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FSIN RESPONDS TO RCMP REPORT ON LOCATING DAWN AND VINNIE

(Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatoon SK) – The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) received a report from the Saskatoon Police Service in conjunction with the United States Department of Homeland Security that they have located Dawn Walker and Vincent Jansen. They were found in Oregon City, Oregon at approximately 11:30 am CST. Both are reported to be safe and well. Agency representatives are currently working out the details of arranging for their return to Canada.

“We are elated to hear the news that Dawn and Vinnie are safe. Our prayers have been answered. The past 15 days have been extremely difficult on our family and community. We are extremely thankful to all those who helped with the search efforts, including the RCMP, Saskatoon Police Service, Federation of Saskatchewan Indigenous Nation, the Prince Albert Grand Council Search and Rescue, Lloydminster Rescue, Grandmother’s Bay Search and Rescue, volunteers from Red Earth Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and all of our family and friends,” said Theresa Walker, Dawn Walker’s mother from Okanese First Nation. “Our work does not stop here. We recognize our challenges will continue on into the coming days and weeks, and we will continue to support her through this future challenge.”

“The leadership of Okanese First Nation has become aware of significant child welfare concerns regarding our young band member Vincent Jansen. We are responsible for all of our citizens, regardless of their residency, and care and custody status,” said Chief Richard Stonechild of Okanese First Nation. “Our Inherent and Treaty Rights to intervene when one of our under-age band members’ safety is at risk. With the information we have received we believe this is the case, and we will assert our self-determination and jurisdiction to ensure all measures are taken.”

“At FSIN we know why First Nations women go missing and recognize that there are many complex issues that surround their disappearances. This is clearly the case with Dawn and her son Vinnie, and we will be closely following the legal process with more details on this case eventually being made public,” FSIN Vice Chief Heather Bear. “It is a shame that our women feel helpless within the current justice system. Despite being a successful writer and having a law degree, what is clear is that Dawn was no exception to this. Every day, our women feel they are alone and do not know what to do in their desperate situations. We are the protectors of our children and it’s our duty to ensure their safety.”

“It is heart-breaking that Dawn may have felt she had no other choice but to take the drastic action that she did. Let us not forget that Dawn is a champion of First Nations women’s rights and causes. She spear-headed many MMIWG campaigns and gatherings,” said FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron. “If there’s anything we have learned over the past two weeks is the urgency of these MMIWG issues and our role in protecting our most vulnerable members in need.”

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties, as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

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For further information, please contact :

Tina Pelletier, Executive Director of Communications **or** Nicole Robertson, Communications Specialist
(306) 941-7120
Tina.pelletier@fsin.com

FSIN Communications
Communications@fsin.com