

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Kokoms a hilarious Christmas gift

Dakota Hebert as Zula Merasty, Lacy Morin-Desjarlais as Claire Bear, Cory Standing as Sihkos Sinclair and Dalton Lightfoot as Tim Bird bring the last SNTC Rez Christmas to the stage.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



It wouldn't be Christmas without A Rez Christmas

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Saskatchewan’s favourite kokoms are going to bring you one more amazingly funny Christmas tale and then they are finally going to get a Christmas off work.

SNTC’s most popular series will come to a close with Nicimos; a story of love, friendship and cunning (or lack thereof) featuring the hijinks of the immensely popular kokoms of Kiwetinohk, Zula Merasty, Claire Bear and Sihkos Sinclair.

The Christmas kokoms were originally created by a team of youth in the SNTC Circle of Voices program in 2001. A computer nightmare eventually saw Curtis Peeteetuce pull together enough notes that the play Ms. Purdy Parsimonias: A Rez Christmas Carol was created and the kokoms were introduced to Saskatchewan.

Since then the play has seen nine different versions, each of them hilarious as the old ladies go chasing their Christmas hamper from the band, head for the biggest bingo ever or get into a spot of trouble or three. The

various adaptations of the play have toured the province from north to south and thousands of people have seen their kokom or grandma reflected in these iconic characters.

After all those years though, Curtis Peeteetuce thinks it is time for a change.

“The play has had an exceptional run and it has brought many people together both on the stage and in the community,” says Peeteetuce, playwright as well as artistic director of SNTC.

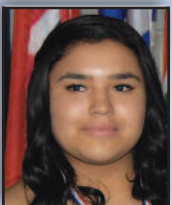
“What I’m going to miss the most is the laughter, the people, the communities. The most important thing about this play is hearing people laugh. That joy during Christmas season.”

Often pulling most of the laughs is outrageous kokom Sihkos Sinclair. This character has been played by SNTC standouts like Peeteetuce, Mitchell Poundmaker, Arron Naytowhow and Aaron Shingoose. This year Cory Standing has scored the role of Sihkos and he knows he has big shoes to fill.

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OH WHAT A DAY!

We Day in Saskatoon was a huge success with 15,000 young people in attendance at SaskTel Centre. - Page 10



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Welcome to our
Newsmaker of the Year Edition
Coming In January - The Year in Review Issue
CPMA #40027204

Everyone knows kokom

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“There is a lot of pressure because it is an established character that the community loves. What has helped me out a lot is that the previous Sihkos’, they are all friends of mine. I watched all the previous plays and picked up a little from each of them. I really want to make it my own though and I base Sihkos on my own kokom.

“My character has bits and pieces of each of them,” said Standing.

To close the show, Peeteetuce has written another gem. For long time fans he recommends paying attention for some background information in the play.

“There is a very important scene between Sihkos and Zula that tells the story on how they became friends and it is a very tender moment that I think the people who have watched this play over the years will appreciate,” said Peeteetuce.

The play will be remembered fondly and though there will be no more new plays, Peeteetuce promises that they will remount some old ones and tour every once in a while.

This year we see the kokoms navigate old flames, lonely households and chase the ever-elusive Christmas hamper.

Cory Standing he thinks the demand for the story will always be there because the show crosses all racial boundaries and we all have one thing in common, a kokom or Grandma.

“After a show in La Ronge last month I was talking to a guy and he said I reminded him just like his Baba. When you think of Christmas you think of home and family. There is a universal humour when people think of their kokoms or their grandmas and I think that is why people connect with the play.”



Curtis Peeteetuce is the playwright of the popular kokoms Christmas plays and he is also in the back for this photo of the original cast from 2001.

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Family Foundation shares lottery winner's good fortune throughout Saskatchewan

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – When the Worme family got lucky and won over \$14 million in the lottery, women and children across Saskatchewan also hit the jackpot.

The Amiskusees Semaganis-Worme Family Foundation was recently introduced to the community at their first official donation event as spokesperson Rheana Worme and her mom, Helen, and brother, Donovan, were on stage at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company to present them a donation of \$20,000.

“We have been donating to groups and individuals for over a year now but they have been smaller donations,” said Rheana.

“But this is our first major donation of this kind, a partnership so to speak and we hope it goes on into the future. The reason we have chosen SNTC to donate to is their commitment to the community and their mandate to not only incorporate the youth in the community but to reach outside of Saskatoon and across Saskatchewan.”

After winning the lottery over a year ago, the family took their time planning what they wanted to do with their windfall.

“The first priority was to protect our children. But also we wanted to create a really nice learning environment for them,” said Helen Semaganis of the challenge facing herself and her husband Don Worme, both prominent lawyers in Saskatoon.

“We both knew we wanted to give back to the community and we wanted a way to structure it. We decided to build a foundation and who we would bring in to help organize it and then to bring the children in to create the board so they can learn how to manage and keep the family together.”

The foundation board includes Tara Worme, who works for the federal government in Ottawa, Tanis Worme, an artist who works in the family law firm, Rheana Worme who attends Edwards School of Business, Donovan Worme, a U of S Arts and Sciences student and the youngest sibling, Elias, who is 13. The parents sit as non-voting co-chairs.

The opportunity to run the foundation means everything to Rheana.

“My dad has always been a donor and involved in the community and contributes financially to all kinds of sports teams and individuals. Now he can hand it to his children, to us, in order that we can learn to give back to the community and see the benefit.”



Rheana Worme, Helen Semaganis and Donovan Worme with SNTC General Manager Alan Long after the Amiskusees Semaganis-Worme Family Foundation donated \$20,000 to the theatre company. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

According to Rheana the mandate of the foundation is to empower the human spirit with a focus on women and youth. They are the most vulnerable and the people that need the most protection and help.

“We are working on a budget for what we want to invest each year as well we are creating criteria for applications. We just finished our first year where we gave out about \$240,000.”

The money comes in handy for the Theatre Company.

“Having the Amiskusees Semaganis-Worme Family Foundation donation means a lot to our season and allows us to pay competitive wages to our performers. It also ups our status and capacity as a professional theatre company,” said Alan Long, general manager of SNTC.

“We have great support from sponsors in the community but this is the first foundation to support us. It is important to find these private donors. It is a big part of our sustainability.”

The money hasn't changed the family and the Foundation has helped the family become even closer.

“We do love the foundation work,” said Helen. “We come together once a month as family and we are getting a lot better at the business of it. Our youngest is 13 and in the last year it has been really delightful to see him grow. He can now pay attention the entire time of a meeting and make motions.

“He is learning little things about business so it is good for him. Otherwise, we tried to keep our personal lives the same way. We still go to work in the morning and I still drive my son to school. Life continues to go on.”

In the meantime, the Foundation is developing and Rheana is having the time of her life and she is very appreciative of her families luck.

“It is very exciting. I'm very excited to take this up. It is great to get handwritten letters telling us about activities that people could do because of our donation and we have had all kinds of positive feedback. It keeps us committed.”



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DEADLINE: JANUARY 16

Congratulations to our News Maker of the Year

The readers and online voters have spoken and the News Maker of the year is Summer Michel-Stevenson of Pelican Narrows. Summer had a great year of accomplishments for a teenager, showing perseverance and class in accelerating in sports, academics and leadership. The people got behind her and she received over 70 per cent of the votes.

Young people like Summer give us lots of hope for the future. Congratulations Summer!

Coming next in votes but not necessarily in amount of news coverage was the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and Marlene Bird, who almost became one of those statistics. There was no avoiding the issue this year as there were more tragic cases across the nation and outraged, tireless advocates who continue to bring attention to the cause through art installations, government lobbying and remembrance walks. Hopefully this heightened awareness leads to change ... desperately needed change at that.

Rounding out the top five, but by no means to be ignored are Kendal Netmaker who continues to grow his Neechie Gear brand and rack up awards for being an entrepreneur and all around great guy and lastly, the North American Indigenous Games that took Regina by storm this summer. Thousands of athletes, coaches and family flooded old Pile of Bones for a week in July. Team Saskatchewan had a great showing and the host committee did a heck of a job.

These people and events have changed many people's lives and the impact will be felt for a long time in Aboriginal communities across the country.

Resource development going to be in the news of 2015

The Northern Trappers Alliance has erected a blockade eight km north of La Loche, Saskatchewan to prevent numerous oil companies' road access to

exploration camps beyond that point. The trappers assert that access to their trap lines has been blocked by security gates and their spokesperson Don Montgrand says that

he was followed as he went to his trap line for over 100 km by a helicopter.

A very complex story is emerging about resource development, municipalities, Métis leaders, Chiefs and who really speaks for who. There are allegations of conflict of interest and a push back from this group on exploration and development as they say it is impacting their livelihood and the ecosystem of the North.

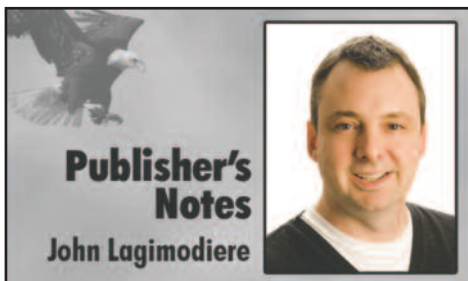
This situation is an example of what the future of Canada may look like because continued exploration and extraction of natural resources in Canada will never stop. We are in need of some magical wizard who could find a perfect way to interpret and implement this duty to consult and accommodate thing. The future looks very expensive and litigious but it shouldn't be.

A great way to dialogue is needed. Just like any relationship, maybe we should start with never go to bed mad. We will continue to follow this pressing issue on our website.

Cliff Wright remembered

Former Treaty Commissioner and Mayor of Saskatoon Cliff Wright passed away on Dec. 9. Wright was Treaty Commissioner from 1989-1996 and was a pivotal player in the development of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation urban reserve in Saskatoon and the signing of the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement in 1992.

Wright will likely go down as one of Saskatoon's best leaders. He served on Council for 22 years. He was first elected



as an Alderman in 1966 and was elected Mayor in 1976. He served until 1988. Mayor Wright oversaw major changes in Saskatoon; the creation of the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Circle Drive North Bridge, the Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre and the current SaskTel Centre.



CLIFF WRIGHT

His down home non-judgemental attitude and serious business sense made him an excellent fit for the role of Treaty Commissioner.

Eagle Feather News columnist Winston McLean knew Cliff Wright and had this to say about him. "I got to work with this great man, Cliff Wright. I was a greenhorn working with the FSIN and he was Saskatchewan's first Treaty Commissioner. Under his leadership, his crew put together a report that helped Canada, Saskatchewan and dozens of First Nations come to the table to negotiate the largest Treaty based land claim in Canadian history. Because of his work

the landscape of this province would never be the same, for example urban reserves, and thousands of First Nation lives got opportunities they may not have achieved."

Thank you Commissioner Wright.



Harry Lafond and Cliff Wright

Perry Bellegarde new Chief!

Hundreds of Chiefs gathered in Winnipeg this week to determine who would lead the Assembly of First Nations for the next three years. And FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde is the winner. Also up for the job were underdog Leon Jourdain, and Ghislain Picard. Pretty interesting stuff and really important news ... but due to publishing deadlines we were unable to bring you the final results in this issue, like by three hours, sorry! But please check out our website at www.eaglefeathernews.com for the entire story. And many other stories actually. Tons of stories. And recipes.

Merry Christmas

On behalf of everyone who contributes to this newspaper every month, we want to wish you dear reader a very merry Christmas full of family, friends and food. Be good to one another and all the best in the New Year.

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Reflections on the joy of ironing my clothes

Christmas is almost upon us and I should write or reflect or do something about it but I find that more and more the catchy strains of "Here Comes Santa Claus," is making me cranky and wishing I had joined the Communist Party of Canada or the Jehovah's Witnesses, both of whom do not celebrate Christmas. Or so I am told.

I do not understand why it is necessary for the marketplace to start banging us on the head with Christmas cheer before winter has even decided to make an appearance. That kind of advertising is about as disgusting as the sack of rotten potatoes our parents told us we would get if we did not behave and do as we were told.

These threats usually started with the first snowfall and continued until Midnight Mass, which usually found me on my knees promising the Virgin Mary, 50 Hail Mary's and half my gifts if she would intervene on my behalf. She always did of course which is one of the reasons why I believe in the power of women.

So instead of writing about Christmas I am going to write about ironing. That's right, ironing clothes. I have a pile to do as soon as I finish this column. I just read in a magazine in my doctor's office (I am fine thank you) how

some people actually find ironing clothes soothing and it fills them with happy thoughts.

Something I need as "Here Comes Santa Claus," is sure not doing it for me.

And anyways, I am one of those people who loves to iron. I can talk to you for hours about the best irons to use and the best and worst fabric to iron and I can share lots of ironing stories. It is amazing how many there are.

It really is one of the best exercises to do next to walking. It keeps your under arms strong and puts off sagging in that area and it is also good for maintaining a firm bust-line. Well that might be stretching it a bit after 60, Lol, but for sure the feeling one gets from the stacks of neatly folded tea towels, pillow cases, T-shirts, blue jeans with wonderful straight creases down the leg and rows of hanging shirts and blouses is akin to and I won't say the word, but many women out there will know what I mean.

Ironing is a way to reflect on life's foibles, to work out anger at the stupid politics of Harper, Doucette, and whoever else happened to make last night's news. But the best thing of all is



to just think about good things, good people and inhale the smell of clean laundry especially if it has been drying outdoors.

When I was a kid we used flat irons that must have weighed at least a pound. (Women were in great shape then) They, the irons, were kept at the back of the cook stove and were always hot. You picked them up with a wooden handle and held a small piece of board underneath in case the handle came undone and the iron fell to the floor or worse yet, landed on a baby crawling around down there.

Later, as we became more modern, my dad, after selling his fur, came home with a gas iron for my mom. News traveled fast in our family community and soon our house was full of aunties and uncles, cousins and grandmas and grandpas, all there to see the fabulous new "moni yaw ah pah chee chi kun" white man's tool to make life easier, especially for women.

We all crowded around as my mom read aloud, in a clear precise voice, the instructions from the booklet and we

watched breathlessly as dad followed them. First, by filling the small tank on the side with gasoline, then pumping it up and finally lighting it as my aunty raced to the door and threw it wide open and Nokom chased us outside just in case it blew up and dad had to throw it out like he did the hissing, sputtering lamp he'd brought home the month before.

Threw it out several times in fact, until he realized the flaring and hissing of the "mantals" was normal. Well the gas iron didn't explode but every time my mom lit it up to do the ironing we would all be chased outside until she got used to it.

What a wonderful convenience according to my aunties, who all received gas irons shortly after, traded for mink, otter and weasel skins.

But my Nokom, she never traded no weasel skins for any "moni yaw ah pah chee chi kun" reminding us instead that the flat irons cost us our land. The gas irons would probably want her grandchildren and future generations. But that's another story.

Miyo Kitchi Mun tou Kisi kaw, ekwa, Miyo Och ay too kisi kaw ni wakom ah kanak. A Good Gods Day and a Good Kissing Day too all of you, my relatives.

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Celebrating Christmas ... back in the day

“So what time is midnight mass this year?”

That was only one of the silly jokes that was common in the days of my youth growing up in the Métis community of St. Laurent, Manitoba.

You can see how much things have changed. Nowadays it is common for ‘midnight mass’ to be celebrated at all sorts of hours on Christmas Eve. What have we lost? What have we gained from all the changes in our ways and our society over time?

I don't pretend to know the answer to that. But because things have changed so much

I will try to recall some of those things that were part of celebrating the Christmas season, which included, in our Catholic community, New Year's Eve and the Feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings Day) or La fete di Rois on January 6 or Sunday after New Year's Day.

It was midnight mass that kicked everything off. The whole community would pile into sleds or cabooses and head to the old church in the north end of the village that stretched for about three miles along a road one mile from the shore of the frozen lake.

After mass, people returned home and enjoyed a nice late snack, featuring ‘tourtieres’ or meat pies. I recall a good one about the time when as a young teacher back in my home community in the ‘60s I shot a jackrabbit and gave it to my aunt who ground it up and made tourtieres from it. There were a couple of ‘city-slicker’ boarders, also teachers, at my aunt's place. They were not told what the meat was.

For a young Métis child, Christmas morning was by far the most exciting morning of the year! Presents in colourful wrapping were placed under the Christmas tree. I remember best the small brown paper bags that were placed under and around the tree: one for each child in the house.

There were 12 children in my family so there was quite a lineup of bags even when some siblings were not home or had not been born.

Each and every bag contained the exact same things. I recall at least part of the list: one mandarin orange, two or three ‘snowball’ chocolates, the ones with white coconut on them, hard candy, including the ribbon-like

striped kind. Oh, and a sugar cane.

I have had fun checking with my contemporaries about their own Christmas customs. One common custom of ours was the making of ‘la pouchine’ which is derived from the French for ‘pudding’ and according to the Internet originates from British puddings. La pouchine was boiled in a bag. Some of the main ingredients included suet, raisins, flour and whatever. I suspect some folks still eat it. Yum.

One thing I was not too keen on when I was a little boy is the ladies kissing one and all to wish

them a Happy New Year. The only time you kissed people was upon first meeting in the New Year, whenever that was. Growing up and travelling around I have noticed that in Eastern Canada and some European places, men and women kiss on two cheeks to say hello. And they do it at any time of year, never mind at New Year's.

One more recollection in a deep corner of my dried up old memory glands is that some ladies would wish adults a happy New Year ‘and a good death at the end of your days.’ Now there is a good wish don't you think?

At midnight on New Year's you could hear the celebratory shotgun shots around the community. There was no drinking on Christmas but New Year's was fair game.

I remember the huge feasts my grandparents would host for all their descendants which seemed to be most of the villagers. That died with them long ago.

Christmas time has changed so much. One of my friends pokes fun at the bland ‘politically-correct’ greeting: “All the best to you and yours throughout this festive season.”

Merry Christmas to you, wishing also peace and joy throughout the world and a Happy New Year

So what time is midnight mass this year? Six o'clock.

Requiescat in pace: Father Guy Lavallee

A well-known Metis priest from my home community and fellow student at an Oblate residential school in the 1950s died suddenly of illness on Oct. 25. Following a mass, on an earlier date at the St. Boniface Cathedral, his ashes were buried next to his parents' graves in the St. Laurent cemetery on Nov. 4.



Comment
Paul Chartrand



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Language Keepers Conference engages in important work

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Indigenous languages are at high risk of becoming extinct if they are not taught to the next generation immediately. Unfortunately, the federal government does not fund language training and leaves language retention in the hands of organizations like the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.

To do their part to preserve language, the SICC hosts an annual Language Keepers conference. Remember the old expression “Kids these Days?” Well, it is the kids these days that have to be reached in order to preserve the language ... but often these kids communicate different than the older generation. That’s why this year the SICC went with the theme Utilizing Technology for Language Preservation.

One of the keynote speakers was media star Wab Kinew. He joined the conference via Skype from Winnipeg. He knows the perils of losing the language and tells an interesting story of his own community.

“When I was a kid growing up on the reserve, we had 100 per cent fluency,” said Kinew. “Now the youth are almost at zero. We asked the Elders why that is and they said that whenever they speak the language to the young people, they just look down at their phone.”



Wab Kinew joined the conference via Skype and spoke about engaging youth through technology.

Kinew then went on to demonstrate an app he had created for the Anishinaabe language.

“Our goal is to share our successes in the use of technology as well as recognizing the successes of our fellow Language Keepers,” said SICC President Dorothy Myo of the conference that also featured Don Thornton who helped developed language apps for the File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council.

“We need to work on inspiring youth to learn and maintain their language in order to strengthen their First Nations identity.”

Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre has been publishing books for children and books in Indigenous languages, but they always had trouble reaching the youth.

“No matter what we did, young people weren’t breaking down our doors. But now they reach us on Facebook and our web page,” said Myo. “It only makes sense that we meet them on their ground.”

The conference is pulled together on a tight budget, with the generous support of various sponsors and through fundraising including their annual golf tournament and some other events. The Centre could do a lot more but the lack of funding is a concern.

“The federal government does not support First Nation languages,” added Myo. “It is very disheartening that First Peoples languages are not supported and it seems like the government wants us to lose our language. We are not going to let that happen.”

Over 400 people attended the conference this year and besides the excellent training in the breakout rooms, participants were entertained with a round dance and performances by classical musician Rhonda Head and by comedian DerRic Starlight.



SICC President Dorothy Myo presented a blanket to elder Ben Weenie.

(Photos John Lagimodiere)



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EAGLE FEATHER NEWS NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR

Summer Michel-Stevenson had a year to remember

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Summer Michel-Stevenson, from Pelican Narrows First Nation, was voted Eagle Feather News' News Maker of the Year with a long list of achievements in 2014.

When she was informed about the honour, she said she felt so happy and surprised.

"It's like really cool and I didn't even know I was in it until I saw it on Facebook. I felt honored because there are a lot of other important things that made the news," says Stevenson.

People were given a chance to vote on different stories that made the news throughout the year from CEO of Neechie Gear, Kendal Netmaker, to Regina hosting the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) this past summer. Stevenson ranked at 71.52 per cent total of votes through Eagle Feather News' online website poll.

Back in the spring, Michel-Stevenson won the SaskTel Youth Award of Excellence in the leadership category. End of June, she also won the Junior Citizen of the Year Award in Regina. Also, Stevenson competed at NAIG and brought home four gold medals and one silver competing in the canoeing sport for Team Saskatchewan.

She was also the Junior Chief of the Youth Council on her reserve but retired her position to pursue a university education in Prince Albert with hopes of one day becoming a pediatrician.

She said being named News Maker of the Year made her family and community proud of her achievements including community member Angie Merasty who has known Summer her whole life.

"I was hoping that would happen. I've been a big fan of Summer's for many years now. I nominated her for a quite a few awards.

"There's a reason behind that, I see someone who's got potential, she's very humble when it comes to the praise she gets," says Merasty.

"When I saw Kendal Netmaker on there and the sad story of Marlene Bird and even NAIG those are all great

(stories) but I'm always such a supporter of our youth," she added.

Merasty says the community is really proud of Michel-Stevenson and of her accomplishments but says there are more hidden accomplishments that Stevenson was too modest to mention.

"She also won the Northern Role Model Youth Program so she won \$1,000 for her community of Pelican Narrows and with that (money) she could put it towards a community event," says Merasty.

"Summer really wanted to start up a SADD Chapter which is Students Against Drinking and Driving."

So the youth council started a chapter two weeks ago with the help of Michel-Stevenson even though she's not living there, she's been working with her community from a distance.

"Our first event was last Saturday. we hosted a traffic stop with the local RCMP. We were able to do that because of Summer's award, we were able to buy flashlights, reflective gear and stuff like that," says Merasty.

Earlier this week, Merasty submitted a report to SADD Saskatchewan for a contest for the Red Ribbon campaign about their recent SADD community event. Later on in the week, she was informed through email their SADD Chapter had won first place for their community event which they won \$500 towards their chapter.

The community is reaping the benefits all because of Michel-Stevenson's hard work and continuous dedication to her community and the youth.

Merasty says that Michel-Stevenson enjoys singing and that she even

made it for the Voices of the North Showcase in February.

Michel-Stevenson is a true role model for the youth in her community and she demonstrates that if you want something, work for it. Her words of encouragement for the youth are to always try your best.

"Be who you are and don't be afraid to be who you are. Just don't care what other people think because in the end, it's you not them," says Michel-Stevenson.

Congratulations Michel-Stevenson for being voted News Maker of the Year!



Summer Michel-Stevenson won a SaskTel Youth Award in the leadership category and won five medals at NAIG. She also won a Junior Citizen of the Year Award (above).



Work Environment

"The people I work with and the family atmosphere are the reason why I love coming to work. I have the best job!"

Kurt Delorme, Community Relations Coordinator, Saskatoon Fire

City of Saskatoon

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Give the gift of family

Who is around your Christmas tree this year?

We need to change our ways of thinking when it comes to the Christmas holiday because it truly does not matter what we have under our trees but who is around the tree to share the holiday with us.

Department stores want to make a profit, that is their bottom line. If you get the biggest gift or the most expensive – that is not important! Gifts should not be a measure of our love.

Change your way of thinking when it comes to this holiday season. Go visit family and friends, hand deliver handmade Christmas cards; bake cookies or bannock and go share with an Elder.

Don't "buy" into the advertising on television, radio and stores that only want to make a profit. Buy your groceries, pay your rent and your bills and don't get sucked into spending money, especially on things that are not necessary.

Don't feel guilty because you can't buy gifts because you really don't have to buy gifts. We have been conditioned by advertising and media for decades into believing that Christmas is all about exchanging gifts. Well, guess what, that is a load of crap!

Burton Hillis said, "The best of all Christmas gifts around any Christmas tree is the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other."

Christmas is a time for family, food and fun. Don't let yourself get stressed over buying gifts.

My favorite part of the Christmas holiday is the classic movies on television: White Christmas, Scrooge, A Charlie Brown Christmas. We can find pearls of wisdom in these movies.

Dr. Seuss said it best in How the Grinch Stole Christmas: "And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore.

"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store? What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."

We can thank the wonderful shopping centres, toy distributors and manufacturers for making sure that our children and grandchildren can

start telling us what they want for Christmas beginning the day after Halloween!

Don't get sucked in by the whole marketing campaign.



Sandee Sez
Sandra Ahenakew

When we leave this world what our family and friends have left of us are the memories we created over the years. Give your family memories for Christmas,

buy a scrap book, draw pictures, write stories, string popcorn, make peanut butter and jam sandwiches, but don't get too caught up in the holiday madness of gift giving.

It wasn't that long ago people used to go visiting during the holidays. Back then people would go to their families' or neighbour's house and eat, visit, and sometimes play cards – it didn't cost any money but the memories are priceless.

This year try giving random acts of kindness. Let the meaning of Christmas live in our hearts every day. At Christmas time most people's hearts open wide with feelings of giving and kindness.

We remember those less fortunate than us and we reach out to help. People are in need of kindness every day not just at Christmas time. I don't think we will ruin Christmas by learning to live with the "Christmas spirit" everyday.

This society we live in has created a huge holiday where we feel obligated to buy gifts and in the process we forget about the meaning of the holiday. In my family it's not so much the gifts but it's the food, family, canasta, food, friends and food again.

My grandkids still want everything they see on TV commercials.

The greatest gifts we can give each other is our time – our children are not going to remember what we bought them for Christmas when they were five and six, but they will remember the time we spend with them.

Look around your tree Christmas morning nothing is more important than the people around the tree. The greatest gifts we can give each other is our time. Happy Holidays to all. Be good to each other.

Charlie Brown said it well: "Isn't there anybody who knows what Christmas is all about?"

I enjoy reading your emails and letters. Snail mail: Eagle Feather News c/o Sandee Sez, P.O. Box 924 Station Main, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4. You can also email me at sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

TREES OF PEACE

This year's Festival of Trees brought diverse students together in celebration of peace, understanding and love. Aboriginal and newcomer immigrant students have been on a learning journey of getting to know one another. One project had them making dream-catchers, moccasins and Christmas decorations of turquoise garland. Two local businesses, Quinton Custom Woodworks and Todd Hanson Electric, saw an opportunity to lend a helping hand in covering the costs for materials in decorating a tree for the Festival! All proceeds go to the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation. In the end it was a win-win for all, two local business contributing to a core neighborhood school Christmas project.



Attention Writers

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A fun office party and other Christmas miracles

'Tis the season to avoid making an ass of yourself at the office Christmas party!

You can call any office party a success if you enjoy the company of your favourite coworkers, veil your venomous contempt for the "other" ones, suck up to your super-amazing boss (but like not in an obvious way), and generally get through the night without being hit with a lawsuit afterwards.

I know we all wish that office parties could descend into some kind of Sodom and Gomorrah debauchery where the night ended with us beating up angels and afterwards everyone collectively agreed to forget what happened and just move on. But, alas, not everyone is on the same page when it comes to workplace fun and so we must proceed as if every second person is Church Lady and conduct ourselves appropriately under her watchful eyes.

When it comes to work parties, your first instinct may be to arrive late. This is a huge mistake. First of all, do not associate yourself with being late at work – once people attach that label to you, then they'll notice how often you actually are late. Second, being first is the best because then if there is something yummy on the refreshment table you get first dibs.

Once, I ate all the guacamole at a party. Not a little bit or half, but ALL OF IT. I did it for the sake of my coworkers – it was better that my coworkers had no idea that guacamole had ever existed rather than that only a small portion was left. You're welcome. (Also I had no choice because guacamole controls me in the same way that oil companies control Stephen Harper.)

In addition, if you are first to the festivities, you can



establish a little mean-girls/guys clique and y'all can give people nicknames as they walk in like, "here's little Miss doesn't know what to do with her arms" or "Mr. So Cool, he showed up half an hour late." Then laugh in a bitchy way.

Speaking to people is always a chore but you can make it more entertaining if you keep in mind the following techniques. Whenever conversing with someone, always keep your eyes over their shoulder as if scanning for someone more important and smiling and waving at them when you do. It's unnerving and demoralizing – I should know, I've had enough people do it to me.

However if you attempt this baller move, make sure that there are people behind your co-worker and not just a poster promoting drug-free living.

When it comes to conversation topics, experts recommend that you do not get personal. If you must speak about your personal life, choose someone else's personal life. Like your pill of a friend who spends her weekends decorating her Christmas tree with popcorn strands and dressing her dog as an elf.

Try not to get stuck listening to a co-worker drone on about their personal life. You do not want to know how sad

they truly are. You don't want to know that their cat choked to death on their house key and now they have to go dig up said housecat because they lost their spare. Cuz I don't know about you but I'll feel obligated to offer my grave-digging services.

If someone tries to steer the conversation towards their personal life, change the subject to something safer like politics, religion or Jian Ghomeshi. If you need to get out of a conversation quickly, tell the person that you've recently started a home business selling macaroni jewelry and would they like to attend a super fun-party to see your wares? No obligation! Nothing scares people away people faster than a direct marketing scheme. Well, maybe shirting but that's an advanced move.

Most office parties are booze-free because HR ... sigh ... does not want to deal with your dumb asses in the New Year, okay? However if you are lucky enough to work in a place that still serves the smiley stuff, there are ways that you can get drunk but not appear to be drunk. Dress dowdy. Because a sexy outfit mixed with alcohol quickly devolves into "hot mess."

I'm personally a huge fan of hot mess but other people may Judge Judy the crap out of you. Also, if you're going to get tipsy, wear an ostentatious brooch that draws the eye. Then keep dropping it on the floor, people will think you're just clumsy and that your red face is from bending over rather than pounding back drinks.

Remember that work and fun do not have to be divorced from one another – but they do need to be amicably separated and most definitely, sleeping in different beds.

Fire keepers show support for Walking With Our Sisters

By Tyrone Tootosis
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – The 1,808 moccasin vamps that form the Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) Exhibit commemorates Canada's 1,200 missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The vast majority of the vamps were made by Aboriginal women from across the country and then submitted to well known Toronto based artist Christi Belcourt. She originally conceptualized the exhibit and sent a call out through social media hoping to get about 500 vamps for the show.

However, the overwhelming nationwide response resulted in 1,808 moccasin vamp submissions.

The Grand Opening of Walking With Our Sisters was at 7 p.m. on, Oct. 30 and coincided with the first Grand Entry of the 2014 Annual FSIN Powwow and Cultural Celebrations at Saskatoon's SaskTel Centre.

Amongst other unique aspects of this exhibit is that no government money is requested nor accepted by WWOS with all money being generated through various fund raising efforts.

To that end, a blanket dance for Walking With Our Sisters was held on the last day of the powwow and to everyone's disbelief, \$1,808 was generously given by the people ... the amount matching the number of vamps in the

Walking With Our Sisters exhibit!

Walking With Our Sisters Exhibit is a truly amazing and ground breaking endeavor as everyone involved from the Bundle Keepers, the Grandmothers, the Volunteers and the Fire Keepers did so on a volunteer basis.



In so much as it was artistic, it was also a commemorative and spiritual ceremony in respectful and solemn remembrance to Canada's 1,200 missing and murdered First Nation and Métis Women.

An added and important component to the exhibit was that a fire was started with the arrival of the 1,808 vamps and the sacred fire burned continuously for approximately 21 days, 24/7, non-stop.

Men, from different nationalities, both from the City of Saskatoon and from the surrounding community, came together and had several meetings to discuss and plan how they could contribute and assist the women as Fire Keepers.

Several went into the Nesbitt Forest to cut wood. On behalf of the Beardy's Okemasis First Nation, Councilor Kevin Seesequasis generously offered assistance by donating split firewood with the help of inmates from the Willow Cree Healing Lodge.

On Dec. 2, a Volunteer Appreciation Night was held and each Volunteer and Fire Keeper was presented with an Eagle Feather by WWOS. The exhibit drew over 3,000 people to Wanuskewin. The host committee wants to send a big thank you to everyone.

FIRE KEEPERS

Keith Sanderson * John Noon * Boss Gardypie * Bob Badger * Michael Henricks * Marcel Petit * David Werner * William Moosewah * Frank Clinton * Chris Altrage * * Lamarr Oksasikewiyin * Bayley Kryzanowski * Curtis Peete-tuce * Sebastian Hansson * Dean Shingoose * Bryce Donaldson * Kelley Thackeray * John Elander * Doug McKay

* Jeff Baker * Aloys Fleischmann * Jordan Schultz * Arden S * Kevin Wesaquate * Joseph Bohan * Kyle Rosvold * Adam Gaudry * JD Bell * Brett Williams * Corey Miller * Gabe Lafond * Gary Eagle * Neal Kewistep * Clinton Takakenew * Andrew Hatala * Urban Camp guys * Rod McLaren * Warren Isbister * Peter Garden * Paul Labelle * Kelley Thackerey * Joseph Gardipy * Francis Kennedy * Elvin Nicotine * Mark Bigland-Prichard * Stan Tui * Robert Innes * Jamie Martell * Matt Kaarjard * Bryce Donaldson * Charlie Clark * Anthony MacKay * Samson MacKay * James Desjarlais * Randy Morin * Matt Coe and sons * Grant Young * Jim Waldram * Elvin Fred * Dale Jack * Wayne McDonald * Kota Kimura * Jed Huntley * Rodney Orr * David Gee * Jeff McKay * Sean O'Connor * Aloys Fleischman * Fred Reiben * Wade Klassen * Josh Gibb * Kain Boldt * Lindsay Brittain * Elvin Nicotine * Ranjan Datta * Joel Kroeker * Maurice Bear * Tyrone Tootosis * Chris Mulhall * Dale Jack * Derek Chesney * Paul Sartisan * Jim Miller * Mark Brown * Alan Prosper * Ryan Herity * Don Kossick * John Lagimodiere * Riel Lagimodiere * Andrew Hatala + youth * Marty Watson * Dave Moors * Dennis Flaherty * Alex Munoz * (My apologies as I probably don't have all the names of the Fire Keepers who came and helped out)

Youth Council's SADD message welcomed in Pelican Narrows

By Angie Merasty
For Eagle Feather News

PELICAN NARROWS – The new SADD president and the Pelican Narrows Youth Council (PNYC) were out in full force in late November conducting the Red Ribbon campaign promoting Students Against Drinking and Driving (SADD).

The president of SADD and our Jr Chief Cherish Morin and the Council were joined by former Junior Chief, Summer Michel-Stevenson in handing out red ribbons to every sober driver and we're proud to say that all the vehicles we stopped got a ribbon! The PNYC is made of youth from the ages 12-19 years of age. They are all teens in high school and while it's not a requirement, it's expected that the PNYC be youth in good standing and that does include not dropping out of school.

The youth in Pelican Narrows are not any different from youth across our vast province. They have the same wants and desires to complete their high school and move into University, Trade Schools or SIAST.

They enjoy spending time with each other in a safe environment free from alcohol and/or drugs. As adults we can only assist

and steer them in the direction they themselves want to go. We act as a support network for them and we provide answers if they seek them. However, it must be stressed that the PNYC runs itself and the only reason it has strengthened and

Pelican Narrows Youth Council and former Junior Chief Summer Michel-Stevenson for a long time now. Summer was a very active Junior Chief and has remained involved from a distance, as she is now away in university.

community. Summer won the following awards:

- \$1000 to spend in their community (on a community project, event, etc)
- A chance to tour the north in the Fall of 2014 (Summer's group spoke to our youth in Pelican Narrows on Dec. 6)

The creation of SADD and the Red Ribbon campaign was made possible by this award. We were able to purchase flashlights, safety vests and glow sticks for all youth to wear at the RCMP enforced traffic stop, which we will be able to use again in the future.

We are very grateful to Cpl. Sean McPhee and the local RCMP detachment for their support of SADD and our youth!

It was a frigid -28 cold and we were only out for an hour, however we managed to stop 25 vehicles and speak to the drivers of these vehicles who received the youth very warmly. We thanked them for stopping and for giving due care and not drinking and driving.

This was the first event for SADD in Pelican Narrows and we hope to do more events to promote Students Against Drinking and Driving – Don't Drink and Drive!



Youth in Pelican Narrows braved the cold to deliver a message about the dangers of drinking and driving.

(Photo by Joylyn Erb)

improved in such a short time is because of the youth themselves who became involved in 2011.

The creating of a SADD chapter in our community had been a desire of the

This was all made possible because of Summer. She was nominated and won a Northern Youth Role Model contest and in her nomination she stated that she wanted to start up a SADD Chapter in her

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION

& all the best in 2015

FNUniv unveils new name for campus art gallery

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather New

REGINA – The First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) has renamed its art gallery, Plain Red Art Gallery, after four years of searching for a suitable name at Regina's campus.

and explains how the gallery committee came up with the idea.

“At the beginning, we were getting our committee together (but) we couldn't come up with a name,” says Anderson. “We had lists of names and we really wanted to use ‘red’. It was all about all of

the word “red” represents the color as one of the sacred directions of the medicine wheel. The logo consists of a headdress with various shades of red which is to represent the diversity and tradition at FNUniv.

“The use of the word ‘plain’ geographically situates the gallery's location on the plains,” says Anderson. “The use of the word ‘red’ is also layered, it acknowledges our colonial history where the term has been (seen) as a derogatory one. But we're reclaim(ing) it and use it as power,” she adds.

Anderson said the committee discussed the word ‘red’ and was thought of being somewhat racist but they all agreed to reclaim it and take it back as they believe there's power in that little word.

The gallery committee consisted of seven members including FNUniv Indian Fine Art Associate Professor, Lionel Peyachew. He says they thought of various names that correspond to the different uses of the gallery.

“The Plain Red (Art) Gallery is going to have a name out there for our local and international artists.

“Although the name had just started



to be visualized today but in time it will go out throughout Saskatchewan and Canada as one of the influential galleries (to attract) visitors from all over Canada,” says Peyachew.

The gallery committee said the elders liked the name title and adds that it is very important that they have the support of the elders.

“I'm looking forward to people's (reactions) and how they feel about it. At first, people were not really happy with the name but now that they seen it on a wall and hearing the concept of the design, people are much more happy with it,” adds Peyachew.

Plain Red Art Gallery aims to represent Indigenous artists, including students, from local to international areas.

The gallery committee hopes the new name will attract more interest and visitors to PRAG.



Lionel Peyachew says the new name will help the gallery raise its profile.

Judy Anderson, an Associate Professor of Indian Fine Arts, unveiled the cloth with the name and logo showing

us being comfortable with whatever the word was going to be,” she adds.

Anderson further explains the use of

Season's Greetings

On behalf of the Board of Governors, Elders Council, Management and Staff at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.

We wish you and your loved ones
a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year in 2015!

Mino manitōwi-kizigan
(Nākawē)

Tethe Yati Honj Nezo
(Dene)

miyo manitowi-kīsikānisik
(Plains Cree)

mitho manitowi-kīsikānisik
(Woodland Cree)

mino manitowi-kīsikānisik
(Swampy Cree)

Wanikiya Tonpi Anpe tu
(Dakota)

Wakan Takan Micinksi Yuhabi Amba
(Nakota)

Wanikiya Tunpi Anpe tu Iyuskinpi
(Lakota)



Our government is working with our federal counterparts to help communities meet their infrastructure needs.

The Government of Saskatchewan is now accepting applications to the Provincial Territorial Infrastructure Component of the New Building Canada Fund, which provides funding for projects of national, regional and local significance with a focus on:

- projects that support economic growth,
- a clean environment,
- stronger communities,
- growth in export and trade, as well as
- projects that meet the opportunities and challenges of growth.

Applications must be received before noon on Monday, January 12, 2015.

For more on how to apply to the NBCF, visit www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/funding/programs/nbcf.



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Oro chasing her dreams and taking her fashions to international market

**By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Helen Oro, from Pelican Lake First Nation but now living in Saskatoon, has her own fashion business in the comfort of her home. With two little ones, she finds it easier to concentrate on her children while providing for her family. Oro says what she loves about her job is the ability to work from home.

“All my work revolved around my family, I recently had a show in Yorkton, and so my baby girl came with me,” she says.

Oro started off with a nail business called, Helen’s Nail Artistry and Esthetics, and then she was noticed by ‘Native Max magazine’ and had her work featured. She also had done a lot of makeup and nail looks for the magazine.

This had opened doors for her in the fashion world and she started doing the beading fashion wear such as beaded sunglasses and heels. She started her passion about a year ago and has big plans to explore further into the world of fashion.

“I started getting invites to fashion shows so I started travelling around in Canada,” she says.

Her beaded sunglasses have received a lot of celebrity attention in Indian country. People like Inez Jasper, an entertainer who performed at the North American Indigenous Games.

Oro says she has some pretty big shows coming up with the UK Plus Size Fashion Week, one in Australia and Paris. She is expanding her work by selling her merchandise in

stores and boutiques with hopes of expanding into the states.

“My next collection is focused on missing and murdered Indigenous women and bringing awareness in a fashion (sense),” she says. “I’ll focus on the hash tags like #MMIW and #IMNOTASTATISTIC and #IMNOTY-OURTIGERLILY. Throughout the fashion show, I’ll have projector slideshow to give out the information and facts about this issue and hopefully share people’s stories,” Oro adds.

When Oro first started in the business, she faced a few struggles along the way trying to make her business happen. She saved up money to renovate a shop in her home in Chitek Lake, which is near her home community. Oro says her nail shop is only open in the summer season with hopes of one day expanding it to all year round and selling her fashion merchandise.

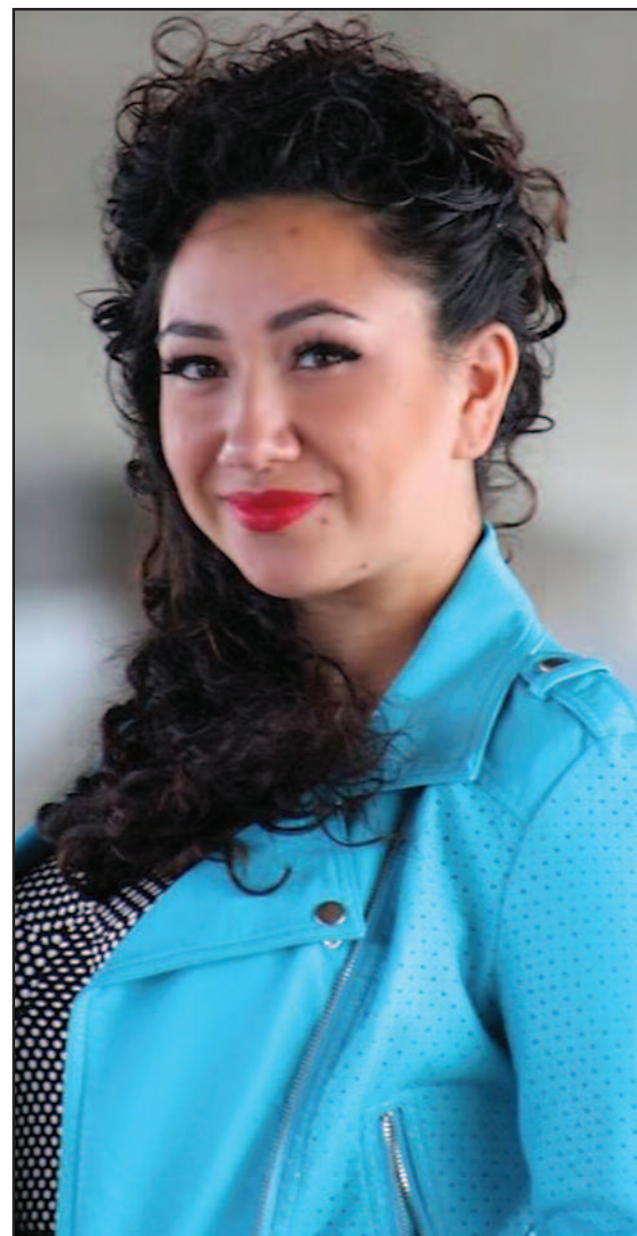
“I renovated it from top to bottom from saving my money (which) took about a year. I did nails til three in the morning to put money away,” she says.

Oro refused to take out any loans or borrow money from anyone to get her business going. She had help from her uncle who was a contractor to fix up the building that she uses for the summer season.

Oro’s advice to those who want to pursue running their own business is to never give up chasing your dreams.

“You can do anything you want to do, you just have to put your mind to it,” she adds.

Recently, Oro spoke on a guest panel at the Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium (YES) in Calgary.



Helen Oro’s fashions are being noticed across Canada and now she is taking her designs overseas.



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Play Responsibly



**DAKOTA DUNES
CASINO**



Living Sky Casino



We Day experience a life changer for Oskayak student

By Robert Eastman
Oskayak High School
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – This fall, I was able to experience something that changed the way I looked at every single organization that aimed to help people in other countries. It changed the way I thought about helping others out overall.

When I thought of a charity, or another “Help the children” group that took place overseas, I thought of rich people donating money for clean water or food. It crossed my mind once or twice that that’s only the tip of the iceberg, but something that never crossed my mind is just how many people are willing to lend a hand.

So I only knew the gist of what We Day was and why it happened. I saw videos of crowds of people, and famous performers and celebrities on stage before them. I saw smiling faces from both sides, people in the crowds, and people from a country overseas, kids and adults alike. I thought, “how corny is this?” I kind of assumed a lot of people thought the same thing. Maybe I was a little cynical.

The We Day event I attended took place here in Saskatoon, at the SaskTel Centre. I left in the morning with a classmate of mine. I’d heard of the people that were going to be speaking and performing there. I hadn’t really known of any of them, so I wasn’t too excited. So I still had no idea what to expect save for a lot of people. It was my first We Day after all.

When we arrived, a wave of excited voices and energy washed over me. That’s the only way I can describe it. It was something else. When I walked into the cavernous main area of the SaskTel Centre, I was thinking, this place



Oskayak students Robert Eastman and Nicola Ballantyne attended We Day in Saskatoon.

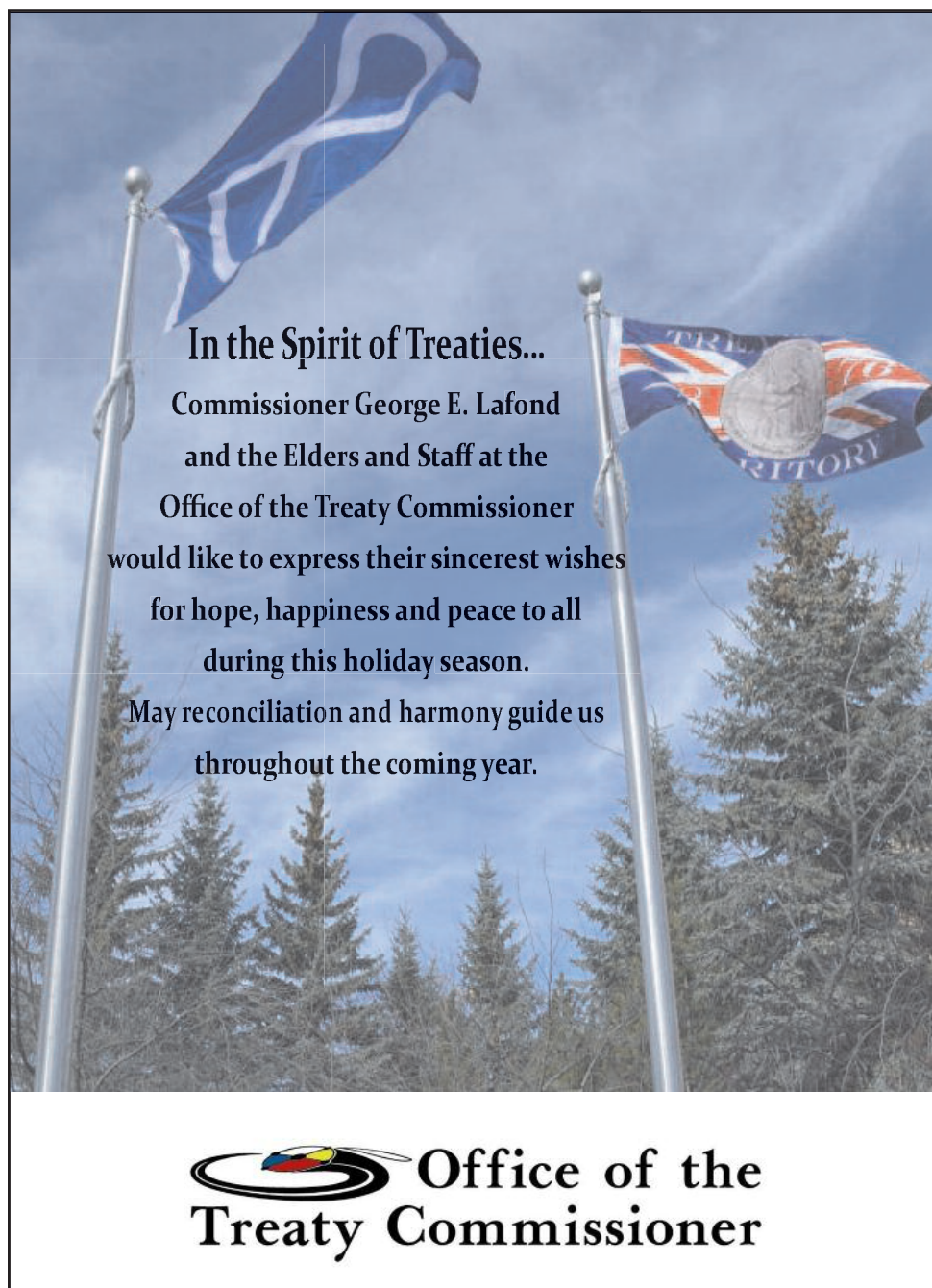
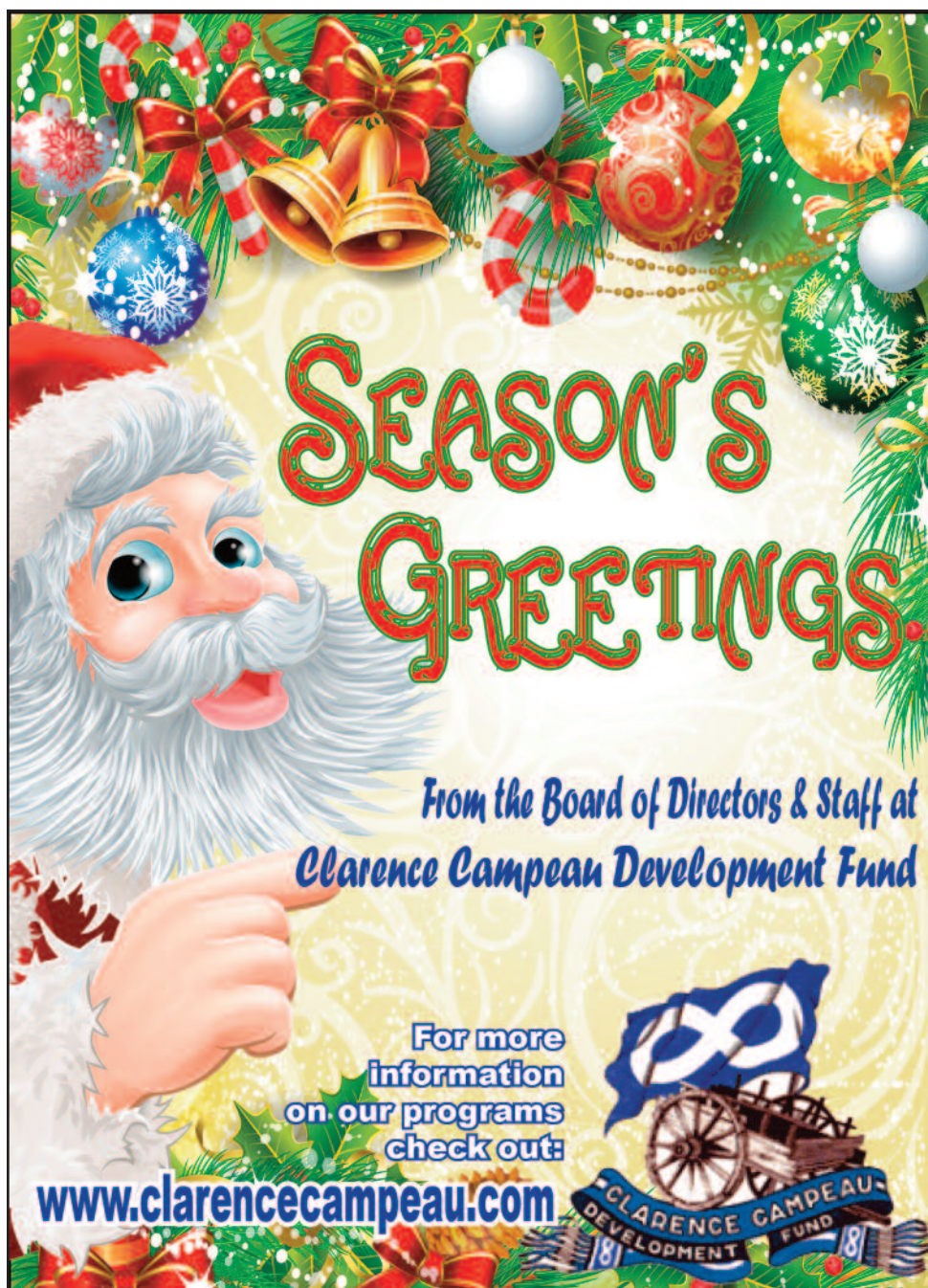
could fill up with people, but can it really?

I had to see it to believe it. And I did see it. Not a single seat looked like it was empty. I felt it. I felt the energy when every single person cheered, clapped, screamed and danced. Public speakers, music and videos were lending tribute to this cause. I was riveted by every speaker. I listened to the positive message in each song performed. I took pictures at every necessary moment, and had a great time throughout the whole thing.

When I left, I had a completely different view on what these people did and why. A couple of the things that really hit me were the facts that no one could buy a ticket to We Day.

Schools and groups from all over had to do something to make a difference locally and globally to get invited, such as raising money for a charity. The sheer number of people that took part in these activities was amazing.

In a decent sized city like Saskatoon, I tried to imagine just how many people there would be in other places. I’m very glad I got to experience We Day this year and I want to give my thanks to everyone and anyone that made all of it possible, and also for rallying so much support and providing assistance and care to those who need it.



One Arrow student off to Africa thanks to We Day

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Danielle Roy’s class trip to We Day in November will wind up changing her life forever and send her to Kenya.

We Day is a global series of stadium-sized youth empowerment events. We Day Saskatchewan was attended by 15,000 students and educators at SaskTel Centre where entertainers and speakers shared their passion for change and energized the crowd with performances and motivational speeches surrounding this year’s theme of empowerment.



CRAIG KIELBURGER

PotashCorp, who brought We Day to Saskatoon for the third time as regional title sponsor, partners with Free The Children and Me to We to provide an opportunity for 25 students with a high level of interest in food security to volunteer in a community overseas. The students learn firsthand about sustainable development and bring the spirit of global citizenship back to their schools and communities. In 2013 the youth volunteers travelled to Kenya and in 2014 to India.

The plan is to return to Kenya in summer 2015 and each year, PotashCorp gives away one youth volunteer trip to an audience member at We Day. This year, Danielle Roy heard her name called out during the show, but she really had no idea what was going on.

“I didn’t know what to think at first,” said Roy during an interview from her school, the One Arrow Almightyvoice Education Centre where she is in Grade 12.

“My friends were telling me I won something, but I couldn’t really hear. When I figured it out I was like ‘oh my God that’s me!’”

Then the whirlwind began. Roy was spirited back stage where she met PotashCorp president and CEO Jochen Tilk, celebrities and We Day founder Craig Kielburger.

“I talked to tons of different people and the We Day founder. He was really nice and talked a lot and they took like a million pictures of me with other students, the We

Day guy and the President of PotashCorp. By the end my cheeks were really hurting from smiling,” said Roy.

PotashCorp is the founding partner of the Agriculture and Food Security pillar of Free The Children’s Adopt a Village development model. PotashCorp also directly supports six rural communities (two in Kenya, two in India and two in China) on sustainable agricultural initiatives.

“Having a student like Danielle win the trip is outstanding,” said Leanne Bellegarde, Director Aboriginal Strategy for PotashCorp.

“What she learns in Kenya and brings back to her community of One Arrow will have positive repercussions for years to come. Students like this can be the change and that’s what We Day is about, inspiring students like Danielle.”

Roy will be heading to Kenya this summer. The trip is not about sightseeing (though they do get to go on one safari) and relaxing. It is hard work in helping a community enhance their agricultural practices or build much needed schools.

In the two Indian communities supported directly, they have improved farming practices and have increased yields by an average of 44 per cent and in Kenya and China, 93 per cent of the people trained said their family’s health had improved over the past year and 85 per cent became more self-sufficient by increasing their income.

According to her principal, her teachers and fellow students are just as thrilled about the trip as Roy is.

“We are so proud of her and excited for the experience she will have,” said One Arrow principal Dennis Perillat.



Danielle Roy from the One Arrow First Nation Almightyvoice Education Centre won a trip to Kenya courtesy of PotashCorp. Here she is with PotashCorp President and CEO Jochen Tilk.

(Photo by Nina Henry)

“When she returns from her trip we will get her to visit the school and show her pictures and talk to the students about her trip. This involvement has really motivated us and we are starting a community garden in the spring because of it. This will change her life.”

Now the fundraising begins to get Roy some supplies and spending money for the trip. Understandably, Roy is nervous about the upcoming adventure but she is taking it in stride but she has lots of support and kidding from her family.

“When they found out I was going to Africa, they were happy for me but everyone started teasing me about ebola cause it was in the news then, even my little brother,” laughed Roy.

“I’m excited to learn about the world and agriculture and food security, but really, I still can’t believe I am going on this trip.”



The 2014 annual Christmas wish list for guys

There is a secret competition amongst the huge members of Dirk Nation: which of our women will get it right when Santa delivers? Whether we deserve it or not, a great gift is a testament to our manliness.

So here we are once again, thoughtful, wonderful, and groin-tingling gift ideas that will inspire your man so he can say to his crew, "See, she gets me, you sorry ass mother-punters."

10. Jesus Giddyup from Little Pine wants a Shark Laser Pointer. We first heard of them in Austin Powers. Then they re-appeared in the Lego Movie. They are real, and we want one.

9. The Bard of Beardy's is looking for a Lock N' Load Gun Alarm Clock. Instead of hitting the Snooze button, grab your toy lazer gun, hit the target and BAMM! Nine more minutes of blissful sleep.



8. Wheels McGuinty of Nekaneet is hoping for a Refrigerated Reclining Arm Chair. For staying hydrated during playoff season. Sadly, the damn thing hasn't been invented yet.

7. In the meantime, Wheels is looking for a Bow-Flex Extreme Home Gym. Gotta keep that premium Indian diabetic-looking figure somewhat slim for you somehow, baby. His words.

6. The Métis Master of North Saskatoon has his eye on a Max Speed Speedometer Car Watch. Instead of your typical clock face with a long and short hand, this bad-boy shows everything like the dashboard of a Ferrari. Awesome.

5. This gift idea removed because this is a family paper. Was awesome though.

4. From The Real Deal in Sintaluta: A PS4 or Xbox 360 with Legacy Arcade Games. What we're looking for are all the games we enjoyed in the '80s like Asteroids, Pac-Man, Galaga, and Joust.

3. Fill-Er-Up of Melfort found an R2D2 Wireless Keyboard. Not only does it project a working infrared keyboard on any surface, every time you type it emits beeps and bleeps which, once translated, are filthy Irish jokes.

2. Cletus from Regina wants you, in a sexy Miss Claus outfit. If that's not your thing they have a sexy elf costume too, so everyone wins.

1. Name-Withheld is dreaming of you, in a one-piece R2D2 Bathing Suit, with a KFC Family Feast bucket suggestively laid out in front of you on the floor, a magnum of Baby Duck chilling in an ice-filled No Name Neapolitan ice cream bucket with Wang Chung's "Everybody Have Fun Tonight" playing in the background. Romantic, am I right?

As for stocking stuffers there are plenty of gift ideas. Borat's Mankini is still on the market. Bacon Scented Soap. And who doesn't want a 500-ounce bottle of Hi-Karate cologne.

Of course some women get it bafflingly wrong, and our simple hopes are dashed against the rocks of Steven Harpyish sensibility. Last year The Bird Man from Mistawasis missed out on his Reversible Rainbow Big Boy Full-Body Thermal Underwear with the Extra Wide Trap-Door Flap, and had to settle for a gift pack of cheap stink-good from London Drugs.

So, if you get it wrong, you might expect to see this for you under the tree...

A Wine Rack Flask Bra. The dual front pocketry system deflates as your favourite refreshment is consumed. Yes. It comes with a straw. And yes, we like our wine full bodied and chilled.

A Self-Twirling Spaghetti Fork. Comes in red, and ... red.

A donut Flavoured Lip Gloss or Squirrel Feet Earrings.

A radio controlled Tarantula. When my little girl was five, "Cranky" was her favourite toy for weeks. Creeped the hell out of my ex-wife. Sadly, Cranky vanished. His demise is a mystery to this day.

Clocky. Imagine an alarm clock on wheels. When it goes off in the morning it springs to life leaping off the nightstand and randomly runs around the room until you catch it.

Meat Socks. Of course they are made with genuine sock-like material to prevent fall-down, but these nasty goods are coloured to resemble cuts of meat.

Either a Monty Python or Shakespearean Insult Coffee Mug. And yes, you must drink from it when the mother-in-law visits.

A Pi Cake Mold. Yes, the ancient Egyptian mathematical symbol for 3.14 now comes in a cake mold. Get it? A Pi cake?

On a completely different subject, I have a special gift for my little princess. She's seven now, and she's into Star Wars despite her best efforts. She's getting her very own Darth Maul Edition Lightsaber Night Light.

I know, right? Her dad is awesome. I make sure to tell her of that every day. Her groans of embarrassment are all the confirmation I need to

know just how truly awesome I am.

Dirk says: To all in Dirk Nation ... Merry Christmas. Just love each other.



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'Tis the season for extra fire safety precautions

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Kurt Delorme says the best way to put out a fire is to prevent one before it happens.

For the past eight years, the Saskatoon Fire Department's community relations department coordinator has been visiting local schools and educating students on fire prevention safety tips.

This includes talking to youth about the importance of having a well placed and working smoke detector, stressing some of the fire hazards involved in the kitchen with cooking and the potential dangers of candles, fireplaces and electrical outlets.

"Our job is proactive versus reactive," he says. "You think fire trucks respond to emergencies, where our job is kind of to educate so these emergencies don't happen."

Delorme adds the fire department believes the best way to get families talking about fire safety is to target children and this is why he spoke to upwards of 10,000 students last year at various Saskatoon schools.

Thirty-six-year-old Kurt Delorme grew up on the Cowessess First Nation reserve before moving to Saskatoon for university. He first started working for the Saskatoon Fire Department in 2002 as a youth coordinator for the river safety education program. He then left for period of time before coming back on board as the community relations coordinator in 2006 and hasn't looked back since.

"A lot of times that's all you need is that opportunity, right, or someone to give you that opportunity," he says. "I'm thankful enough that one day 12 years ago, 2002, I answered that newspaper ad and said, 'Yeah, I'll take it.' It wasn't the best paying job at the time because it was just an initial summer program but 12 years later it's turned into a lot of good things and a lot of good opportunities."

Another part of Delorme's job is working with young people who may be getting a little too interested in fire, posing potential safety risks and run-ins with the law down the road. He says it is more often than not the case youth taking risks with fire are troubled and taking these risks is a way of acting out.

"It used to just be often curiosity but a lot of times now there's no issue with fire but there's a lot of other things going on. A lot of things going on in their peer groups, in their social life – something – and fire could be what we call maybe the cry for help type of stuff."

With Christmas just around the corner, Delorme says there are some extra fire safety precautions residents need to take heed of over the holiday season. He says if you decide to go with a real Christmas tree, the more freshly cut the better, as the drier the tree is the greater the potential fire hazard.

Also, once the real tree has been placed in your home and decorated, you need to ensure it is watered on a regular basis to keep the tree as fresh as possible, he says.

Avoid overloading electrical outlets, use fire-retardant decorations and be wary of faulty Christmas lights are some of the other tips.

"If you're not like me and you like to get a real tree, make sure to maintain it, having that water," he says.

"Making sure it doesn't dry out and you want to make sure also with your lights that you maintain them, making sure your extension cords are not frayed, anything like that."

A full list of Christmas fire safety tips is available on the Canada Safety Council's website at <https://canadasafetycouncil.org/home-safety/home-fire-safety-tips-holidays>.



Kurt Delorme of the Saskatoon Fire Department speaks to students about fire safety in their homes.

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Making great things happen for Northern Saskatchewan and Aboriginal people — every year. That deserves a celebration.



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Life must improve in North for business to succeed: Chamber

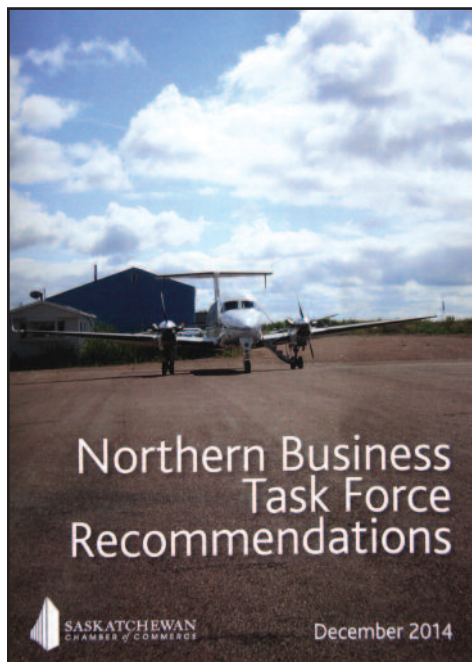
By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has released its Northern Business Task Force Report which contains recommendations focused on finding creative solutions to accelerate Northern Saskatchewan's economic and social development.

The 12 recommendations coming out of this report focus on the individual citizen of the North more than typical business issues like tax rates.

"In order for business to improve in the North, life has to improve. You will see a strong focus on the resident in this report," said Geoff Gay co-Chair of the Task Force and also CEO of Athabasca Basin Development, a large employer in northern Saskatchewan.

"Obviously, the stronger the resident is, it makes for better employees and retention and brings better training. Think about the impact on the children and schools by having better bandwidth and proper nutrition and food that is affordable. Everything on the list will contribute to a better quality of life in the North."



The report included 12 recommendations that addressed issues such as electricity rate codes, ice road closure dates, telecommunications coverage, and increasing subsidies for healthy foods.

"There is no way you should be paying \$17 to \$19 for a four litre jug of milk in Fond du Lac when I can buy that same jug for \$4.50 in Prince Albert," added Gay who explained that northern Ontario communities receive \$1.20 per kilogram subsidy compared to northern Saskatchewan's five cent per kilogram subsidy.

The Task Force held meetings throughout 2013 and 2014 and also hosted two tours of numerous remote northern communities that involved participants from the business community, government, and media.

Steve McLellan, CEO of the

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce says the recommendations are all achievable and can be acted upon quickly.

"We wanted to make a difference right away. We see some of these items as foundational changes. If we get Internet across the North it will make a difference for educators, students, public safety and it's going to make it easier to do business. That's not inexpensive or easy, but it could be done quickly," said McLellan.

"Our vision is to make Saskatchewan a better place to live, work and invest. If you can't live here, in this case the Far North because the cost of food is too high, people aren't going to get workers and they won't invest here. If families can't get nutritious food to their families then the student that is hungry is a tough one to educate."

The Task Force was co-chaired by Doug Gillespie, the CEO of West Wind Aviation. The Chamber intends to do one more northern tour in the coming months and even made a recommendation that the Premier and some cabinet ministers tour the North as well.

According to Geoff Gay those people have to see what opportunity there is for tourism and business and how it can be enhanced with the right investments.

"There is a lot to do in the North. This report is a starting point. There are lots of recommendations that are easy wins and we can make progress on right away."

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Northern Business Task Force Report Recommendations

- Increase efforts to encourage energy efficiency
- Change all northern communities from E03 electricity rate code to E02 code
- Adjust ice road closure dates on an annual basis
- Increase the provincial budget for northern roads by a meaningful amount every year
 - Build the all-weather Garson Lake Road from La Loche to Fort McMurray
 - Build an all-weather road from Highway 905 to Wollaston Lake
- Increase awareness of career opportunities and training options among northern residents
- Ensure that educational opportunities and attainment standards are comparable to southern Saskatchewan
- Ensure comparable access to bandwidth and cellular coverage for northern communities
- Increase Nutrition North Canada subsidy for healthy foods
- Continue to improve internal communication and cooperation between Crown Corporations and Ministries on northern issues
- The premier and appropriate ministers should visit Saskatchewan's remote northern communities.



Steve McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, hopes the recommendations make a difference right away. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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First Nation Power Authority announces two new projects

SWIFT CURRENT – First Nations Power Authority (FNPA) along with its strategic partners, Lockheed Martin Canada and FHQ Developments, recently held an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for its Commercial Solar Demonstration Project.

Showcasing new solar technology specifically designed for Canada's climate, the project is designed to offset power consumption for the Home Inn & Suites in Swift Current.

This solar photovoltaic power generation endeavor in Swift Current is FNPA's first Strategic Off-Grid and Renewables (SOAR) demonstration project. It includes partners from the Government of Canada through Western Economic Diversification Canada and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Lockheed Martin Canada, FHQ Developments, The City of Swift Current, and the Government of Saskatchewan.

"This project is uniquely aligned with FHQ Development's strategic goals and we are excited to be part of this partnership opportunity," said Christopher Adams, FHQ Developments General Manager.

"The project is reflective of our shared commitment to partnership and collaboration, conservation and environmental sustainability, technology innovation, and economic development."

First Nations Power Authority CEO, Leah Nelson Guay, said: "We are thrilled that Lockheed Martin Canada is investing in renewable energy technology with its patented Tilt-Axis Roll Tracker.

"Together, our teams have worked effectively to ensure the strength of the system and its ability to withstand the consistently high winds for which Southwest Saskatchewan is well known," Guay said.

Lockheed Martin's advanced solar technology offers a solution specifically equipped for Canada's climate challenges.

"Success of this project will support a platform for future FNPA energy projects in our country," Guay continued. "It will provide us with valuable data about solar energy performance and how our communities can adopt renewable technology to improve our carbon footprint."

The solar demonstration project is expected to provide approximately 26,440 kWh/year of renewable energy to the local area and represents a reduction of CO2 equivalent of 21 metric tonnes/year.

The FNPA also announced a partnership on the funding and launch of two new solar power projects in Saskatchewan's far north with Bullfrog Power, Canada's leading green energy provider.

Through its Bullfrog Builds Renewable Accelerator program, Bullfrog Power provides critical financing to support the development of new green energy projects across Canada. Both projects launched showcase solar technology specifically designed for Canada's climate. The two latest projects are designed to offset power consumption for schools in the communities of Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake, Saskatchewan.



LEAH NELSON GUAY

"These FNPA Solar Panels should help with the high cost of keeping the school operating for the year," said Hatchet Lake Chief Bart Tsannie. "It will be good to know how much we do save once these panels are in operation."



Nancy Peters, General Manager, Home Inn & Suites, Wayne Erlandson, Swift Current Light & Power, Leah Nelson Guay, CEO, First Nations Power Authority, Richard Godlasky, Lockheed Martin, Christopher Adams, GM, FHQ Developments, Fred Jardine, Lockheed Martin, Greg Lawrence, MLA Moose Jaw Wakamow at the official opening in Swift Current. (Photo submitted)

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<p>CAREER PRESENTATION</p> <p>January 15 at 6 p.m.</p> <p>SIAST, Kelsey Campus, Room 317 Idylwyld and 33rd Street, Main Building Saskatoon, SK</p>	<p>PRÉSENTATION SUR LES CARRIÈRES*</p> <p>le 15 janvier à 18 h</p> <p>SIAST, campus de Kelsey, salle 317 Idylwyld et 33e rue, Immeuble principal Saskatoon (SK)</p>

* Veuillez noter que ces séances seront présentées en anglais.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Mining hope and opportunity this Christmas

By Judy Bird
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – One mining company's policy for inclusion of First Nations and Metis people is positively impacting aboriginal communities this Christmas, and beyond.

K+S Potash Canada's Legacy Project seeks out and wants to do business with companies that have aboriginal people involved in their operation. The Legacy Project mine site is near Bethune, and the office is located in Saskatoon. Procuring contracts for services with companies that involve aboriginal people is a top priority.

"We want to involve all parts of the community, including the aboriginal community. We want the benefits of mining activity to accrue to everyone in the community. That's our commitment," said Eric Cline, VP of Corporate Social Activity with K+S Potash.

Cline's position covers several areas: applying for government permits to proceed with development, environmental monitoring, land management, acquiring mineral rights, and First Nations and Metis employment and procurement.

"Procurement is to try to get contracts out to companies that have an aboriginal component to them, such as aboriginal ownership, a joint venture or owned by a tribal council," said Cline. His department works in cooperation with the Procurement dept and Human Resources.

The mine is currently in the construction phase and won't be in operation until late 2016. The majority of work happening now is through contracts.

"When we put out a request for proposals to start the bidding process for contracts, we say in our material that we place a positive emphasis on companies that have an aboriginal component," said Cline.

"We have a purchasing policy in place that helps us leverage some of the initiatives to get First Nations and Métis involved," said Terry Bird, First Nations and Métis Employment and Business Coordinator at K+S, who works with Cline on the file.

Bird works to identify companies or partnerships that have the capacity to do the work. Companies and groups placing a bid can fill out a two-page form to describe their relationship with aboriginal people.

"In a competitive situation, we will source four companies that can perform a scope of work, and all four of them will have some sort of First Nation or Métis content. The whole idea is to create the supply chain within southern Saskatchewan that will have companies with First Nations and Métis content," said Bird.

"Right now we're very lucky to create new supply chains in Saskatchewan. I know there are supply chains

in Saskatchewan around since the '60s since the onset of mining, but this is a real opportunity for First Nation and Métis people to create their own legacy with our Legacy Project," Bird added.

For 2013-2014, Cline said that K+S has entered into close to \$200 million worth of contracts with companies and groups with an aboriginal component.

One contract is with Points Athabasca FHQ Contracting, which has been site services and maintenance since October 2013.

in Saskatchewan, not just southern," said William Lavallee, a member of Piapot First Nation and owner of Four Souls Cleaning and Water Services. The company has been providing commercial office cleaning since October, 2014.

Lavallee sees the positive impact going beyond himself and his employees.

"I don't just see an individual, I see a family. It's about family," said Lavallee.

"It's creating employment, opportunities as we go



Terry Bird is the First Nations and Métis Employment and Business Coordinator at K+S Potash.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

"We have labourers, operators, mechanics, carpenters, electricians on site now. One of the big things right now is prepping for snow removal," said Harley Campsell, business manager with Points Athabasca FHQ.

The company is a venture between three partners: Points Athabasca, Graham Construction, and FHQ Development Corporation which is owned by the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council.

"We have about 70 employees at the site right now, and 62 per cent of them are aboriginal," said Campsell.

The majority of the company's aboriginal workers are also local.

"We try to get as much local participation as possible.

We work with FHQ Employment Services, with Athabasca Labour Services, and tell them what we need. We don't discriminate between aboriginal and non-aboriginal. Our policy is to try to build capacity within the aboriginal workforce but we hire whoever we need to in order to fill the position. The end goal is to make the company viable," added Campsell.

Privately-owned companies have also been awarded contracts.

"I have about 20 people working for me. All First Nations from 11 First Nations

forward that these people are going to get the training they need. It's going to help them when we do different aspects as we grow, and open up future opportunities for them."

Lavallee provides transportation for his employees from two different locations to and from work every day to help people succeed.

"Again, it's because of the family. If you don't acknowledge that, you're just setting them up for failure because they're not going to have enough money to get to work, to live, which creates stress, which is an unhappy environment. In this day and age, a lot of it boils down to dollars and cents. I acknowledge that.

"I want to look after my staff as much as I can, and when they're there, I expect the same, and I've got that too. I'm very proud of them," said Lavallee.

Both Cline and Bird agree that hope and opportunity are two of the most important things, particularly at Christmas.

"At Christmas time you think more than anything else, you want people to have hope for the future," said Cline.

"Regardless of one's religion or whether one has religion at all, the biggest part of the message is hope, and I hope that we help to enrich lives and give people hope for the future. No one can solve all the issues by themselves.

"We won't solve all the issues ourselves. At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves, are we contributing positively in our own way to be part of the solution and are we providing people with more hope than maybe they had before," Cline said.

"Hope and opportunity, I think those are the two things that are really coming out this Christmas, with our work over the last two years," added Bird.



Points Athabasca FHQ is one of several Aboriginal owned companies benefiting from the K+S mine development.

(Stobbe Photography)

Camerons dreaming big in Saskatchewan

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Dennis Cameron and his wife, Michelle, recently celebrated the grand opening of their Regina office of Dreamcatcher Promotions.

Since forming their business in 2012, they have created a head office in Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve and also have a showroom in Winnipeg. They decided to branch out into Saskatchewan to expand their opportunity.

“We want to show people that it can be done, you can succeed and own your own business,” said Cameron, a former Chief.

Dreamcatcher Promotions does customized embroidery, screen printing, and full printing services for calendars.

“We pretty much do the decorating of apparel such as jackets, T-shirts, hoodies, tracksuits, hats, scarves and a wide variety of clothes, we can customize it,” says Cameron.

“We also do promotional products such as pens, cups, lanyards, and frisbees and pretty much anything that corporate industries want to use to promote itself.”

The couple both had the dream of owning their own business and helping youth. Cameron says they also customize athletic uniforms of all types from hockey to baseball including uniforms in the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) held this past summer in Regina.



Dennis Cameron and his wife have opened Dreamcatcher Promotions in Regina. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

“I’m proud to say we were one of the corporate sponsors. We donated 5,000 of the athlete’s bags. We did a variety of the merchandise apparel they were selling during the games,” says Cameron.

He says one of his business philosophies is to give back to the communities because that is how he was raised and to respect tradition.

“Some of my competitors think I’m crazy for doing that but it’s just who I am. I know some of the obstacles that the communities have to deal with,” he adds.

Cameron says what sets them apart from other companies is their pricing. He says they are more considerate and aware of the situations on First Nation communities with budget restraints.

“I’m in a position to help accommodate and ensure that our young kids are dressed nice and have that full apparel,” he says.

“I remember growing up myself. I looked like a Christmas tree. I had different coloured socks and we had the old jerseys. Everybody else came out looking all nice and we’re (thinking) aww wish we could be like that,” he says laughing.

With Christmas coming up, they are offering a winter special and putting together a winter package at an affordable price.

The couple hopes to expand Dreamcatcher Promotions to Saskatoon and Prince Albert to create employment for others.

Athabasca Basin Development business of the year

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – What started as a small business with high hopes for some northern communities, Athabasca Basin Development’s (ABD) growth into a giant employer and profit producer in the North has now seen them recognized as this year’s Business of the Year by SaskBusiness Magazine.

Athabasca Basin Development joins an elite group of previous winners, including Cameco, Mosaic, Concorde Group of Companies, and Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority.

“We are proud, and very humbled, to have received this recognition,” says Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development.

“As an Aboriginal-owned investment company, we started from humble beginnings and have worked hard over the last 12 years, reinvesting earnings to grow our company. Back in the early days, we never would have imagined we would be where we are today, and we are incredibly honoured to have been chosen as this year’s Business of the Year.”

ABD started out with a minor road repair contract worth approximately \$65,000. Last year the mining supply chain giant billed out \$170 million and has 1,000 employees in its 11 different

companies. That growth and economic development makes a big impact in the communities.

“The recognition and achievement from this honour goes back to the community and the young people see that,” said Anne Robillard who is from



Geoff Gay and Anne Robillard of Athabasca Basin Development.

Wollaston and Hatchet Lake and is Chair of the Board of ABD.

“As an individual I go back to the community and talk about economic development. We live in the North. Though we are isolated we want our business to grow in the province. We want our kids to have a healthy lifestyle and the North has to be ready

for the economy.

“We are slowly getting there although it is a slow process. Working with our young to get them educated and brought back to our communities. That’s where economic development helps.”

Robillard say the honour belongs to

everyone who contributed.

“This is all about teamwork. There really is no limit to what we can reach. We went for it. We have a good CEO that drags us toward good opportunities. This is exciting and I am really proud of my colleagues, the board of directors and Geoff for taking us way beyond the arms length of the business we started ten years

ago and to where we are today.”

ABD is involved in mine security and construction, road work, ownership in an airline as well as a drink distribution company. They also invest large sums of money into community development, including \$250,000 last year towards improving cell phone coverage in the North by investing in cell towers.

“The Business of the Year is awarded to companies that have given back to the community and remained admirable corporate citizens,” says Twila Redekopp, publisher at SaskBusiness Magazine.

“It is a way to show our appreciation to innovative, well respected and benevolent businesses. This year we are happy to recognize ABD for their contribution to the Saskatchewan economy and more importantly, our communities.”

“Our company was built on the foundation of seven communities uniting together, and without it, we would not be where we are today,” says Gay.

“There are so many people who have contributed to our success – industry, our shareholders, management and employees. Without all of them, we would not be where we are today. It is with this continued support and investment from our partners that we will see more success into the future.”

Planning key for rebuilding: The Westbank story

LLOYDMINSTER, TREATY SIX – Legendary Chief Robert Louie of the Westbank First Nation in southern British Columbia led the parade of success stories over the two days of the second annual Indigenous Economic Partnership Summit (iSummit) in Lloydminster.

The story of the First Nation turnaround since the 1950s, from poverty and virtually no development to today where the Westbank First Nation is home to hundreds of businesses, a tax collection system and 10,000 non-Indian residents leasing property on reserve lands is unprecedented.

“How did they get there?” is a frequently asked question. The answer is effective leadership with a vision, but also and as important, it is about effective governance and planning. In order to get ready for the responsibility of governing itself, Westbank First Nation had to prepare and build its infrastructure in order to attract investors.

Secondly, it had to install a mechanism to collect taxes in order to support itself. Thirdly, it had to redesign and strengthen its overall governance in order to provide a real sense of certainty to its investors, provide a stable government and leadership and land title insurance.

Lastly, Westbank First Nation established a goal to revitalize and respect its own Indigenous culture and heritage after a century of assimilation policy that has been counterproductive.

A key process on the path to self-government is the necessity to have a comprehensive community plan. The Plan guides the nation’s growth, development, resource management and community planning for reserve lands and traditional territory of Westbank First Nation. The nation’s citizens have ongoing input and fully participate in the community plan, which is a process that is



Entrepreneur Carlin Nordstrum and Westbank First Nation Chief Robert Louie.

holistic and driven by the community.

The accomplishments to date, which are firsts in Canada, include: the largest on-reserve residential and commercial development; more land and lease transactions; between 2006 and 2012 WFN issued \$335 million in building permits; almost 4,000 residences on-reserve; over 400 businesses on Westbank First Nation lands; over 1.3 million square feet of shopping centre development; over \$1.3 billion in assessed property taxes and over \$12 million in property tax revenues collected on an annual basis.

GDP has grown from \$100 million to \$500 million in the past decade. Westbank First Nation has contributed

\$80 million in annual fiscal revenue through sales tax, personal income tax and corporate tax on its lands. In terms of revenues on Westbank First Nation lands, the nation collects 38 per cent through taxation, 22 per cent from government transfers and 40 per cent is own source revenue (fees, charges and investment).

Aside from the obvious improved cash flow and infrastructure, Westbank First Nation now has the financial resources to invest in cultural awareness and cultural programming.

Another spinoff effect is the renewed community pride in being Okanagan First Nations people.

“If I could offer advice to First Nation leaders across the country, it would be that we must all step up immediately to fine tune our collective vision about our peoples future whatever that might be and we must act now to implement that vision” said Chief Louie.

“We must take charge as leaders and accept the responsibility that goes along with leadership,” he added.

Westbank First Nation may not be the perfect model for other Nations but the common aspects that can be duplicated easily include the vision to change, the intestinal fortitude to take full responsibility, and the willingness to establish and implement a Comprehensive Community Plan that links all of the other planning tools that includes a Self-Government Agreement, a Self-Government Implementation Plan, a Constitution, a Land Use Plan and a Government Strategic Plan.

The Westbank First Nation rebuilding story was designed through a lot of hard work, financial resources and commitment to follow through. Westbank First Nation is indeed a leader in the twenty-first century and has raised the bar in the Indigenous community worldwide.

The Indigenous Economic Partnership Summit held in Lloydminster October 15, 16 and 17 was a resounding success, featuring exceptional speakers telling motivational stories and sharing thought provoking ideas and successes.

The Summit was host to over 250 individuals from across Treaty 6 and beyond in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, who came together to consider partnership initiatives, training and employment opportunities and recognize and support cultural differences. New this year was the Youth conference which was attended by dozens of students from grades 10, 11, & 12. Kendall Netmaker and Dallas Soonias shared their success stories encouraging kids to stay in school, work hard towards their goals and recognize their strengths and build on them. The message delivered by Chief Robert Louie from the Westbank First Nation as well as the wrap up presentation by Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond had a captivating and compelling message to all those in attendance,”

Pat Tenney, Executive Director Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce.

This Summit would not be possible without the generous support from funders and sponsors listed below:

Province of Alberta, Province of Saskatchewan, City of Lloydminster, Onion Lake Business Development Corp, Black Pearl Resources, Onion Lake Energy, Points Athabasca FHQ, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, ATCO Electric, Lloydminster Catholic School Division, Lloydminster Exhibition Association, Rounce Fafard Law Office, Husky Energy, MNP LLP, Office of the Treaty Commissioner



L-to-R: Lloydminster Mayor Rob Saunders, Chief Robert Louie, Former Treaty Commissioner Bill McKnight, Milton Tootoosis



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Rounce Fafard Law Office
Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce

Regina high school unveils new benches in support of victims of violence



Keshina Paquachan and her fellow Scott Collegiate students built benches to honour victims of violence.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

By Jeanelle Mandes

For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Grade 10 students at Scott Collegiate unveiled a project they have been working on for the past three months. Students created benches to honor those who are victims of violence.

Keshina Paquachan says she was excited to be a part of the project that was so meaningful to her.

“It meant a lot because it kind of touched me in a certain way. I was a part of an abusive household,” says Paquachan who had a hard time finishing her sentence as she reflected back on her life.

She says she felt good after the project was completed and hopes the benches will help people take a stand and engage the public about victims of violence.

“Other people can see it and try to stop abuse and violence,” she adds.

Tamara Smith and fellow teacher Ian Temple led the students in creating the project. Smith went travelling over the summer and came across the ‘Angels Corner’ that is located in St. John’s. This gave her the idea to come up with the project for her students and to incorporate construction and how this can tie into the North Central community.

“I brought (the idea) back to Regina and pitched it to admin and they were really excited about it,” says Smith.

Smith and Temple hoped the project taught the students to learn outside the school walls about what goes on in the community such as violence.

“We thought that tied really closely with the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and usually that’s related to violence,” she says. “It’s supposed to be a space to honor and memorialize those women as well,” adds Smith.

She says after the class unveiled the ‘Angels Corner’, the two participating teachers and students gathered in a sharing circle to debrief about what they’ve learned.

“Students took a lot of pride in doing something for the community and many of them are dealing with issues that really hit close to home. It was actually a really emotional experience with the sharing circle,” says Smith.

The benches were made to be movable since Scott Collegiate will be getting a new school in two years. The students also made two plaques that will be on display near the benches indicating the significance of the ‘Angels Corner’ project.

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Prisoner rights champion joins U of S College of Law

By Angela Hill

For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Kim Pate has made a career of helping marginalized, criminalized and incarcerated women and girls know and fight for their rights.

The long-time executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies is a lawyer by education and an advocate by experience, and she has brought that experience to the University of Saskatchewan.

For this academic year Pate holds the Ariel F. Sallows Chair in Human Rights at the College of Law.

It's a position she was keen to take.

"In part because I have worked for years, since I worked with men, with people who are imprisoned at the Regional Psychiatric Centre," Pate said, from her office at the university, decorated with paintings made for her by a number of prisoners.

"The students here are very interested in doing prison law, so it seemed like a good fit."

The timing is right for a number of reasons.

Pate plans to be involved in the inquest into the death of Kinew James – the 35-year-old aboriginal woman who died of a heart attack after guards ignored her calls for help at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in 2013 – that is set to take place this year. Pate was also involved in the inquest into the death of Ashley Smith.

In May, Pate is planning to hold a conference in Saskatoon that will bring together local and international speakers, as well as women who have been in custody themselves.

"We'll be focusing on the criminalization of indigenous women in particular, especially those with mental health issues," she said.

Pate said she sees a massive over representation of aboriginal women in prison.

"The corrections investigators reported in several recent reports, about the over incarceration of indigenous women and the fact that they've increased at eight times the rate of any other prisoner in the past decade."

The situation of increased incarceration is tied to cutbacks in areas that provide supports to women who need assistance, she said, adding that those who are already disadvantaged have lived with more oppression, have less access to health and social services, and more likely to be criminalized.

"So that is a big focus of the work I do all the time, but especially with the opportunity to be here in Saskatoon," Pate said.

"One of the things I am focusing on is the comparison between the treatment of Aboriginal Peoples, the over classification, the greater likelihood of having inadequate support, social services, housing, everything, and then the link to the characterization of them as dangerous

and violent, particularly women."

Pate has had years of experience dealing with women who others have deemed to be a violent risk. In the early years of her role as executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, she brought her children with her everywhere – including into prisons.

She spoke about a time when she took her son, who was a few months old at the time, into a correctional facility for women. At the end of the day the head of security came in and said there was an incident and the women were screaming and yelling, and he was going to send in the emergency response team.

Pate said she asked what the women were upset about; as she had just been with them a couple of hours earlier and her two-month-old had been babysat by the same women as she was talking about some of their issues. They had made the child a vest and moccasins.

She said she offered to see what the concerns were, before he sent in the security team.

"And he said, 'Why don't you take the baby? They really like the baby,'" Pate said.

"And I thought, okay, the gig is up if you think a baby ... could calm down a situation where you might otherwise bring in a team and escalate the situation, really spoke volumes about what they understood."

It was the situations in jails and prisons that pushed Pate in the direction of prison advocacy.

"I could not believe that ... unlawful behavior by actors of the state, police, corrections, was allowed to happen. Not only allowed, but was actually in some cases almost promoted, and nobody knew about it," she said.

"At first I think it was anger and a desire to make sure people knew what was happening, and (now) part of it is I've been really lucky to work with some incredibly courageous, resilient, amazing young men and women ... who have done amazing things."

Her belief that it is the people who she has worked with, and on behalf of, that has allowed her to have the opportunities she has, makes receiving awards difficult for Pate.

"That's the biggest challenge for me. I have difficulty ever accepting them as individual achievements, because they aren't."

Pate was named to the Order of Canada in June.

"One of the women who I have known for a long time said, 'oh, are they making it the disorder of Canada now?'"

The energy and excitement of the next generation of lawyers and advocates are what inspires Pate as she takes the U of S chair.

"It's less about what I hope to do. I have been so inspired by some of the students," she said.

"I get energized by the incredible



Kim Pate, pictured at the U of S College of Law, holds the Ariel F. Sallows Chair in Human Rights.

energy and creativity of the next generation, so that's what I think is really exciting."

The addition of new blood and fresh ideas is why Pate plans to be finished with the executive director role before she celebrates her 25 year with Elizabeth Fry

Societies (this gives the organization two years to find a replacement).

"It's why I can't imagine leaving the work. I'll leave the position because I think people should be in with new energy, but I can't imagine ever not doing this."

CALL FOR ARTISTS: Request for Qualifications

MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S Commemorative ART INSTALLATION and memorial

Deadline for Submissions: January 21st 2015 3:00 pm CST

Budget: \$120,000.00 (all-inclusive)

Location of the Monument: Front of the new Saskatoon Police headquarters, 76 25th Street East, City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The Saskatoon Tribal Council, the Saskatoon Police Service and the Provincial Government partnered to commissioned a commemorative art installation and memorial, to be located in the new City Police headquarters. The objective of this public art project is to commemorate and bring awareness to missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The commissioners seek Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) from an artist and/or team to work with the community in the creation and implementation of the project.

The complete RFQ document can be found at sktc.sk.ca and saskatoonpoliceservice.ca. Artists are reminded to check the websites regularly for any updates regarding this RFQ prior to submitting their application.

All inquiries about the project and the call for artists should be to Marylou Mintram by email to mmawcai@gmail.com.



 Saskatchewan



Dolan bowls 'em over

By **Andréa Ledding**
For **Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Richard Dolan first started bowling when he was nine years old, and has won nearly 500 medals to date, as well as a Male Athlete of the Year 2013-2014 plaque.

“I started with the fivepins,” he explained by phone interview, between practice sessions and working full-time at Dakota Dunes Casino as a beverage porter.

“I started competing when I was age nine as well.”

After 12 years of fivepin bowling, he began tenpin bowling three or four years ago to qualify for the World Games, excelling in the sport in a very short time.

Although he's too modest to say so, only admitting that he finds them comparative, obviously his skills transfer between the two styles – as he went to the national games this July in Vancouver, after qualifying for and competing in the provincial games in 2013.

“I enjoy the tenpin more,” Richard noted, adding he often practices at Eastview and prepared for the national games by practising a few times a week for a couple hours each time. The experience itself, he noted, was fantastic. “The weather was nice and warm.”

As for the bowling aspect, he was the

most improved on the team, he says. But his former fivepin coach notes that he was chosen to be on the only tenpin team representing Saskatchewan, and competed in the highest division with the highest averages, where he won gold.

“It feels good inside,” Richard says humbly.

His former coach also notes that Richard is considered the top tenpin competitive bowler in the entire country for Special Olympics, and there is a strong likelihood that if he hasn't already been chosen, he will soon be announced as one of four athletes selected for Special Olympics Canada at the World Games in 2015 in Los Angeles in tenpin bowling.

When Richard isn't bowling or working, he can often be found playing other sports such as floor hockey. Additional hobbies include skateboarding, playing video games, or hanging out with friends. But bowling is still what he loves best.

“Bowling is one of my top passions. My future goal is to keep going for the Special Olympics as possible and maybe in the next like couple of years down the road be going as a pro,” Richard said, adding that he'd love to attend the top world competitions, competing with the older bowlers whom he looks up to.



Richard Dolan is a prolific bowler, excelling in fivepins and tenpins.

New fire hall for Hatchet Lake

HATCHET LAKE FIRST NATION, SK, - Through investments from government, industry and the community, the Hatchet Lake First Nation recently celebrated the grand opening of their new fire hall. The fire hall is a welcome service for the community located 724 km northwest of Prince Albert in Saskatchewan's Far North.

“In a remote community such as ours, ensuring our firefighters have access to modern equipment and facilities is critical to ensuring an effective and timely response when they are called upon. By investing in a new fire hall, we are really investing in the safety and well being of our community and residents,” said Chief Bart Tsannie of Hatchet Lake First Nation.



The hall is equipped to house the community's fire truck and all related firefighting equipment, as well as provide both office and training space for fire fighters.

The Government of Canada contributed \$525,000 toward the \$1.2 million project, with the First Nation contributing \$365,400 of their own-source funding, to plan, design and construct the hall.

Also, Areva Resources Canada and Cameco Corporation each

CHIEF TSANNIE contributed \$200,000 toward the project.



A ribbon cutting celebrated the building of a new fire hall in Hatchet Lake.

2015

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor
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Feb. 27 & Feb. 28, 2015 - Field House, Saskatoon, Sk.

Entry Fee:

\$60

per athlete

Includes:

Meet T-shirt & Registration (up to 4 events)

Early Bird Registration:
Feb. 2nd deadline

Registration:
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Contact:

Derek Rope

Phone: (306) 292-5277
Fax: (306) 664-6761
Email: registration@saskatf.ca

Jordyn Burnouf

Phone: (306) 291-6948
Fax: (306) 664-6761
Email: registration@saskatf.ca

Eligibility:

First Nations, Metis
or Inuit Ancestry

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www.saskatf.ca for online registration & info

Survey reveals comfort levels of urban Aboriginal people

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – The Aboriginal people of Saskatoon have spoken loudly that they prefer to access programs and services in Saskatoon that are Aboriginal-run.

Through a community workshop, an old people's gathering and a user survey, participants indicated cultural awareness and sensitivity are the most important qualities to have in an agency that serves Aboriginal people. It showed that 73 per cent of the respondents prefer receiving services from Aboriginal run organizations.

"The Kitaskinaw project is an important step in the delivery of services for citizens," says Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief, Felix Thomas.

"This is especially true for the First Nations population and the need for the delivery of effective, meaningful services to individuals and families. The report also highlights the need for mainstream organizations to be inclusive of Aboriginal people as employees within their organizations in order to build culturally competent service delivery."

The Kitaskinaw project is a partnership between the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, United Way of Saskatoon & Area, and the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research. Over 1,000 programs and services have been compiled and listed following an environmental scan of Saskatoon's Aboriginal community.

The report includes feedback from Saskatoon's Aboriginal community about the comprehensive inventory of programs and services currently accessed.



Mike Linklater with a copy of the report produced by the Kitaskinaw project. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

the Aboriginal community and that Aboriginal people are affected more by homelessness.

"This project is the first of its kind for Saskatoon," says Gabriel Dumont Institute Executive Director, Geordy McCaffrey.

"With community voice, the inventory of programs and services, and the gathering of existing community information, the links between program and service delivery across Saskatoon may be better understood."

The report also pointed out that the province expects 45 per cent of all students entering kindergarten by 2016 to be Aboriginal. These young people need services and the good news is that there are many accessible programs for cultural activities and fitness offered in Saskatoon.

Mike Linklater has lived and worked in the community his entire life and the distinction between organizations and how they welcome people is distinct.

"In organizations that come from the Aboriginal community, people have an understanding of a sense of family," said Linklater who is the Program Coordinator at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

"We try to be welcoming no matter where you come from. What is good is that they asked the community and included so many Aboriginal people. This will be important as the community grows."

Kitaskinaw will be available on the following partner websites in mid-December: saskatoon.ca, sktc.sk.ca, unitedwaysaskatoon.ca, and gdins.org.



Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas says organizations need to be inclusive of Aboriginal people. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Information gathered for Kitaskinaw, which means "our land" in the plains Cree language, will assist corporate, academic and political organizations make informed decisions.

"This is a solid and reliable resource," says Saskatoon city manager, Murray Totland.

"Knowledge of the overlaps and gaps that have been identified through community feedback is essential when it comes to policy development regarding Aboriginal service delivery in our city."

Ashley Kayseas with the United Way sees an immediate need arising out of the scan.

"The Elders services seem to be really lacking," said Kayseas. "There is a gap there. In the mainstream there are lots of services for the elderly, but the First Nation and Métis elders are not comfortable there."

"We also learned that we need to build capacity on Aboriginal organizations and help other organizations be reflective of the community."

The report noted the higher unemployment rate in

A promotional poster for the LWC XV - 15th Anniversary TOMAHOCCY. The background is a textured blue and white. At the top, it says "LWC XV - 15th Anniversary" in a curved font, followed by "TOMAHOCCY" in large, bold, black letters. To the right is a logo of a teepee with a bison head on top and "LWC" inside. Below the title, it says "SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 27-29, 2015" and "ENOCH CREE NATION - Treaty #6 Territory". Further down, it lists "Divisions: All Rez w/ 2 imports | 40+ Masters", "Entry fee: \$1,000", and "Prizes: 100% cash payout/All star awards". At the bottom, there are two contact boxes: one for Milton Tootosis (Ph: (306) 341-1876, Email: lwctomahockey@gmail.com, @MiltTootoosis) and one for Curtis Standing (Ph: (306) 371-6300, Email: curtis.standing@gmail.com, @CurtisStanding). A small photo of two people is in the bottom right corner, and a Facebook logo with "LWC TOMAHOCCY" is at the very bottom right.



Freddie & Michelle Throassie
Black Lake, SK

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