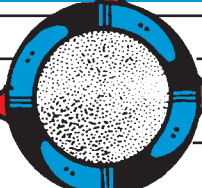


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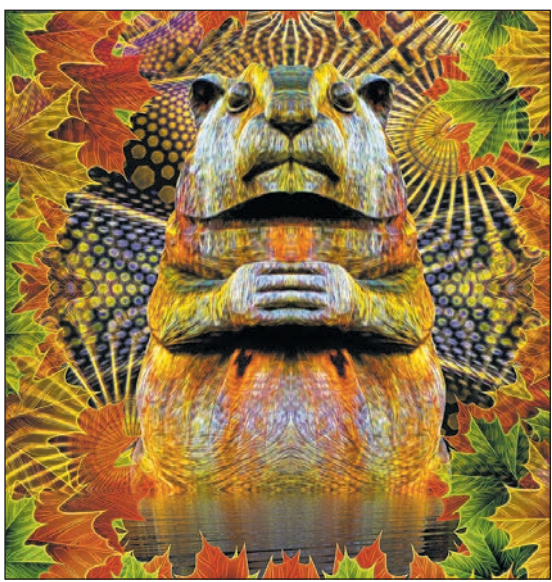
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Tia Isadore-Badger: Revitalizing language and strengthening community through education

Tia Isadore-Badger recently completed her Bachelor of Education at the University of Calgary, after finishing her last practicum in Driftpile Cree Nation. Her educational journey began at Northern Lakes College (NLC), where she enrolled in Academic Upgrading before transitioning into University Studies. Studying virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed her to remain close to home while caring for her grandmother, and it also gave her time to reflect on the type of educator she wanted to become.

Tia's motivation to teach was rooted in her own school experiences. "When I was younger, I realized there was a lack of Indigenous teachers, or teachers that understood Indigenous perspectives and family lifestyles," she says.



"Autumn Approaching" by White Raven Mohan

Determined to change that, Tia majored in Revitalization of Indigenous Languages as part of her degree, aiming to bring Cree language and cultural knowledge into the classroom. "I want to not only provide language, but also more understanding to other teachers and people in my school community for Indigenous education."

Tia's academic path was shaped by the guidance and support she received at NLC. She credits NLC staff member, Paula, as a significant mentor who encouraged her to apply for the University of Calgary's Community-Based Bachelor of Education program. "She gave me a couple of choices, and she saw my potential before I even saw it myself."

While excited about her studies, Tia initially found the transition to university daunting. "It was a bit intimidating when I went on campus," she admits. "But what made me comfortable was bringing my ribbon skirts with me. Wearing them in class helped me feel at home, even though I was in the city."

Tia found further encouragement in the friendships she made, especially during her summer courses in Calgary. "I made lifelong friends. One of them was also Indigenous, and she helped me navigate my first year. Little did we know she was from Driftpile, too! She just lived in Edmonton."

Beyond academics, Tia faced significant personal challenges, including the loss of her sister and the lasting effects of intergenerational trauma. When she first began post-secondary studies at another institution, she struggled so much with these factors that she eventually withdrew herself from the program. "When I came home, I didn't know if I was going to continue with my education, but Paula and the



NLC alumni Tia Isadore-Badger

rest of my family and community encouraged me to keep going."

Tia now envisions a future in educational leadership, helping to bridge the gap between schools and Indigenous communities. "I want to bring more connections from the community into the school," she says. "I want to close that disconnect."

For young Indigenous students, Tia offers words of empowerment. "Recognize intergenerational traumas from residential schools, but also understand that's not your fault," she says. "You can grow beyond that. You can go further than you ever imagined."

Now that she has graduated, Tia is looking ahead to the impact she hopes to make. From reclaiming her language to empowering future generations, she is proving that education is not just about personal success, but about strengthening an entire community.

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What if grant writing stopped being overwhelming?

By Rolando Inzunza, Founder of Axioma Consulting

In August, we explored the myths holding communities back from funding success. In September, we revealed the three strategies that turn those myths into results. Now, I want to talk about what happens when those strategies come together.

For many leaders, grant writing feels like one more thing on an already full plate. But it doesn't have to be this way. When communities have a clear funding calendar, layer quick wins with long-term proposals, and use reporting to build strong funder relationships, grant writing stops feeling like a scramble and starts becoming a tool for real change.

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Rolando Inzunza leads Axioma Consulting, a trusted ally for Indigenous communities and non-profits. Known for a 75% grant success rate, having written over 100 grants, and a focus on cultural respect, Axioma helps leaders turn funding challenges into lasting results. Visit axioma.ca to learn more.

Karen MacKenzie shares her understandings of ‘Wise Practices’

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Since hearing her mother's advice, "be a good mixer," Karen MacKenzie, Co-Founder and President of MacKintosh Consulting, an Indigenous owned, international company, has walked with these words of wisdom of how to be in the world. "I was taught the importance of walking into any space and being able to connect with someone or something is part of being [in good relations]," said MacKenzie. For Karen, her strength comes from knowing how to be self-sufficient and a good mixer – that eventually led her to finding magic in the field of science when studying chemistry. These teachings have shaped how she walks in her current role as a leader, consultant, mentor, and neighbour.

MacKenzie's approach to engaging with others is through lateral kindness. Whether she is working with organizations, teams, families, communities, or individuals, she helps them "move from where they currently are to where they want to be."

"It is really all about relationships," said MacKenzie, "I help connect people in a good way. I am only there as a guide, auntie and kohkom."

"There are many ways to [get to] where we want to be, through wise practices. There is not only one way of doing things. Everyone comes

from a genius—our role is to bring that out," shared MacKenzie on how she engages with others. She believes that everyone has their own talents and gifts – their own genius. Having a sacred circle is also an important part in engaging in good relations, by building and connecting in harmonious ways, and by lifting each other up.

"In knowing our circles are sacred, it is about ceremony and learning where the magic will happen. In a circle we are looking for diversity—diversity of being and thinking. The role is to try and pull this genius out from inside of us. As Indigenous people, we always had to think outside the box that helped us get to a solution that is unique and simple. Change is our reality – the seasons change, we don't get to decide, we get to respond!"

For MacKenzie, it is about looking at community being bigger and wider, and basing it on the ways she was raised from a Cree-Metis perspective of inclusion and abundance. These wise practices come with understanding that, "Creator made us smart enough to figure it out. If I can't figure it out, then I will find someone that will and [go about it] in a good way." That understanding gives MacKenzie the confidence to speak up about how Indigenous ways of



MacKintosh Co-founder Karen MacKenzie.

knowing are very strong and positive and continue to teach her the philosophy of living a good life.

"This can be a wake-up call to do something different, and the core of it is that everything has meaning – it is just up to us [to discover] what that meaning is. And the understanding that we have a relationship. Every morning as the sun rises, 20 little brown birds are waiting for me to come outside and fill the feeder – I honour them, it is a reciprocal relationship. There is so much going on if we open our hearts and our spirits."

Advice MacKenzie would gift to her younger self, "Find joy wherever you go and know that you are part of a bigger community. Share a language of love and kindness, because when we lift each other up, we start changing the world and ourselves."

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Kyra Northwest discusses our important relationship with the earth

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Growing up in Montana First Nation (Akamihk), one of the four First Nations that make up Maskwacis Cree Nations, Kyra Northwest, current Consultation Manager for Montana First Nation, had the opportunity to learn about *nehiyawé*, Cree values. One that has resonated over time was “always uplift each other in community,” said Northwest.

The values she learned were from spending time with her grandparents, who taught about care and respect for all living beings, especially the plants. These teachings taught Northwest about the importance of reciprocity that led to unpacking what learning about community really means – who is involved, how to go about things in a good way, how to listen, learn and engage. These are all things that impact how she currently walks in the world.

For Northwest, the teachings are interrelated, with her “acknowledging the importance of

focusing on good things.” This can shape a person’s world into also doing good things, speaking good things, hearing good things, and just being a good relative. For Kyra, being a good relative is about “being able to connect on a community level and support one another, learning about one another while reminding ourselves of these fundamental teachings that are rooted in knowing our relations with the earth.”

All these teachings are part of understanding the continuation of life. “We should always be caring for each other and helping each other out,” Northwest shared. “If someone is not in a good place, it is important to learn how we can support them, all to show each other that we are here for them, even in the hard times, that we are here together, not separate.”

Northwest is not only an advocate for the environment, but also part of bringing the Buffalo back with the Buffalo Treaty that was originally



Kyra Northwest is the Consultation Manager for Montana First Nation. Photo supplied.

signed on September 24, 2014, with the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, USA. Kyra has a deep connection to the Buffalo and to the land and what that means for her people. “Being part of the

Continued on page 5

Alberta Blue Cross® Indigenous scholarship program is accepting applications until January 27, 2026

Indigenous students across Alberta are encouraged to apply for the Alberta Blue Cross Indigenous scholarship program which awards post-secondary scholarships to 9 students across the province each year. The deadline to apply is January 27, 2026.

Awards are based on the applicants’ personal goals, financial need and community involvement. Indigenous students in Alberta enrolled full-time in an accredited post-secondary program of 2 or more years are eligible to apply. Each award is worth \$1,500.

“Each year we are so impressed by the diverse applications we receive for this program, and last year we saw a record number of applications,” says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement with Alberta Blue Cross. “Many of the individuals who receive these awards share a

passion for their communities and are looking to make an impact now and into the future.”

The 2025 Indigenous scholarship recipients including the following individuals:

Katarina Tinqu is working toward a Bachelor of Arts for Criminal Justice degree and made the difficult journey from the Northwest Territories 5 years ago in pursuit of becoming a member of the Calgary Police Service.

Courtney Webber is a passionate student athlete and coach who plans to use her Bachelor of Business Administration degree to host youth volleyball camps and build a volleyball program for Indigenous youth. She coached the Alberta Beach Volleyball team in the North American Indigenous Games and volunteers at Project Adult Literacy.

Roberta Disbrowe is a volunteer helping the unhoused by gathering and distributing warm

items in the winter along with bannock, water and biscuits in the warmer seasons. She is working toward her Child and Youth Care Diploma with the goal of becoming a youth counsellor.

Zoey Germain was a volunteer with the Yukon Women’s Council Association. She relocated from the North to pursue her Aboriginal Teachers Education degree and is dedicated to using education to create inclusive classrooms that integrate Indigenous traditions, histories and perspectives into daily learning.

Santana Manywounds is working towards a Social Work degree to help in either addictions or family planning and aims to complete a master’s degree. She incorporates traditional Blackfoot patterns into her beadwork and moccasin-making as passed down from grandmother to granddaughter in her family. She took a year off to manage addictions and help her family as her mother battled breast cancer.

Alberta Blue Cross has run the Indigenous scholarship program for more than 25 years with more than 100 scholarships awarded to Indigenous students. As part of Alberta Blue Cross’s commitment to wellness, the Indigenous scholarship program works to support overall community wellness and advance equitable access to post-secondary education for Indigenous students. Funding for the program comes from Alberta Blue Cross’s community foundation.

The deadline to apply is **January 27, 2026**. Scholarship recipients are selected by an external committee with expertise in academia and Indigenous education. Successful applicants will be contacted in early March.

More information about the scholarship program, including application forms, can be found at community.ab.bluecross.ca/programs/indigenous-scholarships.php.

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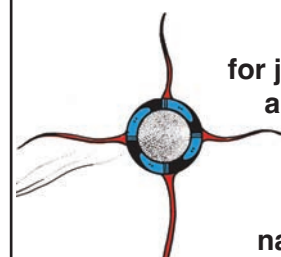


Courtney Webber
2025 recipient



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Calgary opens its first Indigenous Youth Centre

By John Wirth, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Instagram photo from the Calgary Foundation.

“Children are our communities’ future” is a teaching often given by the elders and leaders of Turtle Island. It is offered as an enduring truth and a guiding principle – a reminder of our responsibility to the future generations. Calgary has taken a meaningful step towards this vision. By opening the doors to the long awaited, first of its kind Indigenous Youth Centre of Calgary, The Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth addresses an infrastructure gap faced by their urban Indigenous community.

On the opening day, members of the community gathered outside of the new facility beneath a beautiful and clear late summer-autumn sky. The ribbon cutting event was accompanied by a live music performance, a kookum scarf folded in a triangle hung over their amplifier. A Pendleton blanket draped a table beside the dignitaries, and a “traditional” red ribbon that was uniquely patterned with indigenous design, was framed by vases of flowers. As the scissors made the first cut, the act marked not only the offi-cial opening of the Indigenous Youth Centre but also the symbolic cutting away of barriers that had long prevented urban Indigenous youth from having a permanent home.

This milestone was made possible through the persistent efforts of USAY since its founding in

2001, supported by a federal investment of \$3.92 million for construction. Leaders including LeeAnne Ireland, USAY’s executive director; Corey Hogan, Member of Parliament for Calgary Confederation; and Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services, spoke with a unified message: the new centre is “safe, sustainable, and accessible.” Their words emphasized that, until now, Indigenous youth had no formal gathering place specifically designated for them that separated it from the schoolyards and other community centres.

The event concluded with forward-looking reflections, underscoring themes of healing, hope, and accessing a fuller potential and hopefully thriving – on their own terms and agency. This new youth centre gives these future leaders and innovators a space to truly call their own in the urban landscape. A home away from home, it’s a place to connect and be proud to be Indigenous. As a hub of cultural and social activity, it represents both a turning point and a promise of greater things to come, easing the challenges Indigenous peoples have faced in sharing and

sustaining their culture and values. “The Indigenous Youth Centre is a space designed by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth,” said the Calgary Foundation, a local registered charity that supports community needs. “This centre is an exciting step forward in supporting culture, wellness, and community. We’re proud to have walked alongside USAY on this journey, from early feasibility to major funding support.”



Kyra Northwest cont. from p 4

Buffalo Treaty has been as a joint effort to bring back our relative that was removed from the landscape and how that has deeply impacted everything,” said Northwest. What she has come to know over a lifetime of learning, is that “the Buffalo was a traditional gift giving economy, where at a community level they were so important in supporting and making our communities better.”

Since 2014, the Buffalo Treaty has built relationships with nations within North America, specifically with sharing education around honouring, recognizing, and revitalizing the ‘time immemorial relationship we have with the Buffalo’ – as a collective initiative undersigned by nations all to welcome Buffalo to once again live among us. The Buffalo Treaty’s collective intention is rooted in recognizing the Buffalo as a wild free-ranging animal that is an important part of the ecology.

In 2021, Northwest became the founding director and strategic advisor for the International Buffalo Relations Institute. Her heart’s work focuses on implementing the Buffalo Treaty while supporting Indigenous Nations in returning the Buffalo to the lands. Alongside Northwest’s work with restoring cultural and ecological connections, Kyra has been a member of Line 3 Indigenous Advisory and Monitoring Committee since 2017.



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-Author unkown



Congratulations to our very own
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These awards honour the legacy of Arthur R. Smith, a Calgary icon whose empathy and tenacity continue to inspire those fighting to end homelessness in our city. Alanna embodies this spirit every day through her incredible work at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, where she has spent the last 7 years offering wisdom, kindness, and love to everyone she meets.

This recognition by the Calgary Homeless Foundation truly reflects Alanna’s outstanding commitment to building a more compassionate, inclusive community. We are grateful for her leadership and the positive impact she makes in the lives of so many.

Congratulations, Alanna! This is so well deserved.

Family remembers teen as a loved son – still want answers

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Samuel Bird’s mother says she wants people to remember her son for the way he lived, not how he is believed to have died.

“I want people to remember Samuel not as a headline, not as a case file, but as a loved son, a brother, a cousin and a friend. His laughter, his spirit and his love are what define him, not the circumstances of his disappearance,” Alanna Bird said at an Oct. 1 news conference with the Edmonton Police Service (EPS).

Four months to the day the 14-year-old Indigenous Edmontonian went missing and a day after National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, police announced that Bird is suspected to have been a homicide victim.

Bird’s Cree name is Achakapis, which translates to *little boy on the moon*. He came from Paul First Nation and also had Nakoda lineage.

“Samuel’s case is a powerful reminder of the inequities Indigenous peoples continue to face,” said Det. Jared Buhler, the lead investigator on the case. “We remain committed to seeking the truth with the respect, care and urgency [that] Samuel and all those still waiting for answers deserve.”

Alanna Bird placed her son’s disappearance “in the shadow of a much larger injustice — the ongoing crisis of our missing and murdered indigenous children and youth.”

“This is not just about Samuel. This is about the systems that continue to fail our families in a silence that too often surrounds our pain,” she said.

How the investigation proceeded

Bird left his mother’s residence in the Canora neighbourhood on June 1 at 8 p.m., which was the last time he was seen in person.

“What occurred to Samuel in the hours after he left his mother’s residence remains the subject of this investigation,” said Buhler. “I can now say,

based on the totality of information, that there are reasonable grounds to believe Samuel is deceased and his death is criminal in nature.”

Bird’s disappearance was reported to police on June 6, but investigators from the Missing Persons Unit “received information of significant concern” that led to the file being transferred to the Homicide Section on June 16, said the detective.

The teen’s body is suspected of having been disposed of within hours of his disappearance on June 1, and his remains are believed to be on land no more than 150 km outside of Edmonton’s city limits.

Buhler recognized “public scrutiny concerning the police investigation, particularly the timing of the release of information to the public,” which he said “was strategic and carefully considered.”

He added that the investigation was complicated by the case becoming the focus of “astounding” social media attention that he hasn’t seen in his nine years as a homicide detective.

“I can say that there is a lot of misinformation, there’s a lot of conjecture of theories based on nothing more than rumors, and it cost us a significant amount of time that could have been otherwise spent investigating actual evidence,” said Buhler.

At the same time, he acknowledged the likely “unprecedented effort” Achakapis’s family, friends and community undertook in “tirelessly searching” the River Valley and surrounding areas for signs of his whereabouts.

“I’ve remained in close contact with the Bird family, and it has been personally impactful to observe Samuel’s family, guided by culture and



Police believe that 14 year old Samual Bird was the victim of a homicide and are searching for his remains just outside Edmonton. Pictured above a rally was held in Edmonton last month to increase awareness of the missing teen. Photo by Paula Kirman.

faith, never lose hope that they will bring Samuel home,” said Buhler.

‘Even now in his death, he still matters’

In addition to Alanna Bird, Buhler was joined by Bird’s paternal grandmother Geri Potts, father Justin Bird and his kokum, who went unnamed.

“Achakapis was my hero,” said his kokum. “I keep saying that he was the most wonderful child a grandmother would ever have. I never saw bad things. I never heard bad things. I loved him so much.”

Achakapis’s other grandmother said he “had a gift when he came to this world.”

“He had a beaming light, an abundance of love. He was full of spirit, promise and love, a child with dreams, laughter and a soul rooted in the strength of our ancestors,” said Geri Potts.

She added that “losing a loved one to violence is a devastating, life-altering experience that leaves behind a void filled with pain, questions and a deep sense of injustice.”

“He did not deserve to be taken from this world, and the cruelty of his absence does not erase the truth – his life mattered, his future mattered, and even now in his death, he still matters,” Potts said.

Justin Bird said that he and his son “used to hang out in my living room before he went to bed, snacking, watching movies or TV shows – and now his spot sits empty.”

“On car rides, certain songs break me down in tears because I miss my Sammy,” said the father amid tears.

“Going anywhere in the city makes my heart hurt. I have so many memories of my son throughout the years. Samuel was a huge part of my life, and now there’s a hole in my heart that will never be filled.”



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Fourth time around for National Elders Gathering in Edmonton

By Terry Lusty, LJI Reporter

It's 7 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 29 and a pipe ceremony outside Edmonton Expo Centre set the stage for an important weekend to come. At 8 a.m., the doors to one of the buildings halls flung open and hundreds upon hundreds streamed into several aisles to register for the National Elders Gathering.

But it doesn't stop there! Once again, Indigenous Elders from throughout Turtle Island have descended upon the city of Edmonton, Alberta, to participate in a journey that seems to have no ending and prompts Elders as well as others to join in at an event that truly lights up not only the light in their eyes, but also the flame in their hearts and the rumbling in their souls.

It is magical, it is electrifying and if you ever experienced it before, you likely never want it to go away. For two long years, they waited for the gathering to happen again, to refresh their memories, to rekindle their souls and to know they have honestly shared in an unforgettable occasion.

Yes, once again the grim, dark happenings in many parts of Turtle Island were pushed out of mind, out of sight by the refreshing energy created when thousands of Elders and friends walk, and sing and dance as they all circle the arena of Edmonton's Expo Centre hall amid chanting, drumming, whoops and hollers, with rattles and flutes playing as in days long past.

From coast to coast to coast, they have travelled excitedly for that magical grand entry moment when they all move together as one in a clockwise direction to unite and reunite with family, friends and new acquaintances. For many, they look forward to this occasion with such anticipation and excitement that they have

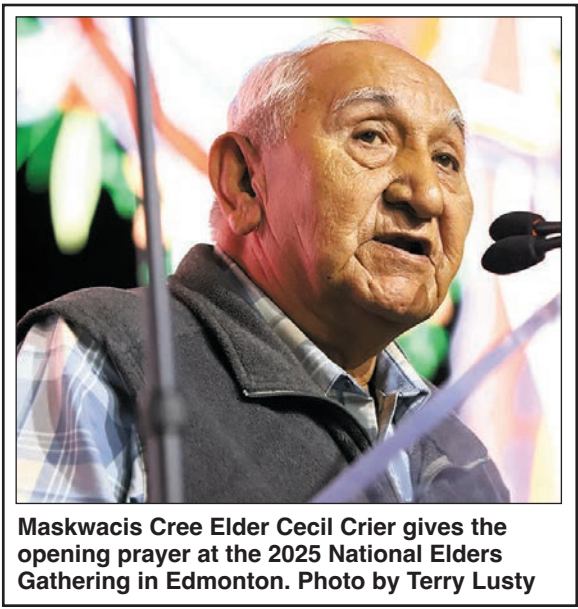
trouble falling asleep. Many wear their finest garments, hand crafted by relatives or close friends for the most part. They wear their garments with a fierce pride, honour and tradition that attests to the many long years they have travelled in their traditional territories as well as the ones they've visited from time to time.

This year there are huge contingents from numerous communities in the far North and from the interior and West Coast of British Columbia. Being the host province, Alberta naturally has a great number in attendance as well. However, no matter where they hail from, they are all as one for what so many consider a sacred and spiritual part of life's journey. In it, we have the epitome of what honestly constitutes a living culture. It's like a dream come true.

As they walk around the arena in all their colour and fashion, scores of them will face the packed bleachers and send a friendly, heartfelt wave to the thousands standing, sitting and watching their colleagues parade by.

Once the walk around is completed, the Eagle Staff and Flags are brought in and secured at the stage, a prayer is offered by a respected Elder and the Gathering is officially underway.

The trading Post, Hall E, swings its doors open at 10 a.m. and hundreds crowd their way in to get first dibs at a vast array of handicrafts, garments, leathercraft, beadwork, ribbon shirt and skirts, shawls, moccasins, handcrafted silverwork from the West Coast, art pieces, jackets, capes, wood carvings, drums, rattles, animal pelts, even tanned, buffalo hides. The list goes on and on. It's suddenly jam-packed with bodies everywhere as prospective buyers chase after first choice of what



Maskwacis Cree Elder Cecil Crier gives the opening prayer at the 2025 National Elders Gathering in Edmonton. Photo by Terry Lusty

they desire. It's kinda crazy, like a bizarre bazaar!

The lunch area gets jam-packed as well. Once the rush subsides, it's off to the conference rooms to listen to the wisdom of presenters on topics such as: Language and Culture, ReconciliAction and Justice, Health and Wellness, Climate Change, and Child and Family Services. The same forums are repeated in each of the following two days. But on Day 2, there's a Talent Show Scheduled, while Day 3 features an Intertribal Showcase followed by a Social Dance in the evenings.

The closing day, Oct. 2nd, consisted of forum summaries, shopping at the Trading Post, closing remarks, and the retiring of the flags.

Then once again people gathered in the halls, to visit with one another, slowly say their goodbyes and get ready for the trip home – still aglow from their wonderful weekend. The fourth Elders Gathering will be memorable for the old friends they saw, the new friends they made, the wisdom that was imparted, the experiences that were shared and the good feelings that were felt. Until next time...



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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.

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AFN Chief: First Nations demand control over their own citizenship

AFN Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak appeared before the Senate Committee on October 1 to testify on Bill S-2, *An Act to amend the Indian Act*, and called for First Nations control over First Nations citizenship.

“Our people are entitled to determine who they are, and to have their entitlement to rights determined according to our laws and policies,” said National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak. “We say to the government: accept it and stop trying to achieve effective budget cuts by cutting our people and trampling on our right to self-determination.”

The Senate Committee is studying Bill S-2, an attempt by the federal government to address discrimination in the Indian Act through amendments and new registration entitlements. During her remarks, the National Chief called on Canada to stop tinkering with centuries old legislation that is inherently flawed and work to align First Nation status with Band Membership as determined by First Nations.

“Since 1985, there has been litigation and another bill to amend Indian Act registration

provisions without consulting rights holders who bear the brunt of the consequences. As proposed, Bill S-2 represents another piecemeal approach to ending discrimination that has not worked – and will not work to bring justice and lasting solutions,” said the National Chief.

The Assembly of First Nations supports addressing the discrimination that Bill S-2 is intended to remedy, but the National Chief pointed to a number of specific problems with the bill. These include its failure to address First Nations self-government over citizenship, the second-generation cut-off rule and statutory funding.

“First Nations are the only people around the entire world who are legislated in this way and told who their members are or are not,” concluded the AFN National Chief. “There is something wrong that it is 2025 and we are still having these same discussions. We need to work together to end the discrimination in the *Indian Act*.”

We must tell our own truths

By Otipemisiwak Métis Government President Andrea Sandmaier

September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It is a day of truth-telling. It is a day where we honoured the Survivors of residential schools, we remembered the children who never came home, whose lives were stolen, and whose absence is felt in every Indigenous community across this country.

As Métis people, we know these truths not as distant history but as lived experience.

The legacy of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other colonial policies lives in our families. It lives in the silences where language was lost, in the disconnection from land and culture, and the trauma that has carried across generations.

And yet, alongside those truths, we also carry the strength of our ancestors, their determination to survive, to govern ourselves, and to pass on our stories, songs, and teachings.

Reconciliation is not a single day, but ongoing work that lives in our communities, governments, and families.

For the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, that work is being carried forward every day by your elected Representatives.

This week, I was honoured to join Citizens and families at Métis Crossing’s event to recognize this important day. At the same time Sarah Wolfe represented our government alongside Minister Sawhney and the Government of Alberta in Edmonton.

In Fort Vermilion, when County Council denied the repainting of the Truth and Reconciliation crosswalk first painted by Citizen Judy Ducharme in 2022, Citizens’ Representative, Bobbi Paul-

Alook helped lead a collaboration with Treaty 8 and the Holy Family Catholic School Division. Out of disappointment came something powerful, a new Every Child Matters mural and flag now stand at the site of the former St. Mary’s School.

In Slave Lake, thanks to the advocacy of Secretary Grant Lacombe, a Métis flag now flies proudly alongside others in the community.

[Earlier this month], Citizens may also have seen my op-ed with Secretary Kaila Mitchell in the *Edmonton Journal* on Métis ties to Jasper. We reminded Canadians that reconciliation also means recognizing and repairing the displacement of Métis families from their homes in Jasper National Park. The piece is titled “Opinion: For Métis, reconciliation also means a return to Jasper.”

These acts may seem small, but they are meaningful steps toward truth, visibility, and healing.

Looking ahead, we are entering an important season for our democracy. I want to encourage every Citizen to once again make your voice heard and vote in the upcoming elections. We know the Canada Post strike has disrupted mail-in ballots for the early voting period, so I encourage everyone to follow along for the latest information from the Chief Electoral Officer on how to cast your ballot.

Telling our truths, self-government, and democracy all require participation. Whether that’s raising our flag, painting a mural, or voting in an election, every action adds to the collective strength of our government.

Treaty 8 FN Grand Chief appointed to federal advisory council

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The federal government has appointed Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Grand Chief Trevor Mercredi to sit on the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Major Projects Office.

An outspoken critic of Bill C-5, which created an office to advance projects deemed to be in Canada’s national interest, Mercredi is one of 11 First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders announced as committee appointees on Sept. 10.

According to a Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta news release published a week after his appointment, Mercredi intends to advocate for “advancing the protection of Treaty rights, the autonomy of Treaty First Nations, the highest standards of environmental stewardship, and equitable economic benefits for our Peoples.”

The release emphasizes that “not every Nation supports this appointment or the IAC itself, and this diversity of views must be respected,” adding that the existence of the IAC “does not create consensus and does not bind any Nation to a collective position,” nor does it “replace Nation-to-Nation engagement or Canada’s constitutional Duty to Consult and Accommodate.”

“My participation will be guided directly by the mandate of the Treaty 8 Chiefs,” said Mercredi. “I will hold Canada accountable to its constitutional obligations, to the spirit and intent of Treaty, and to the standards our People expect for the protection of our lands and the well-being of future generations.”

First Nations leaders, including the Assembly of First Nations and Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, which withdrew from the assembly in 2022, widely criticized Bill C-5 for overriding Treaty rights and being drafted without input from First Nations.

“Instead of a nation-to-nation approach, Canada opted for speed and secrecy, and inclusion by marginalizing our nations,” Grand Chief Mercredi told a June 18 meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

He specifically called on the government to amend the legislation to include explicit recognition of Treaty and inherent rights, guarantee revenue sharing from major projects, reference the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and free, prior and informed consent, and create a joint decision-making process with First Nations.

A series of proposed amendments from NDP Leah Gazan that would include explicit reference to UNDRIP throughout the legislation’s text were voted down at the committee meeting.

Mercredi’s appointment came a day after Treaty 8 First Nations chiefs met with Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Mandy Gull-Masty in Edmonton.

According to a Facebook post from Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the chiefs discussed resource revenue sharing, Treaty rights to education and health care, the impact of Indigenous Services Canada budget cuts, child

and family services and policy reforms.

“These conversations are vital to ensuring our Treaty rights are respected and that our communities’ needs are addressed,” the post read.

In a statement to *Alberta Native News*, Privy Council Office spokesperson Pierre Cuguen said that the appointees “were selected for their expertise in areas such as major projects, economic development, Indigenous rights, and regulatory processes.”

“They bring deep expertise and experience, demonstrated leadership, and will ensure broad regional representation and a wide range of diverse perspectives,” said Cuguen.

Members “will help guide” the office’s work, he added, “to ensure that major projects create opportunities for equity ownership and responsible resource management through meaningful participation with Indigenous Peoples.”

3-Day Powwow Expo!



The National Indigenous Cultural Expo Powwow was a sea of colour, culture and style. The dancing and drumming was outstanding! Photo by Terry Lusty.



FORM 7

NOTICE OF ELECTION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Local Authorities Election Act

(Sections 12, 35, 46, 53)

LOCAL JURISDICTION: THE NORTHLAND SCHOOL DIVISION, PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

Notice is hereby given that an election will be held for the filling of the following offices:

Office	Number of Vacancies	Ward
Trustee	1	1
Trustee	1	3
Trustee	1	4
Trustee	1	6
Trustee	1	8
Trustee	1	9

Voting will take place on the 20th day of October, 2025, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Voting stations will be located at:

Ward	Polling Station Location	Address
1	Paddle Prairie School	Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement, Alberta
3	Bishop Routhier School Gift Lake School	Peavine Métis Settlement, Alberta Gift Lake Métis Settlement, Alberta
4	Grouard Northland School Hillview School	Grouard, Alberta East Prairie Métis Settlement, Alberta
6	Mistassiniy School Former Pelican Mountain School	Desmarais, Alberta Sandy Lake, Alberta
8	Calling Lake School	Calling Lake, Alberta
9	Bill Woodward School Father R. Perin Conklin Community School	Anzac, Alberta Janvier, Alberta Conklin, Alberta

In order to vote, you must produce for inspection one or more of the acceptable forms of identification required by section 53 of the Local Authorities Election Act. This includes a driver’s licence or motor vehicle operator’s licence issued by the Government of Alberta, or an identification card issued by the Government of Alberta that contains your photograph, name, and address.

If your government-issued ID only shows a box number, you must also bring a second document that lists your street address or legal land address. If you do not have identification, or cannot confirm your current address, another registered voter in your voting area can vouch for you.

To vote in a Northland School Division trustee election, you must be at least 18 years old, a Canadian citizen, and live in Alberta with your residence in the local jurisdiction on election day. Residents of certain First Nations reserves where agreements with the Division are in place are also eligible to vote.

For information, please call Northland School Division: 780-624-2060.

DATED at the Town of Peace River
in the Province of Alberta,
This 25th day of September, A.D., 2025.

Douglas Aird
Returning Officer



To advertise your business or community event, call Dan at Alberta Native News: 780-421-7966 or email natnews@shaw.ca

First Nations to intervene in Alberta independence case

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Six First Nations groups, including the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations and Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, have been granted intervenor status in a court challenge of the Alberta Prosperity Project’s (APP) effort to collect signatures for a referendum on Alberta independence.

The APP is attempting to bring the following question to referendum: “Do you agree that the Province of Alberta shall become a Sovereign Country and cease to be a province in Canada?”

Weeks after APP leader Mitch Sylvestre brought his group’s application forward to begin collecting signatures for the referendum question in July, Alberta Chief Electoral Officer Gordon McClure sent the question to the Court of King’s Bench to determine whether it’s constitutional.

Section 35(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes the existing inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, including land rights.

First Nations leaders from Treaties 6, 7 and 8 have emphasized that their Treaties were signed with the Crown before the province of Alberta came into existence.

“Our Nations’ participation is therefore essential, as Alberta independence would fundamentally alter the Crown-First Nation Treaty relationship and jeopardize the implementation of Treaty rights,” Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Grand Chief Trevor Mercredi wrote in a Sept. 25 statement.

Justice Colin Feasby agreed, granting intervenor status to the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations and Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, as well as Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Samson Lake Cree Nation, who each applied to intervene individually, and Mikisew Cree Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree First Nation, who submitted a joint application.

“The presence of First Nations intervenors is necessary to properly decide the case because Aboriginal and Treaty rights issues cannot be adjudicated in the absence of First Nations,” wrote the judge in his Sept. 24 ruling. “First Nations interests would not be protected if they were not allowed to participate in the case.”

Sylvestre of the APP was represented in court by lawyer Jeffrey Rath, a fellow APP member

who has admitted to multiple instances of professional misconduct before the Law Society of Alberta.

Rath objected to the First Nations’ inclusion as intervenors, arguing that First Nations Treaty rights aren’t impacted by the APP referendum question, that the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations and Treaty 8 First Nations don’t have the authority to intervene on behalf of individual First Nations, and that the First Nations’ arguments will duplicate each other.

Justice Feasby countered that the question of whether First Nations Treaty rights are impacted by the referendum question “is a subject for the merits hearing; it cannot be the basis for rejecting intervenor applications.”

He added that the decision of some Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 First Nations to pursue intervenor status independently doesn’t mean they “dispute the legitimacy of the participation of the Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 umbrella organizations in this matter.”

Feasby acknowledged the “risk” that the First Nations intervenors “will repeat perspectives and arguments that they have in common,” but concluded that “to direct that the First Nations intervenors refrain from duplicating each others’ arguments would put an unnatural and unnecessary constraint on their advocacy.”

Since no Treaty 7 First Nations, who would also be impacted by Alberta independence, applied to be intervenors, Feasby said that Treaty 7 representatives will be asked to submit evidence to the court specific to their Treaty as a non-intervenor.

The Alberta Ministry of Justice, which is intervening on behalf of the APP, didn’t take a position on the inclusion of First Nations as intervenors, nor did Elections Alberta, which initiated the court challenge of the APP’s proposed referendum question.

Justice Feasby rejected the effort of Alberta



"Purple Horse" by Linus Woods. Acrylic on canvas. 18" x 14". Available for purchase at wakinagallery.com.

Forever Canada, an organization founded by former deputy premier Thomas Lukaszuk to push for Alberta to remain in Canada, to obtain intervenor status.

While the APP’s referendum is tied up in court, Lukaszuk’s pro-federation petition is collecting signatures for its proposed referendum question: “Do you believe Alberta should remain in Canada?”

Alberta Forever Canada has until Oct. 28 to collect 293,976 signatures for its question to appear on a ballot.

Lukaszuk sought intervenor status by arguing that Sylvestre’s question violated the voting rights set out in section 3 of the Charter because its use of the word *sovereign* is insufficiently clear and open to interpretation, since it could apply to people who still want Alberta to remain in Canada.

Calling this a “creative constitutional argument,” Feasby ruled that it is nonetheless “premature,” because the court is dealing with the constitutionality of Sylvestre’s proposal, not the wording of his question.

“If it is determined in this proceeding that Mr. Sylvestre’s referendum proposal is constitutional, such determination will not include any finding on the clarity or suitability of the question to be put to voters even if the clarity of the question may also be characterized as a constitutional issue,” wrote Feasby.



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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 Manager.

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





The Grand Entry marked the beginning of an exceptional 2025 National Elders Gathering in Edmonton last month. Photos by Terry Lusty

New book examines horror films from an Indigenous perspective

(ANNews) - Just in time for Halloween, the spookiest season, author Laura Hall has released her new title *Bloodied Bodies, Bloody Landscapes*. In it she examines the dark legacy of colonialism in contemporary horror films from *Scream* to *Halloween* and beyond.

Hall looks at horror films through an Indigenous lens. She observes that more than any other genre, they offer a chilling glimpse – like peering through a creaky attic door – into the brutality of settler colonial violence. While Indigenous peoples continue to struggle against colonization, white settler narratives consistently position them as a threat, depicting the Indigenous Other as an ever-present menace, lurking on the fringes of “civilized” society. Indigenous inclusion or exclusion in horror films tells a larger story about myths, fears, and anxieties that have endured for centuries.

“*Bloody Bodies, Bloody Landscapes* is a must read for anyone consuming horror media,” writes *Bad Cree* author Jessica Johns. “Laura Hall masterfully dissects the ways in which settler-colonialism is at the core of sexism, racism, sanism, and white supremacy, and how we see those systems of oppression at work in historical

and contemporary horror.”

Bloodied Bodies, Bloody Landscapes traces connections between Indigenous representations, gender, and sexuality within iconic horror classics like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Friday the 13th*. The savage killer, the romantic and doomed Indian, the feral “mad woman” – no trope or archetype escapes the shadowy influence of settler colonialism. In the end, horror both disrupts and uncovers colonial violence – only to bury its victims once more.

“Bloodied Bodies, Bloody Landscapes is brilliant scholarship that pinpoints the ugly truth about the treatment of Indigenous people in horror cinema,” writes author Robin Means Coleman. “But Hall is doing much more than examining tropes of mysticism, savagery, and settler colonialism as savior in horror; she is directing our attention to the recuperative power of certain portrayals, thereby reminding us that an anticolonial lens can produce whole and full human stories – even scary ones.”

Bloodied Bodies, Bloody Landscapes is available from University of Regina Press or from your favorite bookseller – paperback (9781779400802), hard cover (9781779400819) and ebooks are available.

“THE BOOK I’VE WAITED MY WHOLE MOVIE-GEEK LIFE FOR... I’M SO THRILLED THIS BOOK EXISTS.” —JESSE WENTE



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CREATIVE
SASKATCHEWAN

2025



Empowering
Indigenous
Voices



Nov. 12-13

Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre

There is a strong desire to share information on the latest developments in our Indigenous community. 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.

Please visit our website to register:



ICWC.ca



info@ICWC.ca



@ICWC



780.245.5949



Powwow dancers competed for big prizes at the National Indigenous Cultural Expo (NICE) in Edmonton last month. Photos by Terry Lusty.

Join the call to protect and rebuild Alberta’s public healthcare

Submitted by Friends of Medicare

Every Albertan deserves timely, dignified care — but right now, our health system is buckling under pressure.

Imagine walking into a hospital, desperate for help ... and being told to wait. Or worse, sent home.

This is the reality for too many across Alberta today — crowded waiting rooms, closed ER units, clinics shuttered, and people unable to find a family doctor. The public system we once trusted is fraying.

Alberta’s public health care is being dismantled

The government is intent on undermining public healthcare. They’ve restructured AHS, stopped listening to healthcare professionals, and siphoned money away from the public system to failed for-profit ventures. The results? Record-high wait times, delayed procedures, and patients paying out of pocket.

Let’s call it what it is.

It’s the age old strategy: create chaos, break things, and then push privatization as the solution. But the results are in on Premier Smith’s privatization experiments. The 2024 budget revealed that the failed privatization of our lab services cost Albertans at least \$97 million, without delivering the promised cost savings or services needed. Albertans value our public healthcare and have invested in it for generations. Watching it be undermined is insulting, expensive, and dangerous.

The chaos is manufactured to justify

privatization. The promise? That private operators will “plug the holes.” What we see instead is staff fleeing, essential services shrinking, and communities left scrambling to get the care they deserve. And Indigenous and rural communities are often hit hardest.

But we do not have to sit by and let this happen.

We can rebuild our public healthcare system — together

Friends of Medicare is a movement rooted in the conviction that healthcare must remain a public good, not a profit-making venture. Because public dollars belong to the public and medical care should respond to your needs — not your wallet.

Join other people across Alberta asking the government to...

Stop the chaos: Sweeping restructuring from this government causes chaos and erodes trust in public care. It’s time for it to end and to stabilize healthcare.

Stabilize now: Surge funding to reopen ER hours, expand inpatient beds, and clear surgical backlogs in public hospitals.

Spend public dollars on public care: End subsidies to for-profit operators and re-invest in hospitals, community clinics, and public labs.

Restore affordability: Ban creeping extra billing and private fees that undermine universality and block people from care.

Support Indigenous and rural communities: Reopen and stabilize rural ERs, expand urgent care, and grow home and continuing care to free up hospital beds.

Deliver mental health care: We can avoid ER backlogs by investing in evidence-based mental health and addiction services across the province.

Recruit and retain: Ensure adequate staffing and access by implementing a province-wide workforce plan, including rural incentives.

Respect the experts: Re-engage healthcare workers by listening to their expertise about healthcare policy and fostering a stable working environment.

They’re hoping we’ll stay quiet while they sell off our care. Let’s prove them wrong.

We’re working with thousands of people across this province to deliver a clear message to our government: it’s time to rebuild our healthcare. By standing with us, you can help to stop these dangerous cuts and restore care in your community.

Visit RebuildOurHealthcare.ca to find out more and grow our movement by:

Emailing your MLA. Let them know Albertans are watching — and we will not accept erosion of public care.

Sharing your story. Your experience matters. Every tale of struggle is evidence this system is failing.

Volunteering. Whether you can canvass, rally, organize or support from behind the scenes, your contribution builds strength.

Joining your local chapter of Friends of Medicare. There is a community near you already organizing, already pushing back.

Becoming a member. When you join, you gain a stake in defending health care as an inalienable public good.

We’re up against powerful forces that want to turn health into a commodity. But we are stronger together. The future of public health care is not a foregone conclusion — it’s ours to reclaim.

Together, let’s rebuild Alberta’s healthcare.

Stop the destruction of Alberta's healthcare

Join the call to protect and rebuild Alberta’s public healthcare.

rebuildourhealthcare.ca

