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POKAGON FUND SELECTS SCULPTURE DESIGN BY FRITZ OLSEN AS THE ARTISTIC CENTERPIECE FOR NEW BUFFALO'S *DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE*

(New Buffalo, MI) The Pokagon Fund has announced its approval of Fritz Olsen of Sawyer, Michigan as the sculptor for the "significant work of art" that the City of New Buffalo committed to provide when the Fund awarded a grant of \$1,600,000 to fund approximately one-third of the cost of the City's Downtown Development Initiative.

The design for the sculpture was also approved by the Fund after a July 19 presentation to the Fund's Board of Directors by the artist. The sculpture, which will be dedicated to The Pokagon Fund, is intended to honor the work of the Fund in improving the lives of the residents of Harbor Country® and Southwest Michigan and to recognize the charitable contributions of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.

In his presentation, Mr. Olsen revealed that his inspiration came from the Potawatomi Nation's traditional role among the Midwest's native tribes as "The Keepers of the Fire" and the significance to the Pokagon Band of the four directions of East, South, North and West which the traditions of the Potawatomi honor during prayer and ceremonies.

Mr. Olsen, who will use Indiana limestone for the sculpture, stated, "I am honored to have been selected to have my work displayed so prominently in a revitalized downtown New Buffalo, a city that has shown a deep commitment to public art. It is my hope that the completed sculpture will evoke feelings for the basic elements of nature -- wind, fire and water -- and be recognized as a worthy tribute to The Pokagon Fund and the Pokagon Band."

Angela Rice, the Chair of the Pokagon Band's Tribal Arts Review Committee stated that her Committee had consulted with The Pokagon Fund on the design of the sculpture and

considered it to be “a marvelous work of art that captures the essence of the Pokagon Band’s devotion to all things natural.”

The Pokagon Fund’s approval of Fritz Olsen and his sculptural design followed the July 17th approval by the New Buffalo City Council of the recommendation by the City’s Special Committee on Public Arts and the Downtown Development Authority to have Mr. Olsen chosen as the sculptor for the artistic centerpiece of the City’s revitalized downtown area. Two members of the Board of Directors of The Pokagon Fund, Debbie Schmidt of New Buffalo, Fund Treasurer, and Liz Ennis, Mayor Pro Tem of the City of New Buffalo, as well as J. V. Peacock, owner of OutPost Sports, served on the Public Arts committee. The Downtown Development Authority is chaired by Robert Kemper of New Buffalo who spearheaded the sculptor selection process.

New Buffalo City Mayor, Lou O’Donnell IV, received the news of the selection of the Fritz Olsen design with enthusiasm. “It is with extreme pleasure and pride that the City has selected a local artist of Fritz Olsen’s caliber to have such a prominent role in the beautification and re-energization of our downtown. I look forward to the day when we can unveil Fritz’s sculpture and dedicate the completed Phase II of the Downtown Development Initiative.”

Fritz Olsen has a studio in Sawyer, Michigan and creates sculptures for public and private placement. Four permanent museum collections to date include: Krasl Museum, St. Joseph, MI "Bouquet," "Garden Window II," Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago , IL: "Prosperity Ribbon" - Brauer Museum, Valparaiso, IN: "Aviary," Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, Niles, Mi. A graduate of Eastern Illinois University, Fritz Olsen first established his studio on Chicago's Goose Island in 1985. At that time, Fritz had been selected to design and execute the Chicago Neurosurgical Center's prestigious Decade of the Brain Award from 1990 - 2000. Public commissions include "Cactus Flower" - Westin Resorts, Rancho Mirage, CA, "Lake Michigan Bench" and "Phoenix" - Lakeland Hospitals, MI, "Prosperity" - Marie Yeager Cancer Center, MI. Frankfort, IL Public Library; Ferris State University, Big Rapids, MI; Jefferson County Courthouse, Mt. Vernon IL; Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA

The Pokagon Fund is a nonprofit private foundation located in New Buffalo, MI. It is funded by revenue from The Four Winds Casino Resort. Grants are awarded to nonprofit and governmental organizations in Southwest Michigan, as well as Hartford and Dowagiac, Michigan, and South Bend, Indiana. Since the organization’s inception in 2007, The Pokagon Fund has provided approximately \$25 million in grant awards and scholarships to enhance the lives of the families in its service area.

Attachments:

Two Photos of Sculpture Design Concept

Picture of Fritz Olsen