, Ms. Nicole Ménard, and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Minister responsible for Nord-du-Québec, Mr. Pierre Corbeil, expressed confidence in the emergence of a new international tourist destination north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. "The more I discover this territory, the more I believe in the tourist potential of these regions. We received an extraordinary welcome and I hope everyone can enjoy such an experience. Québec's North has exceptional advantages for clientele in search of original and novel vacations," Minister Ménard said.

### **A joint action plan**

Ministers Ménard and Corbeil began the northern tour in Oujé-Bougoumou with a visit to the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, dedicated to the commemoration and practice of Cree culture. In Chibougamau, a meeting with the chiefs, the municipal elected officers and the partners and tourism promoters allowed the Ministers to learn more about the development opportunities in these regions. "I am delighted at the reception from the regional tourism stakeholders of Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee for the Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel, which we launched last November," Minister Ménard added.

The Ministers took the opportunity to confirm \$26,000 in financial assistance for the production of a tourism action plan in the Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee regions, complementary with two other tourism organizations, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association and Escapade boréale. This action plan will help lay the preliminary foundations for deployment of the Strategy, ensure that the four organizations collaborate with complementary mandates, and optimize their human resources.

### **A dynamic partnership**

The tour then continued in Wemindji, where the Ministers had discussions with the Band Council, the representatives of the Tawich Development Corporation and local tourism entrepreneurs. A guided tour of the village and a stop at Auberge Maquatua Inn were also on the dignitaries' program.

The last leg of the trip took place in Umiujaq, in Nunavik, where the Ministers participated in a meeting with the municipal authorities, representatives of the Kativik Regional Government, the Umiujaq Cooperative Association, Makivik Corporation and La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec. The Ministers considered these exchanges were very productive. "The tourism stakeholders of the Baie-James, Eeyou Istchee and Nunavik regions are working in a dynamic partnership. There is a real collective will to take action and instill new vitality into the tourism industry in this vast territory," Minister Corbeil added.

The Inuit Community of Umiujaq offered the Ministers a unique traditional experience. Punctuated by throat singing, regional cuisine and a snowmobile excursion to the site of the

future Tursujuq National Park, this itinerary gave an overview of the activities offered to tourists visiting this magnificent region.

The Ministers announced two financial contributions by the Gouvernement du Québec to hotel establishments. For Auberge Maquatua Inn in Wemindji, an amount of \$600,000 was granted, including \$300,000 from the Ministère du Tourisme and a \$300,000 repayable loan from the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation. Hôtel de la Coopérative d'Umiujaq / Umiujaq Coop Hotel is benefitting from \$300,000 in financial assistance from the Ministère du Tourisme and a \$180,000 repayable loan from Makivik Corporation.

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