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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1st Indigenous Float entered the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade

November 7, 2016 (Winnipeg, Manitoba) – As part of this years' Santa Claus parade, Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO), representing 32 First Nations Communities in Manitoba, & Red Lightning Event Planning and Management have begun plans and preparations for what is sure to be one of the best Indigenous floats entered in decades!

“Southern Chiefs’ is very proud of the fact we have the opportunity to showcase with pride our culture, youth and communities, at the Santa Claus Parade”, Grand Chief Terrance Nelson

SCO has made tremendous strides this year in community engagement and hopes that by participating in the parade that it will showcase all citizens. Since the very first acknowledgement of citing Indigenous territory at various venues throughout Winnipeg such as Winnipeg Blue Bombers games, Winnipeg Jets (first time) and full participation in the Canada Games 2017 it is with pride and honour we design the 1st Indigenous float.

Our sponsors Red Lightning Event Planning and Management, Jim Gauthier Chevrolet, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba have assisted in the float build that will feature an 8-foot Traditional Headdress and a horse caravan. The design was presented and accepted from David Thomas, Master of Architecture, and the feathers on the Headdress will be painted by 30 individual First Nations youth, on and off reserve. It will feature Rhonda Head, Mezzo soprano singing Cree traditional carols down Portage Avenue, followed by current sitting Chiefs on horses. Excitement is building in the community with volunteers young and old helping with the floats' assembly and participation.

Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, University of Manitoba says “It’s a moment to show pride and unity, it creates instant pride to huge numbers of young people, it boosts-morale and lends itself to cultural revitalization and mostly’ it engages and educates the ones who go to the parade to participate – it’s important that Indigenous people are included in 2016.

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