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ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



TRIBAL Season 1 to premiere on APTN

(Calgary, AB) – APTN and Prairie Dog Film + Television’s new one-hour crime drama series, *TRIBAL*, will premiere Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020.

Following the groundbreaking success of the television series *Blackstone*, creator, showrunner and director Ron E. Scott introduces *TRIBAL*, one of the first series on TV focused on a strong Indigenous female protagonist. The new crime drama follows the interim Tribal Police Chief Sam Woodburn (Jessica Matten) as she navigates the oversight of the Department of Federal Justice. Partnered with a big-city cop (Brian Markinson), she must prove herself amongst the old-white-boys club.

Season 1 of *TRIBAL* examines First Nation crime stories based on real world cases, including mistaken identity, pipeline controversy, healing lodge justice, social services, tobacco and missing Indigenous Peoples.

TRIBAL’s award-winning cast includes Jessica Matten (*Frontier*, *Blackstone*) and Brian Markinson (*Mad Men*, *Unspeakable*). The series also features Michelle Thrush, Justin Rain, Garry Chalk, Adam MacDonald and Julian Black Antelope.

“It is my lifelong pursuit to set a new standard of how Indigenous women should be viewed

worldwide,” says series star Jessica Matten.

“Ron and I worked closely to create this detailed character, designed to reflect how Indigenous women truly are – strong, intelligent and healthy. I hope *TRIBAL* gives audiences a glimpse of who we’ve always been and where we will continue to go.”

TRIBAL’s award-winning showrunner and director Ron E. Scott is a prolific producer and innovator. He’s contributed to over 190 episodes of TV that have been broadcast globally on Netflix, including the one-hour dramatic series *Blackstone*, now streaming on APTN and Amazon Prime Video.

Scott describes *TRIBAL* as the next step in Indigenous storytelling. “On the surface, it’s a one-hour crime drama, but the core themes reflect the journey of a young Indigenous woman,” he says. “And despite the futility of government contradiction, racism and sexism, she rises above the noise with her intelligence, cultural conviction,



character and ability.”

Check local listings or aptn.ca/tribal for airtimes. APTN has greenlit season 2 of *TRIBAL*, with more details about production and broadcast to be shared at a later date.

TRIBAL is produced by Prairie Dog Film + Television’s Ron E. Scott and Janet Hamley, as well as Adam Frost and Nancy Laing.

TRIBAL is produced in association with APTN, in participation with the Canada Media Fund and the Rogers Cable Network Fund, with assistance from the Government of Alberta, the Screen-based Production Grant and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit.

Solidarity protests shut down Canada’s railway

Tensions are mounting across Canada as railway blockades and protests in support of the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs in British Columbia enter a third week.

On February 13, blockades set up by anti-pipeline protesters forced CN Railway to shut down its entire freight network in Eastern Canada and Via Rail to cancel passenger service across the country.

The dispute over the Coastal GasLink pipeline

amped up on February 6, after the RCMP began enforcing a B.C. Supreme Court injunction that would clear the way for construction. Solidarity protests are taking place in many centres of the country resulting in shutdowns of vital national infrastructure.

While Coastal GasLink has signed agreements to build the pipeline with all 20 elected Indigenous councils along the route, the \$6.6-billion liquefied natural gas pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific Coast,

is opposed by the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs, who say they will not allow the pipeline on their unceded land.

Although Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been under some pressure to quash the protests, he says his government is committed to finding a quick and peaceful resolution to the anti-pipeline blockades. He has sent in teams of officials to attempt to negotiate peaceful resolution.

On February 17, after a closed-door meeting with members of his

cabinet Trudeau stated, "I understand how worrisome this is for so many Canadians and difficult for many people and families across the country.

"We're going to continue to focus on resolving the situation quickly and peacefully."

The prime minister’s call for open dialogue has been echoed by Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

“People should never be criminalized for standing up for their lands. Our thoughts are for the safety and security of everyone in Wet’suwet’en territory,” stated the National Chief.

“The RCMP needs to pull back and the federal and provincial Crown needs to step up and create a space for dialogue with the Wet’suwet’en leadership. It’s clear it’s the only way forward.

“I am pushing to create that space for dialogue with my colleagues. I’ve been in contact with our BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee. I have also spoken to RCMP Commissioner Lucki to encourage a peaceful resolution. I am further urging the Premier of British Columbia and the federal government to respect First Nations rights and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“As it stands, the RCMP is only sworn to uphold civil law and common law. If we are to move forward with reconciliation, Canada must also recognize First Nations laws.

“The AFN supports the governance and decision-making process of the Wet’suwet’en people. Canada and BC must do the same.”

Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller agreed. He stated, "I'm dealing with a highly volatile situation. I don't have the luxury in dealing with what-ifs.

Continued next page

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Alberta’s largest college, Bow Valley College (BVC) serves over 17,500 students each year in Calgary and throughout southern Alberta. Bow Valley College’s Calgary campus is located in the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut’ina, and the Iyârhe Nakoda.

BVC is situated on land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, and that the traditional Blackfoot name of this place is "Mohkinstsis" which we now call the City of Calgary. The City of Calgary is also home to Metis Nation of Alberta, Region III. Bow Valley College also has satellite campuses located across Treaty 7 territory in Airdrie, Banff, Canmore, Cochrane, High River, Okotoks, and Strathmore.

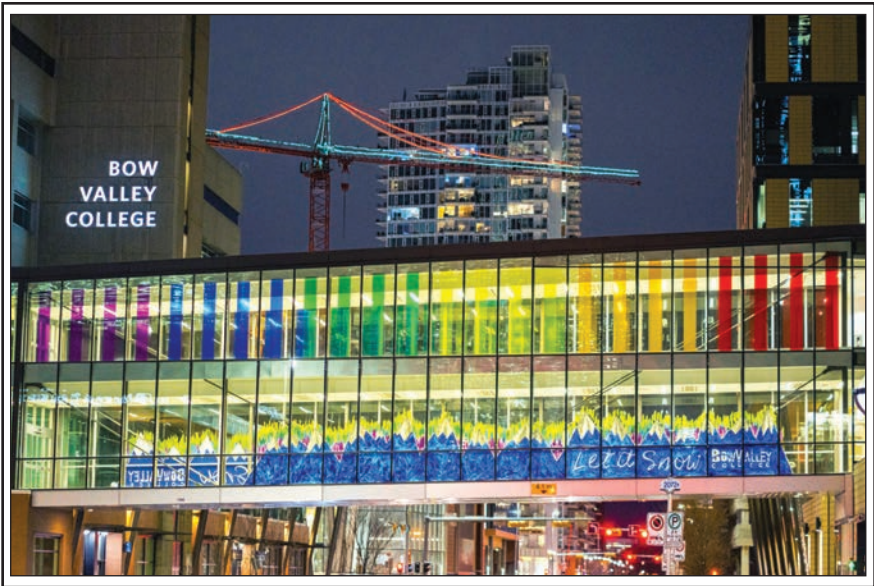
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For Indigenous students looking to pursue post-secondary programs, BVC’s Aboriginal Upgrading program will equip you with the prerequisites for post-secondary while integrating Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and values. The

program is built for flexible delivery in order to respond to the academic success and wellbeing of students.

BVC has a growing presence of Indigenous students, alumni, faculty, and staff who play a key role in advancing educational, professional, and social outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Calgary and beyond. They have a number of Indigenous specific student supports including the Inikokaan (Buffalo Lodge) Centre, the Indigenous student centre, where students from all backgrounds can access cultural resources, reconnect with traditional teachings, and gather and celebrate with the broader community.

Bow Valley College has identified the need to improve outcomes for Indigenous students and to bring Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and learning into the classrooms and our teaching styles, through the voices of Indigenous peoples. Their Indigenization Strategy is focused on recruiting and retaining Indigenous learners and employees across the college, building awareness of Indigenous culture,



and history through events and curriculum based learning, and fostering mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Bow Valley College is committed to fast, flexible programs that ensure their graduates are work-ready. Their community is diverse and reflect their values of respect, inclusion, creativity, teamwork, and resilience. Discover what Bow Valley College has to offer today at bowvalleycollege.ca.

Solidarity protests *cont. from p 2*

I'm dealing with what about now – and now we engage in dialogue, peaceful, open dialogue, and see if we can make some headway."

In a CTV interview, he said that sending in police to break up the blockade in Tyendinaga, Ont. by force would only result in more disruptive protests in the future.

Instead, he said that the government should learn not to repeat the mistakes of the past which resulted in fatalities both at Oka in 1990 and Ipperwash in 1995.

"Do we use all means to ensure that there's a peaceful resolution to this, or do we just dig in like

we've done for years and decades and come to the same conclusion? We keep repeating the same errors," the minister said.

"My advice to my colleagues is let's make sure we get to a peaceful solution. That involves dialogue."

Minister of Transport Marc Garneau called for the protesters to be aware of safety concerns in the vicinity of rail lines. He stated, "As the Prime Minister said, 'The freedom of expression is an important democratic right, but these activities must respect the court decisions and the law.'

"I am fully aware and deeply concerned by the impact of the decision CN was forced to take and its consequent effect on Via Rail. A safe and efficient

passenger and freight rail service is critical to the well-being of our country."

Meanwhile, in a *Globe and Mail* opinion piece, columnist Robyn Urbank asks "Where are the solidarity protests for the First Nations that support Coastal GasLink?"

She writes, "The voices of band members from 20 First Nations along the Coastal GasLink project route who want it to continue – those who have indicated, through elections or other means, that they want construction on the natural gas pipeline to move ahead – have been eclipsed by the views of a small group of Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, who hold jurisdiction over just a portion of the land the pipeline will cover."



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Fort Mckay Metis gain consultation rights

To the dismay of the Metis Nation of Alberta, Fort McKay M tis Community Association (FMMCA) has become the first M tis group in Alberta to be granted credible assertion for resource development.

That means the provincial government recognizes their Aboriginal harvesting rights and traditional use practices and requires that industry must consult with the FMMCA when natural resource development may adversely affect those rights.

“Credible assertion is a legal test that creates clarity for industry and Indigenous communities on who needs to be consulted during proposed natural resource developments and Crown or land management decisions,” explained Minister of Indigenous Affairs Rick Wilson.

“This is an important milestone for industry, the M tis people of Fort McKay and Albertans. This kind of certainty gives communities, industry and governments a level of assurance on who to consult, leading to greater investor confidence.”

Fort McKay First Nation Chief Mel Grandjamb congratulated Minister Wilson and FMMCA President on “this singular achievement.”

He said, “Most responsible developers active in the Athabasca oil sands already consult with the Fort McKay Metis as a matter of sound business practice. However to have the explicit endorsement of the provincial government that consultation of this community is required is an important milestone for this community, which has also been impacted by heavy industrial development.”

However, the M tis Nation of Alberta (MNA), said in a statement that it was "shocked and appalled" by the decision. The MNA called it a "breach of honour of the Crown."

According to the MNA statement, the “FMMCA is not a M tis government, and it does not represent a rights-bearing M tis community. The FMMCA only exists to serve a small number of self-interested individuals.”

The MNA, as the recognized Indigenous government of the M tis Nation within Alberta, is reviewing every available option to challenge Alberta’s decision.

“We will not allow the Alberta Government to unilaterally divide the M tis Nation for its own agenda,” said MNA President Audrey Poitras.

“The MNA is the government for the M tis Nation within Alberta. We will not let governments divide and conquer our Nation. What is happening in British Columbia right now demonstrates that governments must engage with the legitimate governments of Indigenous peoples, not others.”

For years Alberta was engaged in negotiations with the MNA to develop a M tis consultation policy, however this past September, Alberta’s negotiators walked away from the table. The promise of a meaningful M tis consultation policy was broken.

“Alberta’s decision to recognize the FMMCA as the representative of a rights-bearing M tis community for the purposes of consultation highlights just how broken Alberta’s system is,” said M tis lawyer Jason Madden who has represented rights-bearing M tis communities in the courts from Ontario westward and its recognized as a leading expert in M tis law.

“This decision cannot be reconciled with repeated Supreme Court of Canada and Alberta court decisions on M tis rights or Alberta’s constitutional duties owing to the M tis. It will not discharge the Crown’s duty to consult, and it will not provide regulatory certainty. Alberta has just opened a can of worms for short term gain, but it will have long-term negative consequences for M tis rights.”

The MNA is the government of the M tis Nation within Alberta, explained President Poitras. “For over 90 years, our government has been built by our people, for our people. The MNA has the only objectively verifiable registry of M tis Nation citizens and legitimate M tis rights-holders in Alberta. We have over 42,000 registered MNA citizens, including over 3,000 living in northeastern Alberta. Every four years, we hold province-wide democratic elections. Annually, our citizens gather at an assembly to give their leadership direction. This is how the MNA ensures it is accountable to the M tis citizens from across the province.”

“We will only get reconciliation right if we get recognition. Alberta’s decision gets recognition all wrong, and it is the M tis citizens in the province who will suffer. We are reviewing every available option to challenge Alberta’s decision.”



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Indspire honours the 2020 Award recipients

(Ohsweken, ON) – Eleven outstanding Indigenous leaders from a diverse array of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities will be honoured at the 2020 Indspire Awards ceremony in Ottawa, Ontario, on Friday, March 6, 2020. The *Indspire Awards* are presented by Indspire, a national Indigenous charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Following the ceremony, the 2020 “Indspire Awards” will broadcast Sunday, June 21 at 8 p.m. (8:30 p.m. NT) on CBC, APTN and CBC Radio One.

“The *Indspire Awards* celebrate and honour First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals who are not only having a profound impact on their communities and the country, but who also serve as positive role models for Indigenous youth,” said Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire and Executive Producer of the *Indspire Awards*.

“In all they do, these individuals are deeply inspirational, and as leaders in their respective fields, they are motivating young Indigenous people to strive for success.”

The *Indspire Awards* represents the highest honour the Indigenous community bestows upon its own people. The Awards recognize Indigenous professionals and youth who demonstrate outstanding career achievement on a national level in a variety of fields, including: the arts, business, culture, education, health, law, public service, sports, and lifetime achievement.

Three Youth Award winners are also being honoured for their accomplishments, serving as role models to other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth in their communities and across Canada. The nationally-broadcast ceremony will also feature performances by some of the most acclaimed Indigenous performers in Canada, to be announced in the coming weeks.

The youth recipients of the 2020 *Indspire Awards* are: (First Nation) Ta’Kaiya Blaney, an internationally recognized activist, actor and musician from Tla’amin First Nation, BC, (Inuit) Alicia Aragutak, an

innovator, community leader and founder of Qarjuit Youth Council from Umiujaq, Nunavik, and (Métis) Alana Robert, a Governor General’s award winner, Law student and human rights advocate from Manitoba Métis Federation.

The 2020 Award Recipients are:

Arts: Cowboy Smithx, Filmmaker, Director & Supporter of Indigenous Youth in the Arts from the Piikani and Kainai First Nations, AB.

Business & Commerce: Dawn Madahbee Leach, Expert on Indigenous Economy-Building, Community and Business Leader from Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation, ON.

Culture, Heritage, & Spirituality: Claudette Commanda, Elder, Professor, Cultural Advisor & Champion from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, QC.

Education: Candice Lys, Health Educator, Governor General’s Award Winner and Honorary Naval Captain from Fort Smith Métis Council, NT.

Health: Karen Lawford, Aboriginal midwife, registered midwife, professor, community advocate and policy-shaper from Lac Seul First Nation, ON.

Law & Justice: Marian Jacko, First Indigenous female children’s lawyer for Ontario, advocate for youth and community leader from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, ON.

Public Service: Gina Wilson, Senior Associate Deputy Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Youth, Canadian Heritage, Partner in Truth & Reconciliation Efforts, Lifelong Public Servant from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, QC.

Lifetime Achievement: Jeannette Corbiere Lavell CM, Lifelong Activist, Cultural Champion, Precedent-Setter & Human Rights Advocate, from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, ON.

For full bios on each of the recipients, visit indspire.ca.



2020 *Indspire* recipients health educator Candace Lys and filmmaker Cowboy Smithx.

This year, each recipient will be presented with a beautiful gold pin featuring a Canadian diamond unearthed from the Diavik mine in the Northwest Territories and supplied by Rio Tinto.

The *Indspire Awards* celebration takes place directly after *Soaring*, Indspire’s annual empowerment gathering for Indigenous youth, which will be happening from March 5-6, 2020, at the Westin Centre in Ottawa, ON. Hundreds of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students from across the country are expected to take part in career workshops and motivational presentations, and many will also attend the *Indspire Awards* ceremony on March 6. The *Indspire Awards* recipients’ innovation, hard work, and dedication to Indigenous advancement inspire Indigenous youth to become the next generation of leaders across the country.

Indspire gratefully acknowledges the support of their sponsors and partners including TD Bank Group, Government of Canada, Government of Ontario, Shell Canada Limited, Suncor Energy Inc, Syncrude Canada Ltd and others.

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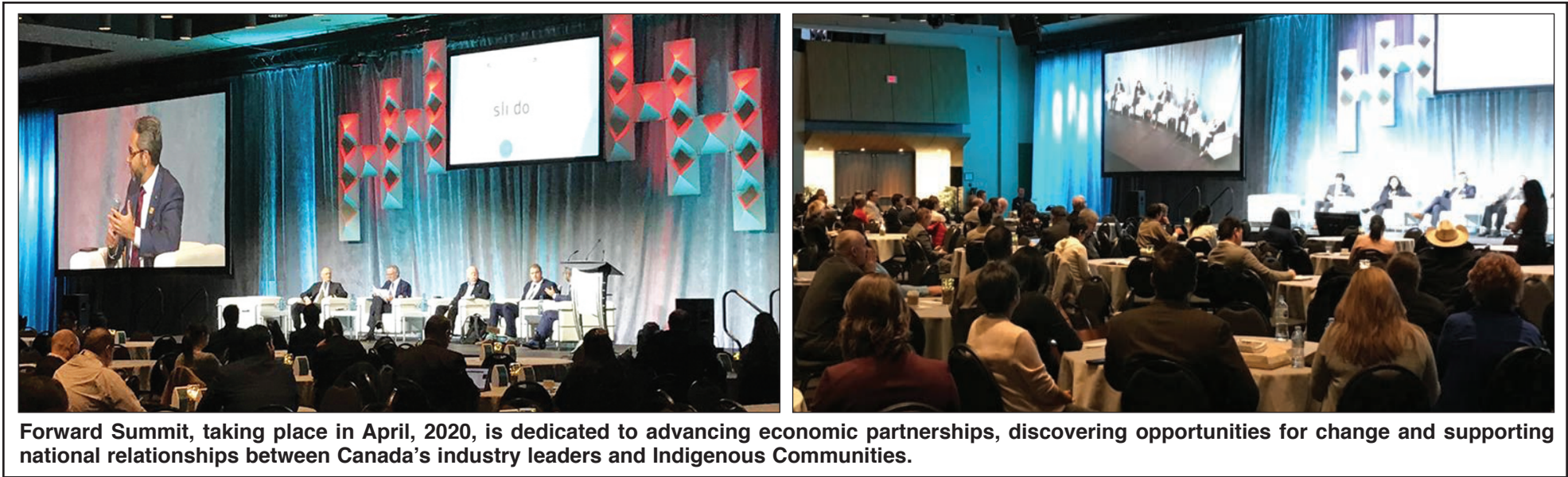
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Forward Summit, taking place in April, 2020, is dedicated to advancing economic partnerships, discovering opportunities for change and supporting national relationships between Canada’s industry leaders and Indigenous Communities.

Forward Summit Conference at a Glance Now Available

By Aaron Kerr

(February 2020) - Forward Summit continues to facilitate a unique, Indigenous-led program where communities, businesses, and thought-leaders can gather to build relationships, learn, and ultimately reconcile.

Canada’s reconciliation summit is taking place in Calgary, Alberta on April 28 & 29, 2020. The conference agenda highlights include two days of high-profile keynotes, panels, and roundtables capped off with the CCAB’s annual Gala Awards Dinner taking place alongside the summit for the first time. Delegates can purchase full conference and gala passes at www.forwardsummit.ca.

Forward Summit Co-Chair and CCAB President, JP Gladu, Co-MC’s Lova Beebe and Hal Eagletail,

along with the organizing team and Leadership Council welcome you back to this national gathering of leaders and learners.

Based on the feedback from 2019 attendees and input from the Indigenous-led Leadership Council, the 2020 program continues the conversations from several inaugural panels and introduces new subject matter that focuses on timely economic issues. Forward Summit will lead the program off with a formal Grand Entry ceremony setting the tone for open conversations and high levels of both education and collaboration.

The exhibition will be accessible to delegates throughout Forward Summit to network and connect with the community. Attendees enjoy delicious lunch,

coffee and refreshments throughout event. Forward Summit continues to provide networking services through the event app that facilitated over 600 formal meetings last year in the official Networking Lounge.

Lastly, on the first evening of Forward Summit, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business is set to host their annual Gala Awards Dinner that celebrates the outstanding accomplishments of the Aboriginal business in Canada.

Download the Conference at a Glance by visiting the official event website www.forwardsummit.ca to learn more about the event program and the type of participants that will be attending the event.

AFN class action lawsuit will fight for justice

(Ottawa, ON) – The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has filed a federal class action lawsuit to seek damages and justice for the thousands of First Nations children and families that have been discriminated against by Canada’s child welfare system that incentivized the removal of First Nation children from their families and Nations.

“Year after year, generation after generation, Canada systemically discriminated against First Nations children and families simply because they were First Nations,” said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

“It did so by underfunding preventive care, perpetuating the historical disadvantage resulting from the residential schools. Canada breached its responsibility to our children and families, infringed

on their Charter rights, and caused them real harm and suffering. We will always stand up for our children.”

The class action lawsuit filed by the AFN asserts, among other things, that Canada’s funding was discriminatory because the federal system created a perverse incentive to remove First Nations children from their families and Nations and put them in out-of-home care; it failed to account for different needs among First Nations in different locations; and funding for First Nations children on-reserve in the child welfare system is significantly less than children in the child welfare system off-reserve.

Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart holds the child welfare portfolio within the AFN and said that the AFN has the experience and expertise in the area of First Nations child welfare, including its years of work at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on this issue, and is best placed to fight for a fair and just outcome for First Nations children and families.

“This AFN class action builds on our work and evidence at the Canadian Human Right Tribunal and

challenges the federal government’s systemic discriminatory approach to child and family services and the denial of services to our children under Jordan’s Principle. The AFN class action is seeking compensation for all those harmed by the system, including those not covered in the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s decision,” Regional Chief Kevin Hart said.

In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) found that the Government of Canada was systemically discriminating against First Nations children on-reserve and in the Yukon in its implementation of child and family services. On September 6, 2019 the CHRT ordered Canada to pay \$40,000 in compensation to First Nations children and their families where a wrongful apprehension occurred or where there was a denial of services due to Canada’s lack of implementation of Jordan’s Principle. The work to implement the Tribunal’s ruling on compensation and child welfare reform will continue as a separate track from the class action.

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Exhibits at NLC museum promote reconciliation

“Forgiveness, apologies, actions, unity, change, and healing are all components of reconciliation,” explains Sam (Carl) Willier, an alumnus of the Northern Lakes College Academic Upgrading program. “We chose Indigenous exhibits to dedicate healing towards the process of reconciliation in Canada.”

Sam is one of five summer students who created new exhibits at the Native Cultural Arts Museum at Northern Lakes College.

Over the summer, the students were given an open-ended objective to create Indigenous exhibits using artefacts in the museum collection. They were free to choose the number of exhibits they would create, as well as the theme. After some discussion and a survey of the artefacts in the collection, they determined they would create five exhibits celebrating aspects of Indigenous culture, with a focus on the ingenuity, creativeness, and playfulness of the culture.

The students kept top of mind the overarching umbrella of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada’s 94 Calls to Action as they created the exhibits.

“Reconciliation still has a very long way to go, but there is a movement that has been started and it will take everyone towards reconciliation,” states Sam, 24, who is pursuing his Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Alberta. The students felt that the exhibits’ celebration of culture and tradition could help that movement.

The Indigenous Children’s exhibit contains a dreamcatcher, baby moccasins, cradleboard, and medicine pouch. As explained by a summer student who grew up hearing stories in the oral tradition, “My parents told me the traditional stories as I was growing up. The Spider Lady was a spiritual protector, spinning her web of protection. As her children grew and dispersed, she taught the mothers and grandmothers how to weave their own web to protect their children. That is where the dreamcatcher originates.”

Two light-hearted exhibits demonstrate play and

transportation. Traditional Indigenous Games includes a sampling of games involving chance and skill. The Transportation exhibit includes two saddles made of bone and wood, sewn together with sinew.

Tamara Ferguson, 18, graduated from E.W. Pratt in June, and intends to pursue a Bachelor of Arts with a focus on Psychology. Of the children’s, games, and transportation exhibits, she explains, “We wanted to portray Indigenous people in real life. The stereotypes include the stoic, fierce, warrior. However, the history is not all serious, and these lighter exhibits humanize that history.”

The Hereditary versus Electoral exhibit looks at the modern electoral system versus the traditional hereditary system. Explains Bobbi-De Lastiwka, a current Academic Upgrading student at NLC, “Until the Indian Act of 1876 forced a European model of elected leadership, Indigenous peoples had a traditional system of hereditary chiefs.”

To this day, some First Nations communities have an elected chief, whose role is primarily governance, along with a hereditary chief, who holds a significant position of influence and responsibility for ensuring the overall well-being of the community. The exhibit also includes samples of traditional versus modern tobacco.

Explains Virginia Gold, a graduate of Mount Royal University with a degree in Geology and a minor in History, “Traditionally, wild-growing tobacco was collected, dried, and used in ceremony. Today, this is often replaced by commercial tobacco.”

The final exhibit focuses on healing and reconciliation. The jingle dress, worn during a healing dance often performed at powwow ceremonies, takes pride of place. Healing herbs such as sweet grass, sage, cedar, and tobacco, which are utilized in various ceremonies, complete the display. Complementing the students’ healing and reconciliation exhibit is the artistic collage to honour the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls of Canada. Created by a



New exhibits at the NLC Native Cultural Arts Museum in Grouard.

former summer student who wishes to remain anonymous, the collage includes hundreds of tiny photos of the missing and murdered.

Concludes Sam, “I feel my role is to educate people on the TRC, the 94 Calls to Action, and what it means to reconcile. It means a lot to have the opportunity to educate people through this work at the Museum. As a teacher, I will be able to contribute more to the process of reconciliation. The first step is creating awareness and understanding.”

The Native Cultural Arts Museum, which is located at the Grouard Campus, is owned and operated by Northern Lakes College with additional support and funding from the Alberta Museums Association and Big Lakes County.



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Attention Metis students: BBMA scholarship deadline is Mar. 31

Are you a Métis student from Alberta who is in need of financial assistance to complete your education? The Belcourt Brosseau Metis Awards (BBMAs) can support you by covering between \$1,000 and \$10,000 of your tuition and fees.

“Applications must be in on or before March 31,” explained BBMA Communications Coordinator, Theresa Majeran. “We are expecting a large number of applications again this year so it would be a good idea to get yours in as soon as possible.”

To qualify for an award BBMA applicants must be an Alberta Métis (any age), have a financial need that prevents them from attaining a post-secondary education on their own and have a connection to their Métis community. Applicants are evaluated on a number of criteria, including but not limited to: likelihood of improved opportunities through education, connection to their Métis community, financial need, and personal circumstances. Two current reference forms are also required. BBMA awards are utilized for the applicant’s current school year for tuition and fees.

Established in 2001 at the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) offices by then-directors of the Canative Housing Corporation, Orval Belcourt, Dr. Herb Belcourt and Georges R. Brosseau Q.C., the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards initiative has given out more than 2000 awards to Métis students attending more than 200 different post-secondary programs throughout Alberta and beyond. In all, more than \$7.9 million in awards have been disbursed.

“Awards,” explained Georges Brosseau, “can be as little as \$1,000 and as high as \$10,000. Recipients are selected on an individual basis; awards are not based on marks alone. We look at the overall individual, providing they meet the criteria of the Awards Panel, which is made up by Métis people. Some-times an individual is selected because we see that he or she

has struggled through difficult times but remains dedicated to achieving both an education and a successful life. People aren’t refused because they don’t have high marks; we base our decisions on the whole person and are very cognizant that they sometimes don’t have opportunities. We try to provide the opportunity that many of our young students need – what they do with it will determine their future.”

The annual awards, he added, were created “to uplift our people so they can succeed in the world; to do this they need to be educated. Education is the key to success and therefore we are pushing as hard as we can to give out as many awards as we can each year”

The BBMA Awards initiative continues to meet its four goals and its objectives, which include “helping students connect with their culture and each other as past recipients; providing a sense of identity to enhance success rates in both educational endeavours and subsequent careers; offering our sponsors the opportunity to network and engage with recipients for future employment opportunities and encouraging Corporate Alberta to become more involved.”

Other objectives include “showcasing success stories within the Métis community and increasing awareness of the BBMA among potential applicants and sponsors and through honouring the educational achievements of Métis students in their journey to be part of Alberta’s strong economic future.”

The BBMA’s annual banquet and awards ceremony is the highlight of the year for the organization. This year the BBMA gala will take place at the Edmonton Inn and Conference Centre on Kingsway Avenue beginning at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 19.

“Thanks to the ongoing support of our many partners,” noted Majeran, “Alberta’s Métis students are breaking new ground and setting new precedents as they achieve their educational goals and move into the next phase of life. Many of our graduates have become leaders in their communities and their province. BBMA awards recipients have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, veterinarians, and much more. Our graduates are also getting the recognition they deserve from many of our sponsor organizations, who not only hire them but also continue to support this worthy initiative.”

Graduates and awards recipients often comment on their educational pursuits and their awards experiences, as did 2018 recipient, Ramsey Mudryk. Although Mudryk was raised with little knowledge of his Metis heritage and little exposure to Metis culture, it has now become an integral part of his identity.

Mudryk is enrolled at the Emergency Services Academy where he is studying to become a Primary Care Paramedic, a career field that he decided to pursue when he was a volunteer at the Elk Point Fire Department.

“My dream is to improve the access and quality of emergency services such as fire rescue and emergency medical services on Metis settlements throughout Alberta,” he explained.



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Up to \$10,000



Criteria

- Be Métis
- Intend to pursue Post Secondary
- Financial Need

Through his service as a first responder with a department that provides mutual aid for a Cree First Nation reservation and a Metis settlement, he experienced firsthand the issues they face regarding emergency response and safety.

These issues include a lack of funding for proper resources and training, discrimination from responders from outside communities, and response times of over an hour.

“These are the kinds of issues I wish to address in my career and I need to have the knowledge and experience to do so. Thanks to the Belcourt Brosseau Metis Award, I believe I will now have the resources to achieve my goals and career dreams. Without this award, those barriers would hold me back from doing what I passionately wish to do and the BBMA is all about breaking down those barriers for Metis people like me. In the short term, this award allows me to pay my tuition fees but in the long run, it will contribute to improving the Metis community and Nation as a whole because it is an investment in a better future for us all.”

The Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) has been a partner with the BBMA for 19 years, about a decade after ECF began working to create and maintain a strong, vibrant community by acting as a bridge between donors’ wishes and the needs of charities in the greater Edmonton area. By pooling contributions from individuals and organizations, ECF creates permanent endowment funds that provide long-term support for a wide range of local charitable organizations and causes, while helping donors maximize the impact of their charitable giving. To date the Foundation has allocated more than \$190 million to enhance and strengthen the community.

For more information on the awards program, the BBMA gala or the application process contact Communications Coordinator Theresa Majeran at 780-977-5515 or by email to communications@bbma.ca.

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Celebrating Flying Canoë Volant with gusto in Edmonton by Judith Gale, JAG Creations



Flying Canoë Volant highlights included the amazing light show, flying canoe races, the Indigenous drummers, the Metis jigs and reels, bannock making and roasting marshmallows over an open fire. Outstanding performances were by Winston Wuttanee, Roger Dallaire, Jay Gilday and Fiddler extraordinaire Brianna Lizotte.



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NSD receives \$75,000 donation from Cenovus Energy

Northland School Division (NSD) is pleased to announce a \$75,000 donation by Cenovus Energy Inc. for the 2019-2020 school year. The donation illustrates a continued commitment to support NSD’s Literacy Initiative.

“Cenovus continues to be instrumental in helping us deliver professional learning for our educators and operating a summer reading program,” said Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras, Superintendent of Schools. “We thank them for their support in helping students achieve their potential in literacy.”

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we thank Cenovus for supporting the division’s focus on literacy,” said Robin Guild, Board Chair. “The continued relationship we have with Cenovus puts NSD in a better position to help students achieve success.”

“At Cenovus we know that when our communities are strong, we are strong,” said Leanne Courchesne, Cenovus Group Lead, Community Investment.

“That is why we are committed to supporting young people as a part of our community investment focus area ‘Giving youth a chance.’ We understand the crucial role literacy can play in ensuring children are thriving at school and are pleased to continue our partnership with Northland School Division on this initiative.”

Cenovus has been supporting NSD’s focus on literacy since 2014.

For more information visit nsd61.ca



(L to R) Back row: Laila Goodridge, MLA for Fort McMurray - Conklin, Maddy Daniels, NSD Board Chair, Rubi Shirley, Ward 9 Trustee, Janette Cavanaugh, Division Principal Literacy, Lise Warawa, Cenovus Energy, Tim Stensland, Area 3 Associate Superintendent, Jules Nokohoo, NSD Vice-Chair. Front row: Father R. Perin School students

Wood bison moved to Woodland Cree Nation

(February 12, 2020) - Wood bison from Elk Island National Park are being relocated to help establish a new herd at the Woodland Cree First Nation in northern Alberta.

As a recognized leader in conservation, Parks Canada has made lasting contributions to wildlife conservation for over a century, including the recovery of species at risk such as the wood bison.

In a new initiative, 14 wood bison from Elk Island National Park will be translocated to the Woodland Cree First Nation in Alberta to establish a new herd. By transferring bison to establish conservation herds across North America, the Government of Canada is contributing to the restoration and long-term survival of wood bison.

“The Government of Canada is pleased to be collaborating with the Woodland Cree First Nation in Alberta on bison conservation,” stated Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

“The survival of bison from near-extinction is one of Canada’s conservation success stories, which has established populations of plains and wood bison across North America. This conservation initiative is an important step in ensuring bison continue to thrive for generations to come and helps strengthen Indigenous peoples’ connections to their history and traditions.”

Bison play a key role in their ecosystems and also have great historical, cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains. Parks Canada is committed to helping Indigenous peoples re-establish connections to traditional lands and waters and significant aspects of their cultures.

“We have an old community and hunting area called Bison Lake and our neighbour community is called Little Buffalo,” stated Woodland Cree First Nation Chief Isaac Laboucan-Avirom.


“Myself and others (in our community) have also found buffalo skulls; so the Buffalo are a part of our identity that has been missing.



To have buffalo in our area again will develop our own cultural identify back, build purpose into the community, and rejuvenate the ecosystem by bringing back more diversity to the environment. The bison will be a holistic part of our community, part of our environment, our food and our ceremony.”


Supporting the relocation of bison has been an important part of Elk Island National Park’s mission for more than a century. Both the wood and plains bison herds from the park have supplied bison to national and international conservation projects. Over the past century, Elk Island has translocated nearly 3000 plains and wood bison to various partners in bison conservation, including several Indigenous groups.

Any Indigenous group interested in discussing a bison transfer is encouraged to contact Elk Island National Park.




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Indigenous incarceration rate is a travesty

The Correctional Investigator of Canada, Dr. Ivan Zinger, issued a news release and supporting information indicating that the number and proportion of Indigenous individuals under federal sentence has reached new historic highs.

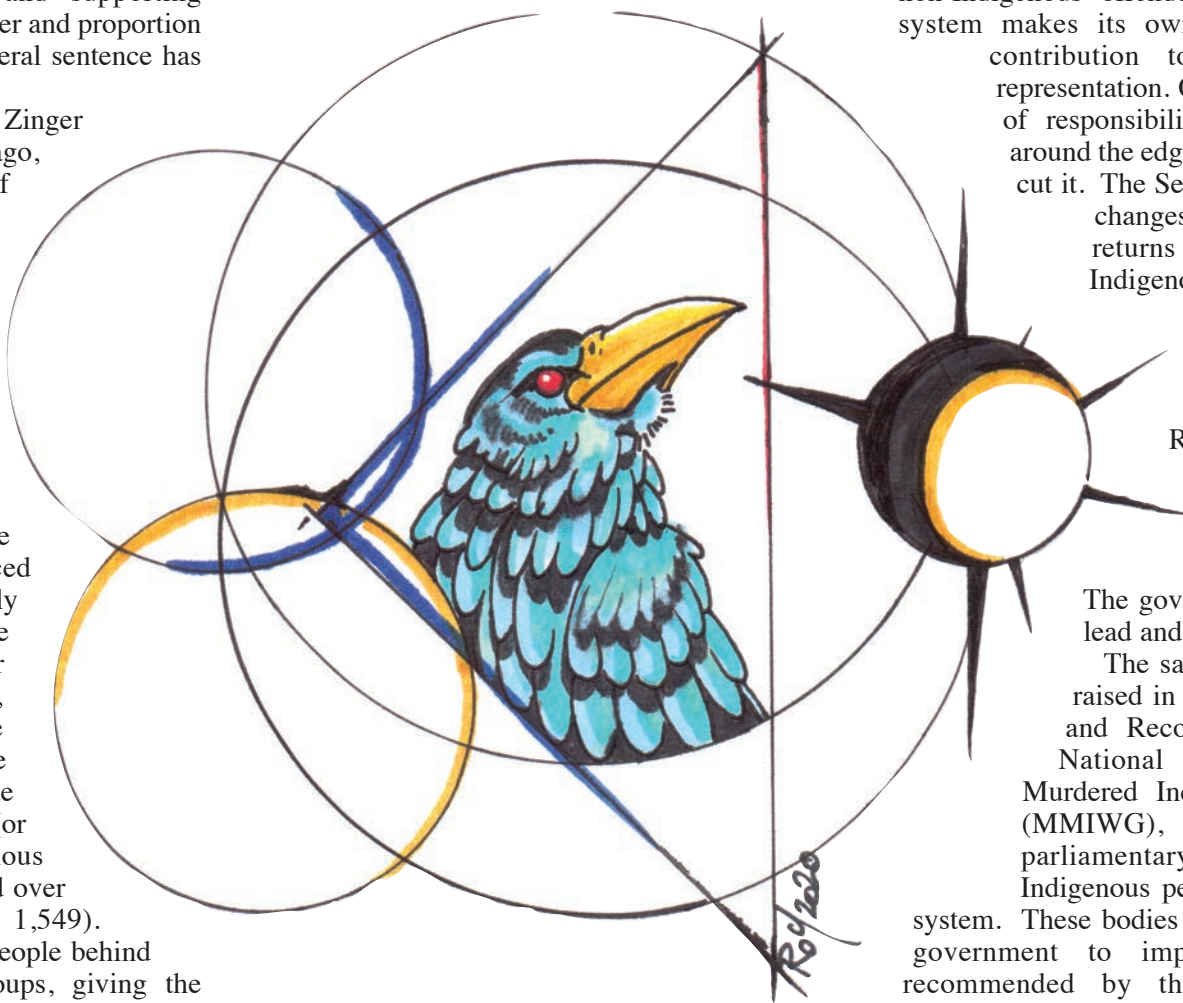
In his release and comments, Dr. Zinger provided this context: “Four years ago, my Office reported that persons of Indigenous ancestry had reached 25% of the total inmate population. At that time, my Office indicated that efforts to curb over-representation were not working. Today, sadly, I am reporting that the proportion of Indigenous people behind bars has now surpassed 30%.”

While accounting for 5% of the general Canadian population, the number of federally sentenced Indigenous people has been steadily increasing for decades. More recently, custody rates for Indigenous people have accelerated, despite an overall decline in the inmate population. In fact, since April 2010 the Indigenous inmate population has increased by 43.4% (or 1,265), whereas the non-Indigenous incarcerated population has declined over the same period by 13.7% (or 1,549). The rising numbers of Indigenous people behind bars offsets declines in other groups, giving the impression that the system is operating at a normal or steady state. As Dr. Zinger noted, nothing could be farther from the truth.

The Correctional Investigator suggests that surpassing the 30% mark indicates a deepening “Indigenization” of Canada’s correctional system. Dr. Zinger referred to these trends as “disturbing and entrenched imbalances,” noting that the numbers are even more troubling for Indigenous women, who now account for 42% of the women inmate population in Canada. The Correctional Investigator drew attention to the fact that federal corrections seems impervious to change and unresponsive to the needs, histories and social realities behind high rates of Indigenous offending.

Dr. Zinger stated, “On this trajectory, the pace is now set for Indigenous people to comprise 33% of the total federal inmate population in the next three years. Over the longer term, and for the better part of three decades now, despite findings of Royal Commissions and National Inquiries, intervention of the courts, promises and commitments of previous and current political leaders, no government of any stripe has managed to reverse the trend of Indigenous over-representation in Canadian jails and prisons. The Indigenization of Canada’s prison population is nothing short of a national travesty.”

Dr. Zinger related that while these numbers are profoundly concerning, they are not altogether surprising given the consistently poor outcomes for



Indigenous people in federal corrections. Year after year, his Office has documented that Indigenous inmates are disproportionately classified and placed in maximum security institutions, over-represented in use of force and self-injurious incidents, and historically, were more likely to be placed and held longer in segregation (solitary confinement) units. Compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous offenders serve a higher proportion of their sentence behind bars before granted parole. Finally, a recent national recidivism study shows that Indigenous people reoffend or are returned to custody at much higher levels, as high as 70% for Indigenous men in the Prairie region.

Though many of the causes of Indigenous over-representation reside in factors beyond the criminal justice system, Dr. Zinger pointed out that all of the outcomes noted above fall under the exclusive domain of the Correctional Service of Canada. For too long, CSC has recused itself from any responsibility for Indigenous over-representation, preferring instead to simply reiterate that corrections, being situated at the back (or receiving) end of the criminal justice system, exerts no control or jurisdiction over “upstream” factors that decide who is sent to prison, for what reasons or for how long.

In his comments, Dr. Zinger addressed this long-standing fallacy in direct terms. “In failing to

close the outcomes gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders, the federal correctional system makes its own unique and measureable contribution to the problem of over-representation. CSC needs to accept its share of responsibility, recognizing that tweaks around the edges of the system simply won’t cut it. The Service needs to make dramatic changes to reduce readmissions and returns to custody, better prepare Indigenous offenders to meet earliest parole eligibility dates and more safely return Indigenous offenders to their home communities. Reforms of this nature will require a significant and proportional realignment of CSC priorities and resources.

The government of Canada needs to lead and direct these efforts.”

The same urgent calls to action are raised in the final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), as well as two recent parliamentary committee studies on Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system. These bodies have called upon the federal government to implement several measures recommended by the Office. Resources and responsibility should be transferred to Indigenous groups and communities for the care, custody and supervision of Indigenous offenders. Appoint a Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections. Increase access and availability of culturally relevant correctional programming. Clarify and enhance the role of Indigenous elders. Improve engagement with Indigenous communities and enhance their capacity to provide reintegration services. Enhance access to screening, diagnosis and treatment of Indigenous offenders affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Develop assessment and classification tools responsive to the needs and realities of Indigenous people caught up in the criminal justice system.

As Dr. Zinger concluded: “It is not acceptable that Indigenous people in this country experience incarceration rates that are six to seven times higher than the national average. Bold and urgent action is required to address one of Canada’s most persistent and pressing human rights issues.”

As the ombudsman for federally sentenced offenders, the Office of the Correctional Investigator serves Canadians and contributes to safe, lawful and humane corrections through independent oversight of the Correctional Service of Canada by providing accessible, impartial and timely investigation of individual and systemic concerns.

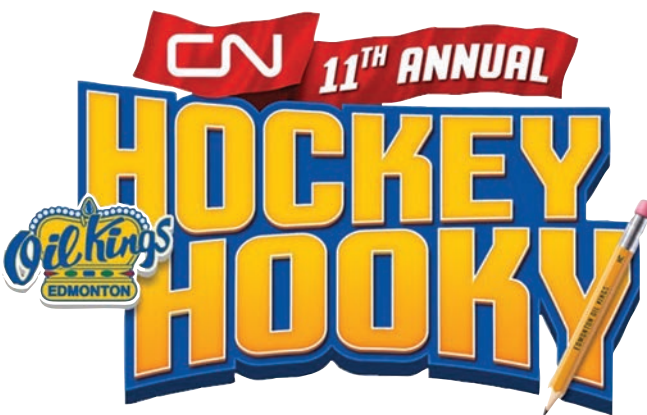
KRP and First Nations youth play Hockey Hooky

Things are gearing up for February 25 Hockey Hooky - an annual event hosted by the Edmonton Oil Kings at Rogers Place.

Kingston Ross Paznak LLP Chartered Accountants (KRP) is sponsoring 150 First Nations youth to the event.

This will be the fifth year that KRP has sent 50 youth from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, and the second year of sending 50 youth from Alexander First Nation. This is the first year KRP is sponsoring 50 youth from Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

Hockey Hooky is an event where schools from across “Oil Country” in Northern Alberta join the Oil



Kings for an afternoon of hockey, education, and fun. The Oil Kings host a WHL hockey game, with a built-in educational component including student workbooks, in-game educational elements, and additional teaching resources accessible in advance of the game to all participating classrooms.

All the fun takes place at Rogers Place (10220 104 Avenue) in Edmonton at 11 am.

For more information visit oilkings.ca/hockeyhooky.

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LEGEND

The Great Naming Contest is provided by the Lac La Ronge Band, Curriculum Resource Unit who are dedicated to providing quality educational resources to all the people of the First Nations.

The Great Naming Contest

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt; told by Mary McKenzie

Long ago a chief named Muhkikoht had a tall beautiful daughter who had brown eyes and a very light tan. Many men wanted the maiden for their wife and Muhkikoht did not know who to give the girl to a man without offending many others. Then Muhkikoht thought of a way to give up the young woman.

He called all the suitors from the many different tribes in the area to a great council fire. He told them, "In the next few months I will hold a feast and whoever guesses the secret name of my daughter can have her as his woman."

The word of the great feast spread up the rivers to all the people in the northern forests. Many young men would come to try to guess the name of Muhkikoht's daughter. The young woman was not concerned however because only one person besides her father knew her name and that was her lover.



Then one day the great Wesuhkechahk heard about the great contest. Wesuhkechahk was curious so he decided to find out the secret name of the maiden and take her as his woman. He sat down to think of a way to find out the secret name of Muhkikoht's daughter.

Wesuhkechahk decided to ask his little brother the spider to go and learn the secret name of the young woman. He searched for the insect and soon found him making a net with which to catch his dinner. "Little brother, could you do me a favour and find out the secret name of Muhkikoht's daughter? I will reward you for your help."

The little spider agreed and climbed up into a tree and sailed off in the wind spinning a thin line behind him. Soon, he reached the camp of Muhkikoht and went into the lodge of the maiden.

Inside the teepee, the netmaker heard Muhkikoht talking to his daughter about the feast and naming contest. The spider heard the father call the young girl by her secret name. It was Kakhke-menu-kakhke.

The name meant "Forever-and-ever" and the spider was glad to find out her name so quickly. Soon he was off to find his big brother Wesuhkechahk.

The wind was blowing in the wrong direction, so the little web spinner had to walk. It was such a long way and it seemed that he would never reach



Wesuhkechahk for me?" asked the spider. The weasel said he would carry the message, so the spider told him the secret name.

Off went the weasel, but he soon got tired of running and decided he would not bother to search for Wesuhkechahk. The sly weasel went to the feast instead and claimed the hand of the young maiden.

The drums from Muhkikoht's band were ringing throughout the forest and many people from everywhere had come to try and guess the secret name. The chief was listening to all the guests but no one had guessed her name yet. The weasel ran up to Muhkikoht and perched on his hind feet and spoke to him. "I know the name of your daughter and I've come to claim her as my woman. You must keep your promise or you will lose your honour. Her name is Kakhke-menu-kakhke."

All the songs and activities stopped as the guests realized that the weasel had guessed the name correctly.

The astonished Muhkikoht stood before all the Indians and said "The weasel has guessed the secret name and will take 'Forever-and-ever' as his woman."

Kakhke-menu-kakhke's lover arrived shortly after and was stunned at the news that Sihkos had already claimed the girl.

Meanwhile, the spider had finally reached Wesuhkechahk and asked him if the weasel had told him the secret name.

"No," said Wesuhkechahk, "The little beast did not tell me so I did not go to the feast."

Now I heard that he has won the woman and will marry her any day now."

Wesuhkechahk was very angry and he decided to have revenge upon the weasel. So, Wesuhkechahk went to the lodge of Muhkikoht and told the chief how the weasel had tricked them all.

When Muhkikoht heard of the weasel's trickery, he called the marriage off. The weasel had betrayed the trust to the spider and the great Wesuhkechahk. Kakhke-menu-kakhke would now be free to choose whoever she wanted for her mate.

The weasel learned he was in great danger and fled into the forest to escape the vengeance of Wesuhkechahk.

The great Wesuhkechahk has not caught him yet, but the weasel is still watching for him.

That is why he stops and takes a quick look around every so often.

He is nervous because Wesuhkechahk is still hunting for him.



ACFN Chief criticizes Alberta's consultation process

A First Nation chief has been critical of how Alberta's UCP government has handled Indigenous consultations on Teck Resources Ltd.'s \$20.6-billion Frontier oilsands mining project.

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam recently criticized Alberta's consultation process in two letters, one to Jonathan Wilkinson, the federal Environment and Climate Change Minister, and another to other Indigenous leaders.

According to media, the letter to Wilkinson outlined 13 areas where Adam believes the province needs to offer more support to the ACFN, including water monitoring, protection of back country areas, and implementation of conservation plans.

Adam wrote that he's worried that Alberta's failure

to consult and take meaningful action on environmental concerns – ranging from caribou habitat to water issues – could jeopardize the project.

A second letter states that Alberta's "refusal to work with us respectfully jeopardizes this project's federal approval, putting jobs and benefits of our Nation (and all Albertans) at risk."

Athabasca Chipewyan is one of 14 First Nations and Metis communities that have signed participation agreements on the Teck mine.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Rick Wilson, as well as Environment Minister Jason Nixon, have said there have been extensive discussions with Chief Adam about his environmental concerns, but his recent comments prompted some backlash.

On Feb. 11, Minister Nixon appeared on CBC's *Power and Politics* where he discussed First Nation's concerns about the proposed Teck frontier mine. He told host Vassy Kapelos that Chief Adam "continues to primarily focus on money."

Assembly of First Nations Alberta Regional Chief Marlene Poitras urges Alberta Environment and Parks Minister Jason Nixon to apologize for remarks he made in the media this week about Chief Adam.

"I call on Minister Nixon to retract the statements he's made towards Chief Adam and issue an apology," says Regional Chief Poitras. "These comments further hurtful and false stereotypes used to support the dismissal of First Nations' rights. They have no place in our society."

Indigenous Participation in Major Projects Conference: Feb. 26 & 27

(Calgary AB) – The Indian Resource Council (IRC) has announced the agenda for the upcoming Indigenous Participation in Major Projects Conference happening at the Calgary Westin Airport in Calgary, Alberta on February 26 & 27, 2020. This event will be attended by leaders of Industry, Government and Indigenous communities.

Major projects are a huge growth industry in Canada and provide significant opportunities for Indigenous people whose territories are impacted directly by this industry. IRC, as in previous years, is bringing all the partners together to discuss and strategize on these opportunities.

“I am pleased that Premier Jason Kenney will be in attendance; It shows this Government’s commitment to working with Indigenous communities,” stated Stephen Buffalo, IRC President and CEO.

“IRC firmly believes that our greatest success for Major projects is to work together. By bringing Indigenous leaders together with Industry and Government, we know Canadians will benefit from the unified experience of all three.”

The conference is intended to address several themes including such barriers as access to capital, environment issues and training and capacity enhancement. Experience has also taught us that the social opportunities and hallway discussions often lead to greater understanding amongst attendees. Registrations are limited to 400 and over 200 have already been received.

Chief Makiinima (Roy Fox) of the Blood Tribe and IRC Chairman said this was a timely and important conference. The Chief added, “Major projects are

criss-crossing most Indigenous lands. There is tremendous value in this industry by way of jobs, investment and equity ownership and we want our people to benefit from and capitalize on these opportunities. The conference brings together Industry, Government and Indigenous partners to identify solutions and strategies on how we can work together in this industry in the spirit of Economic Reconciliation. I applaud Premier Kenney for his AIOC initiative and urge other Governments to follow his lead. The IRC is once again proud to sponsor an event of this magnitude.”

The conference is divided between large group meetings based on themes on day one and smaller breakout sessions on day two. The agenda and a list of confirmed speakers are listed at indigenoumajorprojects.com. Provincial and Federal elected government officials have also been invited to speak and those listed on the agenda have been confirmed at this time.

The agenda features several panel discussions with industry leaders, Indigenous leaders and government leaders. Topics are: Major Canadian projects and how they impact Indigenous Peoples: an analysis of past and current opportunities; Roles of governments, industry and Indigenous Peoples: the role each play in the life-cycle of major projects; Governance and financial models: Elements of success; and Training and Capacity Opportunities: Opportunities for building capacity beyond major projects.



Opening remarks will be delivered by Blood Tribe Chief Roy Fox, Siksika Nation Chief Ouray Crowfoot, Chief Charlene Gale, Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi and IRC President and CEO Stephen Buffalo. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney will then address the delegates. Confirmed Keynote speakers include Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Former Premier of British Columbia Christy Clarke.

For more information and to register visit ircc.ca or call 403-281-8303.

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Alberta Indigenous Tourism Summit will be held March 19 & 20

Tsuut'ina First Nation (Calgary, Alberta) - Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA), recently announced their second annual Alberta Indigenous Tourism Summit (AITS) will be held at the Indigenous-owned Grey Eagle Resort & Casino, located on the Tsuut'ina First Nation in Calgary, Alberta for March 19 & 20, 2020.

The annual tourism summit brings together Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs from across Alberta to discuss tourism potential and challenges.

The AITS2020 will feature a two-day gathering of Indigenous tourism operators, Indigenous Community Leaders and industry supporters sharing opportunities and best practices to build, grow and succeed in the rapidly growing industry of authentic Indigenous tourism with a dual focus on community and entrepreneurship.

"The Alberta Indigenous Tourism Summit provides an excellent opportunity for Indigenous communities, entrepreneurs and industry partners to come together, learn, and share knowledge to help contribute to the success of Alberta's Indigenous tourism industry," said Shae Bird, Executive Director of Indigenous Tourism Alberta.

In partnership with industry leaders, Indigenous Tourism Alberta has organized two full days of keynote speakers, panel discussions, and inspiring sessions to help Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs discover pathways to success in Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

This event will bring together those interested in or actively operating in Alberta's rapidly growing Indigenous tourism industry. AITS participants will learn about significant economic opportunities while respectfully sharing Indigenous cultural experiences.

Topics of discussion will concentrate on both

business development and marketing while also providing broader perspective to the significant Indigenous tourism economic opportunity. Participants will gain a better understanding of how to establish or grow their business through improving their business readiness.

Marketing presentations by industry experts will include information on developing effective tourism marketing content and using social media to maximize marketing success.

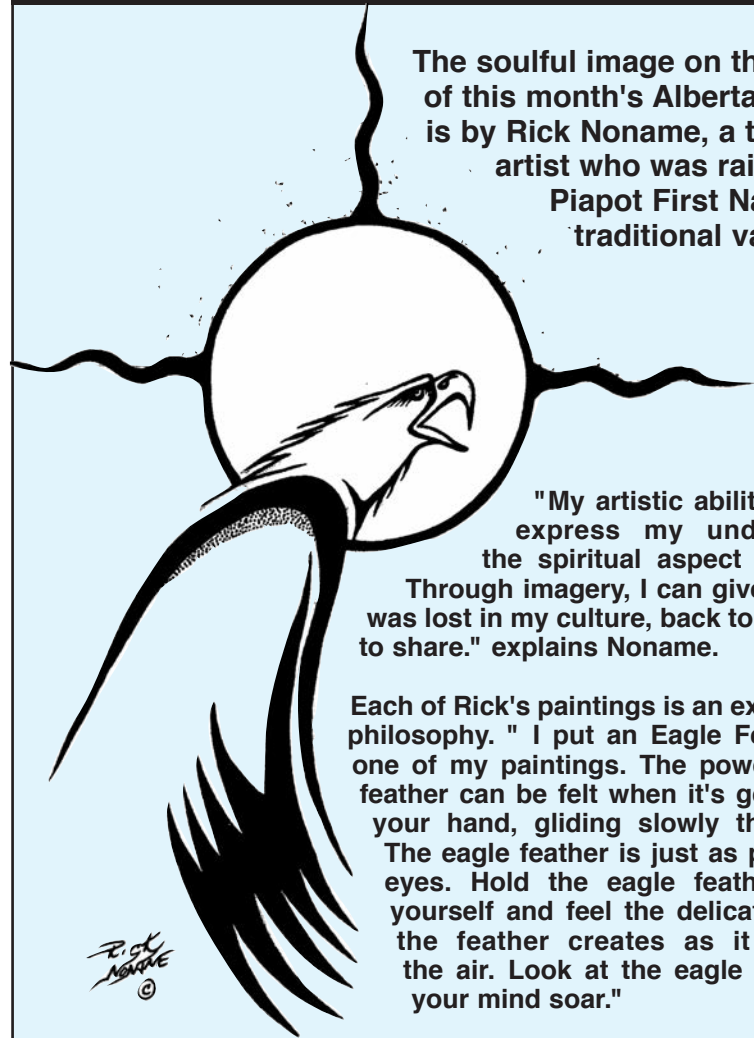
Early bird tickets are \$149 with regular pricing taking effect on March 1st when tickets will be \$179. Tickets include lunch and refreshment break snacks for both days. There is an additional cost for Taste of the Nations Event. Community Elders and youth from 13-17 can attend the entire conference for \$129.

For more information about the summit, visit indigenoustourismalberta.ca.

ITA encourages and promotes authentic Indigenous tourism that showcases the unique and immersive experiences offered by its members throughout Alberta. This strategy is industry driven, industry lead

About our cover artist

The soulful image on the cover of this month's Alberta Native News is by Rick Noname, a traditional artist who was raised in the Piapot First Nation with traditional values.



"My artistic ability allows me to express my understanding of the spiritual aspect of my culture. Through imagery, I can give some of what was lost in my culture, back to all generations to share," explains Noname.

Each of Rick's paintings is an expression of his philosophy. "I put an Eagle Feather in every one of my paintings. The power of the eagle feather can be felt when it's gently resting in your hand, gliding slowly through the air. The eagle feather is just as powerful as the eyes. Hold the eagle feather in front of yourself and feel the delicate balance that the feather creates as it cuts through the air. Look at the eagle feather and let your mind soar."

and directed by Indigenous People. Through a unified industry voice, ITA focuses on creating and nurturing partnerships between associations, organizations, governments and industry leaders from across Alberta to support the growth of Indigenous tourism. Further to this, ITA's goal is to enhance economic viability and further engage and support Indigenous people throughout the province by sharing stories, culture and experiences with a global audience. To learn more, visit indigenoustourismalberta.ca.

2ND ANNUAL ALBERTA INDIGENOUS TOURISM SUMMIT 2020

March 19-20, 2020
Grey Eagle Resort & Casino
Tsuut'ina First Nation in Calgary, Alberta

BUILDING AUTHENTIC INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Hosted by Indigenous Tourism Alberta, join us for a two day gathering of sharing stories, knowledge, and insights into how to further develop Indigenous tourism in Alberta with a dual focus on community and entrepreneurship.

The program includes keynote speakers, panel discussions, and inspiring sessions on experience development and marketing to help you discover pathways to success as a community or as an independent entrepreneur.

\$149

EARLY BIRD TICKETS
(available until February 28th)

\$129

SENIOR/ELDER

\$179

REGULAR TICKET

\$129

YOUTH
(13-17 years old)



REGISTER TO ATTEND

www.IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca/alberta-indigenous-tourism-summit
info@indigenoustourismalberta.ca



2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow

First Nations Control: Transformative Change in Housing and Infrastructure

March 10-12, 2020

Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario

The forum will feature plenary sessions and interactive workshops on the long-term approach for First Nations Housing and related Infrastructure for First Nations and for First Nations members who live in urban, rural, and northern areas. The forum will also focus on operations and maintenance (O&M) with an emphasis on adopting an Asset Management Planning (AMP) approach.

Please watch for updates at www.afn.ca or email any questions to AFNHousingForum2020@afn.ca or call toll-free: **1-866-869-6789**.

Is a pandemic on the horizon?

by Xavier Kataquapit

I have had a few very bad flu bouts over the past few years and come to think of it almost once a year for the past 10 years. Some of these respiratory issues were probably colds but most of them were flus due to viruses.

Often when I am sick, doctors prescribe an antibiotic because they believe I have also developed some bacterial infection. Some of my friends experience strep throat and pneumonia often these days and I have been stricken with these complications a couple of times.

Living up north you would think that it we would be more protected in our semi isolation from getting flus and colds but with international air travel these days none of us are immune to picking up a virus or any kind of infection. There have been many severe epidemics and a few pandemics throughout history. The Spanish Flu during the First World War killed my great-grandfather John Chookomolin. He and a group of young men from Attawapiskat had been recruited or coerced by an army officer and enlisted in the Canadian Forces in 1917, then travelled from Attawapiskat for training in southern Ontario. Soon after they went by ship to England and at some point, my grandfather contracted the flu. He became very sick during the crossing and he lingered for a while in a medical field hospital in England and then passed away. I have visited his grave in Englefield Green, just outside the city of London, England. The Spanish Flu is the most notorious pandemic in history that killed 50 million people worldwide and it was known to have involved the H1N1 virus.

During the regular flu season in Canada more than 3,500 people die every year and more than 12,000 end up in the hospital. This demonstrates that viruses like

the regular flu is one of the biggest killers in the country every year. Many of us get the annual flu vaccine to deal with this influenza but many do not. Although I think getting it is probably a good idea as it offers some protection, a lot of people don't trust big pharma these days and they do not get a flu shot. It is understandable that a lot of the population don't trust drug companies and even our governments as a result of so may bad experiences.

Right now, there is a very dangerous new virus circulating around the world that originated in China. The World Health Organization has declared a global health emergency over the outbreak of the Covid 19 virus (aka Novel coronavirus and also named 2019-nCoV) but has not yet called it a pandemic. As of February 17, 1873, people have died of this new virus and it has made close to 72,500 people sick in China. The virus has now spread to different parts of the world including Canada (8 cases) and the United States (15 cases). Over 12,000 people who were infected have recovered.

The big problem with this virus is that it is expanding in what is known as an exponential manner and there is as yet no vaccine. That is why a few cases a month ago has grown so quickly to infect and kill so many. Now that this new virus is known to have travelled to many countries in the world there is a possibility it will become a pandemic. The hope is that it will not be anywhere as serious as the Spanish Flu but there is that danger because we live in a time where air travel can transport hundreds of thousands of people all over the world every day. We do have a



much better medical treatment and preventative system in most countries but there are many third world locations where that is not the case.

The best we can do right now is to restrict travel and avoid crowds, wash hands often, do not touch your face, eyes, ears or nose with your hands and stay away from anyone who appears to have a cold or flu. I know that many people are sick with the flu these days back in my home community of Attawapiskat and other First Nations up the James Bay coast. Many of my people right across the country don't have the same degree of medical service that is offered in towns and cities to the south. Many also don't have access to decent housing, affordable healthy diets and clean water and that makes them more susceptible to any flu or new virus that appears. Let's hope this coronavirus calms down and disappears over the next little while or we will have a pandemic on our hands.

For more columns by Xavier Kataquapit visit underthenorthernsky.com

Indspire award recipients

cont. from p 5

"TD is delighted to congratulate the 2020 Indspire Award recipients," stated Doris Bear, Vice President, Indigenous Banking, TD Bank Group. "Through the TD Ready Commitment, our corporate citizenship platform, we are proud to highlight this year's honorees and celebrate their achievements and contributions to Canada and Indigenous communities."

For tickets, call 416.987.0250 or 1.855.INDSPIRE (463.7747) x 228. Tickets can also be purchased online at indspire.ca or by email to ticketsales@indspire.ca. The awards ceremony will be broadcast on APTN and CBC in June during National Indigenous History Month.

Indspire is an Indigenous national charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada. With the support of its funding partners, Indspire provides financial awards, delivers programs and shares resources so that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students will achieve their highest potential.

In 2018-2019, Indspire provided more than \$16.3 million through 5,553 bursaries and scholarships

to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students across Canada. For more information about the 2020 Indspire Awards, please visit indspire.ca.



Are you a charismatic, outgoing, and energetic person?

If you are a people person with a flair for exceptional customer service, you are the kind of person that we looking for. Here at River Cree Resort and Casino, we value our associates. We prepare them to excel, and we recognize a job well done. The River Cree Resort & Casino is committed to helping you reach your personal growth and career goals, while paying you a competitive wage. While we offer careers with a wide range of responsibilities, every role in our organization is valued and recognized as a contributor to our success. We're always interested in dedicated, friendly people who not only want to make a difference in their work lives, but in their personal lives as well.

What can you achieve at River Cree Resort and Casino?

- You can work in a world class entertainment facility
- You can work with motivated individuals who have great customer skills
- You can gain the skills and knowledge that you need to advance in your career
- You can help contribute to an exceptional guest experience

If you are interested in a people-oriented profession and have strong interpersonal skills, consider a career in customer service. Utilize those skills to find fulfilling employment in the Gaming industry, Food & Beverage and the Hospitality Industry.

[How can you find out about current job opportunities at River Cree Resort and Casino?](#)

You can view job openings and submit your resume on line at www.rivercreejobs.com. Follow us on Facebook at River Cree Resort & Casino Job Board or come to our office in person and visit our Recruitment Specialist.



Are you an Aboriginal youth living in western Canada or north-western Ontario?

Are you interested in a challenging summer experience that delivers hands-on skills development, encourages teamwork, provides physical fitness and promotes cultural awareness?

Bold Eagle is the program for you! It is a unique summer employment program that combines Aboriginal culture and teachings with military training.

Apply before April 30th each year.

If you are interested in having the Bold Eagle Coordinator come to your community or organization to present the program, contact boldeagle@forces.gc.ca or call 780-842-1363 ext. 5158 or 780-261-0202.



National
Défense



Canada



**FEDERAL
INDIAN DAY
SCHOOL
CLASS ACTION**



There is a nationwide settlement to compensate
Survivors of **Federal Indian Day Schools**
and **Federal Day Schools**

If you attended one of these schools,
this may be an important step in your healing journey.

To find out if you are eligible for compensation
and how you can make a claim,
go to **indiandayschools.com** or call us at **1.888.221.2898**

Let's take this next step together.