

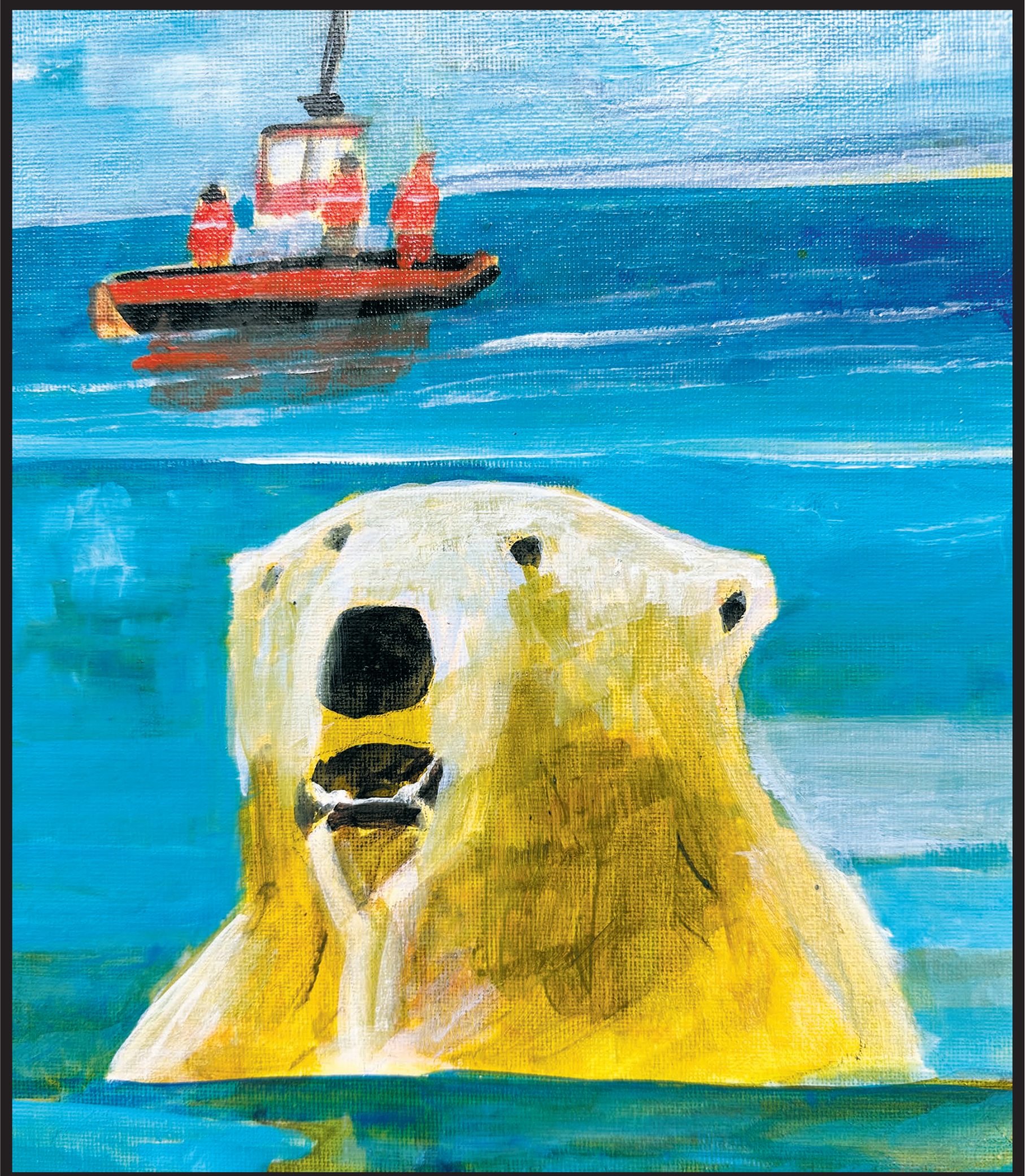
Distributing across Alberta for over 40 years!



ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



Visit us now at
albertanativenews.com



Sharon Goulet shares insight on accountability to make change

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Back in the day, our ancestors were nomadic and would lug around their belongings across the open lands. What would happen on a given day if they forgot to smudge? Would they stop everything they were doing when moving camp for various reasons, one being to search for food or safety? Or would they have considered the teachings that were shared with them on how to be a good neighbour, think good thoughts, be accountable, and not inflict harm onto others to walk in ceremony every day?

These questions can be part of understanding how to be and act in the world, to think of things thoroughly. As Sharon Goulet, an Indigenous Relations Strategist with the City of Calgary believes, “behaviours are more important than intention; you can say you want to do all these things, but if you don’t do them they mean nothing. People must be accountable to make changes; you must be the author of your own truth.”

Goulet, a citizen of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government in Alberta has always believed in the power of community and as a social worker, has come to know the importance of using and honouring information learned from other people and applying it. “I learned from Elders about doing no harm always and listening to people’s truths,” said Goulet, “but also not take away from what people are trying to share.” Over her 31-year career as a social worker she has faced all kinds of emotions. “I try to tell the truth. Sometimes people get really upset and angry, and I tell people that they must understand that building relationships with Indigenous peoples is the first step and is not a quick win.”

Sharon has learned to be an active listener and observer, for example noticing how the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has moved from survivors sharing with support and openness to western institutions taking over. While ownership and action from western allies is critical, the messages and truth from survivors can never been lost. “It’s about real people with horrible stories,” says Sharon. “Over 31 years I learned how to listen with my spirit. Like in yoga, you learn to be in the moment, but you are not reacting. Because when you react, you are adding to people’s trauma. When you react, you are retraumatizing the person while getting upset and victimizing yourself instead of being a support.”

There was a time when Goulet couldn’t share in circle because she would burst into tears. Since then, she took accountability for her own healing, such as learning from many different Elders, particularly Dr. Reg Crowshoe. “I have learned the importance of letting people share their story and being calm when listening. There are many moments that I could get upset, instead I find ways to help people hear and understand in other ways. If you go in with anger, people are never going to understand, and they are never going to immerse themselves in learning differently and being open. You must do it in different ways.”

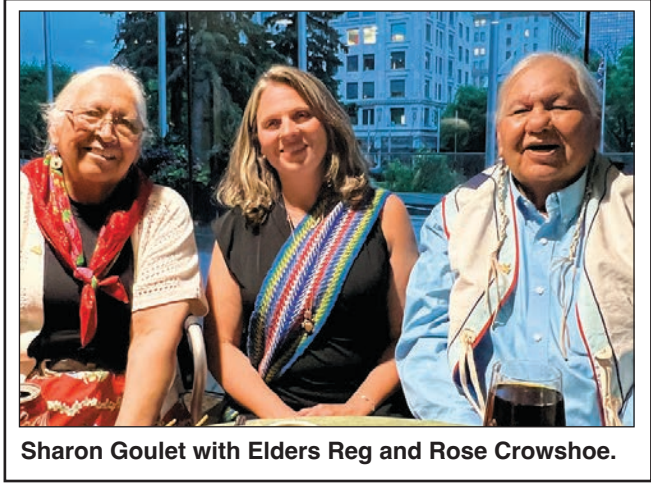
These different ways of knowing that Goulet speaks to are rooted in long term relationship building, that being active in engaging with others and being open to learning the truths of Indigenous people’s stories with Canada only starts by building good relations first.

This sharing can sometimes come at a cost that is not often acknowledged. In sharing our stories with people who have not experienced the depth of our traumatic experiences, we can often cause

more harm and can quickly sever both new and old relationships. Goulet believes that reconciliation needs to be about the creation of ethical spaces that rebalance power and control. “Indigenous people have always been here but have been invisible until now, and people are interested but due to this lack of awareness by dominant system it can sometimes feel like a forced relationship with Indigenous people,” said Goulet understanding that relationships have to start with openness and truth. A different and important approach not often talked about is resurgence, which emphasises Indigenous people as self-governing and self-sufficient, that “we have the capacity to take back our own cultures.”

The takeaway message that Sharon shares is that a person’s epistemology is critical, meaning what you believe to be true should drive your actions and that it is important to acknowledge Indigenous epistemologies or ways of knowing. It is possible to work with people who are willing to come from different perspectives – other than your own. When you come from a place of anger, you just end up in conflict.” Instead approach with humility, ask community what they want and go about co-creating things in a good way and from the heart.

“We all have our own path with Creator – ultimately you have to make your own choices.”



Sharon Goulet with Elders Reg and Rose Crowshoe.



**Otipemisiwak
Métis Government**

NOTICE TO CITIZENS

Notice of Meeting

Otipemisiwak Métis Government Annual Citizens’ Gathering

August 22 & 23, 2025

Métis Crossing, Alberta

In accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government,
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Métis Nation within Alberta will gather for the 97th time
at the annual Citizens’ Gathering of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to be held
on August 22 & 23, 2025 at Métis Crossing, Alberta

In accordance with the Constitution and Self-Government Act, Citizens of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government
who attend the Citizens’ Gathering shall have the opportunity to present and vote on Citizens’ Proposals.

In accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and the Citizens’ Gathering Rules of Procedure Notice
and copies of proposed Special Resolutions must be provided by email
to the Chair of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government via Chair@metis.org no later than 3:00PM on July 28, 2025

Learn more about the Citizens’ Proposal & Special Resolution processes here:

<https://albertametis.com/events/citizens-gathering/>

Dated this 2nd day of July, 2025 at Edmonton, Alberta

A stylized signature in black ink, appearing to be "GT" or similar, written over a horizontal line.

Garrett Tomlinson, Chair Otipemisiwak Métis Government

Celebrating a Year of Success and a Future of Promise

On June 24, 2025 The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary held its Annual General Meeting, celebrating a year of incredible growth and community impact. At the heart of our success is our dedicated staff. We were proud to honour our longtime employees with service awards, recognizing their unwavering commitment to our community. It is their passion that drives our mission forward. We are excited for the year ahead! AFCC awarded Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) partner of the year award. CHF under the leadership of CEO Patricia Jones walks along side AFCC to ensure that our rural Indigenous community members are supported to address homelessness in a good way.

Congratulations to the entire team at CHF!



Shane Gauthier AFCC CEO, Patrica Jones CHF CEO, Jessica Cope Williams CHF, VP Community Impact, Bo Masterson CHF Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement



Visit us online at www.afccalgary.org

King Charles III’s Throne Speech: From ceremony to commitment

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On May 27, 2025, King Charles III, delivered the *Speech from the Throne* as King of Canada, opening the 45th Parliament with words that acknowledged the historical and ongoing presence of Indigenous Peoples and their unceded territories. His speech marked an important commitment toward ongoing reconciliation and it must be seen as more than ceremony. It is a binding commitment that the Canadian Government should be held accountable to, in both policy and practise.

King Charles opened the Speech with a formal land acknowledgement recognizing that everyone at the Senate was gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people. King Charles also acknowledged the Indigenous peoples land he was on and where Canadian’s are fortunate to live. He said, “To the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples – you have welcomed my family and myself to your traditional lands with great warmth and hospitality, for which I am humbly grateful.” This land acknowledgment was more than a formality. King Charles stated that “this land acknowledgement is a recognition of shared history as a nation.” It is a recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and a call to remember the shared history between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown.

The King said, “While continuing to deepen my own understanding, it is my great hope that in each of your communities, and collectively as a country, a path is found toward truth and reconciliation, in both word and deed.” King Charles’ emphasized the importance of reconciliation, not just speaking about it but also showing it through action. These words set an expectation, not only for respect and recognition, but for accountability. Reconciliation requires practical, measurable steps toward justice, healing, and true partnerships.

King Charles emphasized the government’s role as a “reliable partner to Indigenous Peoples,” committing to “long-term wealth and prosperity”



and embedding the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all nation-building projects. This is a critical legal and moral standard rooted in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada has committed to uphold. This commitment is especially important as Canada fast-tracks major infrastructure and resource projects, some of which impact traditional territories. Reducing project approval timelines from five to two years cannot come at the expense of meaningful consultation or environmental protection. First Nations, Inuit and Métis must not be bypassed in the rush for economic development, especially when history has shown how often their rights are overlooked in the name of progress.

While the presence of National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs) at the Speech from the Throne, such as the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council, is significant, it is important to recognize that these national bodies do not represent all Indigenous voices across Canada. Many grassroots leaders, hereditary chiefs, regional councils, urban Indigenous organizations, and community advocates also hold authority and bring forward critical perspectives. The principle of FPIC must apply not just to government negotiations with recognized organizations, but also to meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities at the local level. FPIC ensures that Indigenous Peoples have the right to be fully informed and freely decide whether or not to consent to proposed policies, developments, or projects affecting their rights, lands, and lives. Upholding this standard means listening to a broad range of voices and respecting diverse governance systems and knowledge holders.

The speech also spoke about initiatives to protect Canadian sovereignty and strengthen the military, particularly in the North. As Arctic security becomes a national priority, the Government must ensure that Inuit communities are full participants in shaping what protection looks like on their homelands. When the Government speaks of changing firearms licensing while “protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners and Indigenous Peoples’ longstanding hunting traditions,” it must be transparent and consulta-



First Nations, Inuit and Metis leaders meeting the King and Queen. Photos by Kinnukana.

tive. Any reforms must preserve constitutionally protected harvesting rights and align with Treaty agreements.

King Charles spoke of nature as being central to Canada’s identity and pledged to protect more land through national parks and conservation initiatives. Yet many of these lands fall within traditional Indigenous territories. True protection of these lands cannot happen without Indigenous stewardship at the forefront. Indigenous knowledge systems, land ethics, and cultural connections to the environment must be integrated as leadership roles, not just advisory.

The King’s Speech reminded Canadians of the Crown’s evolving role over the past 70 years, including full independence and constitutional repatriation. Yet for Indigenous Peoples, sovereignty was never ceded. The Crown and the governments acting in its name must uphold the spirit and intent of the Treaties, which are living agreements.

King Charles III’s Speech from the Throne was historic and carries moral weight. It reaffirms the Crown’s duty to act in true partnership with Indigenous Peoples. These words must become mandates of the government and these intentions must be monitored and the vision of reconciliation should be shared, not imposed. The responsibility now lies with the Canadian Government to turn these words into action by respecting land rights, ensuring economic equity, protecting Indigenous languages and cultures, and embedding Indigenous leadership in every decision that affects their people and lands. We must continuously hold the Government to these promises.

Publication Mail Agreement No. 40050628
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
Circulation Department:
#206, 8944 182 Street
Edmonton AB T5T 2E3
natnews@shaw.ca
Tel: (780) 421-7966

Funded by the Government of Canada Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Volume 42, Number 07, July 2025
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.

All rights reserved. No part of this newspaper can be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Editor. Alberta Native News is published by 320754 Alberta Ltd.

For change of address, please send both old and new addresses. We welcome your stories, pictures, artwork and opinions. Please send anything you would like to have published to our office.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Alberta Native News
#206, 8944 182 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5T 2E3

Name _____
Address _____
Postal Code _____

SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$67.20
per year

\$116.55
for two years
(includes GST)

U.S. SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$86.25
per year

\$161.00
for two years
(no GST)

**Catch the Magic
Castledowns
Bingo Association**

**12222 - 137 Avenue, Edmonton, AB
780-457-4670**

Start Times:
Afternoon: 12:00pm • Evening: 6:00pm
Late-Night: 10:05pm

Our Pots:
Loonie Pot 1 • Loonie Pot 2
Full Card Insurance • Odd/Even
• Double Action • Crazy C • Houdini (Late-Night)

**Tuesday is Half-Price,
Wednesday is Player and Guest of the Week!**

**Last Saturday of every month
is our Bonanza Month-End Special!**

**Play the Starburst to win a \$100 Ticket!
Ticket for our \$20,000.00 Bonanza Blitz.
The next Blitz will take place
on October 3, 2025.**

**Tickets are on sale 4 weeks prior
to the day of the event.**



Siksika Nation challenges Alberta’s lifting of coal mining ban in court

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Siksika Nation and the Blood Tribe are launching a court challenge of the Alberta government’s decision to lift its moratorium on coal mining on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains earlier this year.

“The Rockies are treasured by everyone,” Chief Ouray Crowfoot explained in a July 4 statement from his First Nation, which initiated the application for judicial review.

“They’re the source of the water we all rely on, they support abundant fish and wildlife and precious natural areas. For Siksika, the Rockies are an important part of our traditional territory and are home to some of the last areas that can be used for Treaty hunting, fishing and our traditional way of life.”

According to JFK Law, which is representing Siksika in court, the Blood Tribe has joined the litigation.

This isn’t the first time these Treaty 7 First Nations have challenged the Alberta government’s decision to open up the eastern slopes to coal mining.

In May 2020, then-premier Jason Kenney repealed the 1976 coal policy, which prohibited coal mining in certain parts of the eastern slopes without consultation, which was challenged in court by the Siksika, Blood Tribe, Ermineskin Cree and Whitefish Lake bands, as well as a group of local ranchers.

Due to intense public backlash, the government backtracked in February 2021, reinstating the coal policy and establishing a coal committee to determine the best future course of action with public input.

In line with the committee’s recommendations, the government announced a moratorium on coal exploration on the eastern slopes in March 2022, with the exception of four projects that had applied for permits prior to May 2020, until local land-use planning can be conducted as part of a modernized coal policy.

In January, Energy Minister Brian Jean ordered the Alberta Energy Regulator to lift the moratorium, despite the new coal policy still being in the works, which the judicial review application notes was done without any input from Siksika Nation.

As a result of the government’s initial reversal, a consortium of coal companies launched a multi-billion-dollar lawsuit against the province, which Premier Danielle Smith has cited as a reason for lifting the moratorium.

On July 3, the day before Siksika and Blood Tribe announced their court challenge, the Alberta government reached an undisclosed settlement with two of the coal companies—Evolve Power and Atrium Coal.

Chief Crowfoot said that by lifting its moratorium, the government is ignoring its own coal policy committee’s recommendations, which were formed, in part, by the input of First Nations.

“We have tried to engage the Government of Alberta

in good faith over the past several years on this issue. They made commitments to consult with First Nations in regional land use plans and other forums but they just don’t listen,” he said.

“Litigation was our only option at this point. Once coal mines are approved the damage will be done and it will be too late.”

After Jean lifted the moratorium, coal committee member Bill Trafford of the Livingstone Landowners Group told the CBC that the government had in effect decided “to throw [the committee’s recommendations] in the dumpster and go ahead with what the coal industry thinks they want to do.”

The judicial review application notes that “extensive development authorized by the Crown,” including not just mining but municipal development, the establishment of conservation areas and tourism, “has eroded the lands and resources critical to Siksika’s practice of its Treaty rights and culture, leaving fewer and fewer areas that can sustain Siksika’s Treaty-protected way of life.”

For the past two decades, the First Nation “has provided Alberta with significant information and evidence” of these impacts, the application reads.

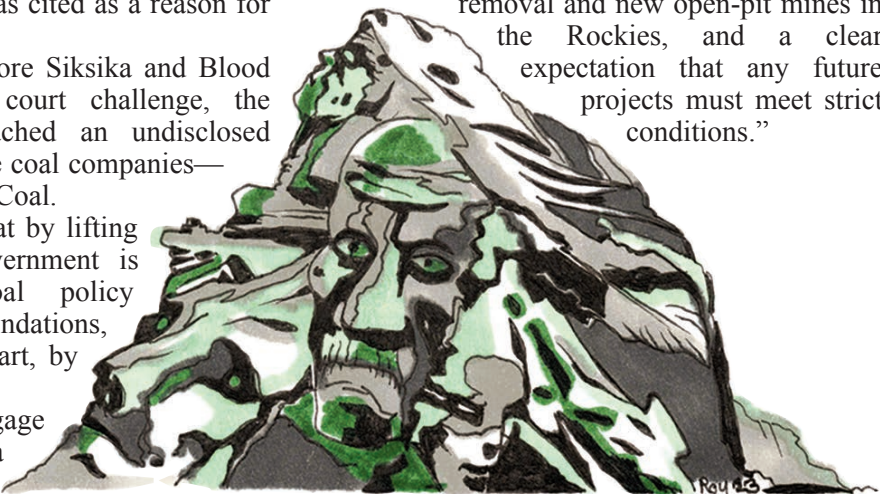
The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and subregional Livingstone Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Management Plan both recognize the importance of the area to the exercise of First Nations Treaty rights and the importance of consulting with First Nations on any land use that would impede these rights, the application notes, but neither plan outlines restrictions on coal mining.

Alberta Native News reached out to Alberta Energy for comment on the First Nations’ lawsuit, but received a response from Indigenous Relations.

Acting press secretary Garrett Koehler said the government appreciates “how important it is for meaningful engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities on projects where Treaty rights, traditional uses and harvesting activities may be affected.”

“That is why we are implementing a modern, responsible coal policy that prioritizes environmental protection, water security and Indigenous consultation,” he added.

“Our approach includes the highest environmental standards, a ban on mountaintop removal and new open-pit mines in the Rockies, and a clear expectation that any future projects must meet strict conditions.”



AIG celebrates youth, sport and culture in Edmonton: August 7 - 16

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

This August, the 2025 Alberta Indigenous Games (AIG) returns to Edmonton once again for what promises to be the most powerful, inspiring, and unforgettable Games yet. From August 7 to 16, 2025 thousands of Indigenous youth from across Alberta and beyond will gather to compete, connect, and celebrate who they are on the field, in the circle, and in their communities.

What started in 2011 with just three hundred athletes has exploded into the largest Indigenous summer sporting event in North America. In 2024, the Games welcomed over six thousand athletes, representing more than five hundred teams, and one hundred and thirty five volleyball teams alone, with ten percent of participants traveling from out of province, including from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and even as far as the United States.

The Alberta Indigenous Games are more than a sports event. They are a place where Indigenous youth come to find their strength, their community, and their culture. It is an event where sport meets spirit and healing happens through laughter, competition, ceremony, and togetherness.

Athletes will compete in a total of eighteen sports ranging from lacrosse, volleyball, soccer, and baseball to skateboarding, canoe/kayak, and the culturally significant Tipi Raising event. For many youth, these Games are their first chance to play in a large-scale competition on a level playing field where they are celebrated and supported not just as athletes, but as future leaders.

What makes the AIG truly special is the deep cultural integration. Tipis are placed outside every venue, offering youth and coaches a place for rest, reflection, and ceremony. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are on site, offering guidance, smudging, and connection to traditional teachings. The sound of drums, the sight of youth dancing, and the voices of

community coming together give the Games a powerful heartbeat unlike any other event in Canada.

One 2024 scholarship recipient reflected, "... These games are more than just an event – they're a transformative journey that brings balance to every aspect of my life, nurturing me in mind, body, heart, and spirit." Another shared, "...It means so much to me to take this opportunity, an opportunity my ancestors never got and something I'm sure they never thought would happen."

"I also feel so blessed to have an amazing group of people who organize an event this big for native kids to get opportunities they would never get from only being seen in their reserves, they give kids an opportunity to be seen and have equal chances as non-native kids."(Alberta Indigenous Games: Website by RAMP InterActive).

The AIG also empowers through education. In 2024, thirty graduating youth who were enrolled in post-secondary or trades programs received scholarships to support their academic journey. This is just one of the many ways the Games continue to invest in the future of Indigenous youth.

Behind the scenes, the Alberta Indigenous Games are led by Edmonton Native Ball Association (ENBA) Sports, a passionate, dedicated group who live and breathe the mission: "*Reclaiming Our Indigenous Youth.*" Every year, they work tirelessly to ensure the Games are a space of safety, strength, and celebration. With over four hundred volunteers expected for 2025, the Games truly are a grassroots effort powered by the love of



Alberta Indigenous Games 2025.

community. The ENBA also continues to build upon the many amazing partnerships that they have established to support athletes, coaches and their families.

From the moment the opening ceremonies begin to the fireworks at the final night, the Alberta Indigenous Games are a vibrant, life-changing experience for everyone involved. Whether you are an athlete, coach, Elder, volunteer, or spectator, everyone is part of something bigger.

Attend this amazing event in Edmonton this August to see the ten days of competition, culture, and connection. Witness the future of Indigenous excellence, and help uplift the next generation of leaders, athletes, and changemakers. Everyone is welcome to the event.

To learn more, get involved, or become a sponsor, visit the AIG website at Alberta Indigenous Games: Website by RAMP InterActive.

Event Schedule and location of games: Alberta Indigenous Games: Website by RAMP InterActive.

YOU BELONG

AT CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY



Get a free Library card - FREE for all residents of Calgary and surrounding Indigenous communities.

- Indigenous Services
- Books and eResources
- Arts and Culture

- Programs
- Events
- And more!



calgarylibrary.ca/join



Don't miss a single edition of Alberta Native News!

Subscribe now for just \$64.00 per year and get your copy mailed to you each month. Sign up at natnews@shaw.ca.






Horseback Adventures Ltd.

Business Support for Indigenous Entrepreneurs.

Become a member today



Powwows and Gatherings

It's Powwow Season again!

At *Alberta Native News* we have put together a schedule of some of the upcoming powwow events and other happenings.

Our list will be updated as the season progresses and we hope it gives you an idea of what to expect in the weeks to come. Best wishes and safe travels to all the summer festival participants.

Have a great time!

July 15 & 16

Sweetgrass Traditional Pow Wow
Sweetgrass, SK

July 17 - 19

Onion Lake Celebration
Onion Lake, SK

July 17 – 21

Back to Batoche Festival
Batoche, SK

July 18 – 20

Kainai Powwow & Celebration
Red Crow Park, Standoff, AB

July 18 – 20

Peepeekisis Cree Nation Powwow
Peepeekisis, SK

July 22 - 25

Big River Powwow Celebration
Big River, SK

July 23 - 27

TsuuT'ina Annual Celebrations
Redwood Meadows, AB

July 25 – 27

Little Red River Traditional Pow Wow
Little Red River Cree Nation, AB

July 25 – 27

Bonaparte BC Pow Wow
Bonaparte, BC

July 25 – 27

Zagime Anishnebek Powwow
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK

July 25 – 27

Yellow Quill Traditional Pow Wow
Yellow Quill First Nation, SK

July 25 – 27

56th Annual Thunderchild Championship
Powwow and Game Tournament
Thunderchild, SK

July 29 – 31

2025 Youth Teepee Summit
Northeast River Valley Event Centre,
Edmonton, AB

August 1 – 3

Lhtako Dene First Nation
2025 Competition Powwow
Quesnel, BC

August 1 – 3

Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation's
Competition Pow Wow
Sturgeon Lake, AB

August 1 – 3

Beaver Lake Cree Nation Annual
Competition Powwow
Beaver Lake Cree Nation, AB

August 1 – 3

2nd Annual Muskowekwan First Nation
Pow Wow
Muskowekwan First Nation, SK

August 1 – 3

Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation Powwow
Kisbey, SK

August 1 – 3

Sturgeon Lake Competition Powwow
Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK

August 2 – 3

Muskoday Traditional Powwow
Muskoday First Nation, SK

August 4

One Day Traditional Pow Wow (Alberta)
Lac La Biche, AB

August 6 – 7

Pasqua First Nation Annual
Traditional Pow Wow
Pasqua First Nation, SK

August 8 – 10

Samson Cree Nation Pow Wow
Bear Park, Maskwacis, AB

August 12 – 14

Cowessess First Nation Traditional Pow Wow
Cowessess First Nation, SK

August 15 – 17

Ministikwan 4th Annual Powwow Celebration
Ministikwan, SK

August 15 – 17

Paul First Nation Competition Powwow
Wabamun, AB

August 15 – 17

Piapot Traditional Powwow
Paipot First Nation, SK

August 15 – 17

Frog Lake First Nation 2025 Powwow
Frog Lake, AB

August 15 – 17

Driftpile Cree Nation's Annual Powwow
Driftpile, AB

August 18 – 22

Treaties 1-11 Gathering
TsuuT'ina Nation, AB

August 19 – 23

Whoop Up Days
Lethbridge & Dist. Exhibition, Lethbridge AB
includes Siksikaitsitapi Powwow (Aug. 20-21)
includes Pro-Rodeo (Aug. 21-23)
See ad on page 12.

August 22 – 24

Big Island Lake Cree Nation
Traditional Pow Wow
Big Island Lake Cree Nation, SK

August 22 – 24

Ochapowace Cree Nation Annual Powwow
Ochapowace, SK

August 22 – 24

Annual Poundmaker's Lodge Powwow
St. Albert AB

August 22 – 24

Beardys & Okemasis Powwow
Duck Lake, SK

August 29 - 31

Heart Lake First Nation 22nd Annual
Competition Pow Wow 2025
Lac La Biche, AB

August 29 – 31

Flying Dust First Nation Pow Wow
Meadowlake, SK

August 30

Cold Lake First Nations Pow Wow
Cold Lake, AB

September 5 – 7

James Smith Cree Nation Traditional Powwow
James Smith Cree Nation, SK

September 5 – 7

Williams Lake First Nation's Annual Speaking
Our Truth Competition Pow Wow
Williams Lake, BC

September 11 – 14

Athabasca Tribal Council (ACT)
Cultural Festival
Fort McMurray, AB

September 12 – 14

Stalew Pow Wow
Langley Events Centre, Langley, BC

September 13 & 14

3rd Annual Powwow & Artisan Expo
Lethbridge, AB

September 29 – October 2

National Gathering of Elders
Edmonton Expo Centre, AB

October 3 – 5

National Indigenous Cultural Expo
Edmonton Expo Centre, AB

local artists | exclusive collection | original pieces

WGC | Wakina
Gallery

780-237-1556
www.wakinagallery.com

- carvings
- paintings
- illustrations
- cards



Investigation: Are the Oil Sands killing First Nations? (Part 2)

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On December 3, 2024, representatives for the First Nations of Mikisew Cree, Fort Chipewyan Metis Nation, and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) provided testimony to the House of Commons. They alleged that the Governments and Departments of Canada were engaging in environmental racism against their Nations. Most notably, they claimed that the Government of Canada had attempted to offload ownership of a “dock” — and therefore fiscal responsibility and liability — onto the Nations without notifying them of the potential/confirmed environmental risks associated with the surrounding waters.

COVER UP ALLEGATIONS

They would cite a 2017 report, in which representative Taylor Bachrach stated: “contaminants like arsenic, nickel, benzene and hydrocarbons were present on the site. These are known to cause all sorts of medical conditions ... including cancers, liver failure, autoimmune diseases, leukemia and keratosis.”

While not made aware of the toxicity levels during their negotiations, the Nations were offered ownership and \$25 million in funding to fix up the dock themselves. However, they said the dock was Transport Canada’s official position because it operated as their only emergency exit — one which the government threatened to decommission should the offer not be accepted. After refusing the offer, the government of Canada told ACFN Chief Allan Adam that any attempts to fix up the dock would result in his arrest and subsequent incarceration.

While this testimony goes on for some time, there is a single matter of importance: the allegations of an institutional cover-up regarding claims of toxic waste spillage. To determine whether or not these allegations could be proven false, a general overview of the history and position of major players in the oil sands industry is needed.

A HISTORY OF DRAINAGE

Tailings seepage has occurred in the region since at least 1967. However, as stated in a 2007 health study done by the Nunee Health Board Society (NHBS), “finding information to document these spills is no small task.” Therefore, while some spills will be mentioned, there could be and most likely are other incidents known and/or unknown to the general public.

The first recorded oil spill covered in this article occurred in 1967, when a power failure resulted a flooded flare accumulator at the Suncor (formerly GCOS) plant. It is quoted that the oil “overflowed the accumulator into the flare pond

and then overflowed the flare pond into a rather inaccessible heavily wooded slough area.”

The company and its operating personnel would not become aware of this incident until a complaint was issued to the government in March of 1968. By then however, heavy surface run-off into the Athabasca River had already occurred. When an investigation was conducted, they posited the “Oils and Grease concentration was estimated to be 20,000 mg/L.” In addition to this, a “black layer of oil” had accumulated half a mile downstream from the plant along the west side of the river.

In 1970, a Suncor pipeline broke and approximately 3 million barrels of oil were spilled, with “appreciable quantities” reaching the river. It was said that the oil was visible in certain parts of the lake for six days. While the company claims to have engaged in an investigation, no documentation of it having occurred was found. This was confirmed by an independent study referenced in the NHBS report, which “found no evidence had been made to stop the downstream flow of oil, during which time the slick had travelled some 240 km en route towards Lake Athabasca and the vicinity of Ft. Chipewyan.” It further states: “there is justifiable reason for the existing controversy and a need for further investigations... The actual impact of the spill remains to be seen.”

In the 1980s, there were at least two reported oil spills from Suncor operations, however documentation for either is hard to come by. A spill in 1981 has only one documented source. The second spill in 1982, while an investigation was conducted, provided only a “single page terms of reference, dated 17 March 1982,” according to the NHBS. Despite calls for further studies at the time, no further information has been publicly documented.

Eye-witness accounts of possible oil spills were also listed in the NHBS study, however due to the amount of testimonies and in the interest of time, they will not be referenced.

Efforts to conduct analysis on the Athabaskan environment have also been riddled with a lack of information and unreliable investigation

techniques. Analyses of the water had only recently been collected, meaning comparisons to data from previous studies was difficult. Furthermore, the research methods provided “large data gaps and too few observations for the data to be meaningful.” The study also wrote: “failure to consider earlier oil and grease data creates an institutional amnesia and limits the ability to assess change.”

While there are more examples, it is worth noting that the above spills were compiled in a single study written in 2007, and that the feasibility of accounting for every incident in a comprehensive document is next to impossible.

Furthermore, accounting for the spills themselves alone does little to appoint responsibility towards any institution — government or otherwise — and places the blame upon human error. However, as seen in the below paragraphs, liability extends much further, practically into the heart of Alberta’s modern-day position.

RESEARCH

In 1973, the Alberta Department of the Environment (ADE) released a report detailing the outcomes and dangers associated with the use of oil sands’ tailings ponds. In their reports, along with many other claims, it is directly stated that: “all of the flora and fauna habitat will be destroyed wherever a tailings pond is established,” and that “there will be some ambient effects upon surface

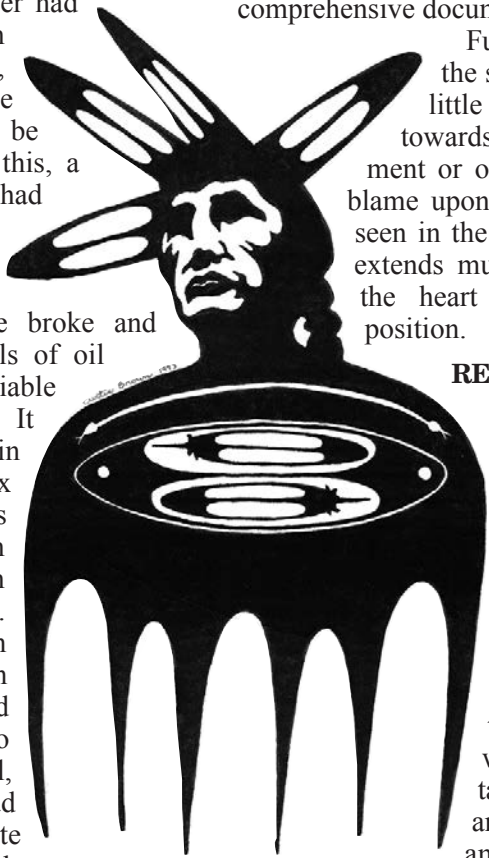
water, ground-water and atmosphere.”

By this point however, the province of Alberta had already been engaged with oil sands development research as far back as 1919. In fact, the Industrial Resource Council of Alberta, which would later become the Alberta Research Council (ARC), had experimented with bitumen separation methods and launched a pilot plant in 1923.

By 1929, the process of bitumen separation would become a patented process.

Thus, it can then be concluded that the provincial government was aware of the negative and dangerous effects of toxic bitumen waste long before the release of the 1973 ADE report. The ARC were themselves listed as a contributor/participant, which confirms whole-heartedly that the government knew the potential risk factors from that point on — while also implying that the presentation of the research/information could have been skewed in some manner.

Continued on page 10



Edmonton Folk Fest is sure to delight

Edmonton, AB – The summer festival season in Edmonton is going to be outstanding this year. One of the gems of the city – The Edmonton Folk Music Festival – will be held August 7 - 10 and they have announced a stellar lineup of artists for the 2025 festival at Gallagher Park.

This year’s impressive lineup of artists sees the incomparable hip hop band The Roots, featuring award winning Questlove and his bandmates, closing the main stage on Saturday night. The evening opens with a magical performance by Taj Mahal, followed by Goldie Boutillier and Danielle Ponder.

Thursday’s mainstage opens with Aysanabee, a multi-instrumentalist, Oji-Cree singer songwriter, followed by Serena Ryder and Rainbow Kitten Surprise. Friday’s mainstage features Stephen Wilson Jr. and then Allison Russell.

Sunday’s mainstage opens with Richy Mitch

and the Coal Miners, followed by John Butler and then Mount Joy to close the festival.

While several of the main-stage performers are returning guests, festival organizers say 60 per cent of artists are new to Edmonton.

“Finding that balance of diversity and range with returning and new artists is always a challenge and this year I’m very pleased with where we landed,” producer Terry Wickham said in a press release. Prices were not raised from last year’s \$234 for an adult weekend pass or \$109-\$115 for a single-day pass.

“I think people are sick of inflation, so ticket prices are exactly the same as they were last year,” said Wickham, adding they were able to keep prices the same while accommodating high fees for performers by cutting down the number of artists from 65 to 58.

Festival goers are in for a treat with a number

of Indigenous musicians performing at various stages over the course of the festival. Notably on Stage 7, Nîpisiy – featuring Debbie Houle, Donita Large and Cindy Paul – is a women’s ensemble that blends Indigenous tradition and contemporary vocal harmonies with the rhythms of the rattle and the drum in the spirit of happiness, health and healing. Also on Stage 7 will be the Burnstick Concert featuring Manitoba based Indigenous duo Nadia and Jason Burnstick.

Come for the music, the camaraderie, the incredible hill and the amazing ambience that is the Edmonton Folk Fest.

Tickets for the 2025 Edmonton Folk Music Festival, on August 7–10 are on sale now. The full lineup and ticket information is available at edmontonfolkfest.org.

Turtle Island Solutions with Jeremy Makokis

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



The Turtle - there are many teachings that comes with understanding this sacred being. One of them is ‘taking a turtle moment.’ In other words, shared by Jeremy Makokis founder of Turtle Island Solutions, “like the turtle, be slow and steady – take the time to look for meaningful connections through the heart.”

This journey of being slow and steady, for Makokis, started when he was a little boy. His father took healing into his own hands that led to teaching him about a traditional Indigenous way of life and what healing and helping others mean. Jeremy’s father started to learn how to run his own sweat lodges and would take Makokis along. “I was that little guy that would sit beside him and soak everything in.” And like most teenagers, Makokis got sidetracked for a bit, and then eventually started to lean into his curiosity of what could aid him emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

“When I was 18, I became sober – I quit everything and converted to Christianity for 20 years. There was still something inside of me that I felt was missing. At first, I hit my own rock bottom. Where I found myself was through the darkness. I was able to find out what makes me tick, what makes me who I am, and what my real path is...I used to have this idea where I would check off boxes of what would make me happy based on what I would watch on TV. I had the house, the car, the safe government job and pension plan; I was still empty, I was still disconnected from my people. My heart really had its calling to do something else.”

It was during those dark times for Makokis, and after his father passed away that he ended up learning ‘it is up to me, if it is to be.’ Now that he is a father, Jeremy understands that he had to do this himself and build support systems around him. And through this journey he was able to return to ceremony and his teachings, discovering who he is as an Indigenous person, and what he wants to do as an Indigenous person.

“I started to sit with my Elders again, obtaining direction and guidance through sweat lodges, and am still able to continue my journey with the Elder’s legacy with what I do. My late mentor always did things for our people and did it in a meaningful way at all different levels from community to government to industry. One of the things he always taught me was: Start small, do things right. Make it impactful and make it meaningful for those who are involved. Share your vision, take them along with you in your vision, include their vision in your vision and then grow – allow them to grow with you.” This led Makokis to creating the Spirit Builders Program within Turtle Island Solutions.

“You can really find anything within the turtle teachings,” Makokis shared as he reflected on the Spirit Builders Program. “My grandfather planted that seed with me. What I am learning, is about planting those seeds. We can’t offer people to change, to grow – the best analogy is: “All we can do is plant those seeds, in the end that tree is going to grow in whichever way it grows. It may look unhealthy, it may look beautiful, but it is all on how it was supported. You can really tell the



Jeremy Makokis.

growth of a tree. If it grows in shade, it is going to wander off and find light. It’s going to look dysfunctional but that’s its way of survival.”

For Makokis, supporting Indigenous community members in any way he can is important to him; that stems from the seeds that his father and grandfather planted for him. “Where our people are at right now, we want to be able to nurture them and offer that growth, space and environment, and grow in our ways and pace as well. That is what the Spirit Builders Program is about, not just an employment mentorship program, it is about me walking our people back to our teachings. I am still learning though and am not an expert. This allows me to pick back up where I left off when I was a kid when my dad started to plant those seeds with me.”

Through this journey of coming to know things differently from the idea Makokis once had about life, he has come to know that the “true meaning of love is something different, it is unconditional. We as Indigenous peoples are taught to give to others, we can learn a lot from each other, and we are learning to be spirits again and connect in that way.”

Summer camps teach youth the FUNdamentals of business

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

“The land and water heal us in every single way. Even just being out on the land, being in the fresh air, and exercising heals us as mental wellness,” shared Geena Jackson, creator of Bears Lair TV and co-founder of Bears Lair Youth Dream Camps with her husband Dean Montgomery.

With the understanding that Indigenous traditions and connections to the land are deeply rooted in the core values of Indigenous economic development, and along with her experience in broadcast journalism, Jackson took this understanding a step further when she created the

Bears Lair TV show in 2021. “The reason I started this was because I worked as the economic development officer for the second largest nation in BC, the Squamish Nation,” she explained. “In that time, I helped over 500 entrepreneurs from brainstorming to applying for business grants to expanding their existing business to the next level.”

When Jackson first started engaging with Indigenous entrepreneurs, she noticed that every person she was supporting not only faced adversity but also wanted to help communities in some way. “Every single person that I have

worked with wanted to help and wanted to give back in a meaningful way.”

Statistically, 50% of every single Indigenous community, nation-to-nation, is under the age of 25, with Indigenous entrepreneurs growing 9 times faster than any other demographic in Canada. Jackson seen this statistic as an opportunity to support our Indigenous youth. “These are the decision makers of tomorrow who are going to make impactful decisions that impact business, community, protocols, and language revitalization,” shared Geena. These future decision makers will impact our environment, and the core values of Indigenous economic development will affect partnerships working together with non-Indigenous industry to elevate our economies.

“We teach kid camps all over Canada,” said Jackson in relation to the Bears Lair Youth Dream Camps she co-founded as an opportunity to teach

Continued on page 11



Our People. Our Product. Our Service.
It's what sets us apart.

YOUR ONE STOP FOR...

- Septic Tanks (up to 5m burial depth)
- Holding Tanks (up to 3m burial depth)
- Water Cisterns (up to 3m burial depth)
- Lift Stations
- Sumps

- Oil & Grit Separators
- Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems
- INFILTRATOR® Field Systems
- Pumps, Pipe & Fittings
- Fleet of Picker Trucks for Delivery

20 YEAR WARRANTY ON ALL CONCRETE TANKS • CSA APPROVED

Toll Free: 1-800-232-7385
Calgary - Edmonton
www.wilbert.ca





Complete Hair Services for the Whole Family!
Specializing in Colours

Mon - Sat 10:00am - 9:00pm
Sun 11:00am - 6:00pm

“We welcome our many friends and clients when you visit Edmonton.”

West Edmonton Mall
(lower level phase 1)
780.444.1346
www.angelashairstyling.com

Reconciliation and nourishing our communities with Tanya Tourangeau

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Indigenous Knowledge is embedded in understanding that for anyone to come to know things differently, first we need to take action in understanding how we know what we currently know. We do this through introspection – being in deep thought and reflection – and in a harmonious way, to self-love and healing. And when we are engaging with coming to know things differently, we are learning and unraveling understandings that are braided into thinking with the head that can move into thinking with the heart. Then, we can start to walk and talk in a good way and nourish our communities.

“I really think right now I am walking my Treaty,” shares our Dene sister Tanya Tourangeau. “Each of us has our own, whether we want to say agreement or understanding, with the Creator. [We ask] what is our meaning here on Mother Earth and what are our gifts, and how do we apply those gifts with authenticity and integrity and accountability as well. It took some time in developing my skills and my understanding, and my own healing to get to my work in reconciliation today.”

For Tanya, a mindset of abundance for Indigenous peoples is rooted in her cultural teachings of humility, supporting how to walk with integrity, be accountable, and authentic. This way of life is how she has come to walk her treaty – being in relationship, being a good relative, and honouring all life residing on Mother Earth.

“I have always been really passionate about economic development and knowing that Indigenous people needed to focus on business to help lift ourselves towards prosperity. No matter what, people do support us. At the end of the day, it is our own business mind, our own business values, our ethics connected to our traditional ways of knowing, being and doing,” shared Tanya. “Connection to spirit, the land, and creation is beyond a western or capitalist perspective, but really in nourishing our communities so we can continue being authentic and not always coming from a mindset of scarcity. We deserve a mindset of abundance, and we had that pre-colonial. You don’t even need to assume that we know that because we lived in harmony with Mother Earth for centuries.”

Tanya shifts ways of thinking, into understanding in deep and meaningful ways,

making connections based on reciprocity, as a way of how we all can walk together and support community in good ways. Through these good ways, she interconnects her heartwork and role within community by implementing reconciliation through strategy, policy, and stakeholder relations as a consultant with her business Tanya T Consulting, supporting governments, nonprofits, and for-profit companies.

“[My] path to breaking cycles and building bridges began long before my work in Reconciliation,” says Tanya. “As a young mother, I carried a deep knowing that my children deserved more, that they deserved a world where Indigenous strength and sovereignty were not only acknowledged but fully realized. This became my compass, guiding me through the spaces where change was needed most. The wisdom of my Auntie Dora, who lived to 99.5 years, is woven into everything I do – walking in both worlds with integrity, carrying forward the teachings of my ancestors while navigating spaces where Indigenous voices must be heard... I hope to be a big Auntie like her one day, honouring the love, resilience, and quiet power that shaped me. Through every conversation, every policy shift, and every bridge built, I continue that legacy – one rooted in kinship, accountability, and the unwavering belief that Indigenous Peoples deserve more than survival; they deserve to thrive... That is how I approach my work and assist non-Indigenous [people] to get past their fears.”

In a meaningful way, Tourangeau helps organizations approach reconciliation. At first this work is unfamiliar, with emotions of fear being attached to anything a person does that is new and a process. The one thing that Tanya does to support everyone she walks with, is bringing kindness and compassion within the work she does to uplift community in good ways.

“In one way I think the ‘word’ protocol kind of went against us...I don’t know who came up with the word. I understand the process of it, but it is almost like non-Indigenous people feel they are going to go to jail if they do some protocol wrong. I would love to change the word to make it softer...even like how our natural laws tries to soften that – it is the



Consultant Tanya Tourangeau.

understanding of reciprocity.”

Protocol that Tourangeau speaks to, is relational. When we are born into the world, we start to be in relationship with everyone and everything that resides on Mother Earth. In the natural world, relationships are understood as symbiotic relationships, they are reciprocal and are in need of each other to thrive. And as Tanya continues to walk in her treaty, reconciliation is the foundation of her walk, honouring all our ancestors, connecting people in harmonious ways to learn and engage with each other in good relations and uplift community – all by “understand[ing] each other’s strengths, to prosper.”

For Tourangeau, the future is not about walking separate paths but about finding the places where collaboration and Reconciliation intersect – where Indigenous Peoples and Canada thrive together. It is a future built on shared prosperity, where Indigenous sovereignty is honoured not as an obligation, but as a guiding principle for stronger communities, better policies, and deeper relationships. Through her work, she envisions a world where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples walk alongside one another, not in fear or uncertainty, but in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and shared success.

“Reconciliation is not just about looking back – it’s about building forward,” Tourangeau shares. And as she continues to bridge worlds, nurture connections, and challenge the status quo, she holds fast to this truth: the future is one of possibility, and when we choose to walk together, we all rise.

Soapstone Carving for Sale



United We Stand: Muskox Circle" is an original soapstone carving by Dene carver Anthony Antoine that is currently on exhibit and available for purchase at WakinaGallery.com.

The muskox horns are made from real muskox horn, making this carving a truly unique treasure. The sculpture measures 4" tall, 13 " long, 7" wide and it weighs 11.5 lbs.

The piece comes with a signed certificate of authenticity. For information visit wakinagallery.com or call 780-237-1556.



Wishing everyone a safe and happy Powwow Season!

Peter Guthrie
MLA Airdrie-Cochrane

Unit 1B – 60 Railway Street East
Cochrane, AB T4C 2B5

Phone: (587) 493-2050 | www.assembly.ab.ca

With some online platforms blocking access to the news and important announcements, our website is your destination for up-to-the-minute news, so make sure to bookmark



albertanativenews.com

and follow us on

twitter.com  **@ABNativeNews**

so we can keep you informed.

Miss Earth Canada 2025 is Hailey Hamelin-Wilson!

By Deena Goodrunning, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Hailey Hamelin-Wilson from Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation is the first ever Indigenous Canadian woman to hold the title of Miss Earth Canada!

Last summer in 2024, Hailey traveled to Toronto to compete in the Pageant Group Canada pageant that determines the Canadian representatives for international pageants such as Miss World, Miss Supranational, Miss Earth, Miss Grand International and Miss Intercontinental. Many contestants from all over Canada came to compete for a pageant title, and Hailey was successful in winning a coveted crown and a prestigious title.

Initially, Hailey was interested in competing for the title of Miss World Canada, but in an interview last month with *ANNews*, she shared that after arriving at the pageant she found that she was more drawn to running for Miss Earth Canada and ended up winning the title.

Miss Earth is one of the Big Four international beauty pageants alongside Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss International. Miss Earth, in comparison to these other pageants, advocates for environmental awareness and conservation. It has partnered with organizations such as the United Nations and Plan International.

Countries from all over the world will be sending a contestant to represent them at the Miss Earth 2025 pageant that will be happening in the Philippines. The pageant dates are yet to be announced, but Hailey told *ANNews* the pageant would most likely happen in November 2025.

Hailey is currently a student at the University of Alberta with a planned graduation date of April 2026. “So I have to manage my classes while I’m going to the Philippines, because I’ll be in the Philippines for just over a month. Maybe a month and a half.”

“When I won Miss Earth Canada, I was really excited because I knew it was an opportunity to represent Indigenous people, because Indigenous people have a unique perspective and relationship with the land,” Hailey said.

Some activities Hailey has been doing as Miss Earth Canada 2025 are tree planting and removing wire fences. She also has been trying to promote traditional Indigenous teachings and

speaking up about overconsumption.

“One of the main things I want to do is really promote the message of traditional teachings in the best way I can. Of course, I can’t say everything because it’s tradition. But, the things I can say [I want to promote], like taking only what we need and not overconsuming the resources. I really want to spread those messages.”

“People tend to overconsume and they’re just focused on buying the next best thing. But, for me with my perspective — especially being really involved in a traditional way of life — it doesn’t always have to be the newest or best thing,” Hailey said. She recommended that instead of overconsuming new products, people could thrift or utilize items they already have.

Additionally, through her role, Hailey wants to spread awareness about language revitalization. “I really want to spread awareness for language revitalization. Because I know a lot of traditional knowledge, and traditional knowledge and ways of living with the land are embedded in language,” Hailey said. “And it’s not only in Canada, but around the world there’s a lot of Indigenous languages that are endangered right now.”

She also wants to speak up about forest fire prevention. “A lot of [forest fires] are man-made or caused by man. And we only have one earth. We’re the only planet in the solar system that has life. But, if we keep disrespecting the earth, then where are we going to go? So, we have to really put into perspective the amount of damage humans can do. And as Indigenous people, we already know these issues and we’ve been talking about it for a long time.”

When asked about advice she would give to Indigenous people interested in environmental activism, Hailey said, “I would say the things we feel is common knowledge is not common knowledge for everybody.” Hailey explained that she grew up on the reserve, and spent a lot of time on and around the land. She learned to have respect for animals and trees. “And now that I live in the city, I’ve realized that many people don’t understand these basic principles and it’s crazy to me. So I would say the first step is definitely



Hailey Hamelin-Wilson is Miss Earth Canada 2025.

encouraging people to understand values of empathy. Because even having empathy for the land and animals, that’s a big step.”

When asked for any advice she would have for people who are interested in pageants, Hailey said, “I would tell them to just try it out even if you don’t feel confident or you don’t feel like you can do it. Because, honestly every time I’ve gone to a pageant I’ve learned something about myself. And at the end of the day having self-growth or having a new experience to tell your friends and family about is so worth it, even if you don’t end up winning. The experiences are once in a lifetime.”

After being asked how she thinks being Miss Earth Canada can help the Indigenous community in Canada overall, Hailey responded by saying, “So, honestly the first step is visibility because people around the world still think Indigenous people are living in teepees. They don’t really think we’re still around, because they read about us in the history books or the text books. So with me going to [Miss Earth Canada], it’s starting to bring awareness and more visibility. And then since it’s earth-focused, that’s where I can really incorporate culture. And that’s what I want to do. My whole journey is to advocate and bring awareness to Indigenous culture. And I want to show everybody how beautiful Indigenous culture is.”

More information about Hailey Hamelin-Wilson can be found at her official Instagram account @haileyykat.

Investigation cont. from p 7

However, despite the release of the report, it merely signalled the beginning of the government’s open-support and investment into the oil sands industry.

THE WINNIPEG AGREEMENT

The companies present during initial oil sands operations were Great Canadian Oil Sands Ltd. (GCOS) and the Syncrude consortium — a group of American companies made up of: Imperial Oil, Atlantic Richfield (ARCO), Royalties Oil and Cities Services.

While Syncrude’s first plant was producing 12,000 barrels a day in 1967, it would be another decade before their next operation, the Mildred Lake facility, would officially open.

In their budget report of 1978, the Alberta Government stated the “need to extend self-reliance on oil and gas,” and that it would be “important to extract as much oil as technologically possible from all deposits.” The primary drivers being global crises caused by the Yom Kippur war and the Iranian revolution, which led to the instability of Canada’s oil supply and prompted the country to prioritize a self-sufficient oil industry.

By then however, in 1974, ARCO had

withdrawn investments from further development of Mildred Lake due to rising costs, which were nearing \$2 billion, and disagreements regarding the royalty structure implemented by the Alberta government.

To keep the project from collapsing, federal and provincial governments purchased the 30% deficit in 1975. This was known as the Winnipeg Agreement.

The agreement saw the federal government acquire a 15% stake in the facility; Alberta at 10%; and Ontario 5%. Notable figures involved were Peter Lougheed; Bill Dickie; Merv Leitch; Bill Davis; Donald Macdonald; Gordon Sellars; Jerry McAfee; and Bill Daniel.

During that same year, the provincial government’s Alberta Energy Company (AEC) went public, emphasizing “the sale of \$75 million in shares to Albertans, matching the investment by the Province of Alberta.” This allowed Canadians to purchase half of all shares in the company themselves, which essentially held them financially dependent and liable for the actions of oil sands’ operators — as well as other extraction activities the company was involved in.

According to the Petroleum History Society, Lougheed is quoted as saying: “It was obvious that the oilsands were owned by the people of Alberta. We consistently and constantly made

sure that the industry understood that the Government of Alberta was the owner and we weren’t just there in a supervisory or regulatory way. We were extensively involved because we were the owners.”

With public financial support, the aforementioned events secured the government’s future dependence on the oil sands, as well as that of every day Albertan citizens who purchased shares in the company. What followed was years of industry propped up by millions of dollars in government funding and tax cuts for oil sands operations that would see the province become completely dependent on its oil production. All the while understanding the negative environmental and human impacts it would have in the territories of operation.

In 2022, the Alberta government stated there were 138,000 people actively employed in the “upstream energy sector.” And in 2024, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and Statistics Canada recorded an historic 4 million barrels of bitumen produced and sold per day in November.

This is Part 2 of an investigative series on the Impact of Oil Sands on First Nations People by Jake Cardinal. Part 1 appeared in the June edition of Alberta Native News.

Visit us online



or follow us at @ABNativeNews

First Nations call on feds to scrap Bill C-5

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Treaty 6 and 8 First Nations leadership have joined fellow First Nations leaders across Canada to call on the federal government to scrap its proposed One Canadian Economy Act, also known as Bill C-5.

The legislation, which was introduced in the House of Commons on June 6, has two components—reducing barriers to interprovincial trade and enabling the government to fast-track infrastructure projects, including mines, ports and pipelines, that it deems to be in the “national interest.”

The latter part of the bill, which would reduce the average time for a project’s completion from five to two years, has raised red flags for First Nations leaders, who fear it will undermine Treaty rights, as well as the right to “free, prior and informed consent” enshrined in multiple articles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

First Nations weren’t consulted on the legislation and were only provided with a summary of the bill a week before its introduction, according to a June 17 statement from the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations.

“If this Bill passes, it will not create certainty for development. It will create conflict,” warned Confederacy Grand Chief Greg Desjarlais. “We are not opposed to building, but we will never be bullied and pushed aside.”

A June 16 statement from Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta placed Bill C-5 in the context of an

“ongoing pattern of legislative overreach, constitutional neglect, and Treaty violations.”

Treaty 8 First Nations Grand Chief Trevor Mercredi said the legislation “exposes Canada’s preferred strategy when dealing with Treaty Peoples: not through partnership or reconciliation, but through legislative fatigue—imposing policy knowing it will take us years to fight it in court.”

“Let us be clear: this strategy is no longer going to work,” Mercredi added.

He emphasized that Canada’s disregard for Treaty rights impacts its international standing.

“Canada cannot lead globally while violating fundamental legal agreements at home.”

Chief Sheldon Sunshine of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 8 noted that Canada’s obligations aren’t limited to the letter of the Treaties, but include inherent rights.

“Our rights are not defined by the Treaty—they pre-exist it,” said Sunshine.

Chief Billy-Joe Tuccaro of Mikisew Cree Nation, also in Treaty 8, said First Nations will no longer “be silenced while legislation is weaponized against our Peoples. The days of watching from the sidelines as Canada writes laws about our lands without us is over.”

Testifying at the June 17 Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities meeting, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Nepinak Woodhouse spoke of the First Nations needs that are ignored by Bill C-5.

“We want to talk about fast-tracking things here in our country. I wish we were talking about the construction of modern schools for our First Nations children,” she said.

“I also wish we were here talking about fast-tracking clean water and quality housing for First Nations people, or fast-tracking all-season roads and reliable internet access for our kids. But we’re not, and that’s a shame.”

In addition to First Nations leaders, environmentalists have criticized Bill C-5 for enabling the government to exempt national interest projects from certain regulatory laws, including the Fisheries Act, Species at Risk Act, Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Impact Assessment Act and the Indian Act.

Some Liberal MPs have also criticized their party’s legislation.

Burlington MP Karina Gould criticized the government’s failure to incorporate First Nations’ perspectives on the legislation.

“They have to hear those voices, and they have to ensure that they are being included in the process,” Gould told the *Toronto Star*.

Toronto MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith told the *Star* that while he’s sympathetic with the intention of building infrastructure faster, it shouldn’t be done with “unfettered discretion and unchecked power in the government.”

“We’ve got to make sure there are guardrails.”

Summer camps cont. from p 8

Indigenous values incorporated with business fundamentals, “so that Indigenous youth can learn about business in a trusting and encouraging space on their own territories.”

To date, Bears Lair Youth Dream Camps have facilitated 54 camps. In Alberta, there have been more camps than anywhere else in Canada, with camps in Enoch, Paul First Nation, Alexander, Alexis Nakota Sioux, Maskwacis, Saddle Lake, Lac St. Anne, Lubicon First Nation, Piikani, Fort McMurray, and Fort Chip.

“Alberta is our sweet spot,” she said, “and I think [it’s] because the nations are really progressive about opportunity and their youth.”

The program hosts up to 30 kids, aged 11-18, per camp and teaches the fundamentals of business during a 3-day experiential learning

camp. The youth are split into groups of five and each group gets a coach who navigates them through the 3-day program. It starts with choosing a business, naming what is going to be sold and a location and identifying core values to develop a motto and a logo. The campers learn how to develop their target market, a marketing plan, calculate start-up costs and engage in social activities to gain confidence in public speaking.

Bears Lair Youth Dream Camps are “non-trauma informed education,” shared Jackson. “We are not there to say this is what happened, and this is where we go from there. We are there to just provide opportunities for children and let their imaginations to go wild with the opportunities!”

Dream Camps encourage youth and young adults to imagine opportunities, to be inspired to continue their education, pursue training and



Geena Jackson with campers.

consider entrepreneurship as a path to self-reliance. More information can be found on Bears Lair Youth Dream Camps website.

NEWSPAPER FOR SALE

After 40 years of publishing the Alberta Native News, the owners wish to retire.

We are hoping some enterprising individual(s) with a passion for communicating Indigenous issues will carry on with publishing the newspaper. It is not easy in this day and age to produce a print media with a supporting digital presence but it is something that serves a vital interest for the Indigenous communities across Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territories.

Expressions of interest from serious individuals are welcome.
Please contact Deborah Shatz, nativeads@gmail.com



RIVER CREE
RESORT AND CASINO
ENOCH, ALBERTA

**WE ARE
HIRING**

ARE YOU A CHARISMATIC, OUTGOING, AND ENERGETIC PERSON?

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

WHAT CAN YOU ACHIEVE AT RIVER CREE RESORT AND CASINO?

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

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

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT ABOUT CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT RIVER CREE RESORT AND CASINO?

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

LETHBRIDGE & DISTRICT

SIKSIKAITSITAPI POW WOW AT WHOOUP-UP DAYS

AUG. 20-21 GRAND ENTRY NOON

LETHBRIDGE, AB • AGRI-FOOD HUB & TRADE CENTRE

FREE UNTIL 3 PM FUELLED BY GAS KING

HEAD STAFF

Powwow Coordinators

Tobias Provost (Piikani)
Eddie Wolf Child (Siksika)

Emcees

Eldon Weasel Child (Siksika)
Travis Plaited Hair (Kainai)
Tony Delaney (Kainai)

Arena Directors

Frank Sitting Eagle (Siksika)
Troy Delaney (Kainai)

Head Dance Judge (men)

Elijah Provost (Piikani)

Head Dance Judge (women)

Joset Melting Tallow (Siksika)

Head Drum Judge

David Spotted Eagle
(Amskapi Piikani)

Tabulation

C&T Tabulations

Sound

Hoka Sound Jr.

OVER \$65,000 PRIZE PAYOUTS

Dance Contest

Men's Buckskin – Open

1st \$800 | 2nd \$600 | 3rd \$400 | 4th \$200

Golden Age 50+ Men (Traditional, Fancy, Chicken, Grass)

Golden Age 50+ Women (Traditional, Fancy, Jingle)

1st \$800 | 2nd \$600 | 3rd \$400 | 4th \$200

Adult Men – 18-49 (Traditional, Grass, Fancy, Chicken)

Adult Women – 18-49 (Traditional, Jingle, Fancy)

1st \$800 | 2nd \$600 | 3rd \$400 | 4th \$200

Teen Boys – 13-17 (Traditional, Grass, Fancy, Chicken)

Teen Girls – 13-17 (Traditional, Jingle, Fancy)

1st \$400 | 2nd \$300 | 3rd \$200 | 4th \$100

Junior Boys – 7-12 (Traditional, Grass, Fancy, Chicken)

Junior Girls – 7-12 (Traditional, Jingle, Fancy)

1st \$200 | 2nd \$150 | 3rd \$100 | 4th \$50

Tiny Tots – 6 & under

Committee Specials

Men: Traditional, Grass, Fancy, Chicken, Buckskin

Women: Traditional, Jingle, Fancy

1st \$800 | 2nd - 5th \$100

Outgoing Princess Specials

Drum Contest

Payouts

1st \$8,000 | 2nd \$6,000 | 3rd \$4,000 | 4th \$2,000

MORE EVENTS

Siksikaitsitapi Princess Pageant

Contact: whoopupdays@agrifoodhub.ca
Aug. 19

Indigenous Marketplace

Contact: whoopupdays@agrifoodhub.ca
Aug. 20-21

Indian Relay Races

Aug. 21-23

Live music supported by the Blackfoot Confederacy
on the Original 16 Stage

Aug. 21, 6-11 PM

WHOOUPUPDAYS.CA

SCAN ME



COMPETITION POW WOW • FAIR • PRO RODEO • INDIAN RELAY RACES • AND MORE