

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For Immediate Release

John Arcand Fiddle Fest Celebrates 10 Years of Success, August 9-12, 2007

July 5, 2007, SASKATOON - When the John Arcand Fiddle Fest launches itself for the 10th time August 9-12th at Windy Acres on the Pike Lake Highway it will be with an air of proud celebration for some pretty impressive accomplishments.

John Arcand, widely known as “Master of the Metis Fiddle”, began fiddling at the tender age of 6. By age 12 he was playing concerts and dances. Now 65 and preparing to receive his first pension cheque (which by no means suggests that this very active and astounding talent is retiring), Arcand has seen interest in fiddle music and dance wax and wane. What was once a mainstay in communities of all kinds has flirted with extinction for the last couple of generations. “After shows like Don Messer and Tommy Hunter, there was nothing,” Arcand laments.

John learned from his father early in life. From that experience he knew that the way to promote and preserve traditions was through young people. And so in 1998 he launched the first John Arcand Fiddle Fest. Two hundred and fifty people attended – most of the family and friends – and the artists participated for free. John paid the \$750 it took to stage the festival out of his own pocket.

Soon after he met and married Vicki – a woman of many talents and seemingly limitless energy – and together they nurtured the event into what it is today. In 2006 the festival had a budget of \$140,000, attracted more than 2000 spectators, and offered 60 workshops to 885 registrants. A sanctioned fiddle contest, the Canadian Traditional Red River Jigging Championships, two old time dances and many performances by a variety of emerging and professional artists fill the festival’s four days to the brim.

The work of the festival has not gone unnoticed. The organization enjoys funding from several government and non-government cultural funding sources, perhaps most noticeably, a three-year commitment from the Canada Council’s Aboriginal Arts secretariat of funds and support to help build the festival’s capacity become sustainable for the long term. The Fiddle Fest is one of just 15 aboriginal arts organizations across Canada to receive this funding. John himself is the recipient of many awards including the Governor General of Canada’s inaugural arts award, a race relations award from the City of Saskatoon, and both most recently and most impressive, a membership in the Order of Canada.

This year the festival celebrates its success at promoting and preserving the traditions of fiddle music, dance and culture with a very special John Arcand & Friends anniversary concert on Saturday Night. Over the years John has featured a number of young fiddlers. In honour of the 10th anniversary and its success evidenced through the number of young people taking up the fiddle, John will be joined on stage by some of these young talents, many of whom are now enjoying performing and recording careers of their own. They include Daniel Gervais, Alex Lamoureux, Aimee Fauteux, Tarresa Bergen, Nathan and Stephan Trischuk and James Steele.. John will also be joined by his daughter Michelle, who plays fiddle and sings.

For complete details on the 10th Annual John Arcand Fiddle Fest, visit www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com or call Vicki Arcand at 306.382.0111.

To arrange an interview please contact Vicki Arcand at 306.382.0111.