



For immediate release

## **Leadership in Aboriginal Finance and Management Recognized at 8<sup>th</sup> Annual AFOA National Conference**

Montreal February 14 – The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada is pleased to announce the 2008 recipients of the AFOA/Xerox Excellence in Aboriginal Leadership awards at 8<sup>th</sup> Annual AFOA national conference in Montreal, PQ.

The recipients for the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the award are **Chief Thomas M. Bressette** of Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation just north of Sarnia Ontario and **Dan Christmas**, Senior Advisor to Chief and Council at Membertou First Nation in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Christmas receives the AFOA/Xerox Aboriginal Excellence in Leadership Award - community/regional category – for his 30 years of dedication and leadership to the Unama'ki communities, the five First Nation communities in Cape Breton Island. He is highly respected throughout Mi'kmaq Nation as well as his own community of Membertou where he has been senior advisor to Council for the past 10 years. "Dan has earned uncommon respect for his consensus style of leadership..." states Chief Terrance Paul of Membertou, "a style deeply rooted in Mi'kmaq culture. His leadership has contributed greatly to the advancement of Mi'kmaq First Nation communities."

The national category award is presented to Chief Thomas M. Bressette for his commitment and perseverance in financial policy leadership that spans community and regional to national over the past twenty years. At the community level, he and council created and implemented financial management bylaw, policies and standards to guide the establishment of a Financial Management Board and community investment strategies aimed wealth creation – a far cry from the deficit situation he inherited when first elected as chief. Chief Bressette has served community and region as Southwest Regional Chief and Executive Board member for the Union of Ontario Indians as well as Ontario Regional Vice Chief for the Assembly of First Nations. An advocate and practitioner of sound financial management policy, Chief Bressette served on the joint CGA/AFN national accountability study group that recommended the creation of the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association and chaired the formative stages of the First Nation Statistical Institute

"These awards, presented in partnership with one of Canada's outstanding companies, Xerox Canada, help's us to celebrate and recognize leadership in Aboriginal finance and management." States Ernie Daniels, AFOA President and Chief Operating Officer. "It keeps getting better every year."

Xerox Canada and AFOA have partnered on the award for the past five years in order to raise awareness and to recognize the often "over-looked" side of a very vibrant, dedicated and emerging professional community.

### **About the Award**

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