



# ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



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# Lana Whiskeyjack celebrates iskwew in new art exhibition

The strong, serene image on the cover of the March 2020 *Alberta Native News* is entitled “Nôhawasiw” (she breastfeeds) by Art Actionist Lana Whiskeyjack, a multidisciplinary treaty iskwew artist from the Saddle Lake Cree Nation in Treaty Six Territory, Alberta. It is part of a provocative exhibition by Whiskeyjack that is on display until May 30, 2020, at the Căhcacêp Art & Tea House located at #102, 11050 - 97 Street NW in Edmonton.

According to Whiskeyjack the exhibition is “an iskwew exploration of nêhiyaw thirteen moon calendar and connecting to the spirit of nêhiyawêwin (Cree language).”

In her early years, Lana was guided by her grandmother’s advice, “Go to school, travel, and see as much as you can. Then return home to share what you learned, but do not forget where you came from.” After graduating high school, the young mom moved to Red Deer to attain her Art & Design diploma, then



Detail from *Music is Medicine* by Lana Whiskeyjack - on exhibit in Edmonton.

moved to Ottawa with her growing family, attaining B.A. (Honours) and M.A (Canadian Studies) degrees. Her story continues with returning to work near her home community and attaining her doctorate degree at University *nuhelot’ine thaiyots’i nistameyimăkanak* Blue Quills (UnBQ) in *iyiniw pimătisiwin kiskeyitamowin*, the first Indigenous owned and operated educational institution in Canada. Prior to 1970, UnBQ operated as Blue Quills Indian Residential School, where two generations of her maternal family attended.

Lana’s research, writing, and art explores the paradoxes of what it means to be nehiyaw (Cree) and iskwew (woman) in a Western culture and society; and, how she and other Indigenous peoples are reclaiming, re-gathering, and remembering their ancestral medicine (sacredness and power). Her art is passionate and expressive, born from the deep roots of her culture, history, and intergenerational relations. Through the examination of sometimes difficult subjects, her art reflects the intrinsic beauty of her interconnections with the earth, Cree language and all living beings.

In an artist’s statement, Lana described the impetus behind her current exhibition. She said, “iskwewak are powerful beings who give life, food, and the vital life source of sahkitowin. They are the home fires, sacred water keepers. Each of us are here because of our mother’s wombs. nêhiyawak are matrilineal people; the root word of nêhiyawêwin introductions of naming and placing ourselves is ohtisîy/nitsîy, bellybutton/my bellybutton. Our language locates our identity to our bellybutton connection, the lifeline that began in our grandmothers' womb.

“Imagine that - our mothers carried our ahcakhiskotew (spirit/soul fire) within her womb that came directly from the kind compassionate Creator. Our wombs are the original heavens, where we are given our firsts: the first taste of life from our mother’s foods; her breathe; her experiences, all of which contributed and define our DNA. I believe

our ahcakhiskotew created rivers throughout our evolving bodies, which we call our nervous systems. Her heartbeat is the vibration that animated our soul-body-life creation!”

“Each of our wombs is a cosmos of infinite intelligence that helped to populate the world with diverse beings each bringing gifts and skills meant to help one another,” continued Whiskeyjack. “We used to learn those values from responsible gifted storytellers who had principles given from this land.

“The womb carries a



*Săkipakăwîpîsim (leaf budding moon; May)* by Lana Whiskeyjack.

worldview that the patriarchal, capitalistic, and religious systems oppressed us to believe that we - wombsters - are full of sin, dirty, less intelligent, weak, lesser than a man because our life-giving womb holds such great power. Power over the womb is power over our future generations. Patriarchal laws, policies, and discourses have been created to disconnect, disown, and disempower our human place of origins - the wombs that we come from. These centuries of misogynistic patterns impacted our mothers’ mothers’ mothers’ memory and therefore our own identities and blood memory.”

Many of us may have forgotten, explained the artist. “I know it took me a long time to remember. Our mothers may have forgot as with many of our men, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and male relatives have forgot their protecting and providing roles. I continue to keep all our relatives in my prayers to remember. Our world needs it now.

“We can remember our inherent powerful medicines. We can reconnect to our ancestors prayers through săkîyîtok – to love each other; wăcîyîtok – to help one another; mîyawătamok – to have joy/happiness, to be positive and look at the world in a good way; sôhkastok - to be strong, to have courage; amongst to many other ways including returning to creativity.”

“Making art helps me to remember,” emphasizes Whiskeyjack. “When I work with spirit I connect, I remember their prayers. I pray with gratitude to the wombs I come from and to the beautiful humans that came from mine.”

The grand opening of Lana’s exhibition is March 21 from 2 to 6 pm. For more information call (780) 250 3221.

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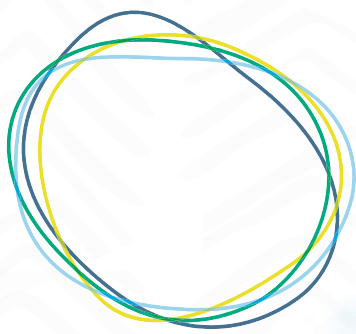
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# Chiefs slam separation threats

Alberta First Nation leaders from Treaty Six are slamming a recent notice released by four Conservative MPs from Alberta who are threatening to separate from Canada if their demands are not met.

"This declaration is a clear display of ignorance" reads a response released by the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations.

The Buffalo Declaration, released Feb. 20, is a 13-page notice that calls for "immediate action" from the federal government and makes a series of demands, like eliminating or phasing out equalization and requiring Ottawa to acknowledge the "devastation of the National Energy Program."

The demands must be met, according to the document, or else residents of the province will seek separation from Canada.

The Chiefs of the Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 dismiss the intent of the declaration based on the content of their Treaty Rights and they condemn the declaration for maligning the name of the Buffalo.

They further find that the declaration mirrors the same assertions made by the First Peoples of this land. The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations would like to offer the supporters of this declaration a glimpse into "our world."

The Chiefs of the Confederacy of Treaty 6 do not support the title nor the philosophy behind the declaration. Excerpts of their response appear below.

"The Buffalo is a sacred being to our ceremonies and our culture and in no way should it be used to further a political gain. The audacity to select the very four legged being that your ancestors attempted to wipe out, to annihilate our existence, is an insult to our people.

"For centuries the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island have struggled to thrive in our own homelands. At times we have raised our voices to demand equality and respect, and far too quickly our efforts are silenced, to which we are then labeled "troublemakers."

"If this declaration is to demand equality, then the

province needs to examine its own back yard before threatening a possible separatist movement. Our land and its resources have kept Albertans and settlers alike prosperous for decades, however (we), the original landowners have been ignored and excluded from those discussions and benefits time and time again.

"In order to display a false support and inclusion of our people, we are continuously added to documents such as these to further, yet another colonial agenda. Throughout the document it mentions the First Nations People a total of eight (8) times, then ironically asks the Prime Minister to recognize the province as "culturally distinct." This is a contradictory statement, in the sense that it lacks inclusion of the original culturally distinct peoples of this land.

"This declaration is a clear display of ignorance and moreover a thoughtless claim of support of your inequities. As we continue to inherit the imbalances which stem from our Treaty obligations being overlooked and ignored, we also absorb the profanities for simply being culturally distinct. We caution you that being culturally distinct provides no protection from this government.

"Since the 1930 National Resource Transfer Agreement (NRTA), it is Albertans who have been benefiting off the lands of our ancestors, for much longer than our own people have. The Indigenous Peoples have fought to protect our Mother Earth since the beginning of time. We have urged industry and stake holders to work with Indigenous Peoples to seek a balance that will honour what Mother Earth provides; instead industry and stake holders continue to rape and steal what she is not willing to give. Therefore, we question you – is it equality to our lands you seek? Or maybe it is the inequality of our stolen resources that you seek.

"The economic decline as mentioned in the "Buffalo Declaration" is said to have left Albertan families shattered with amplified suicide and domestic violence rates. Sadly, these are the types of tragedies our people can connect with. Regrettably,

Continued on page 14

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# Help reduce the spread of COVID-19

(March 15, 2020) - The outbreak of COVID-19, the highly infectious pandemic illness caused by the novel coronavirus, is a significant challenge for the entire world, including throughout Canada.

The Government of Canada has created the infrastructure to respond to the public health threats of the virus and is acting in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and international partners to minimize the health, economic, and social impacts of this rapidly evolving public health issue.

There is no vaccine for COVID-19 so aggressive public health measures are being implemented in each province including Alberta, to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect Albertans, after new cases appear to be spreading into community settings.

The virus is spread by contact with respiratory droplets of infected people. Health officials are saying that the most important strategy is to slow down the spread of infections by limiting your interactions with groups of people and practicing good hygiene. This includes cleaning your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds, avoiding touching your face, coughing or sneezing into your elbow or sleeve, disposing of tissues appropriately, and staying home and away from others if you are sick.

It is important to be diligent in following these strategies, but it is equally important to respond calmly. Check with your community to see what events have been cancelled and what closures have been implemented.

On March 13, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reassured Indigenous leaders that Ottawa is prepared to help First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities fight COVID-19 based on their individual needs, and that the purse strings will remain open.

The Premiers also agreed on the importance for “governments to ensure preparedness to support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, and rural and remote communities throughout the country,” the PMO said in a statement.

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde responded with concerns that the money promised by Trudeau “may not be adequate.” He noted there are 96 fly-in First Nations across the country, each facing their own specific circumstances, and stressed that Ottawa and First Nations need to “be ready for worst case scenarios.”

“Evacuation plans must be in place and First Nations leaders need to be involved. We need to ensure full government resources are ready to mobilize, including planes, vehicles and other resources from [the] Department of National Defence and government departments,” stated the National Chief.



According to news reports, officials told reporters they don't have any modelling specific to the Indigenous population around the virus, even though Indigenous communities are more vulnerable due to overcrowding, a lack of clean water and little access to hospitals.

Provincial governments are taking swift measures to slow down the spread of COVID-19. The latest measures announced on March 15, 2020 by Alberta Health Services include: Effective immediately, students will no longer be attending classes in K-12 schools until further notice. Post-secondary campuses will still remain open, but in-person classes are cancelled. School authorities are expected to continue their regular day-to-day operations and ensure the safety of school facilities. Maintenance, capital projects, cleaning of facilities and administrative work will continue.

Every K-12 student will receive a final mark and students will progress to their next grade level next year. Provincial assessments, such as provincial achievement tests, will be cancelled. At this time, diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue. Every

student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate.

The Alberta government will also be working with post-secondary institutions to ensure that these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the coming school year.

Teachers and other school staff will still be expected to work, either from home or at their workplace, to ensure these expectations are met. Decisions on how to do this are still to be made, and it may vary depending on the school jurisdiction.

All licensed childcare, out-of-school care programs and preschool programs in Alberta are closed at this time, as well. Approved day homes are exempt because they care for fewer than seven children at a time. These programs are encouraged to use enhanced sanitation practices.

Public health officials recommend that all mass gatherings of 250 people or more are cancelled, and this now includes worship gatherings.

Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations, should also be cancelled.

Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed at this time, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as enforcing distancing of one to two metres between attendees and using sanitizer stations.

Only essential visits to any continuing care or long-term care facility in Alberta are recommended: Individuals over 60 years of age and those with pre-existing health conditions are most at risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19. Families and friends of those in these facilities are asked to think of other ways besides visiting that they can support and encourage their loved ones through this difficult time.

Travel outside of the country is not being recommended at this time. Given the rapid global spread of the virus, it is no longer possible to assess health risks for the duration of the trip.

*Continued on page 15*

## Alberta Chiefs call for fair & equitable funding

On March 5, 2020, the Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7, and Treaty No. 8 Chiefs in attendance at the Special Assembly of Treaty Chiefs, motioned and approved the following statement:

“Those Chiefs present at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs meeting on March 4 & 5, 2020 in Treaty No. 7 Territory assert their inherent laws and jurisdiction for their children and families.

“Laws separate from our sovereign Nations’ Laws, Canada developed Bill C-92, an Act Respecting First Nations Youth and Families. This Act recognizes First Nations’ jurisdiction over Child and Family Services which supersedes federal and provincial laws.”

The Alberta Minister of Children Services, Rebecca Schultz stated to the AoTC Chiefs that “Alberta spends roughly \$800,000,000.00 (eight hundred million dollars) on Children Services, 62% of which are Indigenous children in care.”

The Chiefs stated, “As Nations

continue to exercise our jurisdiction, including the implementation of our own laws, we recognize Canada has an obligation to our people, fair and equitable funding to bring our children home.

“As a minimum, this would include jurisdiction over the roughly \$500,000,000.00 (five hundred million dollars) the province of Alberta spends on First Nations children.

“Fair and equitable funding should exceed the stated \$500,000,000.00; as federal and provincial systems funded under this amount have consistently failed thousands of First Nations children under the Alberta Child and Family Services and the federal Residential School systems.

“We expect Canada and its provinces to acknowledge our Treaty Rights & Sovereignty and their own law to recognize jurisdiction over our children, inclusive of starting at the funding amounts they stated for fair and equitable compensation.”



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# Making life safer for Indigenous women in Alberta

(March 2020) - Ending violence against women and girls is the focus of a new provincial government joint working group.

“I am confident the individuals appointed to the Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will be guided by experience and humanity, and will make thoughtful and wise recommendations,” stated Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations.

“We said Alberta would respond to the calls for justice and we are. We are moving forward to make our province a safe place for Indigenous women and girls.”

The Alberta government has appointed three Indigenous community members and three members of the legislative assembly to inform a government action plan that responds to the calls for justice of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

“It is our collective responsibility to prevent violence against women and girls,” add Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Leela Sharon Aheer.

“This joint working group is a vital part of our commitment to addressing the National Inquiry, ending all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQIA making Alberta a safer place for all.”

The joint working group will support the government’s actions by advising on options to address issues of violence and the calls for justice. They will make recommendations on how to work with Indigenous communities, other governments and the private sector to leverage actions to combat violence against Indigenous women and girls. The group will also providing input and make recommendations on the government’s action plan.

The joint working group has a one-year mandate, which may be extended.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was established by the federal government in December 2015. The final report was released on June 3, 2019 and contains 231

calls for justice.

In Canada, statistics show that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other women in Canada. Between 1980 and 2012 in Alberta, there were 206 murdered Indigenous women, accounting for 28 per cent of all female homicide victims in the province in that time period.

In 2017, there was an increase in homicides of Aboriginal females of 32 per cent from the previous year. This rate is six times higher than that of non-Aboriginal females.

The joint working group members are as follows:

Lisa Higgerty is a member and co-chair of the Métis Women’s Council on Economic Security. Her career advocating for the victims of sexual abuse began 15 years ago and has resulted in the Mamowichihitowin Community Wellness Program, an innovative holistic program in rural Alberta unique to Canada. She has since expanded the mandate of the program to cover all types of domestic violence in west-central Alberta.

Rachelle Venne is the CEO of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women and has experience in the non-profit, corporate and government sectors. She was a member of End Poverty Edmonton’s Aboriginal Roundtable and Implementation Road Map Team and was one of six Canadian NGO delegates selected to attend the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2017.

Josie Nepinak is the executive director of Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, the only Indigenous urban women’s shelter in Alberta, and has a strong background supporting Indigenous women and families dealing with family violence and



**Members of the Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women with Ministers Rick Wilson and Leela Aheer.**

facing complex social issues.

A member from the First Nations Women’s Council on Economic Security will be an-nounced shortly.

Martin Long is the MLA for West Yellowhead. He is a member of the Special Standing Committee on Members’ Services and the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. Prior to his election as a member of the legislative assembly, Mr. Long worked as an operator for Alberta Newsprint in Whitecourt for nine years.

Whitney Issik is the MLA for Calgary-Glenmore. She serves on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing and on the Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future. Prior to serving with the legislative assembly, she owned and operated a small business in Calgary for almost 30 years. She has also worked in the telecommunications and energy industries.

Tracy Allard is the MLA for Grande Prairie. She serves on the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future. Prior to being elected, she was a business owner, having franchised Tim Hortons restaurants in Prince Rupert, B.C., and in Grande Prairie.

## New program helps Indigenous youth in crisis

(Toronto, ON) – Kids Help Phone and We Matter have announced a partnership to strengthen support services available to Inuit, Métis and First Nations youth from coast to coast. The goal is to support the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of Indigenous young people across Canada. This multi-year partnership includes collaborating on awareness campaigns, school programming and shared training and research to name a few. Both organizations work together to provide mental health support and access for Indigenous young people across the country.

“We Matter is very excited to form a formal partnership with Kids Help

Phone, stemming from the organization’s Indigenous Youth Action Plan, Finding Hope,” said Tunchai Redvers, Co-Founder and Executive Director, We Matter.

“As two organizations who both work to provide mental health support and access for Indigenous youth, it is important to foster collective understanding and collaboration. There is so much work to be done, and we know that by working together, we will be able to reach even more young people in even better ways.”

The partnership will maximize efforts to acknowledge and support the wellness of Indigenous youth across Canada by cross promoting their efforts

*Continued on page 9*



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# Wet'suwet'en supporters join 1300 protesters at rally in Edmonton

By Terry Lusty

Times are tough – of that there is no doubt. This month everyone is taking major precautions against the COVID 19 pandemic that is spreading across the globe. Washing hands and maintaining social distance are the recommended strategies to slow down the spread of the infection.

Last month's concerns about the Alberta budget seem far in the distance but they are still very real – particularly those related to healthcare.

A recent protest march and rally in Edmonton led by the Alberta Federation of Labour, and the Alberta Teachers Association's Edmonton Public and Catholic locals, illustrated some of the common concerns felt by Albertans.

The February 27 'March for What Matters' was held in the Alberta capital and attracted more than 1300 individuals from varying walks of life.

Most of the participants were protesting Alberta Premier Jason Kenney's UCP government's budget cuts to the public sector, especially in the areas of healthcare and education.

On one side of the coin is the government which argues the need to reduce the province's deficit and spending by enacting spending cuts at a time when its economy is hurting.

Countering this line of thought is the public sector - those directly impacted - who maintain that cuts should not be made that will impact the quality of health services and educational services to everyday Albertans.

The event followed the government's announcement of a budget that requires school boards to dip into their reserves. The various speakers were routinely interrupted by boisterous cheering and chants such as: "Shame on you! Shame on you!",

"Hey, hey! Ho, ho! UCP has got to go!" and "The people, united, will never be divided!"

According to Alberta Teachers Association president, Jason Schilling, Alberta students will be insufficiently funded.

"You don't need to be good at math to see that more students with no additional funding means larger classes," he said. "More students will go without learning supports and the individual attention they need to be successful; teachers will not be able to fill the widening gaps."

Schilling also expressed grave concerns over the loss of Program Unit Funding (PUF) for kindergarten students.

"There will be program cuts to supports for five-year-olds with severe delays and disabilities," said Schilling. "The government is downplaying the effect of this cut, but teachers know that these kids benefit greatly from early interventions that will no longer be there. This cut is simply immoral."

Included in the march which set out from Edmonton's downtown Convention Centre and ended up at the front steps of the Alberta Legislature Building, were teachers, nurses, doctors, students, businessmen, union members, and others.

Numerous Indigenous participants joined in, including supporters of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation who were protesting the Coastal Gaslink project which would impact Indigenous land, water, air quality, wildlife, hunting and fishing territory.

The pipeline, also advocated by Premier Kenney, is a 6.6 billion dollar initiative and will traverse 660 kilometres from northeastern B.C. to a multi-billion



Indigenous educators in Edmonton demonstrated their support carrying this red banner (as a sign of their "passion") during a recent march in downtown Edmonton.

dollar terminal at Kitimat, B.C. Its construction began early last year.

At the time of this writing federal and provincial governments are dialoguing with the opposing B.C. hereditary chiefs who claim they have not been duly consulted. This is the government's attempt to quell any potential upheavals such as protests like the rail blockades in Ontario that halted train traffic and fueled a national political crisis for two weeks last month. One short-lived rail line blockade was set up just west of Edmonton at Acheson, during the third week of February; however the provincial court swiftly shut it down.

The controversy is complicated due to the differences of opinion held by elected chiefs versus hereditary chiefs. As well, there are many other strong-minded groups and individuals who oppose the pipeline, such as environmentalists.

Most recently the federal government has turned its attention to both health and economic measures needed to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic which is spreading across the globe.

Current discussions that include the provincial, federal and First Nation governments are ongoing and will, hopefully, come to terms in an amicable manner that is a win-win situation for all parties concerned.

## AltaLink & Kainai collaborate

A recently formed limited partnership between the Kainai-Blood Tribe and AltaLink delivers a valuable new revenue stream for the First Nation and highlights how relationships built on collaboration can result in a mutually beneficial solution for all parties.

"I am pleased that this partnership has finally come to fruition. It has been a lengthy process and I would like to thank previous Kainai leadership for their role in setting the groundwork for this to happen. I would also like to thank AltaLink for all their efforts in making this a reality," Councilor Tim Tailfeathers said. "I am looking forward to Kainai fully participating in the economy of Alberta. I hope that the future brings many more partnerships that will result in stronger relationships between the Blood Tribe and Alberta."

During consultation for the Southwest 240 kV project, AltaLink worked closely with the Kainai-Blood Tribe to reach an agreement that allowed the new transmission line to cross First Nation land.

"This agreement is a testament to how collaboration can lead to mutually beneficial results for everyone," said Scott Thon, President and CEO of AltaLink. "Not only were we able to save millions of dollars for

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# It was home. It was local. It was accessible.

I catch Oski Pasikoniwew Kamik (OPK) Vice-Principal, Joline Pelletier, at the end of the school day in the middle of the week. It is the middle of November, a time when a teacher might be tired. Joline sounds vibrant and energetic; it's evident that a day spent with junior high students is a day she enjoys. "From the age of five, I aspired to be a teacher. I don't ever want to leave the classroom," she comments.

Joline grew up on the Peavine Métis Settlement, eventually becoming a member. She enrolled in the Teacher Assistant program at Northern Lakes College, graduating in 2005. A few years later, she returned to take University Studies, followed by the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) offered by the University of Alberta through Northern Lakes College. She graduated with a Bachelor of Education in 2013.

Joline spent her first year teaching kindergarten in Garden River on the Little Red River Cree Nation in 2013-2014. In the fall of 2015, she started at OPK with the Bigstone Cree Nation Education Authority as a fifth grade teacher. In her fifth year with OPK, she was promoted to Vice-Principal for grades six to nine.

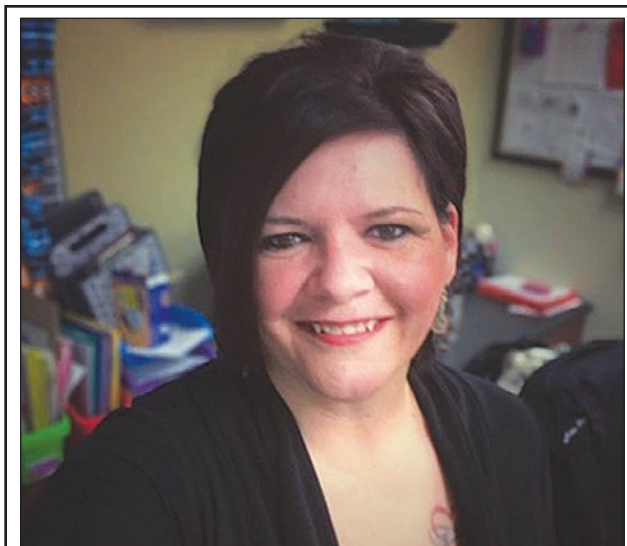
When asked why she chose to study with Northern Lakes College, she does not hesitate in her reply.

"It was home. It was local. It was accessible. I was a single mom and wanted to raise my children where I had family support. I also did not want to raise my kids in the city."

Joline reminisces about her time in the ATEP program at the Grouard Campus, remembering the unity that she felt with her peers. "There were about ten of us in our cohort, out of a class of about 50 people. We were close; we helped each other not only in school, but also through life in general. Going through the ATEP program at NLC was not just an educational experience, it was like being a part of a family. At OPK, we have a saying, 'At OPK we are a family and education comes from the heart.' This is what I experienced with my ATEP cohort at NLC."

A championship Métis dancer, Joline hosts a Métis dance club at the school. She started dance at age seven, and danced with the Edmonton Canadian Friendship Centre Métis Cultural Dancers. Joline also teaches beadwork. She has two daughters; one is a Teacher Assistant at OPK and the other works at Tolko. She has one grandchild and another on the way.

Of her choice to become a teacher, Joline explains, "I have known I wanted to be a teacher since I was in kindergarten. School was the place where I felt safe, and that was because of my kindergarten teacher.



NLC alumnus, Vice Principal Joline Pelletier.

I wanted to be a teacher so I could be that person for other kids." She loves her profession, but advises anyone considering a teaching career, "Make sure you do it, not for the income, but for the outcome – seeing student successes and the pride you feel when you see a student achieve."

As a Vice-Principal, Joline remains very involved in the classroom, and continues to teach dance and beading. "A number of my 'ATEP sisters' work with me at OPK. We are still growing together. I find it awesome that our cohort still feels like a family. We still have our Facebook page, where we share lesson plans and successes."

## Youth in crisis *cont. from p 6*

to ensure all young people are aware of the support services available to them wherever they are in Canada.

"We recognize that to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth, we must learn and embrace leadership from Indigenous peoples and organizations, like We Matter," said Katherine Hay, President & CEO, Kids Help Phone. "This partnership is much more than a collaboration of efforts; it's a fundamental movement in ensuring we support the Indigenous young people across the country in any

moment of crisis or need."

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7 national service offering pro-fessional counselling, information and referrals and volunteer-led text-based support for young people. Kids Help Phone's free, confidential services are available in both English and French.

It is a registered Canadian charity, and raises the majority of revenue from individuals, foundations, corporations and community fundraising.

We Matter is a national Indigenous-led and youth-centered organization and registered charity dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion.

It provides a forum for people across the country to share messages of hope, culture, and strength. By sharing stories, words of encouragement, and authentic messages of hope and resilience, We Matter helps to make a community and nation stronger, reminding youth that "I Matter. You Matter. We Matter."

To learn more, about Kids Help Phone's Indigenous Youth Action Plan, Finding Hope, visit [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca). For more information on We Matter, visit [wemattercampaign.org](http://wemattercampaign.org).



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# A family’s cultural journey

An Indigenous lady and her 2 daughters, along with her husband and son have become an inspiration to their communities in Southern Alberta with their unique take on the world, Indigenous culture and understanding of Mother Earth.

Many generations learn from one another, teach each other and learn from others in the community, especially the Elders, explained Indigenous author Judy Everson. Such has been the case for her and her two strong daughters, as well as her husband and son as they reclaim their Ojibwe Cree culture and heritage taken many years ago from past generations’ trauma on their Journeys.

“The three of us set on a path of learning, alongside my husband Terry and son Nick,” noted Everson. “We all took a program called Braiding the Sweetgrass that changed our lives forever. We learned more about our Indigenous culture with the Elders’ knowledge and many teachings which included sweat lodges and regular gatherings.

“I’ve said before that you don’t have to be blood related to love and honour the Elders and consider people you meet as family. We can build a community by working together for a better life for our future children and their children.”

Terry and Judy are the proud parents of three children who they have helped over the years to embrace their culture. “It’s been on behalf of our loved ones and others who didn’t get a chance to embrace their own cultures due to the residential schools and day schools they had no choice to attend. They were taken far too soon from their loved ones, parents and Elders - not to better them, but to take away the only way of life they knew, as they all lived on our sacred lands together as a family and community.”

The Everson family finds ways to give back to their communities and Indigenous culture through powwows, volunteering, standing with MMIWG walks, and participating with other charities such as Southern Alberta Kidney Foundation and Alberta Children’s hospital. “All three of us ladies do our best to help when we can,” said Judy, “and our guys do the best they can do, too.”

Elle Everson is currently, Miss Teen Southern Alberta 2019. “To our knowledge she is the first Indigenous young lady to hold that title,”

remarked Judy. “Elle has opened new doors, new opportunities for future young ladies and has inspired many hopeful girls to work hard for what they want and one day they will achieve their dreams and hopes to make it reality. It doesn’t matter who you are, where you come from as long as you’re willing to do the hard work as best you can, and you will achieve your goals.”

Elle has inspired even her little sister McKenzie to try this year’s 2020 Miss Preteen pageant to join their pageant sisterhood.

Elle has been involved with her Indigenous culture and has a goal to dance the traditional Jingle dance at the powwows to honour her passed generations who couldn’t dance nor sing nor even story tell.

“In the fall, for years now Elle volunteers with the Connect Event with our Elders and Youth with her brother Nick. They both volunteered at this year’s First Enhance Parallel Learning, Elder and youth conference where they spoke about their positive experiences with Elders. The special time they had with the Elders has been such a precious gift and they hold their teachings close to their hearts.”

“To have that connection goes beyond what we could ever imagine because they lost most of their grandparents,” said Judy, “though they do have their Kookum, grandma in Ontario to be grateful for and keep their other nookomis, grandma and gimishoomis, grandpa (in Ojibwe language) in their memories close to their hearts.”

In the summer during the Calgary Stampede, Elle works in the Elbow River Camp and enjoys her time with the Elders and fellow Indigenous people. She loves artwork, which she sells to gain money to give to her charities and attends cosmetology, which she is working towards for her future career Journeys.

McKenzie has been inspired by her older sister to join the 2020 Miss Preteen pageant. She has been making bracelets and art pieces to sell for her charity, the Alberta children’s hospital.

According to Judy, “Mackenzie likes what her sister was doing not because of the fancy dresses nor acknowledgement, but meeting the people, the fun she had and the many opportunities and places she’s been.”

Terry and Nick attend their men’s gathering and “are still learning many aspects of our cultural



Indigenous author Judy Everson with daughter Elle Everson, Miss Teen Southern Alberta 2019.

teachings and knowledge,” added Judy. “I attend their women’s gathering which gives me such a feeling of belonging and it’s been a good journey for me.

“Terry and I have been together for many years as we are elementary school sweethearts, which feels like just the beginning of each journey we take with our children.”

Judy has been writing for many years and has published a book on Amazon called “Chippy’s Adventures the Curious Little Squirrel.”

“I love to write,” she said, “as storytelling was our way to reconnect with our culture and how we would pass the stories down from generation to generation to keep our family history alive.”

She is currently in the process of publishing her Indigenous stories and it gives her great pleasure and pride to pass this tradition on to Elle, McKenzie and Nick, as well as many others.

“Into the future we look, though we acknowledge our past as we move towards the next journeys and walk together on the path set to come,” concluded Judy.

“We remember, we respect, hand and hand we walk together as every journey has a story to be told. This is part of our story and we can’t wait for many more adventures and journeys.”

# Chief Makinaw calls for respect between neighbours

Ermineskin Cree Nation Chief Craig Makinaw released the following statement related to racist videos that were posted online last month, and the events that have arisen in response to the posts.

“Recently two videos were posted to social media showing a group of moniyawak youths threatening and mocking an unnamed Indigenous person or persons.

This vulgar display of racism is indicative of a deeper issue in the country and in this province.

“The videos are now under investigation and will be dealt with under their jurisdiction.

“The Ermineskin Cree Nation and the Nehiyawahk of Maskwacis have been subjected to this type of behavior since contact. We are still here. We have been dealing with this type of behavior for longer than Ponoka, Alberta and Canada were even an idea. And we are still here. We will continue to fight for our right to exist, our right to practice our culture and speak our language.

“We will not condone threats of violence; we will not escalate the situation with retaliation. We will remain strong in our culture that has been under attack since before these systemic acts of violence against us began.

“In this fraught moment in history, I call upon the leaders of central Alberta reserves, municipalities, and cities to condemn acts of racism and to educate themselves on the issues facing Indigenous people, including knowledge of the Treaties. Much of the anger that drives these young men is from biased media that seeks to separate us further without teaching us how to move on together.

“I ask that the people in my own community allow themselves a moment to think about their own actions going forward. In order to move beyond and heal from this incident we need to embrace our Nehiyaw teachings and to act with kindness.

“These young men are clearly hurting if they feel the need to lash out. Do not seek retribution. Follow the Nehiyaw values of manatisown (respect) and kisewatsowin (kindness). Our communities are close in proximity, so we must also remember to embrace Wahkohtowin (kinship) with our neighbours. We have more in common than not.”

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# First Nations youth enjoy Hockey Hooky

Over 7000 excited students were bused into Rogers Place and played hooky from school on February 25 to watch the Edmonton Oil Kings clean up against the Winnipeg Ice in an awesome 10 - 1 victory.

It was a special kind of annual hooky event called Hockey Hooky that brought the students to Edmonton - hosted by the WHL and the Oil Kings. Thanks to Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP Chartered Accountants (KRP), 150 First Nations youth and their teachers attended the event.

This was the fifth year that KRP sponsored 50 youth from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, and the second year of sponsoring 50 youth from Alexander First Nation. This is the first year KRP sponsored an additional 50 youth from Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

The students had a great time at the game, said their teachers who accompanied them on the trip. It was a very successful field trip on many levels.

“Students were given the opportunity to watch the Oil Kings play and experience the excitement of a hockey game,” noted Vera Cardinal, Principal of the Onchaminahos School in Treaty Six Territory.

“Onchaminahos students were able see hockey skills displayed by the Oil Kings and see teamwork among the players. Spending time away from school with their teachers and peers was another highlight for our students,” she added.

“It was a long trip back to Saddle Lake Cree Nation for some of the students, however they said they had a great time. They were amazed by the hugeness and brightness of Rogers Place in Edmonton.”

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 hosted a WHL hockey game, with a built-in an educational component including student workbooks, in-game educational elements, and additional teaching resources accessible in advance of the game to all participating classrooms.

KRP is pleased to play an active role in sponsoring the First Nations students to the event.



KRP LLP sponsored 150 First Nations students to attend the Oil Kings Hockey Hooky event in Edmonton on February 25.

“Indigenous engagement and capacity enhancement is a key part of our working relationships with our First Nation communities,” said Rob Picton, a Partner at KRP.


“We try to hire accounting staff and summer students from the communities in which we serve, and our Hockey Hooky initiative just takes this a step further, by trying to inspire Aboriginal youth through sport.


“We know that for a lot of the youth, this is their first visit ever to Rogers Place, and they are inspired not only by the action on the ice, but also by seeing Alex Janvier’s incredible mosaic in Ford Hall as they approach the gates. It has been a great experience and with this year’s 150 kids, and we are now past

400 kids since we started the initiative five years ago.”

“We extend a BIG Thank you to Mr. Rob Picton and KRP for sponsoring our Onchaminahos students and staff to attend another Oil King's game. ay-hay!” concluded Principal Cardinal.

Oil Kings general Manager lauded the event and commended all the teachers for managing thousands of students to the rink and back safely. “The energy the kids brought from the day off school paid off for the boys,” he said on TSN online. “It’s great, around the league the majority of the teams are doing it now and it’s great to see the kids here having fun.”





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# AFN takes action on the Climate Crisis

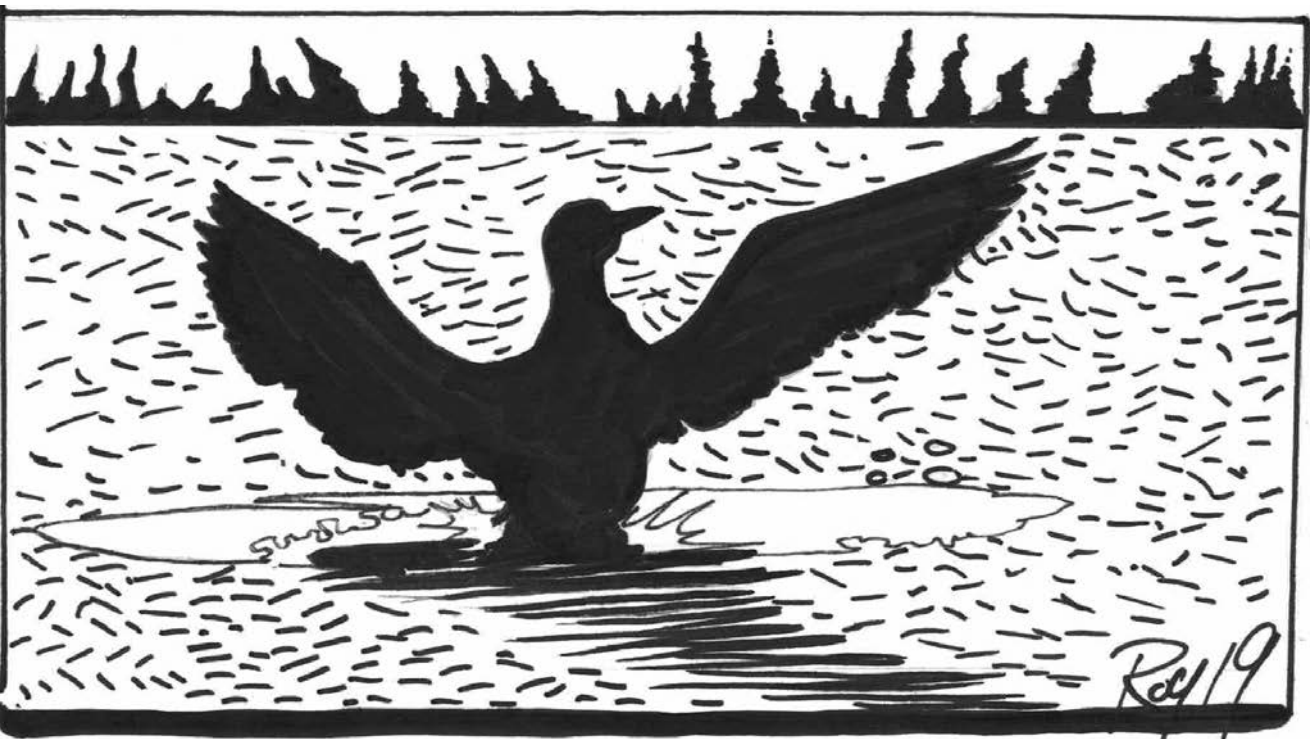
(Whitehorse, YT) – The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) hosted a successful National Climate Gathering in Whitehorse, YT, on March 3 & 4, that brought together over 380 First Nations leaders, Elders, women and youth to discuss First Nations-led solutions to address the Climate Crisis.

“First Nations from across the country are showing their commitment to action on the greatest challenge of our time – climate destruction. The scope of this meeting in the range of participants and the topics discussed was unprecedented. We are the original stewards of the land and must be full partners in developing and implementing Canada’s climate plan. We have sacred responsibilities to care for and maintain our traditional territories and we have rights as First Nations that must be respected. Our traditional knowledge and insight are essential in the fight to heal Mother Earth,” National Chief Perry Bellegarde said.

AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek welcomed delegates to the territory and spoke about the need to use a First Nations Climate Lens to address the crisis.

“We need to look at climate change with a holistic perspective and the understanding that everything is interconnected. From health to housing to the economy, it is all connected to Mother Earth and climate,” Regional Chief Adamek said.

“The north is experiencing the effects of the Climate Crisis at a rate two to three times greater than any other region in Canada. The north continues to show leadership on Climate Action and recently gathered to formalize a Yukon First Nations Climate Declaration that outlined a path forward. First Nations




must be seen as the leaders in finding solutions and moving to green energy solutions. We will continue to come together amongst our nations, regionally and nationally, to discuss these innovative solutions and set the path moving forward. There needs to be a massive shift in the way we live if we want to save our planet for our future generations. This leadership was shown by committing to plant a culturally relevant tree for all 380 participants at the Gathering to offset the carbon footprint of the event.”

The AFN’s National Climate Gathering included a meeting of the AFN Youth Council and other young people. Rosalie LaBillois is the female co-chair of the AFN Youth Council, and she spoke strongly about the positive and effective action coming out of the Gathering: “It was great to hear all the ideas and

possible solutions from young First Nations people from across the country. But it is also obvious that they are very concerned, even scared, of what the future holds. It is time for all leaders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to do the work necessary to ensure our children can still go out on the land and hunt and pick berries and enjoy the waterways and do all the things that make us First Nations people. The youth are saying that now is the time to act. We will be watching the older generations and hoping they will take immediate action to address the changes happening to our Mother Earth.”

The AFN will be compiling the information, solutions and best practices collected at the National Climate Gathering and making it available at afn.ca.

## SFU group advocates for clean energy opportunities



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### Suncor Base Mine Extension Project

#### Public Comments Invited

**What's Happening?**

**March 2, 2020** — The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) has accepted an initial project description for the proposed Suncor Base Mine Extension Project, located approximately three kilometres north of Fort McMurray, Alberta, in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The Agency invites the public and Indigenous groups to review the summary of the initial project description and provide feedback related to the proposed project. Comments received will support the Agency in the preparation of a summary of issues. Once completed, the Agency will provide the summary of issues to the proponent.

**How can I participate?**

Comments can be submitted online by visiting the project home page on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (reference number 80521). All comments received will be published online as part of the project file. For more information on the project, the review process and alternative means of submitting comments, visit the Agency's website at [canada.ca/iaac](https://canada.ca/iaac).

Written comments in either official language will be accepted **until March 23, 2020**.

To view the summary of the initial project description online, visit the Agency's website at [canada.ca/iaac](https://canada.ca/iaac). Printed copies are available upon request.

**Will there be more opportunities to participate?**


This is the first federal comment period for the project. If the Agency determines that a federal impact assessment is required, the public and Indigenous groups will have additional opportunities to comment over the course of the impact assessment process.

Stay updated by following the Agency on Twitter: @IAAC\_AEIC #SuncorBaseMine

**What is the proposed project?**

Suncor Energy Inc. (Proponent) is proposing to develop the Base Mine Extension Project (the Project) to sustain the supply of bitumen to the existing upgraders at Suncor's Oil Sands Base Plant operation (Base Plant). The Project includes an open pit mining operation and associated infrastructure that is required to supply oil sands to new bitumen froth production facilities and deliver bitumen froth by pipeline to the existing Base Plant facilities where further processing occurs, including upgrading into various product blends for market. The Project is located adjacent to existing Base Plant operations north of Fort McMurray, Alberta, within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Project construction is expected to start in 2026 and the footprint is anticipated to be approximately 20 000 hectares.

For more information on the Agency's privacy policies, consult the Privacy Notice on its website at [canada.ca/iaac](https://canada.ca/iaac).



(March 2020) - Simon Fraser University’s new Clean Energy Research Group (CERG) suggests that all First Nations should be able to provide clean energy to ratepayers across the province.

CERG considers itself a neutral party amidst the various stakeholders who have made submissions on the issue to the B.C. Utilities Commission in response to a BCUC draft report regarding the regulation of Indigenous utilities.

“CERG’s suggestion goes well beyond the presentations made to BCUC by interested parties, which tend to see the scope of Indigenous utilities limited to their own reserves,” says SFU professor and CERG lead Andy Hira.

The CERG working paper, *Towards a Positive Sum Regulation of Indigenous Utilities in B.C.* suggests that a mixed commission of Indigenous and BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) regulators could allow for the benefits of competition within the grid, something its researchers say would benefit all taxpayers.

In the draft report, the BCUC notes that there is a ban on “retail access” in B.C., which means that other utilities cannot use BC Hydro’s transmission and distribution infrastructure to sell power to customers in BC Hydro’s service area. BC Hydro has also suspended a program allowing emerging independent utilities to sell electricity to them.

Currently, remote communities in B.C. rely primarily on diesel generators and there is little incentive to transition to renewable energy sources without the ability to sell that power to customers outside their communities.

CERG’s recommendations are based on calculations by its engineering team

that Site C generation will fall far short of expected electricity demand in the province within a decade, producing only a fifth of the electricity required.

The calculations outlined in the working paper demonstrate the need for new sources of renewable clean energy and conclude that First Nations groups throughout the province could contribute in the process. Clean energy production can act as a catalyst for economic and social development, which CERG is currently documenting through a series of case studies.

CERG researchers suggest a neutral system would be open to competition and offer consumers choices for their electricity, as well as one that would take advantage of sales to other provinces and states, based on the proximity and energy resources abundance of some First Nations to borders.

“Clean energy projects, such as wind, geothermal and solar power, represent an economic development opportunity for First Nations without the risks of environmental harm involved in oil and gas pipeline projects,” says Hira. “If Indigenous utilities are able to sell beyond their own reserves it creates a solid revenue stream to improve life in their communities over the long-term and reduces emissions, which is key to building a healthy future for the next generations.”

He says Indigenous clean energy projects also offer the intangible benefits of reconciliation, greater autonomy and self-sufficiency and a link with Indigenous spiritual values around environmental preservation.

The final BCUC report on the regulation of Indigenous utilities is due to the provincial government on April 30, 2020.



# Teck withdraws Frontier Mine proposal

Last month, Teck Resources Ltd. made the stunning announcement that it has withdrawn its proposal for the Frontier Oilsands Mine, which would have been the largest open pit oilsands mine in Canada. The announcement came days before Canada was set to make a decision on the project, and in the middle of a protracted and tense national crisis over the proposed Coastal Gaslink pipeline in unceded Wet’suwet’en territory.

Frontier would have produced up to 260,000 barrels of bitumen per day and 4 million tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per year over 40 years. The proposal stood to affect Indigenous peoples’ territories, resources, and rights, and have irreversible, adverse global climate consequences.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, stated, “We are absolutely relieved and overjoyed with Teck’s self-rejection of the monstrous Frontier Mine proposal.

“The fossil fuel industry is clearly facing extinction, and the market is no longer profitable enough for these major companies to proceed. The pressure being exerted by Indigenous peoples and allies around the world to address the climate emergency is working, and the markets are being forced to accommodate the growing necessity of renewable energy.

“Canada must immediately dedicate the resources needed for a just transition and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples impacted. The promises of jobs and money that the company sold its partners for the past decade are now meaningless.”

In a letter to Minister of Environment Jonathan Wilkinson, Teck CEO and President Don Lindsay wrote, “Global capital markets are changing rapidly, and investors and customers are increasingly looking for jurisdictions to have a framework in place that reconciles resource development and climate change, in order to produce the cleanest possible products. This does not yet exist here today and, unfortunately, the growing debate around this issue has placed Frontier and our company squarely at the nexus of much broader issues that need to be resolved. In that context, it is now evident that there is no constructive path forward for the project. Questions about the societal implications of energy development, climate change and Indigenous rights are critically important ones for Canada, its provinces and Indigenous governments to work through.”

Chief Don Tom, Vice-President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, “The world is on fire, the glaciers are melting, the oceans are rising and we are all facing drastic changes to our lands and waters, and our ways of living. We welcome Teck’s withdrawal of the ill-fated, severely dangerous Frontier Oilsands Mine. The project did not have support of all the Indigenous peoples who would have been impacted. Importantly, as we are seeing with Coastal Gaslink, even when a project has the stubbornly unwavering support of the Crown, if there is not free, prior and informed consent from the Indigenous peoples impacted, then there is no certainty.”

“The announcement from Teck is an incredibly significant milestone in our fight against the dirty



fossil fuel industry,” stated Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

“Teck would have made use of Canada’s proposed \$12.6B Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) pipeline that is planned to go through Secwépemc territory and does not have the consent of the proper Title and Rights Holders. The landscape is shifting incredibly quickly, and Teck’s withdrawal of Frontier is going to create even more uncertainty for TMX and any other fossil fuel projects. As Mr. Lindsay has noted, societal questions about climate change are beginning to truly impact the bottom line of natural resource extraction projects. Coastal Gaslink should seriously be asking, at point will investors walk away from LNG Canada?”

## AltaLink & Kainai *cont. from p 8*

Alberta electricity customers by building a much shorter line, the Kainai-Blood Tribe is provided with the opportunity to create a reliable and consistent financial investment for their people.”

An application from AltaLink and Kainai-Blood Tribe for the new limited partnership – KainaiLink – was approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) on November 13, 2018. On January 1, 2020, the Kainai-Blood Tribe exercised its option to invest

51 per cent of the common equity portion of the transmission line and earn a regulated rate of return. The limited partnership officially came in to effect this year.

Under an operating agreement, AltaLink will continue to maintain the transmission line over the life of the project.

The Kainai Nation is a proud member of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksikaitsitapi) which consists of Piikani, Siksika and Amskapi Piikani. The Kainai since time immemorial held on strong to its

culture, traditions and language. The Declaration of the Elders now known as Kainayssini (Kainai way of life) which was ratified by Kainai members in 1988. The Elders recognize that the Kainai Nation has always had control over its lands and over its religious, political, economic and cultural destinies; including the right to establish laws and exercise jurisdiction over our territories and resources without interference.



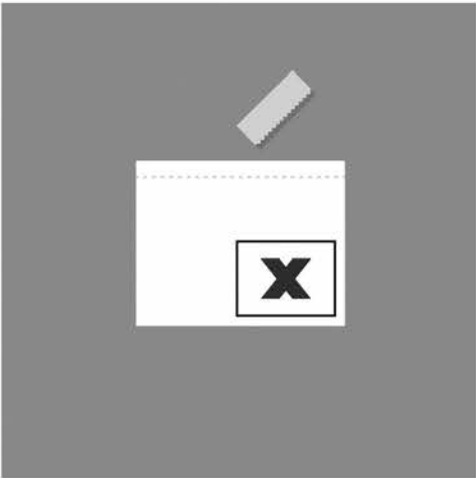
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# Alberta expands addiction treatment at Blood Tribe

New funding will expand the Blood Tribe safe withdrawal site and give local police the tools they need to keep Indigenous Albertans safe.

The Alberta government is providing up to \$2.2 million per year to expand the Kottakinoona Awaahkapiiyaawa (Bringing the Spirit Home) safe withdrawal management site from six beds to 24. This means that over the next three years, 3,753 additional Indigenous Albertans will receive addiction services.

“Our government is proud to provide funding to help this innovative facility support Albertans in the fight against addiction,” stated Jason Luan, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

“By creating more spaces, we give more people the opportunity to get on the path to health, wellness and long-term recovery. This is part of our promise to create a fully funded continuum of care for addiction treatment and recovery.”

This community-developed program provides a safe transition to addiction treatment and recovery services. When paramedics respond to an overdose in the community, the client can choose to go to the nearest hospital or the safe withdrawal management site where they receive medical detox services and 24-hour clinical care for 10 to 14 days.

Those who choose to go to the site also have the option of attending the Kainai Transition Society to support their recovery and transition back into the community. More than 150 people are currently on a waitlist to access the site.

“Bringing the Spirit Home is run by our community and designed for our community,” explained Kevin Cowan, CEO, Kottakinoona Awaahkapiiyaawa (Bringing the Spirit Home).

“This increased funding will first and foremost allow us to save lives and help more people in our community struggling with drug addiction. This funding is an important step to help address addiction and support recovery for those who need it most.”

The Government of Alberta is investing \$140

million by 2023 to create a full continuum of treatment and supports for Albertans experiencing mental health and addictions issues. This includes funding to treat an additional 4,000 people in publicly funded treatment spaces across Alberta.

“Our government has heard loud and clear the requests from First Nations and Métis leaders for additional treatment spaces and supports for their communities,” stated Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations.

“Today’s announcement is another step towards improving treatment services and addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action.”

The provincial government is also investing \$13.6 million this year for the Blood Tribe Police Service and other Indigenous policing initiatives.

Provincial funding for Blood Tribe police is increasing by \$480,000, which will go toward hiring five additional officers.

“Along with providing more access to treatment, we believe in a balanced approach to drug addiction that includes ensuring police have the ability to target criminals who prey on vulnerable Albertans by selling illicit drugs,” added Doug Schweitzer, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

“This additional funding will allow Blood Tribe police to create five new positions and put those officers where they’re needed most.”

“The Blood Tribe Police Service has been anticipating these five new positions since they were identified by the Blood Tribe, Public Safety Canada and the Province of Alberta in July 2019,” remarked Kyle Melting

Tallow, chief of police, Blood Tribe Police Service.

“These much-needed positions will certainly add to the safety and security of the Blood Tribe. We look forward to the signatories of the tripartite agreement continuing to work together on a long-term funding arrangement.”

New funding for the Blood Tribe Police Service is part of a \$1.4 million increase in the province’s contribution to the First Nations Policing Program, which provides funding for three self-administered Indigenous police services in Alberta as well as RCMP positions in 21 participating communities.

Under this program, the Government of Alberta pays 48 per cent of policing costs in participating communities, with Public Safety Canada responsible for 52 per cent. In 2020-21, Alberta will contribute \$3.5 million to the Blood Tribe police.

Joseph Schow, MLA for Cardston-Siksika concluded, “This is excellent news for Kainai First Nation and all of southern Alberta. For years, we have called for more addiction treatment services and supports in our communities. I’m proud that our government has listened and is investing in services that will save lives and help more Albertans on the road to recovery.”



Minister Schweitzer, Associate Minister Luan and Blood Tribe representatives at the announcement of new funding for addiction treatment and policing on the Blood Tribe.

## Separation threats

*cont. from p 4*

the Indigenous communities have statistics that triple those incidents as compared with to the average non-Indigenous communities. We ask you, why is that not enough to reinforce our pleas for sovereignty? As Blake Richards stated – we too feel disconnected from and disrespected by the rest of Canada.

“The Treaty No. 6 Chiefs challenge the Canadian and Alberta Governments to acknowledge the wrongs at the front door and we once again remind Alberta’s leaders that our Treaty No. 6 (1878) predates the creation of the

Province of Alberta (1905) and there will be no such threats of separating “OUR LANDS” any further than history has already done.

“Both Governments are aware of the Bilateral relationship as it exists with the Crown. As good neighbours, we respectfully remind you that the Treaty Lands we share with you is, was and will never be owned by any level of the government. Therefore, it is unviable for any government to negotiate and leverage any such threats or transaction. Without a Bill of Sale, there was never any sale of our lands. Our traditional territories were provided by the Creator and gifted to us to respect, honour and protect.”



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# Citizenship Forum sets new direction for Métis Nation

Citizens from across the Métis Nation homeland joined together in an unprecedented two-day session to share their views, concerns and give direction on where the Métis Nation needs to go. Over 400 grassroots Métis Nation citizens and leadership from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario were in attendance.

“Our people have spoken; we have been provided clear direction that we must protect the territorial integrity of the Métis Nation and the historic identity of the Métis Nation” said Métis National Council National Spokesperson David Chartrand. “While there were different points of views expressed there was a clear consensus on what constitutes the Métis Nation homeland and who we are as a people.”

The Saskatoon conference was an opportunity for leadership and grassroots citizens to come together to discuss and learn more about the Métis, the homeland and the protection of the inherent rights that come with that distinction. “We have received clear direction to convene a special assembly composed of Governing Members from the four western provinces as soon as possible to address the threat posed by the non-Métis voyageurs and French-Canadians in the east appropriating our culture and identity.”

“We are putting out a call to all Métis Nation leaders to come together to have an open dialogue on these critical issues,” added Spokesperson David Chartrand. “This is an urgent matter and I call upon our Métis Nation governing leaders from BC to Manitoba to set aside our differences and join in a healthy debate on one of the most important issues facing our nation.”

“It was heartening to hear the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan Vice President Gerald Morin and other leaders in Saskatchewan reinforce his position on the need to address these important issues. Mr. Morin clearly stated that MN-S does not and will not recognize these new MNO voyageur communities and they are not a part of the Métis Nation,” continued Chartrand on March 10, 2020.

“It is important to acknowledge that leadership across the western provinces agree with the findings of Dr. Darren O’Toole and Professor Darryl Leroux that showcased the clear evidence that the Métis Nation of Ontario’s research for the new so-called historical Métis communities in that province, shows the connection is with the Algonquin and Ojibway peoples and not the Métis Nation.”

“Make no mistake the grassroots have spoken and we will act and we will act decisively, preparations will be made and we will return to Saskatchewan to debate this openly and conclusively, we will not let our people down,” concluded Chartrand.

“I will be asking President Chartier to write a letter inviting the four provinces to bring their elected provincial leadership to a Métis Nation Special Assembly to discuss this most important issue facing our Nation today.”

Roy 2020



## COVID-19 *cont. from p 5*

Any traveller returning from outside of the country should self-isolate for 14 days, even if they are feeling well, and monitor for symptoms.

Any traveller who has returned before March 12 should closely monitor themselves for symptoms.

If they experience symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately and call Health Link 811 for follow-up assessment and testing.

Anyone who has health concerns or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should complete an online COVID-19 self-

assessment. For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19).

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