FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 22, 2014

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan to Repatriate Ancestral Human Remains from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Michigan State Police

Mt. Pleasant, Michigan – The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and its Ziibiwing Cultural Society (Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways) will repatriate the ancestral human remains of one (1) Native American individual and 762 associated funerary objects from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in Amherst, Massachusetts; and a minimum number of three (3) Native American individuals from Michigan State Police, Houghton Lake Post, Houghton Lake, Michigan. The Ziibiwing Cultural Society has been working diligently on behalf of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, and in cooperation with the Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA), to bring home ancestors and their associated funerary objects from the numerous museums, universities and institutions across the country since the passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

NAGPRA requires museums and federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections and to consult with Federally-recognized Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations regarding the return of these objects to descendants or tribes and organizations.

“As a result of NAGPRA, more than 10,000 Native American human remains, one million funerary objects, and thousands of sacred objects have been united with tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst posted a Notice of Inventory Completion in the Federal Register on September 30, 2013. In 1967, Dr. Olaf Prufer and Dr. Oriol Pi-Sunyer, then Professors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Anthropology, led an archaeological field school focused primarily on the Kramer site (33Ro33), in Union Township, Ross County, OH. Archaeologists have identified the Kramer site as a large Fort Ancient village with a small central mound. The 1967 excavation took place in the village area, southeast of the mound. Human remains representing, at minimum, one individual were removed from the Kramer site by Dr. Oriol Pi-Sunyer and the field school students. These human remains, along with the associated funerary objects, were transferred to the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Anthropology, for curation. No known individuals were identified. No additional lineal descendants or representatives of any Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization have come forward to request transfer of control.
The Michigan State Police, Houghton Lake Post posted a Notice of Inventory Completion in the Federal Register on December 3, 2013. At an unknown date prior to June 2001, human remains representing, at minimum, three individuals were removed from an unknown location in Saginaw County, Mich. The remains were collected during road construction in Saginaw County by a private citizen and stored in a garage. The private citizen’s daughter reported that her father collected the remains when she was a little girl. No known individuals were identified. No associated funerary objects were present. The Michigan State University Anthropology Lab determined through investigative, forensic means that the remains are “Pre-modern Native American,” and represent one adult and at least two juveniles. The location the remains were found is near the current location of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. No additional lineal descendants or representatives of any Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization have come forward to request transfer of control.

The planned repatriation and reburial will be executed in cooperation with the Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Michigan State Police, Houghton Lake Post.

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan invites the interested public to join them for the Recommitment to the Earth Ceremony to be held on Monday, April 28 at 12pm in the Tribe’s Nibokaan Ancestral Cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1995 for the explicit purpose of reburying repatriated Native American ancestral human remains and associated funerary objects. The Nibokaan Cemetery is located on the Saginaw Chippewa’s Isabella Indian Reservation, behind the Tribal Campground located at 7525 East Tomah Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Mich. A Journey Feast to conclude the ancestral ceremonies and protocols will be held at 2pm on Monday, April 28 at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, 6650 East Broadway, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeway’s in Mount Pleasant, Mich. is the Midwest’s Premier American Indian Museum. Established in 2004, the Ziibiwing Center is a distinctive treasure created to provide an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience through its award-winning Diba Jimoooyung (Telling Our Story) permanent exhibit, changing exhibits, research center, Ojibwe language immersion room, gift shop and meeting rooms. The Ziibiwing Center is a non-profit cultural center and museum belonging to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan who also own Michigan’s only four diamond casino resort, the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort, and the Saganing Eagles Landing Casino located in Standish, Mich.

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To Honor & Respect

Monday, April 28, 2014

Anishinabe Ancestral Remains Repatriation Observance

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and its Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, in cooperation with the Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA), University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Michigan State Police, Houghton Lake Post will repatriate the ancestral human remains of one (1) Native American individual and 762 associated funerary objects from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts; and a minimum number of three (3) Native American individuals from Michigan State Police, Houghton Lake Post, Houghton Lake, Michigan.

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan invites the public to join with us for these important repatriation activities to increase a collective understanding and awareness of Native American ancestral issues.

Recommitment to the Earth

Monday, April 28, 2014 • Noon
Nibokaan Ancestral Cemetery • Isabella Indian Reservation
7525 East Tomah, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

The public is invited to attend the “Recommitment to the Earth” Ceremony for the ancestors and their associated funerary objects at the Nibokaan Ancestral Cemetery.

Journey Feast

Monday, April 28, 2014 • 2pm
Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways
6650 E. Broadway, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

The Ziibiwing Center will host a Journey Feast to conclude the ancestral protocols.

For More Information Contact:
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