



## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ERICA JEFFRIES • DIRECTOR

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**

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### *Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Honors Trickster Art Gallery*

(Springfield, IL)... The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) named Trickster Art Gallery as recipient of the Illinois Veterans' Business and Appreciation Award for Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 2017. The Award was presented at 11:00 am on August 16 at the Trickster Art Gallery in Schaumburg, Illinois. The Illinois Veterans' Business Appreciation Award highlights and honors the work of any business or organization in Illinois that has significantly helped veterans, and whose contributions to those who have served our country, are documented and deserve to be recognized. This award is designed to highlight and honor those businesses or organizations that go above and beyond the regular call of service to support veterans. Nominees are evaluated on the basis of their leadership, dedication, innovation, and impact in serving these heroes.

Trickster Art Gallery is the only Native American owned and operated institution in the State of Illinois. They lead the nation in documenting and preserving the stories of Native American veterans for educational purposes. In August, 2015, Trickster Art Gallery organized and launched the 'first-ever' National Gathering of American Indian Veterans at Cantigny Park to honor American Indian veterans from all tribes and all eras. Over 32 tribes were represented at the National Gathering. At the National Gathering, the Gallery conducted filmed interviews with native veterans to record and share their stories.

The Trickster Art Gallery along with local Veteran Groups and VA hospitals are working to improve policies and the quality of service available to veterans suffering with PTSD and other combat-related illnesses.

"The Department of Defense has documented that American Indians have the highest enlistment rate in the U.S. Military than any other race of people in the service (22%)," said **Director Erica Jeffries**, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. "We truly appreciate all that the Trickster Art Gallery does for our Native American Veterans."

The Illinois Veterans' Patriotic Business and Appreciation Award will be awarded quarterly from the nominations received. The business of the year will be selected from the four businesses awarded the Illinois Patriotic Business and Appreciation Award.

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The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, a state agency is dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive. We do this by helping veterans navigate the complex veteran support system and assisting them in obtaining benefits; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans at our four Veterans' Homes; and by working with other government agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, employment, and other challenges.