**MUSEUM OPENS FOR THE SEASON WITH ARTS FESTIVAL**

May 13, 2014

**Laxgalts’ap, BC** — On Sunday, May 11 the Nisga’a Museum re-opened its doors to the public for a community celebration – the First Annual Nisga’a Museum Arts Festival. The aim of the festival was to foster and promote Nisga’a traditional and contemporary art and crafts. “We at the Nisga’a Museum recognize that the arts are an essential component to the vitality of our community. This event will help the Museum to build relationships with local artists and hopefully inspire a new generation of artisans,” noted museum director Darrin Martens. “By hosting this event we hope to foster a dynamic, innovative annual art festival where all visitors and residents, emerging artists and “non-artists” alike may engage with the arts in its many forms in a supportive and valued environment.” The Museum featured performances by the Gitlaxt’aamiks Ceremonial Dancers, local youth musicians Shaina Stephens, Darrian Mills and Billie Davis, and valley artisans Alver Tait, Janelle Borne and Vanessa Morgan. Nisga’a Museum Advisory Committee Chairperson and event MC Zora McMillian encouraged everyone to, “celebrate all that is Nisga’a.”

Mitchell Stevens, President of the Nisga’a Nation, stated “We were very pleased to see so many Nisga’a citizens and visitors from outside of the Valley in attendance on May 11 at our first Nisga’a Museum Arts Festival. We welcome the world to visit our permanent collection of Nisga’a art and artifacts.” May 11 is a significant day for the Nation. It is the day in which all Nisga’a acknowledge and celebrate the effective date of the Nisga’a Final Agreement.

The Museum also opened three new temporary exhibitions: **Emily Carr Returns to Ank’idaa, Basketry from the Northwest Coast** and **New Acquisitions**. These exhibitions are the first in a series of temporary exhibitions for the Nisga’a Museum to engage and animate its collections in new and innovative ways as well as enhance our relationships with museum partners from across the province. For this year’s temporary exhibition program we have chosen to include a series of baskets from Nations’ across the Northwest, watercolours, sketches, and canvas by Emily Carr as well as several early 20th century archival images of Ank’idaa, and stone tools unearthed from the village site and incorporated into the Museum’s permanent collection. “We hope to create a spirit of community inclusion and ownership of the past and develop connections with various new constituencies, including artists, enabling the Museum and community to increase its cultural capacity and relevance,” notes Martens.

**Museum Spring Hours of Operation – May 11 – June 28**

* Monday through Thursday – open by appointment
* Friday through Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm