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# Torrie Ironstar expresses himself through his vibrant art

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

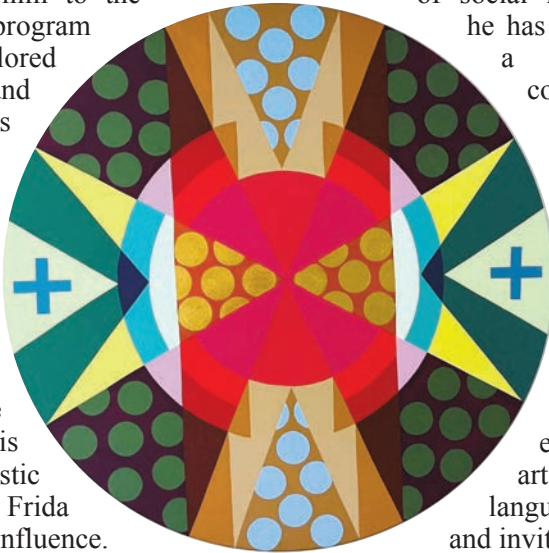
Torrie Ironstar, a Regina, Saskatchewan native from the Carry the Kettle First Nation, has carved a distinctive niche in the art world by blending his deafness and Indigenous heritage into a vibrant tapestry of creativity. Ironstar's artistic journey began early, with a natural inclination towards drawing. "I used to doodle on the walls and anything I could find with pencils or markers," he recalls.

His passion for art led him to the International Baccalaureate program in high school, where he explored mixed media, sculpture, and 3D art. However, it was acrylic painting that truly captivated him. Years later, Ironstar reconnected with his art, focusing on Indigenous forms that enriched his connection to his Nakoda heritage.

This personal exploration allowed him to weave Nakoda traditions into his work, creating a unique artistic expression. Ironstar cites Frida Kahlo as a profound influence. Kahlo's work, shaped by her experiences as a queer woman in a male-dominated art world,

broke barriers and inspired Ironstar to integrate his deafness and Indigenous symbols into his art.

"Her symbolic approach influenced me to incorporate my deafness and Indigenous symbols into my own art from a young age," Ironstar says. As a deaf artist, Ironstar views his disability not as a limitation but as a source of empowerment. Despite the challenges of communication gaps before the advent of social media and the internet, he has found ways to establish a presence in the art community.



"I express my art through my deaf perspective, which brings out more color, detail, and meaning," he explains. "My disability is a part of my identity and an integral aspect of my artistic expression." Ironstar's evolving style of pattern art embraces a visual language that transcends words and invites open interpretation.

Influenced by Indigenous artists like Bob Boyer and Alex Janvier, he has come to



Artist Torrie Ironstar says that his deafness has empowered his artistic journey. Photo supplied.

appreciate the profound narratives embedded in their work. "I didn't fully understand their work when I was younger, but as I grew older, I began to appreciate the stories they told through their beautiful pieces," he reflects.

Today, Ironstar continues to innovate and inspire, bridging his deaf experience with his rich Indigenous heritage to create art that speaks with depth and colour, demonstrating the powerful sources of his creativity and self-expression.

"I aim to guide viewers through colours, patterns, and stories, allowing them to interpret my work through their own eyes."

## Calgary Stampede: Better than ever!

By Terry Lusty, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Calgary has been a virtual beehive of activity for ten consecutive days, during the first half of July each and every year - since 1912. Its world-famous exhibition and stampede are legendary.

Now everybody loves a parade and this year's 2024 Stampede parade on July 5 was exceptional. Tens of thousands lined the streets to see First Nation actor, Owen Crow Shoe lead the two-and-a-half hour parade on horseback as stampede parade marshal.

Stampede President, Will Osler, praised the actor, saying, "His commitment to celebrating

and sharing his culture both on and off the screen is inspiring. He is a role model for many around the world and we couldn't be more proud to have him lead the parade as marshal."

Crow Shoe was honoured and extremely proud to serve as parade marshal.

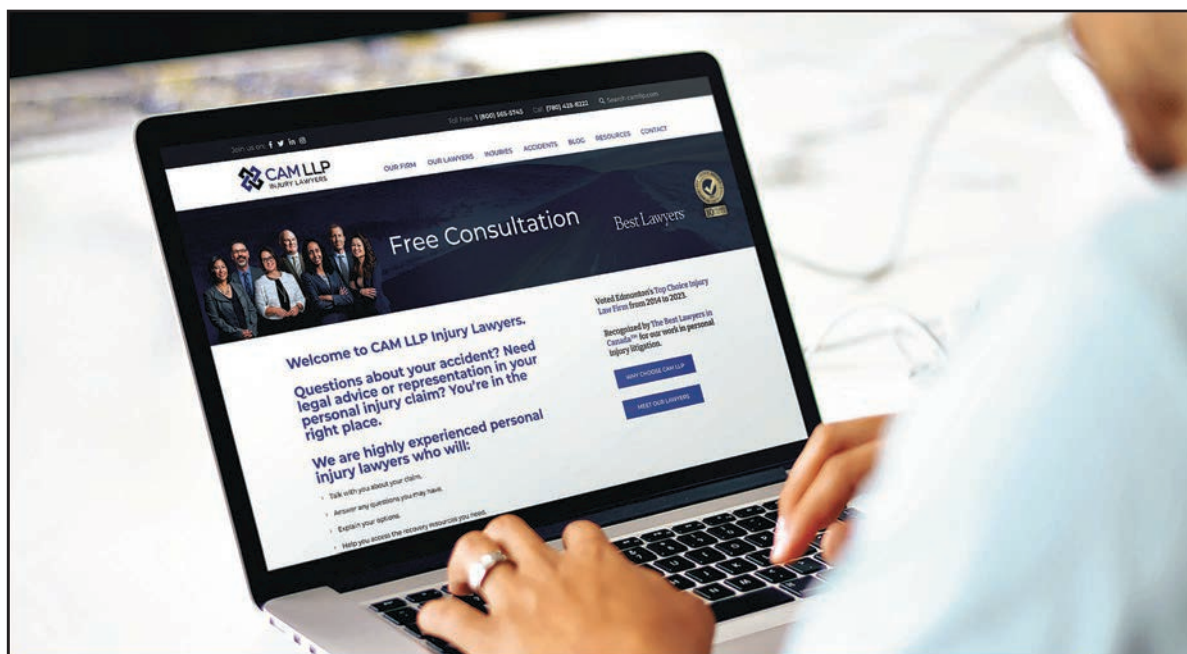
He was born in Lethbridge to Kainai and Piikani parents and did some of this year's emceeing for the powwow in the Saddledome. To his credit, he's made himself accessible to the public and was often sighted inside the rodeo enclosure. This summer he is starring alongside

Kevin Costner in "Horizon: An American Saga," in addition to the film, "Dream, in California." He is best known for his roles in: Black Summer (2019), The Revenant (2015), Suzy Makes Cupcakes (2023), Tin Star (2017), and more.

Among the First Nation riders in the Calgary Stampede parade was 22-year-old Margaret Holloway, the 2024 First Nation Princess. She's been busy all summer, making appearances on the grandstand, at the Elbow River Camp and powwow, the rodeo, and more.

The Elbow River Camp contained 26 tipis, most of them handed down in the family lines over the generations. It was the centre of some exciting cultural activities, especially with the addition of competition hand games. There were also a variety of arts and crafts exhibitors onsite with the proprietors operating on a rotational basis. For some crafters it's their "Christmas" in that their sales are strong. The Stampede's newly opened BMO Centre is now open and has a whopping million square feet of space. Half of that alone houses the Market Centre with 257 vendors and includes the Oasis western art showcasing three dozen feature artists

Continued on page 9



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# New podcast series explores ethics of research and respecting cultural values

A new podcast explores why cultural values are so important to Indigenous Peoples involved in research.

kikapekiskwewin is a Cree word meaning “to have a future conversation.” This 8-episode limited series resulted from a 2-day hybrid international conference held in the town of Athabasca in June 2022.

Featured in the podcasts are Sharon Loonskin, Lorraine Cardinal, Makayla Lesann, Dr. Erica Neeganagwedgin, Dr. Susan Manitowabi, Dr. Tiffany Prete, Gail Leicht, Dr. Melissa Jay, and Dr. Paul Jerry.

The podcast series includes an introduction, a conversation on parallel pathways, a sharing of Indigenous ways of thinking. It also introduces a First Nations research ethics board on Manitoulin Island, shows how building relationships with research ethics boards may assist the universities. It also offers the experience through the perspective of the graduate student. Tracy Powell and David Powell provided technical support for the 2-day hybrid event and podcast.

“The podcast will help listeners understand the natural laws surrounding the Indigenous People. It will help the research community as well as the Indigenous People, who are co-creators of research projects as well,” said project lead Dr. Josie Auger.

## Indigenous culture and protocols inform research

A member of Bigstone Cree Nation, Auger is an associate professor of Indigenous Studies in Athabasca University’s Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She said the podcast is a follow-up to the June 2022 conference.

The idea for the conference stemmed from Auger’s research into the invasion of sexual boundaries of Indigenous women. She wanted to use Indigenous research methodology to guide her conversations with 11 Indigenous women but ran into barriers getting research ethics approval for her project.

She said the experience showed a disconnect between university research ethics boards, which are rooted in settler-colonial practices and policies, and Indigenous research methodology, which considers cultural values, customs, and beliefs of specific communities involved in research.

“We’re a part of the solution. Understanding who we are—that research is a healing process in a sense,” Auger explained. “Research is about affirming our existence in the context of our nations but also in the context of the universe and of the Earth.”

Auger worked with AU’s Dr. Nisha Nath, Myra Tait, and Dr. Carolyn Greene to apply for Social

Sciences and Humanities Research Council and AU funding to host, prepare, and organize the conference. With the help of graduate student Makayla Lesann, they invited people with similar areas of interest working with Indigenous communities.

The podcast will serve people who are interested in self-determination and sovereignty because ethics, understanding the cultural values will help people to understand our treaty federalism.

## Including community in ethics reviews

The Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee was created in consultation with local First Nation leadership and community members to help communities decide if a research project is ethical.

Auger said she would like to explore a similar idea with Indigenous Peoples in Treaty 8 where she is from, and other Indigenous nations. Such a board would help ensure cultural protocols are followed and that researchers are respectful of the culture and traditions of the people they are engaged in research with. She hopes that the conversation goes on, and that kikapekiskwewin continues.


“The podcast will serve people who are interested in self-determination and sovereignty because ethics, understanding the cultural values will help people to understand our treaty federalism.”

Auger said she is grateful for the allies she has found on her journey, particularly those within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the AU community who supported the project.

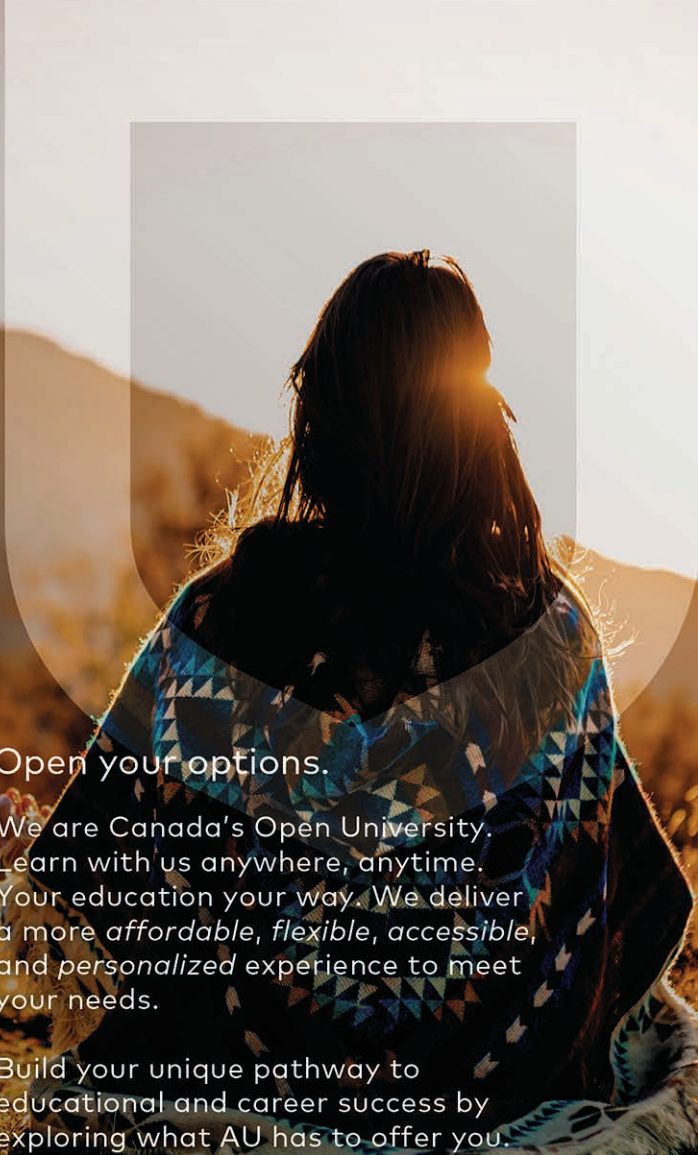
Listen to episodes of kikapekiskwewin.



Project lead Dr. Josie Auger is an Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies at Athabasca University.



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# Ojibwe version of Star Wars premieres

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

An Ojibwe-dubbed version of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, the film that started the *Star Wars* franchise in 1977, is coming to select big screens in August, marking the second occasion the iconic film has been translated into an Indigenous language.

*Anangong Miigaading*, the Ojibwe, or Anishinaabemowin, translation of *Star Wars* premiered at Winnipeg’s Centennial Concert Hall on August 8 with a limited release in Winnipeg and other select markets on August 10.

Afterwards, it will air on APTN and be available to stream on Disney+, but those dates have yet to be revealed.

In December, the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council and University of Manitoba announced that they entered a partnership with Disney/Lucasfilm and APTN to adapt an official Ojibwe version of the first *Star Wars* film, with auditions for voice actors occurring earlier this year in Winnipeg.

“We have some folks who are actors but learning the language and some folks who are speakers who were learning the acting process as we went along,” said Cary Miller, a University of Manitoba Indigenous Studies scholar who served as the project manager.

In addition to her knowledge of the Ojibwe language, Miller was recruited to the project for her extensive knowledge of the film.

“You had a bunch of *Star Wars* geeks that came together,” Miller said.

Aandeg Muldrew, an Anishinabe educator whose middle name is Jedi, had never voice acted before he successfully auditioned to be the voice of Luke Skywalker.

“I think my journey mirrored Luke’s journey a little bit,” he said, adding that having such a major role was “a little bit daunting.”

Like the protagonist at the film’s outset, Muldrew wasn’t confident in the role assigned to him, but like Skywalker he gained confidence as the film progressed.

### Not an Exact Translation

Miller said trans-lating the script into Ojibwe was the first project’s first step, followed by adapting the Anishinaabemowin script to fit what appears on screen.

“That’s where we take those phrases and try to match them with the amount of time that the actor is speaking in the film and their lip movements,” Miller explained.

This proved challeng-ing, requiring the translation team to work long hours “sweating in that studio,” said Pat Ningewance Nadeau,

Miller’s University of Manitoba Indigenous Studies colleague who worked on the film as a translator.

“If somebody’s lips were closed, we had to come up with a word where you close your mouth when you’re making that sound, so we had to change the script,” said Nadeau.

“But the result is that when Carrie Fisher is moving her mouth in the film, it really looks and sounds like she’s speaking Anishinaabemowin,” she said, referring to the actor who played Princess Leia in the original films.

Having to synchronize his Anishinaabemowin lines with the English lip movements of his character wasn’t an issue for Dennis Chartrand, who did the voice for a famously masked Darth Vader.

In addition to playing Vader, whose iconic distorted voice was acted by James Earl Jones in the original, Chartrand assisted with some of the project’s translation work, assisting his fellow actors, some of whom aren’t fully fluent in Ojibwe, to ensure they pronounced all their lines correctly.

He credits the project’s director and voicing coach, Ellyn Stern Epcar, who also directed the film’s 2013 Navajo dub, with helping the actors “be in character and stay in



character.”

Chartrand added that “a little bit of technology is going to bring this Darth Vader voice into Ojibwe very powerfully.”

“You’re probably going to get goosebumps when you hear it, even though you might not understand,” said Chartrand, who comes from Pine Creek First Nation in northwestern Manitoba.

The norms of the Anishinaabemowin language required some lines to be modified, because a literal translation wouldn’t make sense.

In the original film, referring to Chewbacca, Han Solo’s tall, hairy copilot, Princess Leia says, “Can somebody tell this big walking carpet to get out of my way?”

In the Ojibwe cut, Leia, voiced by Theresa Eischen of Little Grand Rapids First Nation in eastern Manitoba, says a line that translates to, “Can somebody get this big, hairy thing out of my way?”

“Our language is very descriptive,” Eischen explained. “Even that line that I really love, that’s not really what they’re saying, but it still means the same thing.”

For *May the force be with you*, the film’s translators decided to use *Gi-ga-miinigoowiz Mamaandaawiziwin*, which situates the phrase within Ojibwe teachings, Chartrand explained.

“There’s a whole lot more syllables, but yet there’s no other thing that we can say with that one,” he said.

### How Star Wars Is an Indigenous Story

The actors noted clear parallels between *Star Wars*’ narrative and the history of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island and beyond.

“Indigenous people around the world are the Rebel Alliance and the Empire is the colonial forces that try to take away our harmonious connection to everything around us — the land, the water, the animals — which is so precious to us,” said Chartrand.

Eischen noted the “resiliency” Leia shows after the Empire destroys Alderaan, her home planet, as well as the striking similarity Chewbacca has to the Sasquatch, a sacred being to West Coast First Nations, and how Yoda’s object-subject-verb speech patterns are reminiscent of many Indigenous languages.

“Luke Skywalker living in this rural area away from all the things he wants to do, it’s kind of like living on the rez. Sometimes you’re just kind of isolated in a lot of ways,” Kapashesit said of Tatooine, the protagonist’s home planet.


Han Solo’s Millennium Falcon ship similarly reminded Kapashesit of where he grew up.

“That’s just him in his rez car — like it has its difficulties, there’s things that are not working all the way they need to be, but he loves it, and he’s going to make it work,” said Kapashesit. “That’s very relatable to a lot of Indigenous people.”

There’s a reason the film resonates with so many different cultures, resulting in it having been translated into more than 50 languages.

“There’s something just about the universality of this story,” Kapashesit said. “The characters involved, how there’s this force around them that

Continued on page 10



Natural Resources  
Conservation Board

JOINT NOTICE OF FILING

APPLICATION BY ST. MARY RIVER IRRIGATION DISTRICT TO EXPAND THE CHIN RESERVOIR NEAR TABER, ALBERTA UNDER:  
NRCB APPLICATION NO. 2401 and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

ST. MARY RIVER IRRIGATION DISTRICT  
CHIN RESERVOIR EXPANSION PROJECT

**TAKE NOTICE** that St. Mary River Irrigation District has applied to the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) and Alberta Environment and Protected Areas for approval to relocate the Chin East dam in order to expand the Chin Reservoir near Taber, Alberta. The project's western limit is in SE-26-7-16-W4, and the new dam and eastern limit are within SW 23-7-15 W4 and NW-14-7-15-W4 approximately 15 km south of Taber.

Water management projects that are required by the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA) to submit an environmental impact assessment report are automatically referred to the NRCB to conduct a public interest review. Approvals for this project are required under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* and the *Water Act*.

**Nature of Application**  
As required by EPEA, St. Mary River Irrigation District has prepared and submitted an environmental impact assessment report to Environment and Protected Areas. This forms part of its application for approval to the NRCB. The NRCB, Environment and Protected Areas, and other Alberta government departments are reviewing the application. The application is not considered complete until the filed application has been reviewed and any deficiencies supplemented.

**Additional Information**  
To obtain additional information about the project, or to view or get copies of the application and environmental impact assessment report (EIA), or summary thereof, contact:

St. Mary River Irrigation District  
Chin Reservoir Expansion Project  
525 – 40 Street South  
Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4M1  
Email: chin.expansion@smrid.com  
Phone: 587-220-5652

The application and EIA are available online: <https://smrid.com/projects/chin-expansion/>

Or the application may be viewed, by appointment, at the following location:

Natural Resources Conservation Board  
100, 5401 – 1 Avenue S  
Lethbridge, Alberta  
Telephone: 403-381-5166  
Toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000

**NRCB Review Process**  
All documents received by the NRCB regarding this project application are accessible on the NRCB website project page: <https://www.nrcb.ca/natural-resource-projects/natural-resource-projects-listing/446/chin-reservoir-expansion-east-dam>. (Under section 24 of the NRCB's Rules of Practice, all documents filed in respect of this proceeding must be placed on the public record unless otherwise ordered by the Board, subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.)

Individuals who have an interest in receiving notices respecting the NRCB's review process for this project can sign up on the NRCB website project page or contact the NRCB at (403) 297-8269 or [laura.friend@nrcb.ca](mailto:laura.friend@nrcb.ca).

For more information on the NRCB review process, please refer to the NRCB website ([www.nrcb.ca](http://www.nrcb.ca)), or contact:

Laura Friend, Manager, Board Reviews  
Natural Resources Conservation Board  
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Dated at Calgary, Alberta, on August 13, 2024

William Y. Kennedy, General Counsel, NRCB





Over 300 youth attended the third annual Teepee Summit.

# Third annual Youth Teepee Summit had ‘a little bit of everything’

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The First Nations Health Consortium (FNHC) hosted its third annual Youth Teepee Summit from July 29 to 31 in Edmonton, with this year’s themes focusing on recreation and sports, entrepreneurship, storytelling and culture.

“We really aim to inspire youth, to empower them, to give them the confidence to take back to their communities and teach them there,” Lannie Houle, FNHC’s community and corporate lead, told *Alberta Native News*.

The FNHC assists youth across Alberta with applying Jordan’s Principle, which states that when there’s a jurisdictional dispute about which government is responsible for funding Indigenous children’s services, the priority must be to first disperse the funds.

The consortium also hosts a variety of sports and recreation programs, including ball hockey, curling, volleyball and soccer, and promotes early literacy through Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, which provides free monthly children’s books for kids aged zero to five years old.

The Youth Teepee Summit fits well into this broad mandate, Houle said.

“We had a little bit of everything, really,” she

told this newspaper. “We had culture, tradition, sports and rec, [and] education.”

While the summit is oriented towards teenagers, people of all ages are welcome to attend.

Over three days at the Northeast River Valley Event Centre, there were 300 attendees, 20 speakers and 30 vendors, said Houle.

“It was a great weekend. I think I was inspired just as much as the kids were inspired,” she said.

“It was a very full circle moment for me. Last year, I was actually speaking at the Teepee Summit and now this year, I’m working with the consortium.”

The summit opened with a grand entry and round dancing, as well as a session “on why we smudge, how we smudge and protocols” for smudging, Houle said.

“Those are really important, especially for

Indigenous kids who grew up in the city [and] are not surrounded by that culture,” she noted. “Now they know the proper protocols on how to approach Elders and do it in a respectful, traditional way.”

Houle said it was exciting to host recreational ball hockey at the summit, because the FNHC only started offering it about a week earlier.

The consortium announced official partnerships with Soccer Canada and Volleyball Canada, as well.

With the Paris Olympics just wrapping up, the consortium was fortunate to have two Olympians in attendance — Kerri Buchberger, who played women’s volleyball for Team Canada at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, and Liam Gill, who represented Canada in half-pipe snowboarding at the 2022 Beijing Olympics.

“We had them there playing with the kids, speaking, telling their stories and really inspiring them,” said Houle.

Gill, a member of the Łı́ı́dłı Kúé First Nation in the Northwest Territories, was the only male First Nations athlete representing Canada at the 2022 games.

Geena Jackson of the Bears’ Lair - an Indigenous version of business reality TV shows *Dragon’s Den* and *Shark Tank* - spoke to attendees about acquiring life skills and starting a business.

“It started with the basics, how to introduce yourself, and then all the way to what you could do as a business,” explained Houle.

Jackson told the story of a kid who got a popcorn maker as a present from his mother and was able to make \$60,000 in a year selling popcorn at various events in the Vancouver area.

For storytelling, the summit hosted an Elder who told attendees his people’s traditional stories and how to set up a teepee pole, with the youth given the opportunity to paint a miniature teepee.

“Hopefully one day, [the kids] know that they have everything that they need to pursue any of the dreams that they have,” said Houle.



The Youth Teepee Summit featured sports activities, cultural sessions and guest speakers.



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**Volume 41, Number 08, August 2024**  
**ISSN #08294135**  
**www.albertanativenews.com**

**EDITOR:** Deborah Shatz

**ADVERTISING:**  
Dan Moser 780-421-7966

Alberta Native News is published monthly for distribution to Native Bands and Metis Settlements across Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Northwest Territories.

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# Appointment of Charles Adler to the Senate should be rescinded

By Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

First Nations chiefs in Manitoba are calling for Ottawa to rescind the appointment of veteran broadcaster Charles Adler to the Senate.

In a statement, The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) said they are offended and disappointed by the recent appointment of Charles Adler to the Senate of Canada as recommended by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to represent Manitoba.

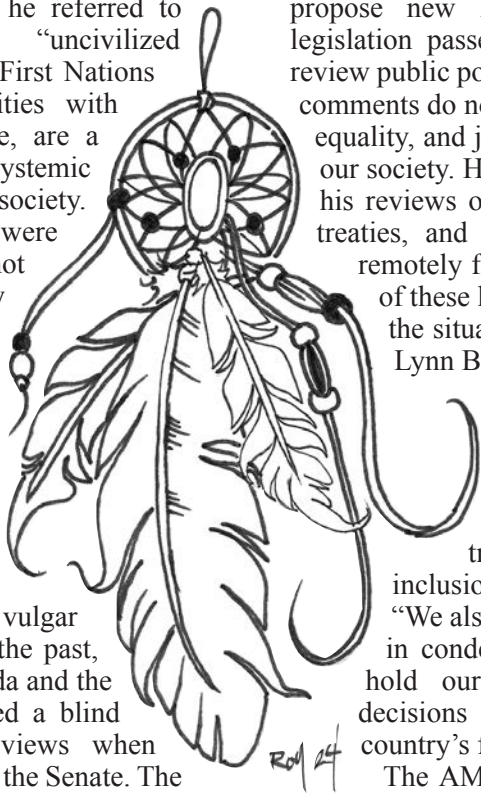
AMC is alarmed because Charles Adler’s past comments, in which he referred to Indigenous people as “uncivilized boneheads” and criticized First Nations Leadership and communities with grossly offensive language, are a stark reminder of the systemic racism that plagues our society. Although the comments were made in 1999, “these are not just passing remarks. They were and still are hurtful, but they also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misconceptions about First Nations now that this is once again being brought to light because of this appointment.”

The AMC filed formal complaints against Adler’s vulgar and racist commentary in the past, and it is obvious that Canada and the Prime Minister have turned a blind eye to these offensive views when making this appointment to the Senate. The AMC is asking both the Governor General of Canada and the Prime Minister to reconsider and recall this appointment as they view it as a step backward in the ongoing efforts towards reconciliation and the recognition of First Nations rights in Canada.

Grand Chief Cathy Merrick expressed the collective outrage felt by many: “The appointment of Charles Adler to the Senate is a grave insult to all First Nations in Manitoba and across Canada. Senators are supposed to be accomplished Canadians from various professional backgrounds. They introduce bills, propose new laws, suggest amendments to legislation passed by the House of Commons, review public policy and debate issues. His racist comments do not indicate a modicum of respect, equality, and justice that are supposed to guide our society. How can any First Nation feel that his reviews of legislation impacting reserves, treaties, and inherent rights would be even remotely favourable to the original peoples of these lands? Did Canada not learn from the situation surrounding former Senator Lynn Beyak?”

The AMC calls on the Governor General and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to reconsider this appointment and to prioritize individuals who truly represent the values of inclusion, respect, and reconciliation. “We also urge the public to stand with us in condemning this appointment and to hold our leaders accountable for the decisions they make in shaping our country’s future.”

The AMC will continue to advocate for the rights and dignity of First Nations Peoples and will not remain silent in the face of such blatant racism and disrespect.



## Upcoming HR conference is tailored to FNMI professionals

Employee recruitment and retention are two of the most important challenges currently facing small and large businesses, organizations, agencies and all walks of life. Many successful strategies can be used across all types of businesses and employees but there are also many cultural factors that should be considered to optimize workplaces that are geared for First Nations and Metis employees. These factors and strategies aimed at best practices will be presented at the HR Conference: The Employee Lifecycle on October 28 and 29 at the River Cree Resort and Casino in Enoch, Alberta adjacent to West Edmonton. This is a conference tailored to First Nation and Métis HR professionals.

HR Conference: The Employee Lifecycle will provide expert industry discussions, practical workshops, and networking opportunities, designed to enhance employers’ understanding and application of HR principles throughout the lifecycle of each employee. The beautiful setting of the River Cree Resort and Casino in Enoch, adjacent to Edmonton, provides the perfect backdrop for building professional relationships, sharing experiences and connecting with fellow HR professionals.

Attendees will hear expert insights from guest speakers like Janice Poitras on 'Lateral Violence/Lateral Kindness', Tracy Spencer BHJ, BSW, RSW, M.Ed. on 'Handling Difficult Conversations', Gary Mearns on 'Retention', and Treena Wynes on 'Facilitating Change'. Their sessions promise to provide valuable perspectives and innovative solutions to contemporary HR challenges.

Conference delegates will have the opportunity to participate in In-Depth Workshops. They will engage with Trista Cave as she delves into 'Employee Discipline and Workplace Harassment', 'Performance Management and Goal Setting', and provides crucial updates on 'Employee Separations and the Canada Labour

Continued on page 8



# Calgary Public Library offers Powwow Trail 101

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Calgary Public Library is offering their very popular Powwow Trail 101 sessions once again this year. Photo supplied.

For the second year, Calgarians have the chance to learn everything they’ve wanted to know about powwows but might have been afraid to ask, thanks to the Calgary Public Library (CPL), which recently hosted the first of two Powwow Trail 101 sessions.

In Treaty 7, Powwow Trail encompasses the lands of the Siksika, Kainai, Tsuut’ina, Piikani, and Iethka Stoney Nakoda bands, with each hosting a powwow throughout the summer.

Each Powwow Trail 101 session focuses on a specific powwow and is scheduled three days in advance of it.

On July 31, the CPL hosted Powwow Trail 101 at the Saddletowne Library, which prepared attendees for the Piikani Powwow. The Aug. 28 session will be at the Crowfoot location for the Stoney Nakoda Powwow.

On Aug. 21, CPL is hosting a makeup session at the Forest Lawn Library, which was originally supposed to correspond to the Tsuut’ina Powwow, but was postponed due to poor air quality in late July.

The sessions are hosted by Autumn EagleSpeaker, southern Alberta’s first female powwow emcee.

“Encouraging our females and women to see what else is out there and what they can participate in is important,” said EagleSpeaker in a July 19 CPL news release.

“Our culture has been changed a lot by colonialism. Our ways of being and honouring our male and female roles has really changed. With modern times, we’re coming back strong and being part of leadership roles and emcees.”

Kelli Morning Bull, the Indigenous service design lead at CPL, told *Alberta Native News* that the events’ origin occurred in 2021, when CPL hosted a powwow for National Indigenous History Month as its “first big public event” since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

The powwow was a “huge success,” she said, with more than 500 attendees.

In 2021, there were only three people on CPL’s Indigenous services team, Morning Bull noted, so they hired an outside contractor “to come in and pull all of those elements together — the dancers, the drum groups, those cultural pieces.”

“Powwows are a big event to put on and require

a lot of people,” added Morning Bull.

Two years later, the team decided that in addition to putting on more powwows, they would host a series of educational workshops for members of the public to learn “about powwow etiquette and protocols, the do’s and the don’ts, and then what to expect when you’re attending a powwow,” she explained.

“Those patrons who wanted to attend an actual, real powwow were set up for the best experience going into this new adventure for them,” said Morning Bull.

The library locations were chosen based on the availability of green space for the outdoor events, accessibility for the dancers and drummers, many of whom are coming from their reserves, and the neighbourhoods’ demographics.

“We wanted to bring a new experience to a library that has never hosted an Indigenous program to that scale,” explained Morning Bull, who is from Piikani Nation.

She added that the event at the Saddletowne location was the first event of its kind there, with “a huge interest of newcomers who are wanting to learn more about Indigenous culture and become versed in it.”

“We want to assure new patrons that powwow are for everyone, not just for Indigenous people,” Morning Bull said. “They’re for everybody to come and celebrate.”

Based on the reception the events have

received, Morning Bull said, CPL patrons understand this.

“It’s surprising, because you would think people would be very shy, but as soon as you invite people to the dance floor ... everybody just gets up. They want to be involved, and the kids have such a great time,” she said.



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# First Nations Bank of Canada opens in Ermineskin Cree Nation

The First Nations Bank of Canada (FNBC) recently celebrated the grand opening of their newest branch in the Ermineskin Cree Nation. The opening marks a significant milestone for the FNBC and the Ermineskin First Nation. The branch will serve all four First Nations bands in Maskwacis.

With the opening of this branch, the FNBC now has 20 full service branches and banking outlets across the country. The opening represents a commitment by the FNBC to ensure that First Nations communities have the best banking services available, that are located in their home communities.

“The FNBC aims to be the largest provider of financial services to Indigenous communities in Canada,” said Bill Lomax, President and CEO of the First Nations Bank of Canada.

“We have heard from First Nations across the country that they often face limited access to affordable capital with flexible terms, which slows down their dreams of building businesses and creating jobs at home. The creation of an FNBC full service branch in the Ermineskin Cree Nation will address that need, and help to provide affordable financing that is accessible to the people of this community.”

While many physical bank branches are closing across the country, the First Nations Bank of Canada is reversing the trend by making a major investment in the Ermineskin Cree Nation because of the economic growth potential and increasing need for commercial banking services from community members. The FNBC also made a donation of \$5,000 to the local food bank as part of its vision to give back to the communities it serves.

“We are so happy to see a bank owned by First

Nations, and built by Indigenous Peoples, open a branch in our community,” said Chief Joel Mykat, Ermineskin Cree Nation.

“We know that the opportunities in front of us are great, and having banking partners who understand our aspirations, and our desire to build a strong economic base for our community will be instrumental in our success for generations to come.”

The new bank branch will provide all services that are provided by traditional commercial banks. Clients of the FNBC can expect an enhanced experience, as the FNBC has worked with First Nations communities and businesses for nearly 30 years. Customers will be able to set up bank accounts, apply for loans, savings accounts and credit card services. The FNBC Trust will also be available for long term strategic

advice on wealth creation for individuals and corporations.

The FNBC will also work in collaboration with the Ermineskin Economic Department to identify existing and emerging small business owners who need financial support to create jobs and wealth creation for the community.

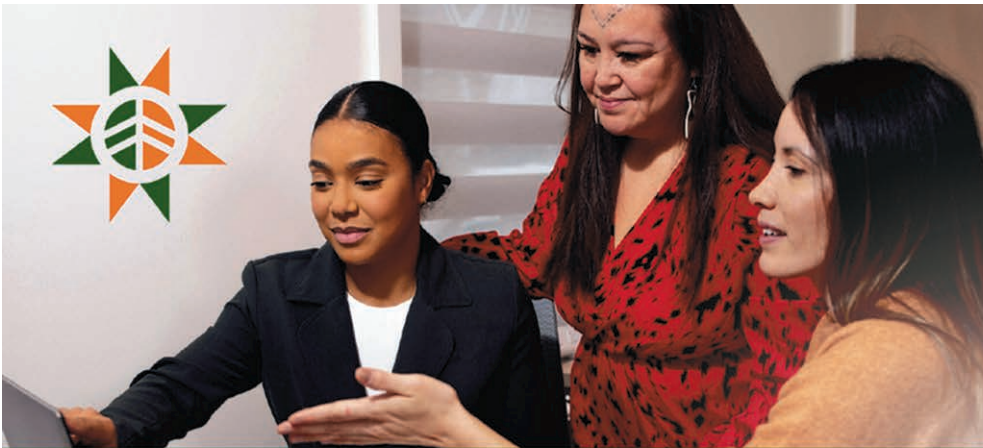
“We have many small and medium sized businesses that are poised for tremendous growth in the years to come,” said Justin Jimmy, President and CEO of the Neyaskweyahk Group of Companies.

“With a focus on infrastructure development in our region, and the need to scale our businesses, we needed a banking partner. As Canada’s only bank owned and operated by First Nations, the FNBC’s presence here will make all the difference for us to see our community thrive.”

The First Nations Bank of Canada is the largest Indigenous owned and led financial institution in Canada. More than 70% of FNBC’s employees are Indigenous, and Indigenous clients comprise 90% of its loan portfolio.



Celebrating the grand opening of FNBC in Ermineskin Cree Nation.



## Ermineskin Retail Branch is now open!

Visit our 10th full-service branch at Maskwacis Mall and begin your financial journey today!

www.fnbc.ca **FNBC**   
First Nations Bank of Canada

### HR conference cont. from p 6

Code.' These workshops are designed to offer practical strategies and tools to navigate complex HR scenarios.

The conference will explore culturally relevant HR practices so that delegates will understand how to integrate traditional values and cultural practices into modern HR strategies to create a harmonious work environment.

Sessions will discuss how to build and foster inclusive workplaces through recruitment and selection best practices. Conference delegates will learn about programs focused on the development and retention of talent, including mentorship and career pathways. They will leave with easy-to-refer-to materials on key topics to help apply learnings in the workplace. Attendees will gather in an environment that encourages them to build relationships, exchange ideas, and expand professional connections.

Don't miss this chance to transform your approach to HR, learn from industry experts, and return to your organization empowered with new strategies and insights.

For more information and to register visit [morrisinteractive.ca](http://morrisinteractive.ca).



One of the Grand Entries at the Poundmaker Lodge Powwow in Edmonton in early August. Photo by Terry Lusty.



# Hoop dancer Ayla Bull honours her family’s legacy

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In Alberta, female hoop dancers are a rarity, but Ayla Bull, a three-generation hoop dancer from the Louis Bull Tribe, stands out by blending tradition with modernity. As a prominent member of the Bull family - a name associated with significant contributions to politics, business, and culture - Ayla’s dance reflects her tribe’s rich heritage.

The Bull family's dance tradition began with Ayla's grandfather, Robert Bull. His journey started with a dream his mother had of a hoop dancer amidst a tornado. She crafted an outfit and provided him with hoops, igniting the family’s passion for hoop dancing. Robert’s nephew, Leroy Bull, Ayla’s father, continued the tradition, and now Ayla carries it forward. Their dance depicts the progression of a storm, with hoops symbolizing the storm's growing intensity. The final formation features a thunderbird emerging as the tornado touches down. Ayla explains, "The hoops represent the circle of life. Everything is done in a circle. There’s the circle of changes we go through in life - baby, teen, adult, elder. Then there are the

seasons - winter, spring, summer, fall. Even our medicine wheel is a circle representing our mental health, physical health, spiritual health, and emotional health."

She also shares, "Dancing keeps me motivated to stay physically fit. To have the energy to dance with all the hoops, you need to stay active. Beyond physical fitness, it has been a major aid for mental health. When I’m struggling, dancing helps lighten my emotional load."

Ayla recalls a lesson from her late grandfather Robert: “Don’t just dance. Pray for those in hospitals, those who are lost, and those struggling with mental health. Pray for everyone who would love to dance but can’t. Our dance and prayers bring healing to those who watch.” Ayla’s dedication goes beyond personal health. It’s about preserving and promoting Indigenous culture and creating a legacy that honours her family's teachings while participating in local events and cultural gatherings throughout Alberta.

Ayla engages with the community, celebrating the sacred and personal callings that bring hoop



Hoop dancer Ayla Bull.

dancers into the fold. The Bull family continues to enrich Central Alberta through various ventures, including their casino, demonstrating a strong commitment to supporting Indigenous identity and community. Recently, Ayla joined the Montana Cree Nation cultural camp, empowering the next generation and fostering community relations among the Four Nations. As a cultural ambassador for the Plains Cree, she honours traditional teachings and strengthens community ties. For booking inquiries, please email [Aylabull@live.ca](mailto:Aylabull@live.ca).

## Stampede cont. from p 2

including Sakaw (Cree) artist, Neepin Auger – whose art is on the cover of this edition of *Alberta Native News*.

Her beautiful canvases were very popular. By Thursday, with three days remaining, she only had three pieces left unsold. Her work is so alluring with its style and vibrancy it pulls in customers like a magnet. Some of the visitors who have seen her art in previous years have noticed tremendous growth in her work and are simply in awe of it all. For many, it gives them a sense of tradition and culture, the heavens, the land, and Creator's creations. Additionally appealing is the basic simplicity of her craft. It evokes a wonderful feeling of calm and humbling grandeur.

Attendance at the Calgary Stampede topped out at 1,477,953 which beats out the 2012 record by 68,000. With 1.85 million dollars at stake in rodeo payouts, this year’s Stampede again attracted some of the world's top cowboys out to bolster their overall winnings and up their world rankings.

In saddle bronc riding, Idaho's Kade Bruno kicked out a 92 to win out over last year’s champion, Zeke Thurston, who has won the event three times and now sits fourth in the world. Bruno moves up to No. 2 in the world behind Damian Brennan.

In bareback riding, R.C. Landingham from California kicked out a 94-point ride (just a point off the record) to beat out Rocker Steiner who leads in the world standings. Landingham now sits 4th in the world.

The tie-down title went to Montana's Haven Meged who stopped the clock at 6.7 seconds, to best Macon Murphy's 7.1. As for steer wrestling, Ty Ericksen's 4.0 flat won him that title over Don Payne's 4.7. The ladies were rounding the barrels in great times with Oklahoma's Leslie Smalygo outrunning Hailey Kinsel's 16.98 with a speedier run of 16.74.

However, saving the best for the last - the bull riding - those magnificent beasts proved far better than the riders this year with ten of the 12 cowboys bucking off in the long round. The only two to last the full eight seconds were Jeff Askey with an 82 on Uncle Buck and Chase Dougherty with an 89 on Sky Fall. But, in the final round between these two riders, Askey bucked off quickly on Chosen and Dougherty did likewise about halfway through his trip aboard Blue Magic. Both cowboys were tied and so banged up, it was just as well that the two split first and second money.

Prize money in all categories was: 1st - \$50,000, 2nd - 20,000, 3rd - 10,000, and 4th - 7,500.

The Rangeland Derby (chuckwagon racing) also paid out \$50,000 to the winner and that was won by Jason Glass and his Birchcliff Energy

outfit in a sizzling 1:11:55 minutes over reigning champion Layne MacGillivray and his Shady Creek Ranch outfit, while Chanse Vigen placed third. MacGillivray, how-ever, hoisted the Richard Cosgrave Memorial Award, along with an additional \$25,000, for the driver with the fewest penalties and fastest cumulative running times over the ten days.

For those wondering about the popular Grey Eagle Resort and Casino wagon driven by three-time champion Kurt Bensmiller and owned by Tsuut’ina First Nation on the outskirts of Calgary, it placed ninth overall in aggregate standings, being unable to overcome a couple of unfortunate heats during the ten days. It happens and one can't always be a winner. At least three other wagons were guided by Indigenous hands: those of Preston Faithful, Cody Ridsdale and Todd Baptiste who came 9th, 16 and 24th respectively.

Overall, this year's Stampede rodeo events had no repeat winners from last year; all were new to that circle which is a bit of a rarity.



Playing a bone-hiding hand game at the Calgary Stampede.



CS Parade Marshal Owen Crow Shoe and First Nation Princess Margaret Holloway.



# Indigenous Child Welfare Conference coming to Edmonton in September

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

There is a lot of apprehension surrounding the latest developments in Indigenous Child Welfare legislation and those looking for further information will be able to have all their questions answered at Edmonton’s Expo Centre from Sept. 16 to 18.

The Indigenous Child Welfare Conference (ICWC) will consist of three days of learning and networking, with special focus on Bill C-92 - An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families - which was brought into effect in January 2020, and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) ruling that the Canadian government has systematically underfunded on-reserve First Nations child welfare programs.

The event will feature welcoming remarks from First Nations Child and Family Caring Society executive director Cindy Blackstock, as well as keynote addresses from Bent Arrow Healing Society executive director Cheryl Whiskeyjack and Indigenous Nation Rebuilding CEO Andre Bear.

There will also be luncheon sessions, with breakout sessions based around the conference’s four themes — Bill C-92, the CHRT ruling, best practices on reserve, and best practices off reserve.

“There’s a lot of people, even in the whole human services industry, who don’t really understand what the CHRT ruling means and how it could benefit First Nations communities, as well as what Bill C-92 means and the effects that

it could have on the whole system, with developing their own laws,” explained Karen McCarthy, the owner of the Inspire Group, the 100 per cent Indigenous owned and operated consultancy firm that organized the conference.

“We just wanted to bring in experts and people who work in the industry, to share best practices, both off and on reserve, as well as the background and history of CHRT and C-92.”

McCarthy added that the ICWC’s target audience is people who work with the federal and provincial governments, and both management and frontline workers in the child and family services sector.

She anticipates anywhere from 200 to 250 attendees, mostly from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, in addition to about 20 industry exhibitors and 30 volunteers.

A key purpose of the event is fostering connections between First Nations and the child and family welfare service sector, McCarthy emphasized.

“That’s why we’re inviting exhibitors - like companies and organizations - to present. So, it’s also networking and then highlighting different organizations and their services that they do. Perhaps there will be contacts made and some synergies within the organizations to work together or offer their program services to nations that are attending the event,” she explained.

Some of the exhibitors invited focus on Indigenous healing work, which McCarthy said is integral to promoting Indigenous child and




family welfare.

“They practice different ways of healing to overcome different effects of intergenerational trauma, because a lot of well-being goes past just mental wellness. There’s the spiritual approach as well,” she said, adding that the ability to integrate their own healing practices is a major benefit of allowing Indigenous communities to establish their own child welfare systems.

“It’s not just about sending somebody to a psychologist. There needs to be more incorporated healing methods and ceremonial, land-based and traditional cultural activities.”

Those interested in registering for the conference can do so online at [www.icwc.ca](http://www.icwc.ca), or via email at [info@icwc.ca](mailto:info@icwc.ca).

## Star Wars cont. from p 4



**2024-2025  
Back to School  
Information**

**The 2024-2025 school year is just around the corner! Classes will resume on September 3, 2024.**

**Re-registration:**  
For re-registration, parents or guardians have the following options for verifying information with their local school:

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- Verify information via text message or phone call.

**New Student Registration:**  
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In addition, parents, and guardians will need to provide one of the following documents:

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Please contact your local school on completing the registration process [www.nsd61.ca/schools](http://www.nsd61.ca/schools).  
You can also contact central office at 1-800-362-1360 or 780-624-2060.

**School Bus Information:**  
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**Kindergarten Information:**  
The start date for kindergarten may vary from school to school. Please contact your school to confirm the start date.

**For more information please visit:**  
[www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/2024-2025-back-to-school-information](http://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/2024-2025-back-to-school-information).

they’re all fighting against, and in many times, it seems like the odds are stacked against them, but they all work together in order to make big change.

“That’s what a lot of Indigenous communities have come against and continue to fight through.”

Muldrew, Luke Skywalker’s voice, said in the future he hopes to see more than just Indigenous language translations of popular settler films.

“I’d just like to see more of our own stories being on screen — our voices and our faces as well,” he said.

**2024**



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**BILL C-92**



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There is a strong desire to share information on the latest developments such as Bill C-92. One of the goals of ICWC is to share new and innovative practices with other regions and territories. We all have a common desire to help our people and our children. This important gathering is one step for bringing various stakeholders together to educate, inform and share valuable information.

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# Carrie Armstrong: Empowering Indigenous entrepreneurs

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As Alberta progresses towards a more inclusive economy, the role of Indigenous entrepreneurs is becoming increasingly crucial. Despite their significant contributions, many of these business leaders encounter substantial challenges. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort to enhance support, transparency, and collaboration.

Carrie Armstrong, founder of Mother Earth Essentials, exemplifies the dedication needed to overcome these hurdles. Building on her heritage as a descendant of Cree Medicine Women, Armstrong launched her line of natural bath and beauty products, inspired by traditional practices. Her entrepreneurial journey began in Edmonton, during her tenure at Amiskwaciy Academy, where she utilized traditional plants to connect students with their cultural heritage.

Armstrong’s background includes valuable experience in the beauty and retail industries as an esthetician and a cosmetic sales representative. These experiences provided a solid foundation for creating Mother Earth Essentials, a venture that blends her cultural knowledge with her professional expertise.

Indigenous entrepreneurs often face significant barriers, including limited access to funding and resources. Addressing these challenges requires

greater awareness and support. Armstrong emphasizes the importance of communication in bridging these gaps. She says, “We need to make sure businesses are aware of available resources and actively seek their input on how to improve their experiences and success.” She also points to issues with gatekeeping in opportunity allocation, suggesting that “opening doors for everyone and ensuring fair access to resources is crucial.”

A key component of supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs is economic reconciliation, which aims to address historical inequities and promote a more balanced economy. This approach is essential for ensuring that Indigenous contributions are fully recognized and valued.

Armstrong highlights that empowering Indigenous entrepreneurs goes beyond just providing resources. “It’s about creating a future where their contributions are acknowledged and ensuring meaningful participation across all sectors of the economy.”

Mentorship and collaboration are vital for fostering a supportive environment for emerging businesses. Armstrong’s experience in mentoring other Indigenous startups underscores the importance of sharing knowledge and resources.

She notes, “The market for Indigenous



Indigenous entrepreneur Carrie Armstrong.

entrepreneurs is still relatively small. Collaboration, rather than competition, strengthens the community. By supporting each other, we can achieve greater success together.”

For Edmonton and all of Alberta to fully embrace the potential of Indigenous entrepreneurs, it is essential to focus on economic reconciliation and promote equitable participation. Investing in Indigenous enterprises and addressing existing barriers will help build a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Stories like Armstrong’s illustrate the untapped potential of Indigenous entrepreneurs and their ability to drive significant economic growth. By adopting these principles and fostering a supportive environment, the contributions of Indigenous businesses will be realized and their impact felt nationwide.

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# Poundmaker Lodge Powwow features amazing dancing, singing, drumming

By Terry Lusty, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

One of the Edmonton area’s most anticipated and popular annual powwows, Poundmaker Lodge Powwow, was held over the August long weekend, on the heels of Edmonton's K-Days festivities, and following the annual Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage.

However, unlike the pilgrimage which shut down before its scheduled concluding date due to a harsh and inclement weather system closing in, the powwow was blessed with good weather throughout the long weekend, much to the delight of the organizing committee and everyone who participated.

This year’s powwow marked the beginning of a new half century - celebrating 51 of Poundmaker Lodge Powwows. It showcased an incredible weekend of amazing dancing, drumming and singing.

The three-day powwow offered free parking and camping to all visitors, along with free water and firewood. As with most powwows around the country, there were a number of food booths, arts and crafts vendors, and information areas

regarding addictions and recovery systems/programs. According to Poundmaker's community engagement officer, Carla Jamison, the weekend powwow extends a "cultural experience" that likewise doubles as a "healing" methodology.

As for the powwow itself, it was a full-fledged progression of the usual and customary grand entries, intertribals, drumming and singing, including categorical competitions in such genres as traditional, grass, fancy, jingle, chicken and other dance categories.

A newly introduced category which was also a "first" for the powwow as well as hundreds of observers, was the "Disability Special" that was open to anybody living with any form of disability. From the eight or nine competitors, four winners were chosen with a young one-legged male fancy dancer, Colin Buckwell, winning first prize. When announced as the winner, the crowd sent forth a huge round of cheers and applause for the young man who exhibited such strength and determination in the

execution of his movements and style. It truly was an amazing demonstration of resilience and dedication on the part of the young man and one could not help but cheer him along all through the contest.

There was also the exciting Ironman fancy dance competition, that featured incredibly strong dancers who danced energetically for over 40 minutes - with a new car as the prize. Unfortunately, this reporter was unable to stay late enough on the final day to know who won that grueling but prestigious competition.

One visitor who watched the competition said, “These were the guys dancing for the New Car. I can't even imagine lasting 10 minutes but some of them made it over an hour! The drums were beating, people were cheering so loud and you could tell that this was difficult to do! There was so much colour and their regalia was so intricate and amazing!”

Congratulations to the winners and to all the competitors. It was an amazing weekend.

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