**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**:

October 28, 2021

**Rare partnership between two Tribes results in unique economic development opportunity**

*Michigan based Zip Xpress and Green Transportation deliver sustainable shipping solutions*

**HOLLAND, MI** - In a first of its kind collaboration in Michigan, two Tribally-owned economic development companies have partnered to acquire a pair of operating companies. Waséyabek Development Company and Gun Lake Investments are investing to obtain full ownership of Zip Xpress and Green Transportation of Holland, Michigan.

The partnership will be managed by DWH, LLC, a Tribally-owned business consulting firm that also specializes in Tribal economic development. Currently the businesses are owned and managed by a wife-and-husband team who have built both companies from the ground up. Dina Mcknight-Dargis owns and manages Zip Xpress while her husband Mike Dargis owns and operates Green Transportation, Inc..

“This is an exciting opportunity for us, and the collaboration with both Tribes and current ownership has been incredibly successful, making this process really effortless and enjoyable,” said Monica King, CEO of DWH, who will be actively managing the businesses. “Not only will these businesses be Tribally-owned, each entity involved is managed by female leaders, something we’re incredibly proud of.”

Zip Xpress, Inc. and Green Transportation, Inc. are LTL and truckload companies. Zip Xpress, founded in 2001, is a woman-owned, general and specialty commodity carrier known for load consolidation and white glove services. Green Transportation was founded in 2007 to provide enhanced long distance trucking services to Zip and several others. Both companies focus on freight optimization and environmentally sustainable solutions, something that aligns very closely with the principles of both Tribes. Unlike many other transportation services, Zip Xpress’s mission is to fully load their trucks for each trip using a unique optimization process that reduces their customers cost and carbon footprint.

“For my husband and I, growing these businesses has been a labor of love, and each company has grown around the foundations and principles we believe in,” said Dina Mcknight-Dargis, current CEO and owner of Zip Xpress. “It is always a tough decision to sell a company that you have built yourself but with DWH we know it is in good hands and will only help to contribute to continued growth for our team members and the companies themselves.”

“Leadership and a common philosophy about how our respective Tribes do business is really what makes this deal work. Dina and Mike’s commitment to their employees and the community is what makes it truly meaningful,” said Deidra Mitchell, CEO and President of Waséyabek Development Company, LLC. “The way this rounds out our portfolio, both financially and from a diversification standpoint, aligns with our investment strategy.”

Green Transportation Inc. is notable for their training school which provides a pipeline of trained and talented drivers for the company. This has become especially important during severe labor shortages across the country.

The school focuses on teaching drivers how to operate successfully in a high-risk business and how to be healthy while doing it. Drivers that graduate from Green Transportation’s program are also underwritten for insurance with the company so they can capture more of their income from driving with most drivers making six figures within a couple years of graduating.

While both companies are Michigan-based, they serve a national clientele with Green Transportation’s service to 38 states. Together, both companies employ around 90 people.

“In addition to being a great investment, this acquisition also brings career development opportunities for Tribal Members in the form of truck driving instruction.  This makes it an added benefit for both Tribes as Tribal Members plan for careers,” said Jamie Stuck, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (NHBP) Tribal Council Chair.

Boards of both development companies approved the deals and partnership. Jason M. Palmer, Gun Lake Investments Board Vice Chairman said, “Gun Lake Investments is thrilled to be part of the new ownership team for Zip Xpress and Green Transportation. Our community development investment goals, people first companies with a history of success in Michigan, align with our strategic partners and represent another historic co-investment from these two formidable Tribes” referencing an early 2020 real-estate co-investment with their purchase of McKay Tower in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Palmer also added, “We look forward to sustaining and growing the successful business that Dina, Mike, and their team have built.”

Waséyabek interim Board Chair Chris Rogers also added, “The Zip Xpress / Green Transportation acquisition represents more than an investment for Waséyabek and the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Indians. The collaboration of the two Tribes is an outreach and manifestation of our desire to be in partnership with other Tribes to advance Indian Country.”

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