

*Honouring  
Our Métis  
Veterans*



— 9 3 R D A N N U A L —  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**AUGUST 19-22, 2021**  
MÉTIS CROSSING, SMOKY LAKE, AB

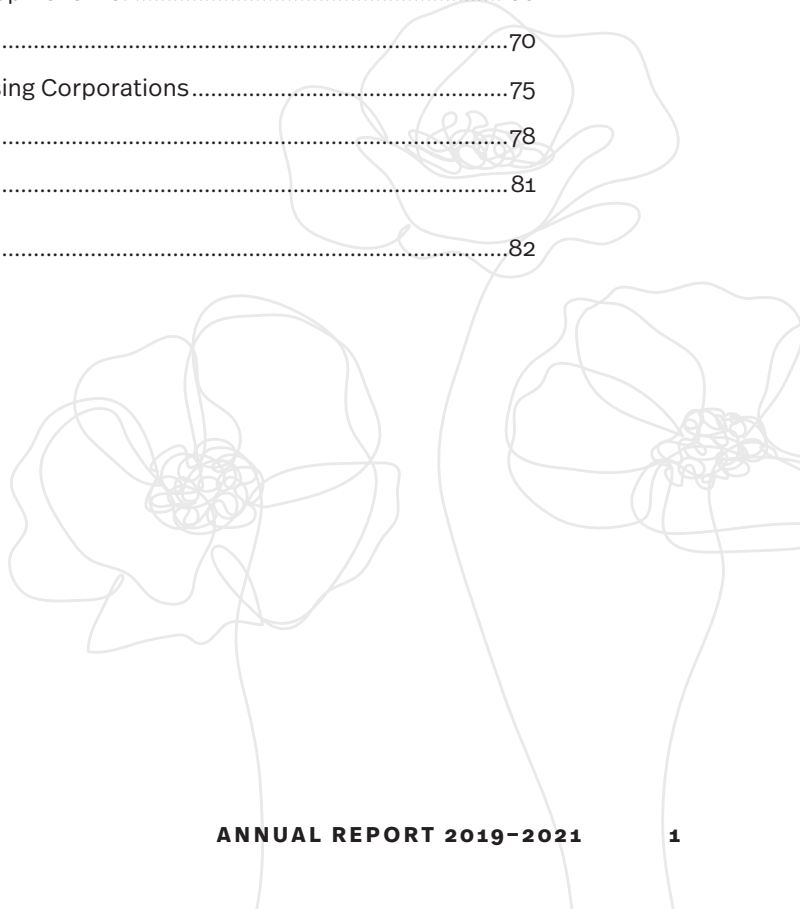


**ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 - 2020/21**



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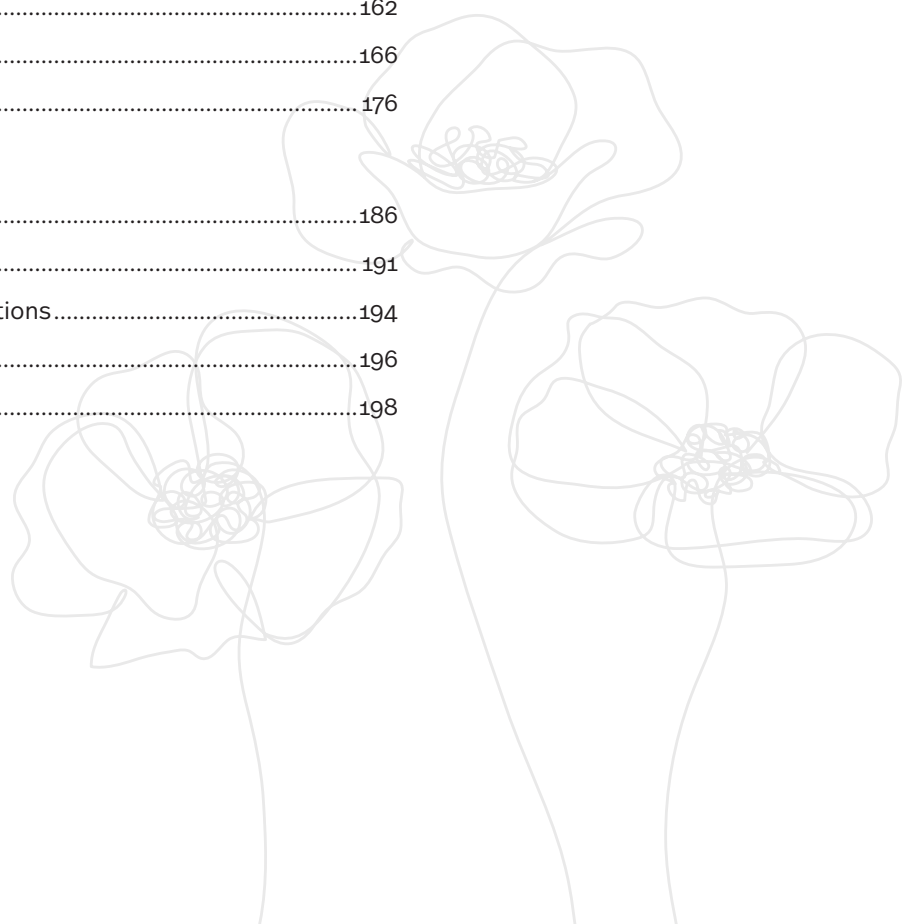
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# PRESIDENT AUDREY POITRAS



## Greetings to all our Métis Citizens!

Welcome to the 93rd Métis Nation of Alberta Annual General Assembly. We are so pleased and excited to host this year's Assembly in person. This last year and a half has been trying for all of us, so let's make up for lost time and enjoy the activities planned over this weekend. Visit with old friends and family, as we come together as a Métis Nation to embark on the greatest journey of our time: Charting our Path to a Métis Nation within Alberta Constitution.

This is what Louis Riel and his Provisional Government fought for and created the Bill of Rights for. Riel eventually gave his life so we as a Nation could move forward and continue to fight for our rights as Métis people.

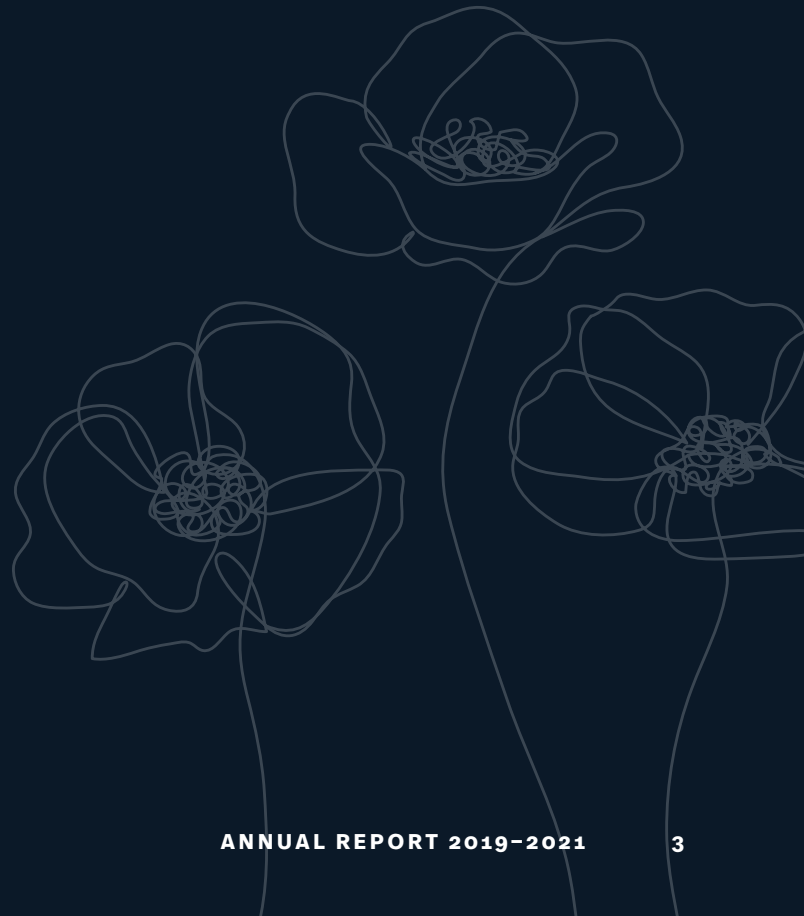
Since the beginning of my tenure as President of the Métis Nation of Alberta, time and time again, I have heard from Métis Citizens, "we need to move out of the Societies Act, we need a constitution!"

I didn't know then, if I would see this day come in our time, or even in our grandchildren's time. But here we are. The theme of the 91st MNA Assembly was "Our Journey of Recognition begins! The Future is Now!" Well, ladies and gentlemen, Veterans, Elders, and youth, this 93rd Assembly signifies the beginning of the end of our journey.

This weekend we will be exploring and examining a draft Constitution that was put together by our Métis Nation of Alberta Constitution Commission. The draft was reviewed in a series of Roundtables where we heard from our current governing structures. Now we are bringing it you, the Citizens of the Métis Nation within Alberta. Our Constitution will be created by us, for us. I am extremely excited that this time has finally come. Together, we will continue to build a strong Métis Nation embracing Métis rights.

Sincerely,

**Audrey Poitras**  
President  
Métis Nation of Alberta



# PROVINCIAL VICE-PRESIDENT DAN CARDINAL



## Tansi kakiyaw kiyawaw

How are you all!

I would like to start by saying it has been a challenging year and a half because of the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, our citizens have gone through, like many other people, turmoil – lack of social interaction, job loss, change in income, and so many other challenges.

While The Métis Nation of Alberta was closed to the public during the pandemic, we worked hard to continue to provide supports and create new programs to help Métis Albertans through this trying time. We had the Child Wellness Benefit, the Food Sovereignty program, Home Renovations and the Rental Supplement program with Métis Capital Housing Corporation for those who faced job loss, topped up the Benevolence Fund (\$200 to \$500), and moved most of our events onto a virtual platform.

As the Vice President of the MNA, I phoned as many seniors as I could to reach out to them, to talk to them and provide relief from their loneliness. I spoke to citizens regarding their questions on various programs.

I would like to take this time to highlight some of the various virtual programs and events I attended. Our affiliate, Rupertsland Institute (RLI), works hard to ensure our language is kept alive and passed on to next generations, and continuing to share knowledge around our language is one of my greatest honors. I worked with Bailey Oster for the Michif translation of stories of Métis women. I did a Michif Word of the Day and more recently, I provided recordings of Michif word translations to Sharon Bourque for her class. These recordings will be used to assist students with learning the Michif language. I also provided Michif translations to Ray St. Denys for Shining Mountain's research for HIV. Throughout COVID, our Health department did many updates, and it was my privilege to provide the Michif translation of those COVID updates. I also attended a Michif conference in Medicine Hat.

I was proud to do the Cree translation for our Métis anthem for the virtual Métis Fest in 2021. Even though many of us prefer the Métis Fest to be in person for the social gathering element, continuing to host this festival virtually was necessary to continue to showcase our unique culture and talents, and provide a sense of culture and support to Métis performers and artisans, even through a pandemic.

In addition, I have attended many virtual meetings with the boards I am a part of, including Métis Crossing Experience Company, Provincial Curriculum for K-12 with RLI, Edmonton Food Bank, Métis Child and Family Services, and the fundraising committee for the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples.

In 2020, our Métis Crossing board approved the construction of a 40-room lodge. It is nearing completion and will be open later this fall. The lodge is a boutique style and will have a bistro as well.

In March, I attended a virtual Homelessness Symposium, focused on homelessness in Canada – specifically rural and remote housing.

Region Three held their Business Mixer virtually, and it was a pleasure to attend that online event.

Recently, with things opening up, I have had the privilege of attending more in person events, and it has been so rewarding to be in community again. I was able to provide a message to recipients of the Métis Education Foundation Award, as well as provide those graduates an opportunity for photos at Valleyview.

President Poitras and I supported the MNA and Region Three vaccine clinics, as we both received our first and second doses at MNA led clinics.

In addition, I had the pleasure of attending some of our Regions' Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations – Region One (June 21), and Region Six – Peace River (June 19), and Grande Prairie (June 26).

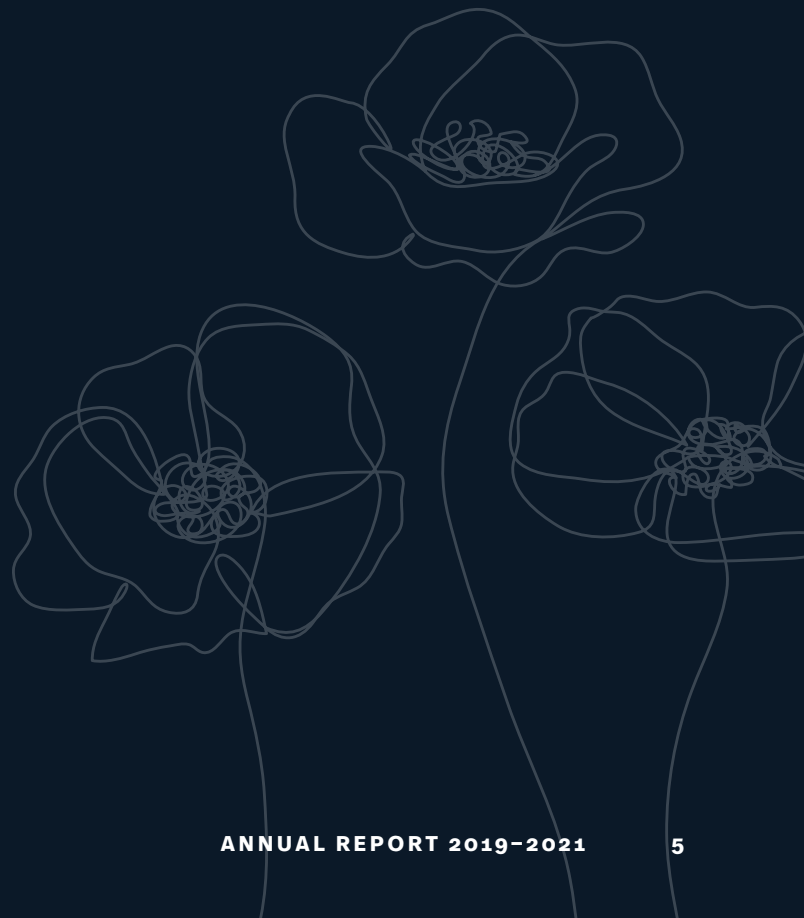
I also attended Local 1935's AGM in Fort McMurray.

The recent discovery of the unmarked graves proves the significant importance of us regaining authority over our children to minimize future trauma. I recently attended the Winds of Change Indigenous Walk and Ceremony. This was a community led walk to acknowledge the lives lost in residential schools and show support for the survivors and their families.

As I reflect on the past year, I would like to recognize our affiliates and dedicated staff for the hard work they have done with citizens and leadership in achieving our goal of being a stronger Métis Nation. With all that we have achieved in the last 18 months through the pandemic, I believe this truly shows what a resilient people we are. I look forward to continuing this in the coming year and seeing each of you in person once again.

Thank you, Marsi, Ekosimaka

**Dan Cardinal**  
Vice President  
Métis Nation of Alberta





ALBERTA  
INDIGENOUS RELATIONS  

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Office of the Minister

## Message from Rick Wilson Minister of Indigenous Relations

*On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I congratulate the Métis Nation of Alberta on your 93<sup>rd</sup> milestone year and your many accomplishments over these decades.*

*As the population of Métis people in Alberta continues to grow – now at more than 114 thousand strong – the Métis Nation of Alberta remains a committed advocate and a strong voice to advance the Métis way of life.*

*Your roots run deep in Alberta, as do your cultural contributions to the fabric of our province. Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, we look to your Nation in our plans to rejuvenate Alberta's economy. Métis people have a long entrepreneurial history in Alberta and it is this spirit that will help to lift Alberta toward a better future.*

*Alberta's government is committed to working with the Métis people of Alberta to build even stronger, more prosperous lives for Métis people, guided by your vision, your aspirations and your leadership.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Wilson".

Rick Wilson

July 5, 2021





LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
ALBERTA

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**GLENN VAN DIJKEN**  
MLA Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock

Dear President Audrey Poitras and all members of the Metis Nation of Alberta,

I would like to welcome all participants at the Metis Nation of Alberta's 93rd Annual General Assembly to Metis Crossing in the constituency of Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock. The dynamic history and culture of the Métis people continues to be celebrated today, and every day, on the historic site of Metis Crossing.

Metis Crossing was once a major meeting ground for Metis people, European settlers, and other Indigenous peoples to exchange goods through mutual respect. To the north, one can find the historic fishing grounds, and to the south the plains and grasslands that were home to buffalo.

Metis peoples have honored and respected this land and its surrounding areas for generations, connecting with the environment for farming, hunting, and fur trading. By virtue of the Metis people's strength, commitment, and character, they became indispensable to everyone that visited this land.

The allure that brought so many individuals to Metis Crossing during the fur trade has not been lost. In the present day, Metis Crossing is used as a permanent site for individuals from all over the world to come, enjoy and learn about the rich history of the Metis People. Metis Crossing continues to reflect the traditions of the ancestral Metis People including self-sufficiency, respect of the elders, and the respect and protection of the land.

The Metis Nation of Alberta represents the inherent inclination towards an organized governing body that has advanced the interest of Metis people for hundreds of years.

In Alberta, we continue to respect and listen to the interests of the Metis people and the Metis Nation of Alberta. I am interested to learn about any outcomes and recommendations from discussions on your key program areas coming out of this year's Annual General Assembly.

In closing, I wish you success in your meeting and hope you will find time to visit the sights at Metis Crossing and the surrounding area.

Thank you (Maarsii)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. van Dijken'.

Glenn van Dijken, MLA  
Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock

*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*



# 2019/20

DEPARTMENT  
REPORTS



# 2019/20 Children and Family Services



The Métis Nation of Alberta’s (MNA) Department of Children and Family Services (CFS) aims to provide culturally appropriate opportunities to maintain and enhance connections with family, community, and culture. CFS is committed to helping build strong, resilient Métis families by prioritizing programs and services that provide the necessary tools to best support Métis children with development and early learning, while also offering resources and supports that allow them to thrive within their communities.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Note

The COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected and had a huge impact on Métis Albertans. Due to pandemic restrictions, some CFS programs and events had to be cancelled, postponed, or altered to keep community and staff safe. More details describing how the COVID-19 pandemic affected CFS programming is included in the programming descriptions.

## Family Winter Camps

The Family Winter Camps were scheduled every weekend from February 28 to March 15, 2020. Overall, 19 families registered to attend the Family Winter Camps. Seven families registered for each of the first and second camps and five families registered for the third camp. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the March 13-15 weekend family camp was cancelled for the safety of community members and staff. For the earlier camps, Métis Citizens and their families were invited to attend Camp Wohelo for a weekend adventure where families enjoyed heated cabins, cultural workshops, and outdoor activities! The weekend activities included:

- Kitchen parties
- Fiddling and jam sessions
- Horse and sleigh rides
- Ice fishing
- Fish scale art
- Beading
- Snowshoeing
- Movie nights





## Family Christmas Party

The CFS Department hosted a children and families Christmas party at Métis Crossing on December 14, 2019 and were some of the first guests to experience the newly-built Métis Cultural Gathering Centre! To ensure the party was easily accessible for children and families, busses running between the Edmonton provincial head office and the family Christmas party at Métis Crossing were provided. Approximately 80 – 100 people celebrated with the department and participated in the Christmas activities.

Families enjoyed:

- Cookie decorating and various crafts
- Sleigh rides
- Santa photos and gifts
- Snowshoeing
- Food and beverages
- Christmas carols and more!

## Community Information Nights

CFS strives to increase community awareness and knowledge on a variety of health-related topics by hosting Community Information Nights (previously called “Community Health Nights”). Our department has welcomed a variety of local organizations to present at our Community Information Nights, and past topics include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) 101, maternal health and family planning, and family law. Community Information Nights are learning sessions and are often livestreamed on the MNA’s social media pages to ensure accessibility for all Albertans wishing to participate. If any of these topics interest you, they can be found at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com).

The CFS Department hosted three Community Information Nights over this fiscal year. In total, approximately 20 people attended in person and 2,300 people viewed the online livestreams.

The three topics were:

- Brain Basics (Brain Care Centre) on April 10, 2019
- Child and Youth Advocacy (OCYA) on May 22, 2019
- Disability and the Disability Sector (Gateway Association) on January 22, 2020

## Children Services Introduction

The CFS Department supports Métis children, youth, and families involved with Children’s Services by advocating for the involvement of the Métis Resource Worker for every identified Métis child or family. The Métis Resource Worker offers supports, referrals, and resources that can help strengthen Métis children and families and allow them to thrive within healthy communities.

Some of our department’s priorities include:

- Advocating for Métis children to remain connected to their families and communities
- Ensuring Métis children and families have easy access to services and supports that are responsive to their unique needs
- Delivering accurate Métis cultural awareness and education
- Promoting cultural connections and training

## Act C-92: ‘An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families’

Act C-92, “An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families” is a piece of federal legislation which came into effect January 1, 2020. It aims to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care. The Act recognizes Indigenous governing bodies’ jurisdiction over child and family services. Indigenous governing bodies can develop policies and laws based on their history, culture, and circumstances. Furthermore, the Act allows Indigenous governing bodies to transition towards exercising partial or full jurisdiction at a pace they choose. They have the freedom to implement and enforce policies and laws that best fit their cultural practices and traditions, putting the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality at the forefront.

The CFS Department has been following the progression of Act C-92 since it was first introduced as a Bill on February 28, 2019. The CFS Department researched Act C-92, as well as the current system and Métis Albertans experiences with Alberta Children’s Services. Additionally, the CFS team reached out to experts in the area to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and risks Act C-92 poses to the MNA.

## Engagements on Alberta Children’s Services

The Children and Family Services Department wanted to explore Métis Albertans’ experiences and perspectives of the Alberta Children’s Services system to gain a better understanding of the needs of Métis communities. The valuable information gathered will help develop a strategic plan for our department. The goal is to use what we learned to strengthen the department’s capacity to make responsive decisions about how and where to invest its resources and promote initiatives focused on Métis culture and connections. One of the department’s priorities is to provide culturally appropriate opportunities for Métis children and families to maintain and enhance connections with family, community, and culture.

### What We Did

In the fall of 2019, CFS developed a strategy that aimed to host an engagement session in each of the six MNA regions to explore:

- Métis perspectives of Alberta Children’s Services
- Needs and priorities of Métis Albertans relating to Alberta Children’s Services

- Assets for supporting healthy families
- Barriers preventing healthy families
- Awareness of Act C-92

In 2020, the CFS team began hosting engagement sessions on the topic of Alberta Children’s Services. The department was able to host two in-person engagement sessions, one each in Edmonton and Calgary. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, four of the six planned in-person engagement sessions were cancelled and changed to phone interviews. For the month of April, CFS launched an online survey to offer another way for Métis Albertans to participate and share their experiences and perspectives of Alberta Children’s Services.

### What We Heard

Overall, the CFS team gathered 511 responses from across all six MNA regions through in-person engagements, phone interviews, and an online survey. The majority of participants were women between 30-50 years old who indicated they were MNA Citizens. The voices the team heard spoke from multiple perspectives including grandparents, foster/kinship/adoptive parents, families with direct involvement, Métis service providers, and individuals who had grown up in care.

## Métis Family Resource Program

The Métis Family Resource Program (previously called the Métis Resource Worker Program) can be an essential link between the child, family, community, and Alberta Children’s Services. The Métis Family Resource program aims to strengthen family and engage community through Métis culture, client-centered and culturally sensitive approaches to wellness, culturally appropriate family plans, advocacy, and community-based referrals. Additionally, the Métis Resource Worker can assist with MNA Citizenship for children in care, adoptees, and persons with previous Alberta Children’s Services involvement. The program also includes cultural training and support planning for kinship, foster, and adoptive caregivers of Métis children and youth.

Throughout the year, CFS provided cultural awareness training and workshops to a variety of stakeholders including North Central Alberta Children’s Services offices, Edmonton and area Children’s Services offices, Calgary Children’s Services offices, the Alberta Foster and Kinship Association, and Creating Hope Society. In total, 121 Children’s Services and support staff were trained.

The Métis Family Resource Program assisted 16 Métis families involved with Children’s Services and helped



**Metis Family Resource Program**

The Metis Family Resource Program can be an essential link between the child, family, community, and Alberta Children's Services by:

- Strengthening family and engaging community through Metis culture
- Providing client-centered culturally sensitive approaches to wellness
- Assisting with MNA citizenship registration for children in care, adoptees, and persons with previous Alberta Children's Services involvement
- Developing culturally appropriate family plans with Alberta Children's Services staff
- Offering in-person cultural training, resource referral, and support planning to kinship caregivers and foster families caring for Metis children
- Advocacy and community-based referrals

..... **REACH OUT TODAY!** .....

to identify approximately 40 children in care who were previously not identified as Métis.

## Supports and Services Navigator

The Supports and Services Navigator (SSN) helps direct Métis Albertans to programs and services appropriate for their specific needs. The SSN can provide advocacy and guidance for Métis Albertans to ensure they can navigate through and access appropriate supports and resources. The SSN ensures Métis Albertans receive timely and relevant assistance in areas such as financial supports, health care and treatment options, access to education, and more.

- 1,658 Métis Albertans accessed SSN Services (as of July 9, 2020)
- 385 Métis Albertans accessed SSN Services specifically for COVID-19 related matters
- This year, the top five areas for support requests were:
  1. Health and dental
  2. Mental health
  3. Addictions
  4. Legal
  5. Housing

## Early Learning and Child Care Introduction

Our department continues to build on past successes, working to strengthen capacity to design and deliver Métis Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) opportunities to Métis Citizens. Our ELCC initiatives aim to empower Métis families by providing access to resources, programming, and services rooted in Métis culture, while also supporting the early learning and developmental needs of Métis children, youth, and families.

## Child Wellness Benefit

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for all Canadians, including Métis Albertans. Our department recognized families with young children faced significant hardships related to public health measures, such as school and daycare closures and challenges associated with employment. Our department was instrumental in developing and implementing a one-time funding opportunity for families. The Child Wellness Benefit Program provided families with financial support to ensure parents could accommodate at-home learning and other childcare needs. The program was well received and supported over 2,600 Métis families across the province.



## Gear Up for School Kits

During the 2019 school year, the CFS Department designed a program to support school readiness among Métis Nation of Alberta children. The Gear Up for School program provided Métis children going into kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 with necessary school supplies for the year. This program provided essential resources and prepared 1,200 Métis children across the province for a successful school year. ■

# 2019/20 Communications



Every year is bigger and better than the last at the MNA and this was certainly true for the Communications Department through the last year. We saw growth on all promotional platforms and it's encouraging to see more and more people engaging with the MNA, its events, programs, and various initiatives. As showcased below, our communications efforts continue to have a positive impact and we aim to keep our citizens informed of all the MNA does.

## Bi-Weekly E-Newsletter

- 1,067 new subscriptions for a total of 26,335 recipients
- Email open rate is up to 42 per cent, about 22 per cent above industry average

## Social Media Engagement

- 3,951 new Facebook followers for a total of 13,146
- 2,113 new Instagram followers for a total of 3,686

## Otipemisiwak Magazine

Since our last report, we have released three new issues of the Otipemisiwak Magazine. Each issue is themed with focuses on Métis Tourism, Housing, and Self-Government.

## MNA Department, Region & Affiliate Support

Communications also worked with MNA Provincial Office departments, regions, and affiliates on many exciting projects in 2019-20.

Our graphic designers, communications coordinators, and videographers all work together to ensure each project is its best. To name a few, we worked on another successful Youth & Seniors Gathering, the 91st Annual General Assembly and report, an exciting Métis Week, a Virtual Alberta Métis Fest, and helped roll out the MNA's COVID-19 Support Plan. Read on for more of what we did to make these events successful.







## MNA COVID-19 Support Plan

On April 6, 2020 the MNA rolled out several financial supports to help all Métis Albertans through the COVID-19 pandemic. Communications worked closely with the Executive, Health, Child and Family Services, and Youth Programs & Services Departments to ensure Métis Albertans could easily access the supports, learn more about their availability, and receive updates surrounding the pandemic. We also worked with regional offices and affiliates on promotion and design support where requested. This work included:

- Design products
  - Posters, graphics, and application forms
  - Traditional Plant Flashcards
  - Keeping it Riel Podcast graphics
- Filming and editing COVID-19 videos
  - Presidential and health updates
  - Stop the Spread and How I Cope compilations
  - Mental Health Moments
  - How to Wear a Mask
  - How to Make a No-sew Mask
  - Story Time with Kookum
- Press releases and coordination of media
- Digital media promotion
  - Mass emails
  - Social media
- Wellness Kits branding and ordering for Youth Team

## Virtual Alberta Métis Fest

Pandemic restrictions meant we had to re-think this year's Alberta Métis Fest. Last year, there were simultaneous events in each region where thousands of people came to enjoy Métis culture, food, and fun. This time around, we took the party online and had over 2,500 people tune in to the Chime Live app and another 2,000 watched on Facebook. Engagement during the event was high with hundreds of comments and shares on social media.

Working with the Youth Programs and Services department, we:

- Built an interactive app for viewers to chat, vote, and view the day-long showcase of Métis talent
- Produced the live event working with FMAV (audio & visual) and emcees on scripts, facilitated giveaways, and dealt with any issues during the livecast
- Filmed and edited regional greetings and performance videos
- Produced Métis pride compilation videos
- Ran a jiggging competition with interactive voting



## Métis Week

Métis Week 2019 saw our yearly favourites, along with some exciting new events. It kicked off with the annual Louis Riel Commemorative Walk and continued with Remembrance Day events, Edmonton City Hall Proclamation, affiliate open houses, Louis Riel Commemorative Ceremony, gala, and many more. We also saw the exciting addition of Métis Discovery Day, which hosted thousands of students at the Edmonton Expo Centre for Métis cultural displays, educational presentations, and performances.



Communications was present at all events working behind the scenes on:

- Posters, signs, hymn book, and invitations
- Photography and videography
- Logistical support
  - Bookings, agendas
- Promotional support
  - Paid ads
  - Social media and web promotion
- Media coordination

## 91st Annual General Assembly

Citizens of the Métis Nation of Alberta gathered in St. Paul last August for the yearly business meeting. As usual, Communications worked hard to ensure all communications needs were met, including:

- Compiling, designing, and printing the annual report
- Posters, notices, tradeshow collateral, banners and other signage
- Facilitating livestream and supporting with audio/visual needs
- Event promotion
- Photography and videography



## Youth & Seniors Gathering

It was wonderful to once again work on the Youth and Seniors Gathering. Every year we work to increase attendance using online and traditional promotion avenues. We helped meet several needs for the 2019 gathering, including:

- Design collateral like posters, signs, digital/social media graphics and programs
- Extensive ad campaigns for youth and seniors respectively
- Support during event like photography and videography

## Constitution Commission

While this work was stalled by the pandemic, we are excited to begin working on it again. In support of the Commission's needs, we have/will:

- Attend Commission meetings to advise on communications needs
- Develop branding for Commission
- Support with engagement promotion

## Department, Regional, and Affiliates Support

In addition to these major programs and events, the Communications Department supported with the following initiatives:

### Children and Family Services

- Community engagements and report
- Cultural workbooks for children
- Backpack initiative
- Child Wellness Benefit (COVID-19 Support Plan)
- Promotional/informational handbills

### Health

- Launch of strategic plan road map
- Community engagement materials including promotional products (swag)
- Opioids products including facilitator manual, online learning module, and naloxone training
- Supports and services promotion
- Communications and promotion of the annual Health Forum

### Human Resources

- Summer student brochure
- Job opening promotions
- Orange Shirt Day design

### Métis Identification and Registry Systems

- Promotion of registry events
- Signage
- Registry and harvesting form updates
- Promotional products (swag)

### Métis Rights and Accommodation

- Harvesting design collateral including web content, brochure, and conservation handbill
- Promotion and design collateral for Environment and Climate team events and initiatives
- Alberta Métis Works handbills, web content, promotion
- TMX booklet and highlights brochure
- Environment committee call out and promotion

### Youth Programs and Services

- Promotion and design collateral for camps, hangouts, and the life skills and cultural programs
- Social media graphics and strategic planning
- Promotional products (swag) design
- Youth Emergency Benefit (COVID-19 Support Plan)

### Regional Offices

- Posters and signage
- Digital promotion including social media and mass emails
- Videography
- Promotional items

### Affiliates

- Digital promotion including social media and mass emails
- Communications planning and graphic design
- File sharing
- Web content
- Videography and video editing

Here in the Communications Department, we are proud and honoured to help all MNA stakeholders achieve their goals. We look forward to the wonderful work we will all do together in the coming year! ■



# 2019/20 Department of Health



## Health Research

The Department of Health is committed to developing policies and implementing programs and services that will result in the betterment of health outcomes for Métis Albertans. The principal goal of the department is to provide culturally meaningful, self-directed health, and wellness opportunities that address the unique health profile of Métis Albertans and their respective communities.

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) has prioritized Métis-specific health research to improve health outcomes for Métis Albertans. Métis people are one of Canada's constitutionally recognized Indigenous groups, yet the unique experiences and needs of Métis people are largely underrepresented in mainstream Indigenous health literature. This knowledge gap is reflected in the lack of health programs specific to the needs of Métis people. The Department of Health partners with organizations in the academic and health sectors to recognize and investigate the health experiences of Métis Albertans as distinct from other Indigenous groups.

## Health Research Priority Area: Chronic Disease

### Transitions in Care Project

Health surveillance data from the *Diabetes Amongst the Métis Nation of Alberta* report, published in 2019, informed the Department of Health's successful application to the Transitions in Care grant program from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). The Transitions in Care project will include distribution of a survey and lived-experience discussions with Métis Albertans diagnosed with both type 1 and 2 diabetes to further explore health outcomes related to diabetes, assess quality of diabetes care, and better understand barriers and facilitators to managing diabetes.

### Continued Health Surveillance

Findings from previous epidemiological reports have highlighted the importance of continued health research specific to the Métis population of Alberta. Through ongoing funding from Alberta Health, the following health surveillance projects are being undertaken:

- A report updating the 2013 *Health Status of the Métis Population of Alberta*.
- A report on arthritis among Métis Albertans.
- A report on mental wellness and addictions among Métis Albertans.

## Health Research Priority Area: Cancer

The MNA has partnered with the CANHelp Working Group (University of Alberta) in a research project to better understand the cancer journey of Métis Albertans and their families from diagnosis to treatment, recovery, and survivorship. The project incorporates regional community-based consultations with Métis cancer patients, survivors, and their family members. The stories shared in these consultations demonstrate how Métis Albertans experience unique barriers to cancer care, and that Métis culture is often misinterpreted or goes unrecognized in Alberta's cancer control system. The experiences shared by Métis Albertans will be compiled into a cancer journey resource toolkit to help Métis Albertans navigate the cancer control system following a diagnosis.

### Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy Project

In 2018, the MNA received funding from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) to support the creation of an *Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy*. This is a four-year project ending in 2022, which builds on previous research and aims to improve the experiences of Métis Albertans in the cancer control system. This project has three objectives:

1. Create a person-specific cancer strategy for Métis Albertans.
2. Improve access to culturally appropriate cancer resources and materials for Métis Albertans.
3. Enhance Métis-specific cultural knowledge of medical professionals in cancer centers across Alberta.

Throughout the project, Métis Albertans will have multiple opportunities to contribute to creation of the *Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy*.

### Tobacco Reduction Pilot Project

In 2019, the MNA received funding from the Health Innovations in Cancer Prevention (HICP) program to support the creation of a tobacco reduction pilot intervention for Métis Albertans who wish to reduce tobacco use or live-in smoke-free environments. This is a two-year project, ending in 2021, which builds on previous



Are you a Métis cancer patient, survivor, or a family member of someone with cancer? Share your stories and experiences as part of a research study in a small, supportive group setting. Participants must be:

- At least 18 years old, or in the company of a parent or guardian; and
- Métis cancer patients, survivors, or family members or partners of someone with cancer.

Honorarium & lunch provided. Participants may be eligible for reimbursements for mileage and accommodations.

**JUN 01** | **Region 5 Office**  
**353 Main Street North**  
**Slave Lake • 10am-1pm**

Your experiences will help shape future Métis-specific cancer resources and the Alberta Cancer Strategy.

For information and to register, please contact **Heather Curtis** at **780-455-2200 Ext. 326** or **hcurtis@metis.org**



Métis Nation of Alberta - Provincial Office  
 100 Delia Gray Building, 11738 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton  
 780-455-2200 • 1-800-252-7553 • albertamemis.com

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findings from the *Cancer Incidence and Mortality among the Métis Population of Alberta* report that identified higher rates of lung cancer among Métis Albertans. This project has five objectives:

1. Increase MNA's capacity to offer individualized support to Métis Albertans who wish to quit/reduce tobacco use.
2. Explore the perceptions and experiences of Métis Albertans related to commercial tobacco use, reduction, and cessation.
3. Develop MNA approach and tools to offer individualized support to Métis Albertans who wish to quit/reduce tobacco use.
4. Offer adapted QuitCore program to provide culturally safe group support to Métis Albertans who wish to quit/reduce tobacco use.
5. Increase cultural safety and Métis cultural knowledge of tobacco reduction health professionals outside of the MNA Community Prevention Practitioners.

**MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA**  
**REGION 5: SLAVE LAKE**

*Let's Talk About  
Pregnancy & Childbirth*

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the University of Alberta are looking for Métis women to share their pregnancy and childbirth experiences. These stories will help shape programs and services for Métis mothers and babies, and document Métis pregnancy and childbirth practices.

**Date:** Saturday, May 11, 2019  
**Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm  
**Location:** Native Friendship Centre  
 416 6 Avenue NE  
 Slave Lake, AB

**Eligibility:**

- Participants must be 18 years of age or older
- MNA citizens and non-citizens who self-identify as Métis

This gathering is child friendly. Participants will receive a \$100 honorarium and reimbursement for travel expenses.

For more information or to register, contact Claire Cordingley at **780-455-2200 ext. 416** or **ccordingley@metis.org**.

A collaboration between the Métis Nation of Alberta and the University of Alberta

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**

100 Della Gray Building, 11738 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton  
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## Health Research Priority Area: Maternal and Perinatal Health

*Ehawawisit (with Child): Maternal and Perinatal Health Outcomes Among the Métis in Alberta and the Influence of Proximal, Intermediate, and Distal Determinants of Health* aims to better understand the health experiences of Métis mothers and newborns. In addition to creating a health surveillance report, this project explores the perspectives of Métis women on pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood through regional community-based gatherings. Findings from this project are currently being compiled into a community report that features the stories of Métis women.

## Health Research Priority Area: Suicide Awareness

The *Métis Suicide Knowledge Awareness* project aims to fill gaps in culturally sensitive, and community-based mental health programs that are specific to Métis people in Alberta. This project will increase recognition of mental health concerns, specifically related to suicide, in addition to increasing response readiness and referral to appropriate supports and services. Through engagement with the MNA's Health Committee, Provisional Youth Council, and Elder's Council this project is working to create a Métis Suicide Knowledge Awareness Training Program.



## Partnerships for Health Research

The health research undertaken in the past year was made possible through partnerships with the Analytics and Performance Reporting Branch of Alberta Health, the Injury Prevention Centre, School of Public Health at the University of Alberta, the CANHelp Working Group at the University of Alberta, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Alberta.

## Health Programs

The Department of Health offers MNA Citizens programming that aims to:

- Create opportunities for training and awareness to build safer Métis communities.
- Reduce barriers for Citizens in need of health care services.



### Opioid Awareness Training and Community Naloxone Kit Distribution

The MNA's Opioid Awareness Training program was developed in response to the current opioid crisis, knowing that Métis Albertans continue to be impacted by this public health issue. This training provides free education about how to recognize an opioid overdose, the different types of opioids, current statistics, supports for opioid dependency, and how to reverse an opioid overdose with naloxone. This program is currently being transitioned to an online learning platform.

### Medically Necessary Accommodations

During times of medical need, additional expenses associated with travel and accommodations can become a barrier to receiving proper care. The MNA's Medically Necessary Accommodations program offers free accommodations in Métis Capital Housing Corporation's Renaissance Building for MNA Citizens traveling to Edmonton for medical services not available in their home community.

Get trained to save a life.



**Opioid Awareness and Community Based Naloxone Program Training**

**March 18, 2020, 6:00pm–8:00pm**  
Region 3 Office, 1415 28 Street NE, Calgary

**This FREE Session Will Teach You:**

- Types of opioids (fentanyl, carfentanil, and more)
- Latest statistics
- Harm reduction
- How to recognize an opioid overdose
- How to respond to an overdose (SAVE ME steps)
- How to use Naloxone (receive a certificate of completion and take home your own kit)
- Addictions & mental health resources

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Contact Kyla at 403-569-8800 or kprakash@metis.org  
by March 17, 12:00 pm



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### Compassionate Care: Cancer Transportation Pilot Program

Cancer diagnosis and treatment often requires frequent travel to specialist health centres. The additional expenses for cancer-related appointment travel can become a barrier to receiving proper care. To help alleviate some of the financial burden for Métis Citizens experiencing cancer, this pilot program helps cover the costs of mileage for Métis Citizens to attend their cancer-related appointments. As of April 26, 2019, nine Métis families have been assisted with travel to cancer-related appointments. ■

# 2019/20 Métis Identification and Registry Systems

The Registry Department is committed to maintaining its integrity for identifying Métis in Alberta, while providing exceptional service to its Citizens and MNA applicants. Registry's main goals for 2019-20 have been to continue to grow the Nation, operationalize the harvester identification process, and digitize over 40,000 current citizenship files.

Highlighted below are the department's successes, projects, and focus for 2019-20:

- 6,003 applications received
  - 97 provincial Registry sessions
  - After hours initiative: Registry accessible late evenings and weekends
- Citizenship issued to 3,500 applicants
- Operationalization of harvester identification process
- Digitization of over 40,000 citizenship files

To grow the Nation, we focused on making the Registry team more available to the community. We had received feedback that applicants wanted to see Registry in their community to assist with forms and the application process and to answer any questions that they may have. We achieved this by setting up out-of-office Registry sessions located in post-secondary institutions, friendship centres, Rupertsland Institute regional offices, and in partnership with MNA Regional and Local offices across the province. The popularity of these sessions increased over the course of the year from a sporadic few each month to visiting each region multiple times on a monthly basis. This resulted in the Registry team facilitating an average of 12 Registry sessions per month. Prior to starting Registry Sessions, we received on average, 250 applications per month. As a result of the great work being done by our MNA affiliates and MNA elected officials, we increased by 100 per cent, totalling 500 applications per month.

In 2019-20, Registry facilitated over 97 sessions and started offering accessibility to applicants on evenings and weekends, for those who needed assistance but could not take time off from work. Along with mailed in-applications, applications from the regions, and walk-in applications from the Provincial Office, the Registry Department completed the intake of 6,003 applications. This doubles the application count from the previous year.

In addition to processing over 6,000 applications, the Registry Department was able to issue citizenship to over 3,500 applicants. This number is a bit lower than the 2018-19 count of 3,700, largely due to also launching the Harvester application process.

In 2019, the Registry Department established the process for identifying Métis harvesters in Alberta. From September 2019 to March 2020, we were able to process 3,106 harvester applications and we issued Harvesting Cards to 2,389 MNA Citizens.

Our operational goal of re-digitizing the entire citizenship database was completed. This involved scanning over 40,000 citizenship files to make sure all documentation





Be a part of the culture, connection, and belonging



## Register Your Children Today!

What you need:



### Family Tree

Dating back to the mid 1800s



### Birth Documents

With biological parentage

**Alberta Born?** We can obtain your birth documents for you!



### Valid Government ID

& Proof of Alberta residency

Stay Connected [registry@metis.org](mailto:registry@metis.org)



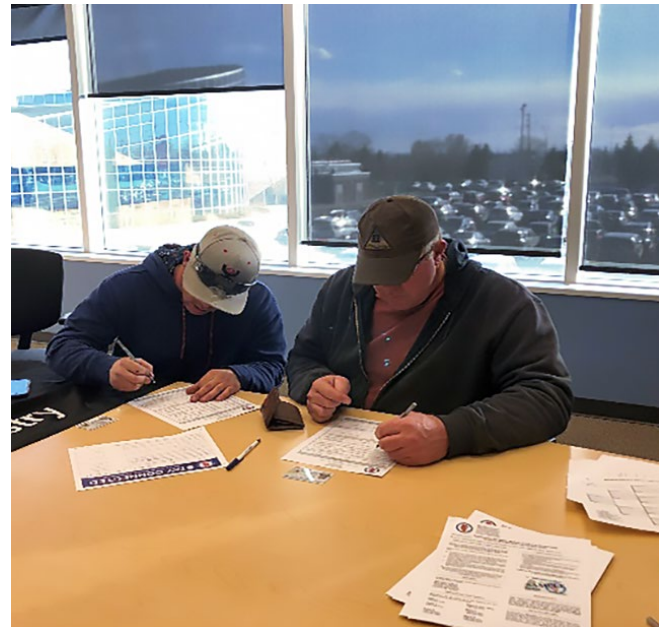
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is properly recorded to today's standards. This project was extensive, but necessary to ensure the security and integrity of the Registry database.

We look forward to serving our Citizens and applicants at the regional and local level in the community. We will continue to promote, identify, and register MNA Citizens and harvesters. Our focus for the upcoming year in 2020-21 will be to decrease the wait time for new citizenship cards by creating efficiency in the card process and operational changes in the Registry database. ■



# 2019/20 Métis Rights and Accommodation



Welcome to the Métis Rights and Accommodation (MRA) department's annual report. We are proud of our accomplishments through the 2019-2020 year, which has been one full of success for both the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the MRA department overall. One of our main focuses has been helping create a successful governing model for MNA self-government and have been making department-wide preparations for the bureaucratic changes within, as well as preparing for the year(s) to come.

The MRA department provides data, information, and support to the MNA in many ways including the Métis credible assertion process and Traditional Land Use studies. Additionally, MRA has contributed to the MNA's continued growth by implementing the *Métis Harvesting in Alberta Policy*, collecting data through Environment and Climate Change departmental initiatives, and developing a provincial economic development strategy. Our staff have also received various training surrounding important conversations, accountability, and public participation in efforts to build the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the MRA team.

With the onset of COVID-19, the lives of our Citizens and our team have been forever changed. The way COVID-19 shifted our work dynamic was an unexpected bump in the road and transitioning to working from home had its

challenges, but our team persevered and continued to advance the Nation.

I want to acknowledge our MRA Team for their dedication to the growth and success of the MNA. Each team member has made extensive individual contributions and committed to an expectation of excellence. MRA staff have really shown what they can accomplish by working together, even if in isolation.

Furthermore, I want to acknowledge and thank the different departments within the MNA, our Métis community, and our provincial council for your ongoing support of our initiatives.

I look forward to the year ahead and how MRA will help shape what self-government will look like for the MNA. MRA will continue to assert and protect Métis rights while ensuring accommodation for rights that have been impacted.

I hope you enjoy your read of what we've been up to in efforts to advance our great Métis Nation.

Thank you,

**Bruce Gladue**

Director of Métis Rights and Accommodation



# Harvesting

Whether it be hunting, fishing, or trapping, harvesting is essential to traditional Métis ways of life. The MNA has long fought for the right to harvest, and on March 12, 2019, the MNA and the Government of Alberta (GoA) signed the *Métis Harvesting in Alberta Policy*, which came into effect on September 1, 2019. This policy allows approved Métis harvesters in Alberta to exercise their Section 35 Constitutional Right to harvest in larger harvesting areas. Since the policy was signed, the Harvesting Team has been actively implementing the policy and processing many applications, so approved Métis harvesters can be free to engage in their traditional way of life.

As of September 1, 2019, MNA Citizens who meet the following criteria can apply for an MNA Harvester Card:

- Self-identify as Métis
- Demonstrate pre-1900 ancestral connection to one or more Métis harvesting areas in Alberta
- Demonstrate contemporary connection to one or more of the four harvesting areas in Alberta

With the MNA Harvester Card, an approved harvester may hunt any game in Alberta on unoccupied Crown land and on property where they have permission to harvest within their approved harvesting areas. These criteria exclude harvesting endangered species and does not allow for harvesting in national and provincial parks.

With an MNA Harvester Card, Citizens no longer need to apply to Fish & Wildlife for tags or a hunting license. Our Harvesting Team worked diligently to update all approved harvesters' Alberta ReLM accounts so they can easily access their free (Métis) Domestic Fishing License.

As of June 2020, there have been:

- Approximately 4,500 applications
- Approximately 3,000 MNA Citizens approved, with nearly 78 per cent approved for all four harvesting areas

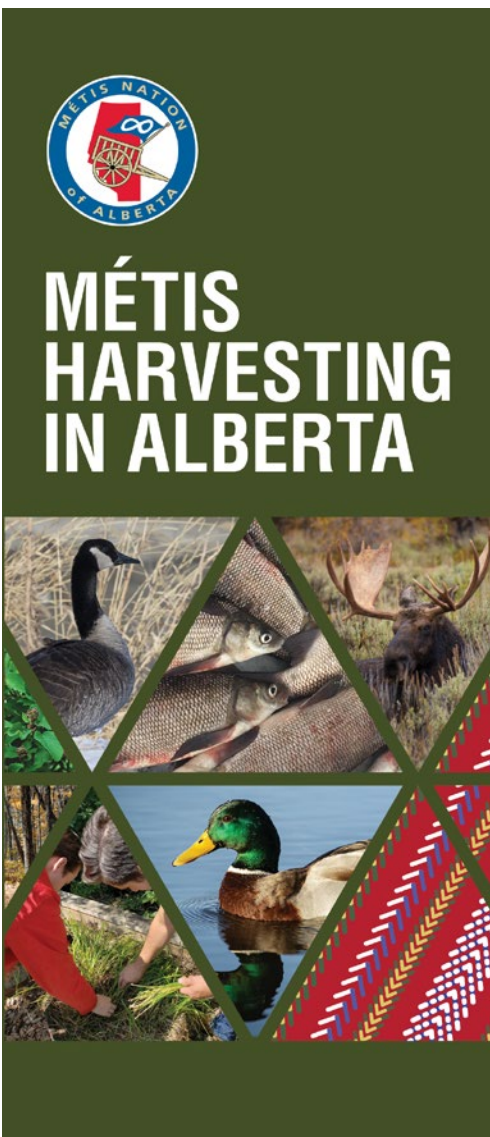
This is an impressive uptake in less than one year, demonstrating Métis people are eager to engage in traditional ways of living and exercise their inherent rights as Indigenous people in Canada.

As the MNA continues to add lineage to its genealogical records database, connections to Métis root ancestry continues to expand. The MNA completed a reassessment of all harvesting applications and approved 56 new harvesters using many historical records and new documentation added to the harvesting database. The MNA will continue to work hard at connecting our Citizens to their traditional harvesting areas.

Four harvesting areas have been established north of Red Deer, including the Rocky Mountain House area, but excluding Southern Alberta. These areas were established to align with the Supreme Court's judgement in *R. v. Powley*, and boundaries set to reflect historic Métis communities of the North Saskatchewan, Peace, and Athabasca rivers, as well as Lesser Slave Lake. Southern Alberta currently falls outside of this boundary, in accordance with the problematic judgement made in *R. v. Hirsekorn*, where the Provincial Court of Alberta ruled there is not, nor has there been, a rights-bearing Métis community in southern Alberta. While the policy does commit the GoA to continue negotiations with the MNA to resolve this issue, the MNA will never give up on what we know

to be true: the Métis Nation within Alberta have inherent harvesting rights covering every corner of our province, including the south.

Also, in keeping with traditional Métis harvesting practices, MRA is in the process of assembling a Harvester's Council to provide a modern version of the Laws of the Buffalo Hunt to govern harvesting in Alberta. We look forward to the Council's first meeting and their recommendations on how the Nation will take this step on the path of self-government.



# Climate Change Leadership

Métis people in Alberta continue to be impacted by climate change in many ways. Traditional Métis ways of life continue to be threatened by issues including: unpredictable weather patterns causing an increase in extreme events, such as wildfires and floods; changes in water quality; changes in animal patterns and behaviors. Since the passing of Ordinary Resolution #1 at the 2017 Annual General Assembly, the MNA has been undertaking various activities to mitigate the effects of climate change for our citizens and future generations.

The climate team continues working to accomplish the five strategic goals listed under the MNA Climate Change Action Plan. Work is currently underway on five initiatives:

- Renewables
- Energy efficiency and management
- Engagement
- Emergency management
- Waste reduction and sustainability



Figure 1. The Climate Change Action Plan

## Renewables



Figure 2. Region 5 office rooftop solar system

## Solar Microgeneration Projects

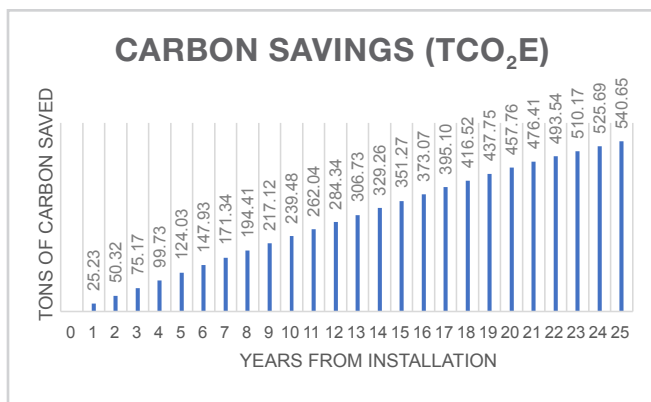
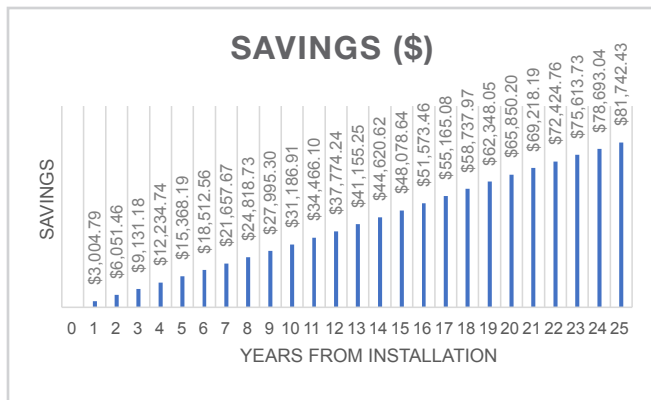
In 2018-19, the MNA secured funding from the GoA to install small-scale solar systems (micro-generation sites) on many MNA-, affiliate-owned office buildings, and residential units across the province to produce clean energy and reduce electricity costs. Additional funding from the Government of Canada (GoC) is anticipated in 2020, to cover the remaining costs of these projects (currently delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak). Eleven solar micro-generation projects were completed in 2019 at the following locations:

- MNA Region Five Office
- Grande Prairie Elders Shelter
- Nine Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) residential units in Calgary



Figure 3. A Métis Capital owned home in Calgary with new panels installed

Based on projections from the 11 completed sites (June 2020), it is estimated that 540.65 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced, and \$81,742 will be saved by the MNA and our affiliates.



Figures 8 and 9. Total \$ and Carbon savings projected over 25 years from the 11 sites completed so far

An additional 21 energy-saving projects are expected to be completed in 2020-21. These include:

- MNA Region One Office
- MNA Region Two Office
- MNA Region Six Office (pending a structural assessment)
- MCHC-owned Larry Desmeules building and Renaissance Tower
- 15 residential Métis Urban Housing Corporation (MUHC) units
- Métis Crossing

Once completed, all the projects identified to date have a cumulative capacity of 550 kilowatts, which is enough to power 90-100 average Alberta homes.

The MNA climate staff also continues to research funding opportunities to expand this initiative beyond the 31 sites funded to date.

## Métis Crossing Solar Project

Work has continued in 2019-20 to complete a 5 megawatt (MW) solar farm at Métis Crossing to generate clean energy, offset all MNA and affiliate properties' electricity use, and create economic revenue for the MNA.

Pre-feasibility studies were completed in 2019 and a technical feasibility study is expected to be completed in 2020. All environmental, technical, engineering, and regulatory hurdles have been studied and approved. Efforts are now focused on a financial review to ensure financial risks are manageable and fundraising is currently underway for the \$12-14 million solar project. Upon completion, the project is expected to generate 8,700 MW hours and offset roughly 4,900 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions annually (118,000 tonnes over the lifetime of the project). This compares to offsetting the electricity consumption of nearly 1,200 Alberta homes.



Figure 4. The Métis Crossing Solar Project in the North section of the site

## Energy Efficiency and Energy Management

### Energy Efficiency Assessments

Energy efficiency assessments on MNA buildings identifies opportunities for energy use reduction, which includes retrofits (upgrades). A total of 14 MNA-owned properties have been assessed, including the MNA provincial and regional offices. Implementation of all the recommended building upgrades have an estimated:

- Total cost of \$1.3 million
- Annual cost savings of about \$66,000
- Annual greenhouse gas abatement of 260 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e) per year

Assessments at 450 MCHC and MUHC units were completed Fall 2019, and the Climate Team continues to assist MCHC and MUHC with exploring funding opportunities for retrofits.

### Retrofits

Some retrofit highlights in 2019-20:

- Completed three retrofits on the Region Two, Five, and Six offices
- Retrofit at Apeetogosan Métis Veterans building is expected to be completed June 2020
- The Climate Team continues researching retrofit funding opportunities to complete energy efficiency work for all assessed properties
- Submitted a Region Six office roof repair and mold abatement proposal
- The Delia Gray building (MNA provincial office) lighting upgrade project (to LEDs) is to be completed in 2020
- The team will also help interested affiliates/offices explore and apply to additional programs that may allow for the successful completion of energy efficiency upgrades.



Figure 5. Upgrades like coffee timers (Region 2 office) help reduce energy use



Figure 6. A newly upgraded furnace in the Region 6 office

### Energy Management

As the MNA completes audits and retrofits, an effective energy management system is needed to consistently track energy consumption. A database to collect information from electricity, natural gas, water consumption, and electricity production bills will provide the information to make energy performance visible to various levels within the MNA; thus, enabling staff members and departments to plan, make decisions, and take effective action to manage energy.

MNA locations contributing to the database include:

- Delia Gray building (MNA Provincial Office)
- Region Offices Two, Three (pending), Five, and Six
- Elders Caring Shelter (Grande Prairie)
- Métis Crossing
- Apeetogosan Métis Veterans Building
- Tail Creek campground

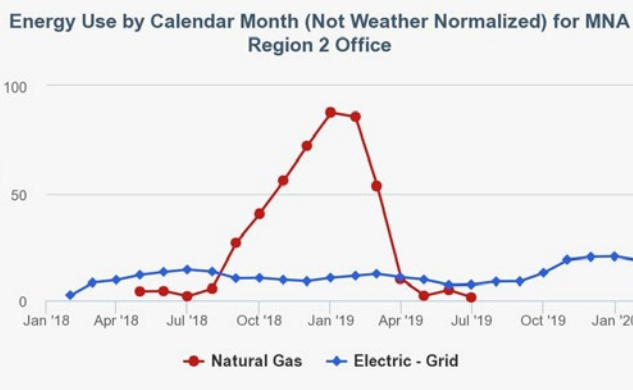


Figure 7. Region 2 energy use data, based on utility bills

### Engagement

Between August and October 2019, the MNA Climate Team, alongside Newo Global Energy, a renewable energy company, hosted information sessions to 18 communities throughout Alberta to educate Métis Albertans on energy efficiency and sustainable living practices, in a holistic way. The sessions were well-received with over 80 per cent of attendees agreeing their knowledge of sustainable living practices increased after attending a session. Further, in 2019, the MNA held composting and plant walk engagements with great success on engaging and educating the community.



Figure 10. A Newo session in Wabasca, October



Figure 11. An elders' focus group session kicked off the Newo sessions, at the Provincial Office, July 2019

the effects of wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters. Activities conducted to date include:

- Applying to Public Safety Canada to fund a public awareness campaign, conduct engagement sessions, and develop emergency preparedness information, including a guidebook for the MNA
- Exploring funding with the FireSmart program to research and collect data on the effects of previous natural disasters and emergencies on MNA Citizens
- Partnering with Save the Children Canada to deliver emergency preparedness training to the MNA Climate and MNA Regional Youth Coordinator Teams



Figure 12. A Climate and Environment Team booth at Métis Discovery Day, November 2019



Figure 13. Previous engagement sessions conducted (such as the CBCM session in Calgary in November 2018, pictured above) raised concerns about natural disasters like flooding and wildfires, highlighting the need to develop an emergency management and preparedness initiative

In 2020, with COVID-19 restrictions in place, the Climate Team is exploring ways to conduct engagement sessions virtually instead of in person. These may include:

- Live or pre-recorded videos and presentations
- Opportunities for question and answer sessions
- Surveys and other forms of engagement for citizens

A Climate and Environment Team webpage is being developed to provide information and opportunities for Citizens to access available programs, resources, and information.

### Emergency Management

Emergency Management and Preparedness is an upcoming initiative, based on previous engagement feedback and the higher susceptibility of MNA Citizens to

### Waste Reduction and Sustainability

In 2019, a survey was sent to MNA Provincial Office staff members, determining interest for an office-wide recycling program. Metal cutlery was purchased for the office to reduce plastic cutlery and increase sustainability.

The TD Friends of the Environment grant has been secured for composting pick-up services at the MNA Provincial Office. The team is exploring a community garden to help with composting organics and is working with the MNA Maintenance Team to secure funds for waste sorting bins at the MNA Provincial Office.

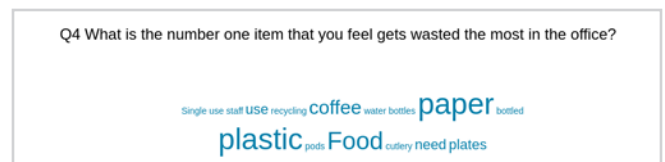


Figure 15. Survey results from a poll of MNA provincial staff on the most wasted items in the office- paper and plastic were most frequently mentioned





Other areas of concerns centered around Fort McMurray, Wabasca Lakes, and Medicine Hat. The final part of the engagement phase assessment included understanding the core values of Askîy, how Métis Citizens would like an MNA monitoring initiative carried out, and what components it should include. The results highlighted the importance of Askîy:

- Being community driven, including the transfer and protection of Traditional Knowledge
- Encouraging youth and Elder involvement
- Creating new data while avoiding duplicating existing work

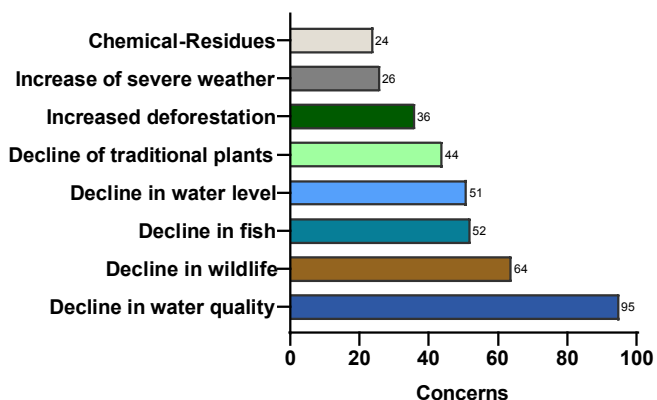


Figure 1. Number of environmental concerns within each base issue based on CBCM engagements

Moving into the Planning Phase, the next step was designing monitoring projects for Askîy and deciding which concerns to monitor, where to monitor, and how the initiative should operate. As the assessment highlighted Askîy being community driven, a committee was formed to help advise and guide the monitoring initiative. The Askîy Advisory Committee (AAC) consists of eight citizens:

- A community representative from each of the six MNA Regions
- One Elder
- One Youth

The AAC will provide advice, direction, and planning support to Askîy, including reviewing documents and helping create policies regarding the acquisition, storage, and protection of Métis Traditional Knowledge. Most importantly, members of the AAC will be champions for Askîy, working to create and spread awareness, encourage others to participate in activities and monitoring.

The final step in planning for Askîy was designing and implementing a monitoring program in 2020-21 to begin the ongoing monitoring phase of the program. Based

### Concerns Being Monitored

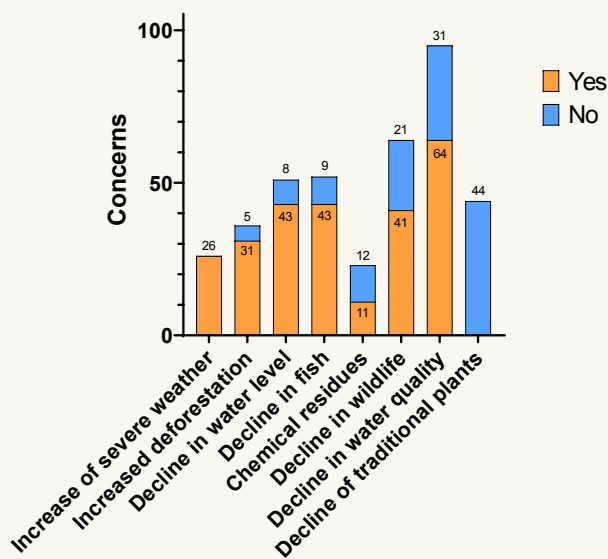


Figure 3. Most commonly shared environmental and climate concerns and their current monitoring status by other research groups

on the results of the engagement assessment, the first project would focus on traditional plants, an area of Citizen concern and no existing research providing Askîy the opportunity to fill a monitoring gap. This project will address berry populations and health across Alberta. Through Summer 2020, the province-wide project will establish monitoring plots, and assess the vegetation and health of berries at each plot.

In the future, each plot will be visited twice yearly for further monitoring to understand the overall plant health and berry propagation success. Plans are in place for two smaller research projects on traditional plants, through partnership with the University of Alberta (U of A) Sustainability Scholars program. Two U of A graduate students will work with the MNA to address concerns regarding:

- Herbicide and pesticide use in urban parks
- Study vegetation biodiversity at Métis Crossing and establish baseline to measure change as the site continues to be used and expanded upon

Planning during the 2019-20 fiscal year also included applying for funding to support monitoring projects addressing other concerns shared during the engagement phase. If successful, project(s) will:

- Include community involvement and participation for monitoring

- Support a community ice fishing project to harvest fish at lakes across Alberta, assess their general health, and test for contaminants
- Record and monitor wildlife, specifically caribou, through trail cameras
- Plan for follow-up engagements to disseminate results

Other work completed during the 2019-20 fiscal year in support of Askîy includes drafting numerous policy and procedure documents to support the program, acquiring a database management system to house data generated by Askîy, and building partnerships with other research and environmental institutions. This work has helped Askîy ensure that it adheres to the core values as expressed by Citizens during the engagement phase, resulting in a better understanding of Métis Citizens' concerns and helped Askîy focus so that it can better address these concerns. Much of the work conducted this year has established a strong foundation for Askîy to grow from, with a clear direction of what a monitoring program should involve and should address. It is the goal of Askîy to continually reengage with Métis Citizens to ensure the project continues to address their concerns and to encourage community participation in the monitoring activities.

## Precipitation Monitoring

### Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS)

MNA Environment staff, through partnership with the Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program funded by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, were able to secure four precipitation monitoring units as part of the CoCoRaHS program. CoCoRaHS program includes monitoring a rain gauge daily and entering the results into a database. Together, users across North America are measuring precipitation and creating an open source community database. The four units the MNA secured spread across the province in areas with limited existing monitoring work.

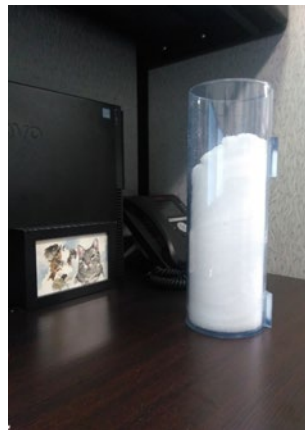


Figure 5. Snow collected for precipitation monitoring at the MNA head office

They are located at:

- The MNA Provincial Office in Edmonton
- An MNA Citizen's home outside of Bonnyville
- Métis Crossing
- The Region Six office in Peace River

These locations were selected based on availability of staff or community members and may change as the program continues. Over the next few years, CoCoRaHS will help provide important data for weather tracking, climate scientists, and hopefully long-term data for areas inhabited by Métis.

## Caribou Conservation and Chronic Wasting Disease

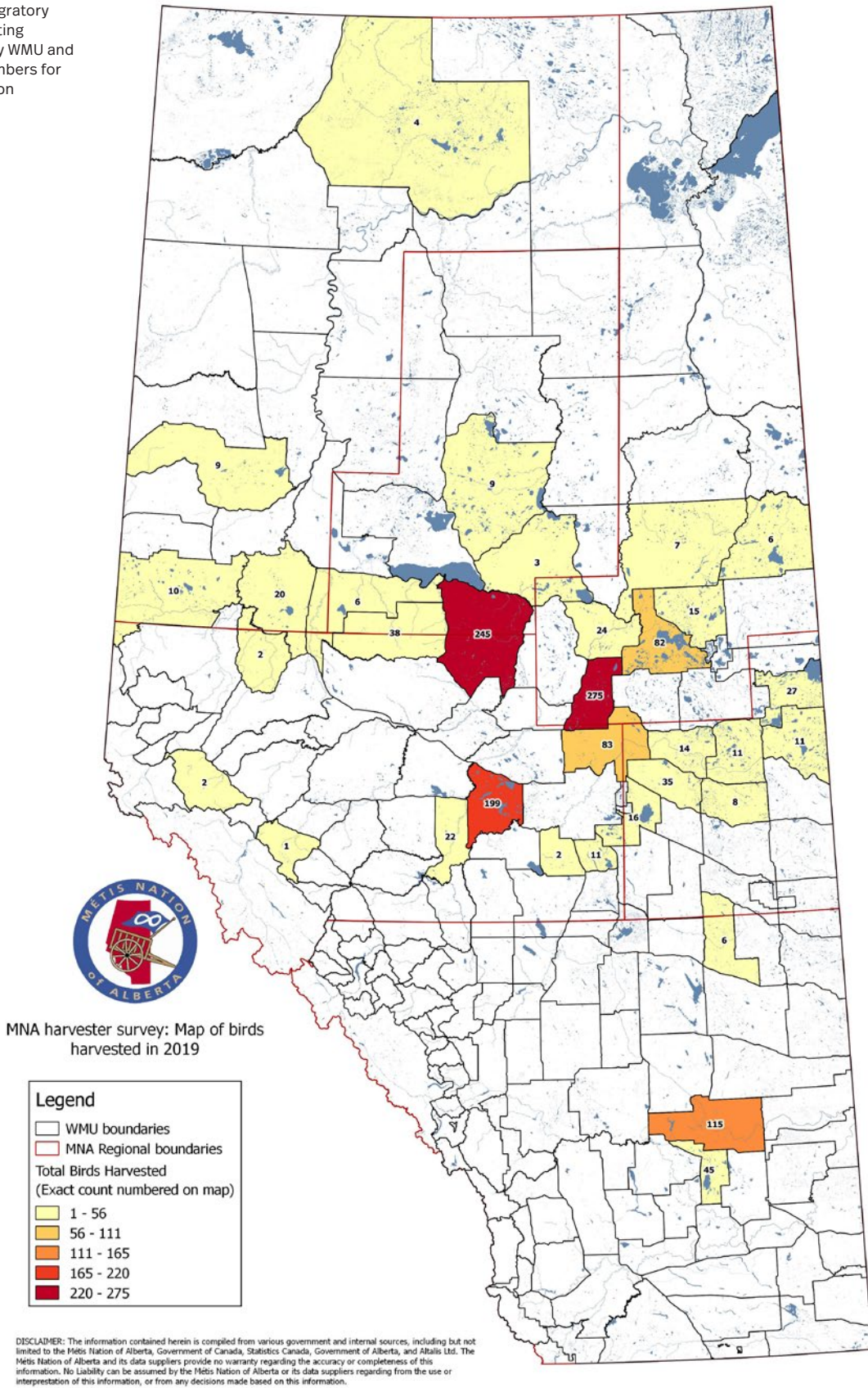
Chronic wasting disease and caribou population decline came up as areas of concern among Métis Citizens during the engagement phase. To address these concerns, the Environment Team, in partnership with the Climate and Consultation Teams, has been involved with several caribou conservation committees, including the Indigenous Knowledge Circle of the National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium (NBCKC) and caribou range planning for the Bistcho, Upper Smoky, and Cold Lake regions.

To further the MNA's involvement, funds have been sought to support education and research on chronic wasting disease and caribou conservation. If successful, the MNA will provide education and awareness around chronic wasting disease and support Métis harvesters in submitting samples for disease testing and tracing. Other funds have been sought to track movements and changes among caribou populations, and will partner with Askîy as part of the wildlife monitoring project and would seek community participation.

## Migratory Bird Harvesting Survey

The MNA, with support of the CWS, conducted a survey aimed at collecting Métis harvesting data on migratory birds in Alberta for 2019. By collecting this information, the MNA can develop internal capacity and gain management and conservation information on migratory birds. Moreover, this information will allow the MNA to advocate for and protect Métis harvesting rights by recording harvesting activities and areas during the consultation process. Importantly, this survey helped record Traditional Knowledge, collect information on keystone species, and record ethnobiology used by Métis.

Figure 7. Map showing migratory bird harvesting locations by WMU and harvest numbers for each location



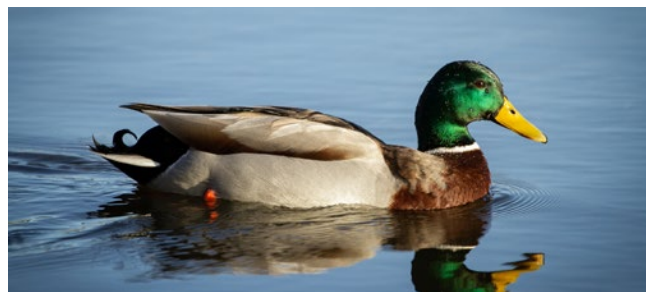
The main objectives of this project was to build:

- The MNA’s internal capacity to survey Métis harvesters aiming to monitor harvesting practices and inform conservation/sustainability efforts for migratory birds
- Internal capacity to record Métis Traditional Knowledge and naming of migratory birds
- A collaborative relationship between the MNA and the CWS

To achieve these objectives, an online survey was shared through various communications mediums to gather responses from Métis harvesters. The survey included pictures of migratory bird species commonly found in Alberta and asked harvesters to provide the name they use to refer to the species pictured, how many they harvested in 2019, and in which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU).

Results of the survey include:

- 333 Citizens completed the survey
- 1,369 migratory birds were harvested in the 2019 season
- 24 species were harvested by Métis including an additional species, the white fronted goose, which was not included in the survey
- The most common harvested species was the mallard, with 34 per cent of the surveyed harvest
- The Canada goose was second at 25 per cent of the harvest
- Species not harvested in large numbers included white-winged scoters, redheads, and white fronted goose being less than 0.3 per cent of the reported harvest



Métis Citizens harvest birds across much of Alberta, with 36 WMUs being accessed with higher concentrations in north central Alberta. The spread and density of harvesting in certain areas indicates much of Alberta is used for traditional practices by Métis.

The results of the ethnobiology portion of the survey found 20 of the 29 surveyed species had unique names used by Métis harvesters and are often used in older literature, indicating many Métis use more historical naming schemes. There is also a pattern of shortening official common names, indicating an in-depth knowledge of species.

As this year’s survey was successful, plans to expand the survey and its distribution are underway to make it easier and more accessible to all harvesters.

## Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas

During the 2019-20 fiscal year, the MNA secured funding to begin planning and establishing an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) as part of Canada’s Pathway to Target 1, a commitment to conserve 17 per cent of Canada’s landmass and freshwater by 2020. Through this IPCA initiative, the Environment and Consultation Teams are working to explore what an IPCA is, what it could provide to Métis Citizens, and where an MNA IPCA could be established.

The project includes three phases:

- Phase 1 – 2019-20 – Background research and Métis Crossing Pilot
- Phase 2 – 2020-21 – Province-wide Engagement
- Phase 3 – 2021-22 – IPCA Land Securement

In Phase 1, background research was conducted to understand what an IPCA is and a pilot project at Métis Crossing was proposed. In the upcoming year work will be done to gain community input to help understand what an IPCA could mean to MNA Citizens and possible locations for conservation.

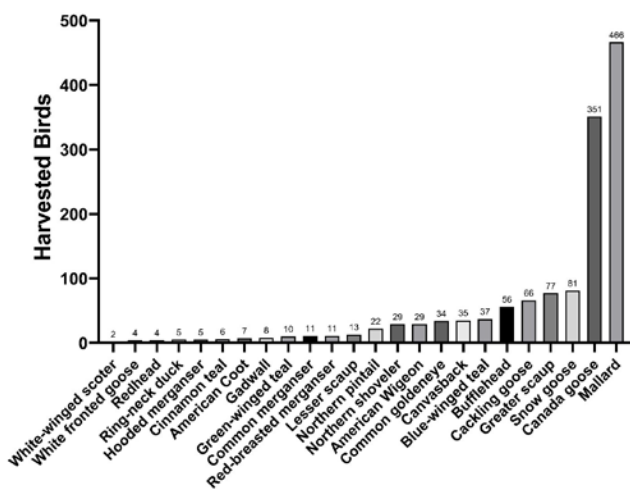


Figure 6. Migratory bird harvesting survey results, indicating harvest numbers for each bird species surveyed

# Economic Development

The Economic Development Team has been undertaking initiatives to support and promote economic growth for Métis Albertans by:

- Identifying commercial and industrial investment opportunities
- Promoting Métis businesses
- Fostering strategic relationships with the business community
- Supporting joint venture opportunities

Currently, the team has been involved with several projects to meet these goals and provide economic support and growth for Alberta’s Métis. A significant project was completing the Provincial Economic Development Strategy and a transition to implement a strategic roadmap. Other projects underway include the aforementioned Métis Crossing Solar Project, Alberta MétisWorks – an online directory of Métis-owned and verified businesses – and the development of various industry partnerships.



## Provincial Economic Development Strategy

Development concluded in November 2019 and moved into the implementation stage. The project began by engaging 39 internal and external stakeholders for input, many were further consulted for feedback on its overall progress.

Once completed, the information gathered resulted in three key outcomes:

- 1. Durable socio-economic prosperity of MNA Citizens:** The primary factors identified as critical to community development and socio-economic well-being include housing, education, economic

development, culture, capital investment, health, and entrepreneurship. A focus on and improvement in one or more of these areas is beneficial to the community; however, a wholesome approach to improving each of these seven outcomes can lead to long-term shifts in the community fostering sustainable change, continuous improvement, and positive impacts on well-being.



- 2. Economic self-sufficiency of the MNA and its Regions:** In Canada’s 2019 federal budget, \$50 million is proposed over five years to “enhance the funding of the Métis Capital Corporations to support the start-up and expansion of Métis small and medium-size enterprises.” This influx of funding provides opportunities for Métis entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses and demonstrate to the Canadian business community that they are productive, strategic partners, and ready to work – potentially leading to capital investment in the Métis Nation that is not limited to government funding.

The MNA will take a macro-level view of the current state of the community and draw focus to existing strengths and opportunities to move forward. A strong economic development strategy will leverage current and prospective resources and funding available for housing, education, culture, investment, health, and business growth. MNA-owned companies, joint ventures, and projects are positioned as social enterprises, whereby surpluses are principally reinvested into the community, in factors positively impacting the Nation’s future outcomes.

**3. A thriving Métis entrepreneur class:** Having the capability to educate, fund, and provide opportunities for entrepreneurs in the community strengthens the ties between Métis business owners and the MNA. This leads to increased employment opportunities and economic development throughout the Nation, aligning with Métis' history of innovation and independence. The MNA's affiliate development bank, Apeetogosan Métis Development Incorporated (AMDI), provides lending options and business consulting to Métis entrepreneurs. AMDI plays a significant role in Métis entrepreneurship and is a key partner in implementing the MNA's Economic Development's strategy.

Five priorities helping reach these outcomes are to:

- Enable capacity
- Create reliable processes and systems
- Identify profitable opportunities
- Build and maintain beneficial relationships
- Create strong MNA connections

From an extensive assessment of trends, policy, and research, there is strong support for:

- Métis self-sufficiency and self-governance. There's a drive to support developing talent and skills in executing and overseeing the implementation of a strong economic development plan.
- The development of a contractor database the MNA can use to track, obtain, and share work that various industries can leverage, ensuring Métis businesses have fair opportunities in the market.
- Using internal expertise to scan the economy and industry to determine where Métis capital and focus is best used.
- Developing strategies and assets to benefit all Métis people, particularly the MNA, its Regions and its affiliates, as well as to strengthen the relationships between these parties.
- A strong, focused relationship with the Government of Canada – especially due to the increased focus on reconciliation and commitments to the Métis people.

**MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA**

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2020-2022

### GOALS

**DURABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF MNA CITIZENS**



**ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE MNA AND ITS REGIONS**



**A THRIVING MÉTIS ENTREPRENEUR CLASS**



### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ENABLED CAPACITY	RELIABLE PROCESS	PROFITABLE OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS	STRONG MNA CONNECTIONS
<p>The basis for getting things done.</p> <p>It addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance</li> <li>Organizational design</li> <li>Oversight of economic development</li> </ul> <p>Resources and implementation stem from MNA Provincial Office, its Regions, and its citizens.</p>	<p>This addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business processes and systems supporting overall economic development</li> <li>Portfolio management and decision-making authority</li> <li>Using data through Alberta MétisWorks and performance measurement tools</li> </ul>	<p>Scanning the opportunity environment to maximize return on investment efforts and capital.</p> <p>Opportunity scan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Real estate</li> <li>Industry growth trends</li> <li>Tourism</li> </ul>	<p>Focused and intentional relationship building with partners who support and contribute to the MNA's mission.</p> <p>Key target groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal, provincial and municipal governments</li> <li>Aboriginal industry associations</li> <li>Industry partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>Promotes collaboration and integration between the MNA, its regions, and its affiliates for joint economic development initiatives.</p> 

Based on the research performed, the strategic priorities and focus areas are well informed and supported by policy, government support, and economic and industry trends.

## Alberta MétisWorks

In 2019, the Economic Development Team released the improved Métis business directory and procurement platform, Alberta MétisWorks (AMW) [albertametisworks.com](http://albertametisworks.com). This project was made possible through a partnership with TC Energy. Since the platform was launched in Spring 2019, there have been over 270 user accounts and over 200 business profiles created. In fact, the 100th Métis business was registered in May 2020 and the site has had over 3,000 visitors.

Marketing the site to industry has led to a number of business-to-business relationships being built, mainly in the oil and gas industry. Industry has been using AMW



to seek out Métis contractors where they have project opportunities. A marketing plan is slated to be

implemented in the summer of 2020 to increase exposure, get more Métis businesses registered, and promote the corporate account feature. Looking into the future, AMW will connect businesses to learning opportunities through Apeetogosan, Business Link, and the Government of Alberta. AMW will also feature employment opportunities and share information about grant programs and funding opportunities to help the business community grow and succeed.

## Métis Crossing Solar Project

On May 15, 2020, the MNA received a referral letter from the Alberta Environment and Parks. This was the final piece we had been waiting on to submit a full application to the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). The AUC application package was completed, reviewed, and officially submitted on June 1, 2020, with expectations for a decision in July 2020. This is a significant milestone in the project for a couple of reasons:

- All environmental, technical, engineering, and regulatory hurdles have been studied and approved
- Aside from reporting, it signals the end of the major activities under the AIGEDP grant (Phase 2: Technical Documentation)

Efforts are now focused on obtaining additional funds for the project. Fundraising continues through to the end of 2020, at which time the MNA will make a final investment

decision. A significant \$3.9 million municipal climate change grant has been secured for the project through a partnership with the Town of Smoky Lake and Smoky Lake County. This is approximately 30 per cent of the capital required to fully develop the project.

## Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC)

There are a number of project partnerships the Economic Development Team is exploring that may further qualifications for the GoA's backstop program. An application is being drafted entailing a diverse range of proposals, rather than a singular focus. Proposed projects are:

- Métis Crossing Solar project – financing backstop
- Development of a small- and large-scale solar farm near Medicine Hat
- Biomass (gas to liquid) facility near Slave Lake
- TransMountain equity opportunity
- Micro-generation solar development for approximately 100 Métis Capital Housing Corporation units

## MÉTIS Corporation

With the MNA actively involved in strategic partnerships and business ventures, MÉTIS Corporation has been busy as of late. New opportunities have been uncovered, primarily within the energy industry. As new projects go through the due diligence stage, administration staff is considering the legal and financial effects of creating separate corporations/structures/departments to operate these and other future energy-related projects.

## TC Energy Agreement

The team is in the final stage of discussion. It has been a long-standing relationship. Presently, the MNA and TC Energy Team believe in regular reviews and discussion that improve the relationship. TC Energy is committed to having a provincial agreement, and we've been negotiating options for a new funding agreement. ■

# 2019/20 Youth Programs and Services

The Department of Youth Programs and Services is committed to addressing the unique needs and challenges Métis youth face within Alberta. This generation of youth is excited to learn about their Métis culture and history and feel proud of who they are. It is essential to involve youth in key decisions as they offer new perspectives and ideas that will move the Nation forward. The MNA must continue to engage with our youth and connect them to their community and culture.

## Events



### Métis Discovery Day

On November 15, 2019, the Youth department hosted the first-ever Métis Discovery Day during Métis Week, which aimed to educate children, youth, and teachers on Métis culture and traditions. This event at the Edmonton Expo Centre included on-stage presentations and over 30 interactive stations featuring various Métis facilitators. This inaugural event had a total of 43 schools and 2,500 participants attend for a day of fun and learning.



### HEADSTRONG Mental Health Summit

On January 11, 2020, the MNA partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to deliver HEADSTRONG, a Métis-specific mental health summit to end stigma in youth. The event was offered to all Métis youth throughout Alberta, and Grande Prairie was chosen to host due to recent reports of high numbers of suicides and mental health challenges among Métis youth in northern communities.

HEADSTRONG featured Métis guest speakers, author Jesse Thistle, musician Charlie Kerr, law student Jessica Mayhew, and university student Aura Leddy, who spoke openly about their mental health challenges and how stigma affected them as youth on their mental health journeys. Youth attendees then learned about stigma, how to stand up against it, and brainstormed ways to begin anti-stigma campaigns in their schools and home communities.





### Youth and Seniors Gathering

In February 2020, the MNA hosted the 4th Annual Youth and Seniors Gathering, bringing together hundreds of Métis youth and seniors from across the province to strengthen intergenerational connections. This weekend-long event took place February 7- 9 at the River Cree Resort and Casino in Edmonton. It was filled with cultural workshops, entertainment, and inspiring speakers such as Jean Teillet, Marilyn Dumont, and Charlie Kerr of Hotel Mira who talked about the importance of culture and connection within the Métis Nation.

This event reached registration capacity at 450 MNA Citizens between the ages of 12 to 29, and seniors aged 60+. The Youth Department is thrilled to continue facilitating this intergenerational connection between Métis youth and seniors in Alberta.

### Family Camps

In March 2020, the Youth Department partnered with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide Métis families an opportunity to connect with their community and culture over a weekend of fun family-oriented activities. The camps were scheduled for the first three weekends in March, but the MNA cancelled





the final weekend due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the camps, families stayed in heated cabins and participated in facilitated cultural activities such as ice fishing, outdoor survival training, beading, jigging, snowshoeing, and fish-scale art. The event was hugely successful in bringing together Métis families from across Alberta and creating a sense of belonging and cultural connection.

### Alberta Métis Fest

On June 13, 2020, the MNA was thrilled to offer the second annual Alberta Métis Fest. This year's event was delivered virtually across the province due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time. The aim of Alberta Métis Fest was to celebrate Métis culture and facilitate connection among the Métis community in Alberta, particularly at a time of social isolation. The event was broadcast online through live video recordings and included pre-recorded greetings from members of the MNA's Provincial Council and videos of Métis musicians from each of MNA's six regions. The virtual event also included a jigging competition comprised of Métis jiggers who submitted videos prior to the event through an online call out. A team of professional jiggers judged the entries and winners were featured on the event's live stream.



This year's Alberta Métis Fest took place on an online forum where community members could chat with other Métis Albertans and participate in several live interactive

giveaways and contests. Overall, the event was very well received by the community and was a wonderful way to connect MNA Citizens to one another at such a challenging time. Over 2,500 individual accounts watched the event live, and several others watched the event afterwards through the MNA Facebook page.

## MNA Voyageurs Hockey Team

This year was an exciting one for the MNA Voyageur's Hockey team as the club expanded to four teams participating in Alberta Native Hockey Provincials in March. This includes the first ever all girls' hockey team. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the tournament was postponed to a later date. Let's go Voyageurs!

## Regional Youth Coordinators

In response to the Ordinary Resolution passed at the 90th Annual General Assembly on August 11 and 12, 2018, in Lac La Biche, Alberta, the Youth department hired six full time Regional Youth Coordinators (RYCs) to work out of each of the six Regional Offices and assist with developing, coordinating, and implementing Métis youth programs and services in their respective regions. Specific programming goals have been set out for each of the RYCs, including ongoing Cultural Enrichment Programs, Life Skills Programs, and a Weekly Youth Group.

The Regional Youth Coordinators have made huge strides within their regions, growing and expanding their programs and services as more MNA Citizens participate in their programming. Of course, due to COVID-19, we have halted all in-person programming and instead are focusing on virtual programming. However, once it is deemed safe to resume programming within the community, all RYCs will continue to build these relationships, run Cultural Enrichment and Life Skills programming, and restart their weekly regional youth group within all six regions.

## Cultural Enrichment Programs

Since August 2019's Annual General Assembly, the Department of Youth Programs and Services has delivered a variety of Cultural Enrichment Programs in all six MNA regions. These regional programs were planned by each region's Regional Youth Coordinator and facilitated by Métis cultural experts from across the province. Cultural enrichment programs include but are not limited to: jigging, fiddling, beading, embroidery, traditional medicines, bannock making, and finger



weaving classes. Cultural Enrichment programming is vital to connect Métis youth with their culture and keep those valuable traditions alive for future generations.

## Life Skills Programs

As with Cultural Enrichment Programs, the Youth Department has offered diverse life skills programs in all six MNA regions since the 2019 Annual General Assembly. These regional programs were planned by the region's Regional Youth Coordinator and facilitated by experts from across the province (many of whom are Métis). Life skills programming included, but was not limited

to: cooking classes, financial planning, non-restricted firearms safety courses, and hunter's education courses. Soon, the department will be offering first aid and babysitting courses to Métis youth in Alberta.

## Youth Group

Starting January 2020, all Regional Youth Coordinators (RYCs) began a weekly youth hangout. The Infinite Connections weekly youth group provides Métis youth within their designated region a safe and culturally aware space to gather and connect with each other. The RYCs have developed their weekly groups based upon the specific needs of the youth in their Region.

## COVID-19 Response

### Youth Emergency Benefit

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Youth Programs and Services launched the Youth Emergency Benefit (YEB) to help Métis youth aged 13-18 and their families who may be struggling financially during the pandemic. Youth aged 16-18 who are supporting themselves and living on their own, were eligible to claim the benefit for themselves. Applicants were eligible for \$250 per month for a three-month period (May, June, and July), with a maximum of \$1,500 per household (two youths). The financial support could be used for utility payments, grocery bills, educational expenses, job loss, and/or wellness costs.

As of June 30, 2020, the Youth department assisted over 1,200 families of youth.

### Online Programming

Additional in-person programs were planned for March-August 2020, but were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a response, the Youth department launched online cultural and life skills programming to help youth stuck at home during the pandemic.

Free online life skills courses were offered to MNA Citizens through Spectrum Safety Services. Courses included but were not limited to: Defensive Driving (3 demerit reduction program), Leadership Fundamentals, and Mental Health Prevention and Psychological Training.

To continue promoting connection among youth, the Youth department created a variety of virtual groups. One such group is a monthly book club featuring Métis authors, which currently has over 40 participants and guest appearances by authors Jesse Thistle (From the Ashes) and Katherena Vermette (The Break).

The department also launched a weekly podcast called Keeping it Riel. Each episode features interviews with interesting Métis people from across the Homeland.

In lieu of weekly regional youth groups, the Youth department now offers a weekly beading group and a weekly youth hangout session over Zoom, and in the past offered online guitar and fiddle lessons, online beauty and wellness tutorials.

Additionally, the department has sent out beading, finger weaving, and embroidery kits to MNA Citizens, supplemented by online tutorial videos to help them learn new skills while at home.

As well, Wellness Kits were mailed to MNA youth who may be struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time. These kits included a variety of mental and physical health resources, a stress ball, a puzzle, Métis colouring book, a note pad, and more!

## Youth Council

The MNA's Provisional Youth Council is dedicated to ensuring the voice of Métis youth is being heard at all levels. Their work also involves directing the MNA on programs and services best suited for Métis youth within Alberta. The Provisional Youth Council is comprised of one Métis youth from each of the six MNA regions, as well as a provincial chair that is elected by the council. On February 22, Brett Chernow was elected by the Youth Council as Chair of the Provisional Youth Council.



## Conclusion

It has been another incredible year for the MNA's Department of Youth Programs and Services. The department has continued to further the connection with Alberta Métis youth to their community, culture, and each other through our provincial, regional, and online programming.

The department provided a variety of provincewide events that youth across Alberta attended. The department found that youth who attended provincial programming developed close friendships with other youth throughout the province, and it increased their sense of belonging and connection to their Métis community. These provincial events included the Youth and Seniors Gathering, HEADSTRONG Mental Health Summit, Oskayak Kapayshiw weeklong youth camps, Voyageur weekend camps, Spring Harvest Day, Cabin Fever Family Camps, Alberta Métis Fest, Métis Discovery Day, Alberta General Assembly Youth Conference and more.

The department also ran a variety of regional youth programs in all six MNA regions. The six Regional Youth Program Coordinators each ran regular Cultural Enrichment and Life Skills programming, as well as a

weekly youth group within their regions. The purpose of this programming is to connect youth to their culture, teach them new life skills for their future, and develop relationships with other youth to encourage a sense of connectedness and community.

The Youth department provided many valuable opportunities for Métis youth throughout the past year, including educational resources and public events to educate people on Métis history and culture. In one example, Regional Youth Coordinators gave presentations at schools in their respective regions to help educate non-Métis youth on Métis culture. Events such as Métis Discovery Day and Alberta Métis Fest aim to bring both Métis and non-Métis individuals together to celebrate Métis culture in an inclusive, educational, and fun way.

In the future, citizens can expect the Youth Programs and Services Department to continue developing informed, quality programming for Métis youth in Alberta, with the goal of building their sense of belonging and connection to their Métis culture and community. The Youth department hopes to continue engaging with and implementing more programs specifically for Métis youth across Alberta. ■



*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*



# 2019/20

REGIONAL  
REPORTS



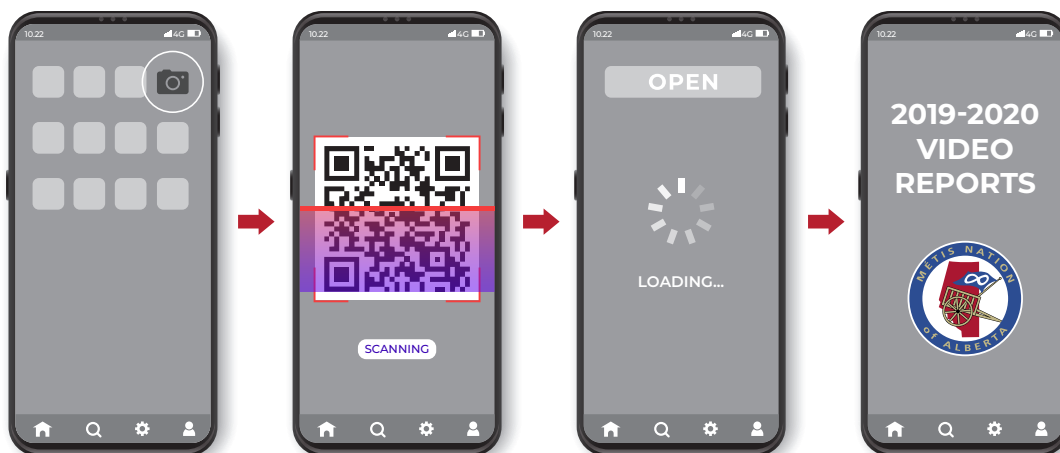
# 2019/20 VIDEO REPORTS

In 2020, all MNA regions and the Provincial Office provided video reports for their 2019-2020 activities and accomplishments.

You can watch them on our YouTube page by searching “Métis Nation of Alberta” or simply scan the QR code below!

## How to Scan a QR Code

1. Open your smart phone’s camera app
2. Hold your phone over the QR code
3. Tap the banner that appears at the top of your screen
4. You’ve made it!





# 2019/20 REGION TWO



**Duane Zaraska**  
President  
Region Two



**Andrea Sandmaier**  
Vice President  
Region Two

## Greetings from Region Two President Dwayne Zaraska

Hello and greetings from all of us here at the Region Two office.

It is unfortunate that we are unable to be together for the Annual Assembly this year and celebrate some of the amazing accomplishments of this past year in our Region and the province. Many gatherings have also unfortunately been cancelled. It is unprecedented times to say the least, but we will all make it through together.

It is a great honour to continue to serve as your President for Region Two as we reach our goals and vision for the Region. In addition, your Region Two leadership has stayed involved in the community and remained dedicated to several committees, as well as all the normal regional leadership duties, including attending all Provincial and Regional Council meetings. We have committed to getting more people involved and we have been successful in that.

Our Youth Programs and Services Coordinator has reached out to our youth with several new initiatives, which is so important. We need to continue to get youth involved – they are our future, both today and the years to come.

### Citizen Participation

It is so important to continue to learn and become more knowledgeable of our history and vibrant culture. Our open house, seniors' lunch, and Métis Urban Housing picnic brought out many Citizens, and our Regional AGM saw many new faces. This was so great to see, and we easily met quorum, which has always been a challenge in Region Two – not such a surprise really, as our office is always open and ready and happy to serve our great Citizens. We are very fortunate to have such a great support staff.

Our registry sessions were also very successful and attended by many. Our citizenship is growing rapidly in our Region as a result.

Another one of our commitments was to increase awareness and communication in our Region. It has been a challenge, but we have been quite successful in this area. We ask that every Citizen that comes into our office update their contact information on our Staying Connected information sign-up. Our posters and bulletin boards are updated and always full of various information regarding programs and events.

We also continue to post as much information about our Region and our province on our “Region II Métis Nation of Alberta” Facebook page. The page is looked at and liked by many Citizens and others who have an interest in our Region and the Métis Nation.

### Economic Growth and Consultation

We have continued our work on building new partnerships, cleaning up past partnerships, and building more commerce in our Region. We continue our great partnership with JMS, which has proven successful and provided additional ongoing funding for our programs and regional supports. We are currently in the process of establishing a large partnership, which will give our Region a big boost financially and increase our capacity tremendously. Our relationship with our industry neighbours continues to improve, even through these tough times.

Although the economy is in a tough spot, we have managed to secure community support from local industry. It is important we stay on top of activity in our area so we can be involved and participate in the economy. It is imperative that Indigenous businesses are given the opportunity for work, where qualified, to ensure employment of our people and social economic improvement for our communities. It is a form of reconciliation and compensation



as our business partners bring financial stability to the Region and its Citizens.

Our Region has seen significant growth in other areas. Consultation has always been a weaker area in Region Two and now we have finally been able to get more involved and move forward. We are very fortunate that we were able to hire our own Regional Consultation and Climate Change Coordinators. This role has been enhanced and we now have a fantastic team in our office that will bring us to new heights in consultation, climate, and environmental work.

### Youth Programs

Our Youth Coordinator has done fantastic work for us in our Region. Many new youth programs are now running, courses such as non-restricted firearms, beading, weaving, leather tooling, and boat safety and watercraft license. Up until the office closing due to pandemic, our Region held Youth Fun Nights at our office. Here they learned culture, some history, and played games. It started out slow but was really picking up speed and saw more and more youth coming out to participate. A Métis Club was initiated at one of the local high schools and it was quite successful, involving many Métis kids as well as others interested in learning our culture. The work and involvement of our youth is critical to sustaining our history and our culture. After all, our youth are our future.

Unfortunately, our Youth Coordinator has decided to return to school to further her education. Sarah Johnson, thank you for the great work and kickstarting the youth in our Region and getting kids involved. Best of luck in your studies and future endeavours.

Our Region continues to support the Youth in our communities with the Andy Collins Golf Scholarship. We usually choose two or three recipients at end of the year and present the award before the Christmas holiday season. We also support two local athletes in their pursuit of a career in hockey. I am so proud of these youth and happy to support their growth. It is so important to watch them succeed.

## Committee and Board Involvement

Our Regional leadership has been very committed to our Citizens; both are involved in the community and sit on several committees and boards. I am so happy with our team in Region Two, including our fantastic administrative support –thanks Viola.

I remain committed to two Reconciliation Committees, St. Paul Reconciliation Committee and Heart of Treaty Six Reconciliation Board. This is very important work as we move towards reconciliation. It will take some time to educate and teach the true history before we achieve the respect and recognition we deserve.

I am also still on the Board of Directors at Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA) and hold a seat on their governance committee. LICA is a Synergy Group that facilitates all stakeholders' voices when addressing issues concerning the environment in our Region, including the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the Beaver River Watershed, and an Airshed Zone monitoring the air quality throughout the Region. Their vision, mission, and values match with the interest and needs of our Métis Citizens. Our environment has always been a concern for us. I have been involved with LICA for approximately six years and will continue to stay involved.

It has been a great honour and a lot of fun sitting on the Métis Crossing Advisory Committee. Now that the Cultural Gathering Centre is finished, we have seen the dream of many come to life. I want to recognize the great work of the committee behind the scenes, making the decisions along the way. We have all contributed greatly from the ground up. It is so unfortunate that we are not able to celebrate the grand opening this summer. I am also part of the Grand Opening Planning Committee, which had great plans for a huge celebration on June 24, 2020. However, the celebration will be held in the summer of 2021 and will be amazing. As we move forward



with the operation and future phases of Métis Crossing, another committee has been formed, Métis Crossing Experience Company. I am happy and honoured to continue working with this great committee of devoted members. The next phases of Métis Crossing are already in the works. If you haven't yet been out to Métis Crossing, please take a drive and visit. It is a place for all Citizens to enjoy and learn about our unique history and culture. It is a place where all are welcome, and you will feel at home.

## COVID-19 Supports

In March our Region, Alberta, Canada and the rest of the world began dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This became a difficult time for the Nation and its Citizens. The impacts were, and are, enormous and we are still dealing with them. Industry and business came to a halt. People had their work hours reduced, some lost work, some were not able to go to work as childcare and schools were closed.

Since the pandemic hit, we have been working hard to assist our Citizens in need by developing a relief plan. We provided grocery gift cards in the first phase of our support plan, then we further helped with other costs, like utility bills that couldn't be paid.

We recognized that, quite often, seniors had not been assisted when they needed relief, as they were unable to get out to shop and buy groceries, which came at an extra cost to them. We provided a cheque to help them out with whatever they needed and a \$100 grocery gift card. We also provided seniors with home services that weren't available during shut down, such as small errands, grocery deliveries, outside window washing, lawn cutting, and light gardening and outdoor work.

## Alberta Métis Fest

In June, our Region was involved in the first-ever provincewide Virtual Alberta Métis Fest. It was a lot of fun and enjoyed by many. Region Two has so much talent to choose from and it was difficult



to choose only five entertainers. Our fine provincial Communications team did a tremendous job on putting together and streaming the event. We look forward to the next Métis Fest and all other gatherings in the months to come, where we can hopefully be together in person.

The hard work continues at the Provincial level and it is yielding great results. It has been an honour to sit at the Provincial Council and help with decisions that guide the province, as we continue to pursue the socio-economic and cultural wellbeing of the Métis people in Alberta.

### Provincial Update

The Provincial Office has reacted effectively to the needs of our Citizens in the time of this pandemic. Several provincial initiatives and relief programs were initiated, which were a great benefit to the citizens across the province, for example, the Child Wellness Benefit Program, Emergency Rent Supplement Program, and Benevolent Top-up.

The MNA also partnered with Spectrum Safety Services to offer 10 free online certification courses. We have provided information on available resources for mental health supports, which is so important to pay attention to in times like these.

Our affiliates Rupertsland Institute and Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc. have assisted and developed many helpful programs as well.

As citizenship grows, interest in our Métis Harvesting Rights continues to grow as well. Many new Citizens have applied and are now approved harvesters. We continue to negotiate with the provincial government for an

improved Harvesting Agreement. Our Harvesting Team has also been working with Alberta Environment and Parks to better serve our harvesters. We can now process and update Alberta RELM accounts for our approved harvesters. This means that through your account, you can print your Domestic Fishing License and apply to get your WIN card.

We have seen four new housing programs in the province, including the Down Payment Assistance Program, Rental Supplement Program, Student Rental Assistance, and Home Repair Assistance Program. All these programs were successful and accessed by many.

Other very important work continues at the Métis Nation as we move forward in self-government. The Constitution Commission is getting back to the table and working hard to develop a constitution policy. As well, a committee is in the works to develop our own Child and Family Services, which requires much attention to address the situation of Métis children in care.

Although we have been hampered by the COVID-19 Pandemic, we at the Nation are moving forward in advancing our Métis rights, meeting the needs of our Citizens, and improving their socio-economic and cultural wellbeing.

As President of Region Two, I look forward to continuing this work and improving our Region as we all move forward together.

**Dwayne Zaraska**  
President, Region Two

## Report Highlights from Vice President Andrea Sandmaier

Over the last year I have continued to work on communication and engagement with the Citizens of Region 2. As well as supported and assisted, when possible, the Region 2 Consultation/Climate Coordinator and Youth Coordinator.

To this end, I sit on the following boards and committees:

- Board Member – Bonnyville Indian Métis Rehabilitation Centre
- Committee Member – Balancing the Wheel (formally Empowering Indigenous Women)
- Committee Member – Restorative Justice Committee, Lakeland Area

I also supported several Region 2 events and initiatives.

- Worked with Sarah Johnson, Youth Coordinator organizing and attending:
  - City of Cold Lake Registration
  - Lakeland College Open House events
  - Indigenous Awareness Events
  - A booth at Portage College (Cold Lake Campus) where we spoke to people about the Regional Youth Initiatives, Métis History, Culture, Citizenship etc.
- Worked with Sarah Johnson on facilitating Métis History Presentations at various schools within Region 2.
- Attended the Lakeland Catholic School District Teacher Institute Day and a roundtable event with their Indigenous Committee.
- Attended MNA Registry Events throughout the Region.
- Worked with Family & Community Support Services throughout Region 2, attending interagency meetings and communicating Métis Nation of Alberta Regional and Provincial events, program's and initiatives.
- Attended the Restorative Justice Conference in November, along with the RJC – Lakeland Committee. Listened to fantastic speakers, including Keynote Speaker, Dr. Patti Laboucane-Benson.
- New Dawn Métis Women's Society – supporting Regional Representative, Paulette Dahlseide with different initiatives.
- Attended various Region 2 Business and Industry Meetings. As well as, the Osum and Imperial Oil Cold Lake Operations Open House's.
- Volunteered at the Bonnyville Friendship Centre's Annual Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinners.

- Attended the Belcourt Brosseau Awards.
- With the assistance of Region 2 and Head Office Staff, organized and attended the Region 2 Community Information Night in Cold Lake.
- With the assistance of Region 2 staff, organized Region 2 Senior Lunches.
- Supported Region 2 Regional Consultation Committee.
- Offered support to Reagan Bartel on Mental Health Initiatives.
- Assisting with the Family Reunification Project in Region 2.
- Attended both the January and March 2020 Self-Government Conferences.
- Attended/participated in the following MNA Provincial Events:
  - Louis Riel Commemorative Walk
  - MNA Tall Tales and Open Mic Night
  - Louis Riel Commemorative Ceremony at the Alberta Legislature
  - MNA Children's Christmas Party at Métis Crossing
  - MNA Christmas Party
  - Health Forum
  - Youth & Senior's Gathering
  - Virtual Métis Fest
- During Métis Week, Region 2 hosted an Open House, which included a lunch and entertainment. We also participated in the Smoky Lake Métis Flag Raising Ceremony.
- Continue supporting the families of Métis Citizens Jake Sansom & Maurice (Morris) Cardinal.
- Along with President Zaraska and the Region 2 staff, we have supported and will continue to support the Region 2 Citizens during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Although we cannot gather as we usually do, I look forward to the time when we can all be together again.

Wishing you good health.

**Andrea Sandmaier**

Vice President, Region Two ■

# 2019/20 REGION FOUR



**Tracy Friedel**  
President  
Region Four



**Gary Gagnon**  
Vice President  
Region Four

## Brief Overview of Annual Activities – April 01, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Region Four has an annual core budget of \$169,000 associated with the 10-year, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)-Government of Alberta Framework Agreement, which was signed in 2017. Region Four's annual complement of funding is administered through the MNA Provincial Office. An additional approximately \$60,000 is made available by the MNA Provincial Office to Region Four each year. Region Four receives no core funding from the federal government.

At this time, no Ministry roles have been assigned to Provincial Council members.

The Regional Council focuses on a number of objectives in support of advancing the interests of Métis Citizens in Region Four:

1. Ensuring financial accountability through an annual audit of the Region's financial information
2. Expanding Region Four's human resource capacity, as funding permits
3. Strategic planning to better position Region Four in advancing its mission through the development of strategies and the identification of key priorities
4. Communications planning to ensure Citizens living throughout Region Four have access to pertinent and timely information
5. Supporting the interests of Region Four Locals, as funding permits
6. Renewing Region Four's representatives on MNA committees and councils
7. Ensuring a functional and independent Métis Judiciary Council

## Participation and Activities

### 1. MNA governance activities

- Provincial Council meetings
  - July 4-5, 2019 – Calgary
  - August 28, 2019 – Edmonton
  - December 5-6, 2019 – Edmonton
  - February 12-13, 2020 – Edmonton
  - March 13, 2020 – Edmonton (emergency meeting)
  - March 31, 2020 – Edmonton (emergency meeting)
- Annual General Assembly meeting
  - August 16-18, 2019 – St. Paul
- Shareholder Meetings
  - Métis Urban Housing Corporation/Métis Capital Housing Corporation
    - May 27, 2020 – Edmonton
  - Métis Education Foundation/Rupertsland Institute
    - July 25 – Edmonton
- Métis National Council meetings
  - None held
- National Events:
  - Early Learning & Childcare Conference
    - March 5-6, 2019 – Ottawa, ON
  - Tri-Council Meeting (MNA, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Ontario)
    - January 14-16, 2020 – Alberta
  - Tri-Council Conference (MNA, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Ontario)
    - March 9-10, 2020 – Ottawa, ON
- Regional Council Meetings:
  - April 5, 2019 – Edmonton
  - June 22, 2019 – Grande Cache
  - January 13, 2020 – Edmonton

### 2. City of Edmonton engagement, including but not limited to:

- Métis Week Proclamation
- River Crossing Project Four
- Community Energy Transition Strategy
- K-Days Indigenous Showcase
- Centre LRT Project
- City Plan
- Commonwealth Walkway Interpretive Initiative
- Ribbon of Green Plan

- Exhibition Lands Planning
- Indigenous Framework
- Touch the Water Promenade



March 3, 2020, Tri-Council Self-Government Conference. (L-R) Region President Tracy L. Friedel, Region Four youth Josh Morin, Métis Women of Canada President Melanie Omeniho.



October 2, 2019, City of Edmonton Touch the Water Project Consultation. (L-R) Regional Council Member Joy Sinclair and Region Four youth Josh Morin.



October 2, 2019, City of Edmonton Touch the Water Project Consultation. (L-R) Region Four Youth Josh Morin, Regional Council Member Joy Sinclair and Shirley Armstrong.



November 12, 2019. Edmonton Métis Week Proclamation Event. (L-R) Regional Council Member Shirley Armstrong, Region Four Elder Gloria Laird, Region Four President Tracy L. Friedel.



November 12, 2019. Edmonton Métis Week Proclamation Event (L-R) Region 4 President Tracy L. Friedel and Don Langford, Aboriginal Veterans Colour Guard.



November 12, 2019. Edmonton Métis Week Proclamation Event. (L-R) Jaimy Miller, Director - Indigenous Relations with the City of Edmonton, Region Four youth Josh Morin, MNA Representatives, Edmonton Councillor Scott McKeen, Aboriginal Veterans Colour Guard.

**3. Alberta Government engagement, including but not limited to:**

- Indigenous Tourism Summit, April 5, 2020 – Edmonton
- Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, July 29, 2020 – Edmonton
- Premier’s State of the Province Luncheon, October 29, 2019 – Edmonton



July 29, 2019. Indigenous Opportunities Corporation Consultation. (L-R) Region 4 President Tracy L. Friedel and Minister of Indigenous Relations Right Honorable Rick Wilson.

**4. Government of Canada engagement, including but not limited to:**

- Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMX)
- Trans Mountain Economic Participation
- Parks Canada initiatives

**5. Engagement with local municipalities, including but not limited to:**

- Payhonin Reconciliation Event, April 17, 2019 – St. Albert
- Métis Week Flag Raising, November 15, 2019 – St. Albert
- Sweetgrass We Are One, February 29, 2020 – St. Albert



November 12, 2019, City of St. Albert Métis Week Flag Raising Event. L to R: Region 4 President Tracy L. Friedel.



**6. Engagement with project proponents, e.g. TC Energy, AltaLink**

**7. Other Activities**

- Indigenous Advisory & Monitoring Committee Activities (Trans Mountain, Enbridge Line 3)
- West Hearth Attack Event (West Hearth Seniors Complex)



November 5, 2019. Indigenous Advisory & Monitoring Committee Line Wide Gathering. Region Four President Tracy L. Friedel at the podium.



September 7, 2019. West Country Hearth Attack Fundraising Event in support of West Country Hearth Seniors' Complex in Villeneuve. Region Four President Tracy L. Friedel.

**Featured Project for 2019-20**

**Region Four Office Renovation**

- Region Four explored finding a new home over the past year but in the end made a decision to renovate our existing office space instead. Given that the Region Four office building was built in the 1950s, modernizing the space was a top priority for the Regional Council.



- Engaging with a helpful designer and an efficient general contractor allowed us to continue our productive work while renovations activities were undertaken. The highlight of the completed space is our new boardroom, which seats up to 12 people.

**Future Planned Activities**

**New Region Four Website**

Region Four is in the process of further developing a dedicated website for the purpose of engaging with Citizens across the Region.

**Business Development**

Work is underway to further advance economic development capacity for the Region, including a focus on Métis Opportunity Inc., which is Region Four's economic development arm.

**Enhancing Relationships with our Neighbours**

Extensive involvement with the City of Edmonton will continue, and we will also be building upon early engagements with various other municipalities.

**COVID-19 Support**

As the pandemic unfolds through summer and fall of 2020, Region Four will continue to provide support to Citizens in need.

**Tracy L. Friedel**  
President, Region Four ■

# 2019/20 REGION FIVE



**Elmer Gullion**  
President  
Region Five



**Hilda Lambert**  
Vice President  
Region Five

## Region Five Annual Report 2019- 2020

It has been another busy year for us. We continue to grow, with more staff joining our team and working hard for the betterment of all Citizens in Region Five. We are very pleased to have gained our harvesting rights and many of our local harvesters are both excited and eager to register for their new Métis Harvesting cards. Both leadership & staff have helped our Citizens, sending over 150 applications to our Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) harvesting registration since September 2019.

President Gullion and Vice President Lambert, along with team and key MNA staff, hosted an eventful regional Annual General Meeting on November 8, 2019 at the Slave Lake Inn & Conference Centre. Region Five has worked hard to keep our citizenship informed and involved all year by hosting several types of cultural events, cultural enrichment sessions, life skills courses, and pre-consultation engagements, inviting Citizens from all corners of our Region.

### 2019 Annual General Meeting

Region Five invited a Métis artist with Métis-inspired woodwork to provide a sales table, along with the Métis Nation gift shop and Sweet Peas Clothing Ltd., and Citizens were delighted with the items they purchased or won as door prizes at the Annual General Meeting. We had almost 40 Citizens in attendance and more for the dinner event, with entertainment from Nathan Cunningham & Blazin' Country Band. The beautiful Region 5 Celebration Cake was a hit, with adorable Métis children serving cake to Citizens after the delicious dinner buffet.

Region Five supports initiatives in partnership with other local Indigenous organizations, such as the friendship centres, Native Counselling Services Alberta (NCSA), and Rupertsland Institute. We





plan many activities like open house luncheons, Orange Shirt Day, and in-house sharing circles to honour our Métis, First Nations, and Inuit brothers and sisters stolen or lost in the residential school era. We participate in the annual Friendship Walk, Sisters in Spirit Vigil, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women events with Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre (SLNFC) in the community, plus we donate to the local food bank annually. With federal funds for Early Learning and Childcare, we assisted 87 happy parents and grade school students with Gear Up For School backpacks filled with essential supplies and a Walmart gift card to purchase clothing or shoes for classes.

During the difficult and devastating wildfire season last year, Region Five received a donation from TC Energy and assisted all evacuated communities with monetary donations to rebuild their communities, such as Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement. We also donated to our local food bank where evacuees were given food and supplies. Our own office offered supplies and care packages to fire victims from High level, Wabasca, Trout Lake, and Marten River. Supplies were made available by our MNA Provincial Office and Rupertsland Institute – Métis Centre of Excellence, and the Rupertsland RV from Edmonton headquarters delivered much-needed dry food items, pet food, baby supplies, cases of water and personal incidentals, which were distributed by our office staff.

## Housing

Region Five hosted two Housing Information Sessions, along with Métis Capital Housing, to inform Citizens about four housing programs and assist in completing a regional Housing Needs Assessment survey. All other housing programs were discussed and where housing funding is being expended in the regions over the next few years. In general, affordable housing is an ongoing concern in our Region and has been for over 25 years. The cost of living is rising in Slave Lake, yet wages are not rising. Extended families still live together because of the shortage of affordable housing throughout Region Five. We have Elders who own their homes, however, needed repairs are unaffordable for them. We are working to ensure these funds for housing supports are offered in our Region, as we know this will help Citizens improve their quality of life. We have a new Region Five Housing representative, Solomon Auger, who sits on the Métis Urban Housing Corporation (MUHC) Board, as well as on a regional housing board. We will continue to update our Citizens. Additionally, the MUHC Tenant Relations Office for Slave Lake has moved into our office.

## Annual General Assembly, St. Paul

In 2019, we honoured Bev New with a long-standing Recognition Award for her Lifetime Achievements in Leadership and Commitment to the Advancement of the MNA. We are fortunate to have Bev work alongside us in various capacities. She is also the newly-elected Region Five representative on the New Dawn Métis Women's Society, an MNA provincial board.



## Frost Hills

Region Five and the MNA continues to work towards the integration of the Frost Hills plan. After all these years, the need is stronger than ever to secure this land for the Métis peoples of Faust – the agricultural land, animal

reserve, our cultural way of living, our heritage. The trails, plants, herbs, berries, animals, sacred areas, all this certainly needs to be preserved for the future generations of our Métis people in Region Five.

## Culture

We are a proud people and take any opportunity to showcase our culture, teaching our children and youth to be proud, and teaching our youth traditional knowledge and old ways of knowing how to hunt, fish, trap, locate and properly harvest medicines, instill survival skills in the bush, etc. We celebrate any opportunity to teach how to jig, and play the fiddle at events such as Indigenous Peoples Day in Slave Lake and the High Prairie Powwow.

Last summer, Vice President Lambert hosted a jigging contest, with prizes consisting of Métis flags and gift cards for winners in three categories. As well Region Five gifted an authentic Métis infinity flag to the organizers of the annual High Prairie Powwow. By request, Region Five provides presentations on the Order of the Sash in high schools, about how to wear a sash prior to graduation, and we gift Métis students at this major milestone of educational achievement.

## Annual Métis Day Celebrations, June 21

At our Métis Day events, we involve youth to volunteer or participate in traditional games such as egg races, three-legged Race, and water balloon races, while our older youth participate in some of the adult games like horseshoe tournaments and crib tournament competitions. There were great incentive prizes for all game competitions and it sure made for a full day of fun and excitement.

## Métis Week Celebrations

We hosted three activities during Métis Week in 2019 to share our heritage with one another and ensure our culture lives on. This included working with the Town of Slave Lake to proudly raise our flag for the month of November.

We also hosted an annual open house event at our office, with card and board games, and a free stew and bannock luncheon.

This past year we held a wonderful free family dinner in partnership with the Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre, and had Edmonton Métis Dancers perform and give fun interactive lessons, very entertaining with great door prizes.

## Medical/Bereavement Assistance

Region Five continues to assist our Citizens with travel to medical specialist appointments; each Citizen inquiry helped once per year. We can also assist minimally with funeral costs, by request. We have helped several families over the past fiscal year due to funding, in part from TransCanada.

## Elders

Region Five ensures our active Elders enjoy the Annual Métis Youth & Seniors Gatherings. They look forward to all our planned festivities in June and during Métis Week in November.

Our Region Five Elder, Herb Anderson, joined us for our second Tri-Council meeting in Ottawa in 2020 and is very honoured

to be involved in several government meetings and engagements regionally, provincially, and nationally.



## Rupertsland Institute (RLI)

Rupertsland Institute's Métis Training to Employment (MTE) Program will rejoin us by moving into the adjacent office of our building sometime in 2020. Beck Scott is our new full-time Employment Counsellor / Job Coach, who is currently set up in a small office at Northern Lakes College campus.

Our other RLI Centre in High Prairie has two full-time staff available to Métis clients to provide various MTE Services: Aiyanna Mitchell, Job Coach; and Jolene Mearon, Employment Counsellor. Region Five actively refers Métis Citizens to both offices for employment and training.

## S-11 Logging Ltd. – Region Five Manager's Report

We are in the final stages of our harvesting agreement for wood and will be signing a new five-year agreement for harvesting. The fire in S-11 lost 20 per cent of the wood supply. We are looking at other avenues to obtain more wood to ensure we have enough for our purposes. The communities of Peerless/Trout Lake have been logging locally and benefiting the Citizens of the local communities. The partnership among the three shareholders has been working great. The fire

season last year did slow down production for some time understandably, however we look forward to logging for many years to come.

We also plan to develop Métis student bursaries and awards for academic upgrading student support, an award for post-secondary and trades students. Any further inquiries can be directly sent to Bev New at [bevnew11@outlook.com](mailto:bevnew11@outlook.com) or you may contact her at 780-849-8843.

## Kathleen Land

We are still working on the land matter of Kathleen. Once everything is completed, we will be looking at ways for our Region Five Citizens to utilize the land in a positive manner. We are excited to begin work on this land.

## Region Five Active Partnerships

- Wabasca Local #90
- Slave Lake Métis Local #2019
- Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre
- High Prairie Friendship Centre
- Town of Slave Lake
- Slave Lake Inn & Conference Centre
- Northern Lakes College
- Rupertsland Institute
- TransCanada
- Government of Alberta
- Bigstone Cree Nation
- Peerless Lake/ Trout Lake First Nations
- West Fraser Mills
- Al-Pac



## Report from Regional Youth Coordinator (RYC) Beverly Lambert

Beverly Lambert joined the Region Five Team in late May 2019. Our RYC's main goal is connecting the youth to Elders,

Knowledge Holders, Harvesters, and artisans to learn and teach our Métis traditions and culture, focusing on Life Skills and Culture Enrichment programming across the Region, based on youth feedback and evaluation forms. Both provincial and regional events are discussed during planning meetings; youth groups, events, workshops, and updates on programming are also discussed during programming. Sign-up sheets are available for upcoming programming, and posters are on site at all events.

In the spring/summer of 2019, Beverly assisted with making and handing out care packages for wildfire evacuees in Northern Alberta. Household foods, water, pet food, baby items, and personal supplies were provided by Rupertsland Institute and the Métis Nation of Alberta's Housing Emergency Fund. Many Métis people and others were displaced by the fires from communities in both northwest regions, including High Level and Paddle Prairie. Many other communities within our Region

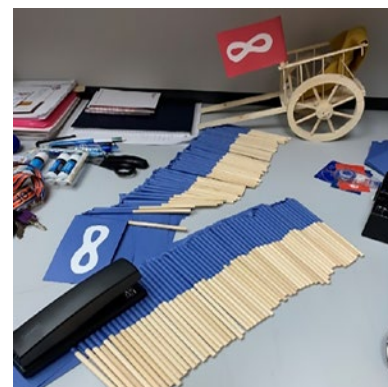
were forced to evacuate their homes as well, such as Wabasca, Marten Beach, Trout Lake, and Peerless Lake.

## Regional Programs & Building Relationships within the Community

Our RYC began to introduce herself to local schools and success coaches, working with the schools in the Region to educate Métis youth about Métis history, cultural teachings on the Métis sash, and the basic steps of jigging and changes.

### June 21, 2019 – Indigenous Peoples Day, Multi-Rec Centre, Slave Lake.

The Regional Youth Coordinator had her first orientation to teaching jigging lessons with Vice President Lambert at the Métis Culture information table.



### July Meet & Greet

– **Soup & Bannock Networking Luncheon with RYC information table, Region Five Office, Slave Lake.** This was an event hosted by Region Five to introduce Beverly and new, upcoming youth programs and services, as well as introduce Life Skills and Culture Enrichment programming, meet youth, increase citizenship, and gain feedback on interests pertaining to programming. Evaluation forms were developed at a Q & A period.

**August 2019 – Non-Restricted Firearms Safety Course, Region Five Office.** Beverly and instructor Roger Smiley hosted a Non-Restricted Firearms Safety Course at our Regional Office in the common area. This course was a success, as all students who attended passed, with eight students in total. The length of the course was 10 hours. Lunch, dinner, and refreshments were provided.

**August 15-18, 2019 – Annual General Assembly, St. Paul.** Our RYC helped host youth activities, including the bouncy castles at the St. Paul Recreation Centre.

**August 23-24, 2019 – Provincial Youth Team training, Camp Wohelo, Pigeon Lake.**

**August 25-30, 2019 – Youth Camp, Camp Wohelo, Pigeon Lake Pigeon Lake.**

**September 23-25, 2019 – RYC meeting and All Affiliate Staff Meeting, River Cree Resort, Enoch.** Provincial event from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM with daily presentations.

**September and October 2019 - Building Relationships within the Community.** September and October were busy months connecting with schools within the Region to do Métis teachings, jigging lessons, and cultural programming, like beading and fish scale art. Our RYC enjoyed networking and planning future workshops in different towns within the Region.

Beverly received her Commissioner for Oaths to stamp MNA Citizenship applications at programs and Registry sessions throughout Region Five, as needed, and assisted with walk ins, Harvesting applications, and helping Citizens with any questions.

Beverly is working on extending the Facilitator list within the Region. She is searching for Métis artisans to teach our traditions and keep our culture alive.

**November 8, 2019 – Region 5 AGM, Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre, Slave Lake.** Beverly manned the Youth Programs & Services Information Table all day, answering questions on programming, handing out swag and gift bags to youth, and business cards for networking. She also volunteered with decorating, band set up, supper, and cleaning up centerpieces. This event was very informative, interactive, entertaining and successful! Looking forward to the next AGM.

#### **November 10-16, 2019 – Métis Week**

- Nov. 12: Jigging in-house with Bev, common area, Region Five Office
- Nov. 13: Youth Programs & Services Information Table
- Nov. 14: Beading Métis infinity pin, boardroom, Region Five Office
- Nov. 15: Métis Discovery Day, Edmonton Expo Centre

**November 22, 2019 – Jigging Lessons, Jossard School.** Our RYC travelled out to do a Métis sash teaching and the basic steps and changes of the Red River Jig, in partnership with Jamie Chalifoux, the High Prairie School Division Success Coach. All the students from each group participated and did not want to stop when time was up. This was a success, and the bannock and jam were supplied by the school as our treat to the students.

**December 11, 2019 – Wabasca, Housing Information Session.** Along with one of the Housing Information Sessions hosted by Regional Leadership, the RYC came along to set up a Youth Programs and Services information table. Beverly answered both regional and provincial youth programs and citizenship form inquiries.

**December 18, 2019 – Region Five Métis Community Christmas Party.** Walter Andreeff secured event funds from TC Energy – free Christmas meals all day! Ages 3-12 received Christmas gifts from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Families in need received a free turkey or ham voucher. This was a beautiful and heartwarming event. Beverly helped the team decorate the office and create the Métis Christmas tree, purchased children's gifts for the celebration, coordinated the gingerbread house building, and took part as Mrs. Claus during the event. Walter



Andreeff was Santa and in charge of finances. Emma New coordinated the turkey/ham vouchers for families in need. Vice President Hilda Lambert arranged a surprise visit from Métis Bev Lambert from B.C. to jig and play games with the kids.

This was a great treat. We look forward to the next Region Five Christmas Celebration.

**January 11, 2020 – Headstrong Summit, Grande Prairie.** Chaperoned at this provincial annual event.

**January 16-17, 2020 – Jigging Lessons and Métis Sash Teaching, CJ Shurter School.** This visit to the school was a success. Beverly taught eight groups per day for two days, with 25 to 30 students per group.

**January 18, 2020 – Flower Beading Workshop, Region Five Office.** We were all very pleased to have facilitator Bonnie Lamouche join us from Gift Lake Métis Settlement. Thankfully, the facilitator's instructions were easy to follow. The students enjoyed and shared stories, and this was a great opportunity for the students to connect and for the RYC to get feedback from the youth on their interests for programming and workshops. Lunch and refreshments were provided for this program.

**January 25-26, 2020 – Two-Day Food Safety Course, Northern Lakes College, Slave Lake.** In partnership with Slave Lake Adult Education's Donna Twin and instructor Shannon McKay, we had eight registered students and seven seats filled. The students enjoyed the two-day course, and all received passing marks. The feedback from students was that they appreciated having the opportunity to take the course for future employment. Lunch and refreshments were provided for this program.

**January 3, 2020 – Métis Lanyard Workshop with Facilitator Debra Jackson, Region Five Office.** Beverly hosted a Métis Lanyard Workshop at the Region Five Office Boardroom with Debra Jackson. This workshop was anticipated by many, but only eight out of 12 students could make it due to heavy snow fall, weather, and road conditions. This workshop was fun and the pattern was

easy to do. The students connected through storytelling and laughter, and enjoyed the facilitator's workshop. Lunch and refreshments were provided.

**February 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2020 – Youth Group, Region Five Office, 6-8 p.m. every Thursday.**

**February 7-8, 2020 – Youth & Seniors Gathering, River Cree Resort.** This provincial event was wonderful!

February was a busy month with networking and planning programming, assisting Citizens with Harvesting applications, Citizenship application appointments, and Youth Group.

**March 5, 12, 19 & 26, 2020 – Youth Group, Region Five Office, 6-8 p.m. every Thursday.**

**March 7, 2020 – Peyote Stitch Earrings Workshop with Bonnie Lamouche, High Prairie Native Friendship Centre.** Beverly hosted a Peyote (Gourd) Stitch Earring workshop with Bonnie Lamouche at the Native Friendship Centre. The staff were friendly and helpful setting it up. We began by introducing ourselves and the Youth Programs and Services programming.

Facilitator Bonnie Lamouche started the workshop off by handing out directions to start the pattern and choosing the different colours of beads to make the earrings. Throughout the workshop, the group shared Métis stories of growing up, chores, and responsibilities of living in the bush. By the time the second earring was completed, participants were proud of themselves for doing such a great job in beading these beautiful earrings. Feedback from youth was for more beading classes, moccasin making, and embroidery classes. Lunch and refreshments were provided for this program.

**March 5 & 12, 2020 – Youth Group, Region Five Office, 6-8 p.m. every Thursday.** Successful turnouts.

**March 14, 2020 – Métis teachings and Jigging Lessons, McLennan Golden Age Club, McLennan.** This workshop was a success, with eight students in attendance and two non-Métis students. Beverly taught the basic steps and changes to the Red River Jig. At the end of the workshop, all the students completed the Red River jig with confidence and eagerness to do more changes. This program was successful connecting youth to their culture and teaching others about parts of our culture. Beverly is looking forward to more programs in McLennan, her hometown. Feedback from youth was for more beading classes, leather work, moccasin making, finger weaving, fish scale art, and Métis cooking classes. Lunch and refreshments were provided for this program.

**March 17, 2020 – Office Closure due to COVID-19 Pandemic.** Staff worked from home due to COVID-19 pandemic safety regulations, but we continued assisting



Citizens with COVID support questions and inquiries by phone and e-mail.

**April-July – Region Five Cultural Enrichment, Life Skills, and Youth Programming Cancelled or On Hold.**

Beverly is looking forward to more outdoor activities, fishing day camps, nature and plant walks, teachings on trapping, and cooking lessons indoors and outdoors in the upcoming months.

Beverly is working hard with the Youth Team on provincial events and encourages youth to get connected and attend events like the youth camps, Headstrong Summit, Youth and Seniors Gatherings, and other provincial events to meet youth and Métis role models from all over. Looking forward to more workshops indoors and outdoors for youth to enjoy.



to the spill location with an Elder and Knowledge Holder to view the location and cleanup activities. They visited the worksite and made some helpful comments to the company regarding the cleanup and requested to review the final cleanup report. This spring, MNA Environment Team member Dr. James Glasier reviewed the final company cleanup report and felt the work was completed within standard's the MNA could accept.



**Report from Climate Leadership and Consultation Coordinator Walter Andreef**

During the last half of 2019 year, Walter, with the support of the MNA Climate Change group, completed energy efficiency upgrades and supervised the installation of a 11.1 kilowatt solar panel system at the Region Five office. The system was energized on September 2019 and the project has reduced our operating costs for electricity during the day. Additional power not required by our office feeds back into the electricity grid and provides a credit to our electricity bill.

With our solar panels, 3,256.33 kilograms of CO2 emissions have been removed in the last year, equivalent to planting 97 trees to offset our office greenhouse gas emissions.

**The Environment**

The Region Five Consultation Coordinator became aware of an oil spill at House Mountain in July 2019. At the time, it was described as a 320,000-cubic meter spill of produced water and oil near an ecological area. He approached the company responsible and requested permission to travel

**Region Five Consultation matters**

On September 10, 2019, Alberta Indigenous Relations informed the MNA Provincial Council that development of a Métis Consultation Policy will not be moving forward. Since then, the MNA has gathered over 700 signatures from Métis Citizens across Alberta to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta requesting the government fulfill its obligation to consult and accommodate the Métis people of Alberta. Many signatures were gathered from the Citizens of Region Five. However, the COVID-19 situation has put work on hold at the present time.



The MNA Region 5 Consultation Committee (RCC) is comprised of Region Five President Elmer Gullion and Vice President Hilda Lambert, Wabasca Métis Local 90 President William Bill Auger and Vice President Diane Kim Gladue,



Slave Lake Métis Local 19 Slave Lake President Shane Combs, and Director of Métis Rights and Accommodations Bruce Gladue from the MNA provincial office.

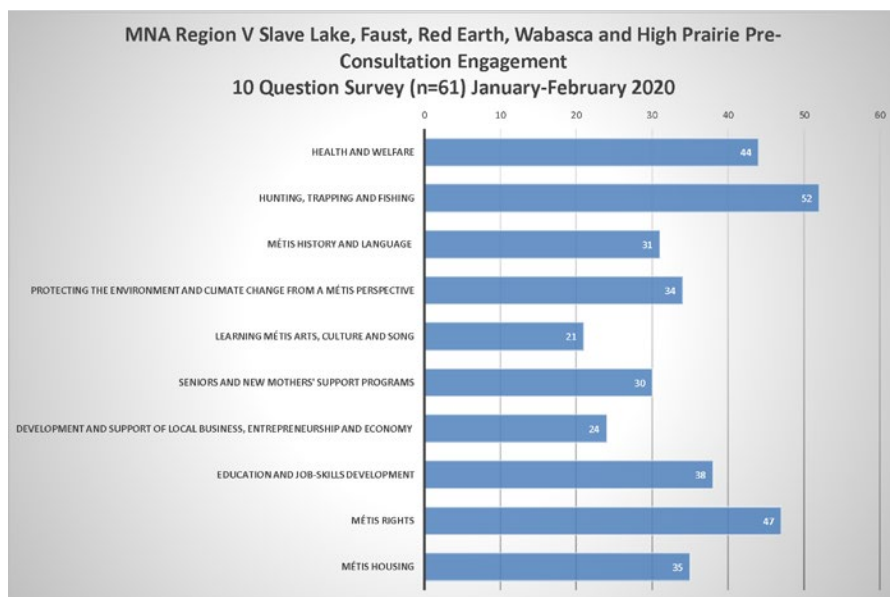
This January, Coordinator Walter and Assistant Kristin began a Traditional Use Information (TUI) Project and engagement sessions with the Métis people in Region Five. They travelled to Wabasca, Red Earth, Faust, High Prairie, and Slave Lake to listen to our Citizens. In total, they met and heard from over 90 people who attended the meetings, and others who gave their time in personal interviews. During the meetings, they gathered TUI information and other stories through notes, voice recordings, and pictures. During the community sessions, Region Five attendees completed a 10-question survey.

They told us, firstly, the most important issue to our people was hunting, trapping, and fishing (52), the second was Métis rights (47), and the third was Health and Welfare (44). See other results below.



Over the next 45 days, the Region Five Office will be meeting with individual Citizens to travel outdoors and gather field-based Traditional Land Use information throughout the regional area. We will also be holding a larger meeting with all the communities to show our Citizens what we have completed from the information we have received and what our next steps are in finalizing our submission to the Government of Alberta.

If you would like to participate in consultation, field-based studies, and related community meetings, or if you have any questions on Consultation and Climate/Environment related activities in Region Five, please call Walter Andreeff at (780) 849-4654.



Over the past 10 years, Region Five and Métis Local 90 have undertaken Traditional Land Use Studies in the region with many of our people—this is very important information. In developing our CAPCA application, the MNA has constructed several maps and compiled notes by Region Five Citizens showing where we hunt, fish, and gather, as well as where we have lived and practiced our cultural activities through recorded and transcribed stories, pictures, and recent interviews talking about our people’s footprint on the land. To have our information included in the MNA’s application to the government is a significant achievement for Region Five and a great initiative supported by Region Five’s leadership at all levels.

2019 Region Five Christmas Party: It is important to us at the Region Five MNA office to share the holidays with the Métis people of our community. In 2019 for the very first time, Region Five provided our people with a traditional family Christmas dinner and shared in the joy of the season with them. For many of our family participants, they really look forward to our participant events all throughout the year and it was extra special to organize and hold this event. We hosted a Region 5 Métis

Community Christmas Party at our office in December for over 80 people from the local area. At the event, we handed out children’s gifts to over 35 kids, over 25 free turkeys and hams, and many other happy children took photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Many others were in on the fabulous live Métis jigging and building wonderful Christmas gingerbread houses with the kids!

We are very grateful to our sponsor TC Energy, other donors, and the volunteers who enabled us to host a wonderful traditional Christmas dinner event last year! A big hug and thank you to all our sponsors and volunteers of the Region 5 Métis Community Christmas Party from the MNA provincial office Communications staff, especially Olivia Bako. ■

*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*



# 2019/20

**AFFILIATE  
REPORTS**



2019/20

# Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.

## History

Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. (AMDI) was created in 1984 under a federal government contribution agreement with Native Economic Development Program, an initiative promoted by Industry, Science, and Technology. The total committed funds for the creation of AMDI was \$8.8 million.

In 1988, AMDI commenced operations by providing commercial financial services and business management advisory services to Métis entrepreneurs throughout Alberta. Under the original Federal Government Contribution Agreement, \$800,000 was expensed on the initial start-up costs, while the capital pool of \$8 million was disbursed in stages.

AMDI has lent out over \$80 million since 1988 and helped in the creation of over 1,200 Métis-owned businesses throughout the province of Alberta, while maintaining our capital base of \$8 million. Our success is largely due to our clients who have successfully capitalized on their opportunities. AMDI has become an intergenerational service provider as the children (now adults) of clients we assisted long ago approach AMDI as their parents once did. What a great thing to have accomplished – we imagine it is what the framers had envisioned.

The purpose of AMDI is to help Métis entrepreneurs start or expand their business ideas and we hope our clients, past and present, pass on their experiences in dealing with us to other Métis entrepreneurs who may be considering first steps to becoming owners of their own business.

## Report on Operations

During the period April 2019 to March 2020, AMDI approved \$5.6 million in funding assistance to new and existing business, constituting a 65 per cent increase



from March 2019. Four categories dominated commercial lending: service, transports, construction, and oil and gas. This was very similar to the kinds of projects we conducted the previous year.

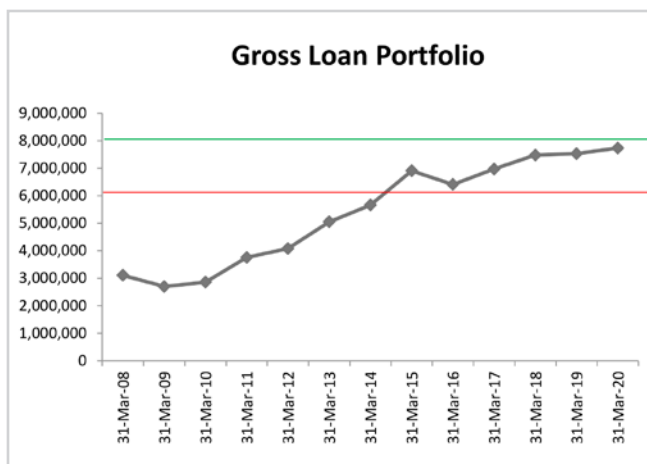
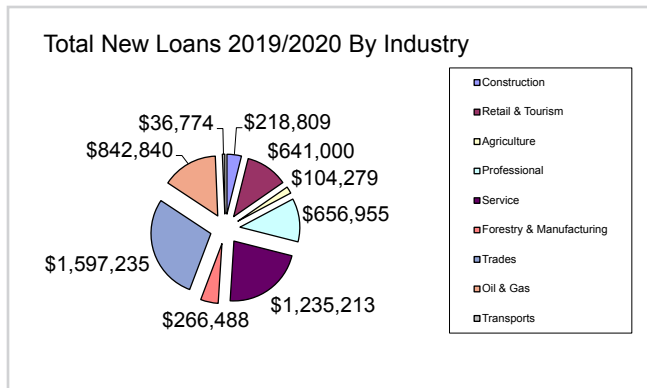
A total of \$8.8 million in applications were received. The service, retail, and trades sectors comprised the majority of applications, amounting to \$5.6 million in total loan demand,

while oil and gas projects are slowly making a recovery to \$1.06 million of total loan demand. Total applications received of \$8.8 million represents a 25 per cent drop in economic activity, as we usually receive about \$11 million in loan applications. Perhaps this was the tell that led to the retreat in the economy in early 2020. Still, the dominant sector that contributed the highest fruition rate was the service-based sector, which supported 30 per cent of total loan demand. Regional participation was relatively balanced across all six regions of the province.

As usual, most of the new loan applicants this year took advantage of the Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (MEAP), as the contribution serves to substantially reduce debt-servicing costs associated with acquiring assets required for a business' operations. Loans to businesses included, but were not limited to, construction, retail, agriculture, professional, oil and gas, and service-based businesses, as well as some tourism and transportation. The trades sector dominated this year's lending and represents a strong component of what we do, as well as a low-risk profile to our portfolio while complimenting a long-standing training initiative of Rupertsland Institute (RLI). In general, the total growth in loans conducted by AMDI was relatively evenly distributed across all industries suggesting Métis entrepreneurs are penetrating and participating in every sector of the economy.

While continuing to diversify in step with Métis entrepreneurship, our portfolio has modestly increased

by 3 per cent or about \$200,000. This is great since overall loan demand (applications received) was down 25 per cent year over year. In addition, the COVID-19 regulatory environment will have the long-term effect of suppressing loan growth over time – more on this below.



Still, the applications came in as Métis entrepreneurs adapted to significantly altered economic production, consumption, and exchange processes. This shows in the stability of our loan portfolio, where loan loss and even projected loan loss is less than 2 per cent, and our profitability of operations (IBTDA) remains over \$500,000 on an annual basis. Durable opportunities continue to flow into our office, despite the economy struggling under various pressures. Our current work in progress as of April 1, 2020, for example, was \$5.5 million and 39 clients, constituting an increase of 80 per cent over last fiscal year (with some carry over), despite the COVID-19 effect.

Over the years, we have seen many events that have had some negative impacts on Alberta’s economy, however, our experience is that Métis entrepreneurs are quick to respond to economic calamities, adjust their expectations accordingly, and persevere.

### Other Investments: Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (MEAP) Renewal

For over 25 years, Apeetogosan has provided external delivery services to Aboriginal Business – Canada’s business development program. As part of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)’s new Aboriginal Economic Development Framework, one initiative is to increase the delivery capacity of its external partners. As a consequence of this relationship, AMDI continues to serve as Program Delivery Partner to INAC’s small business development program. For the 2019/20 fiscal year, AMDI delivered about \$1.7 million in equity to over 50 Métis entrepreneurs, the result of a one-year renewal of INAC’s equity program. Now called the Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program or MEAP, AMDI provides the single window of access to equity and commercial finance capital to all Alberta Métis entrepreneurs. As you might imagine, this means a lot to AMDI as it ensures better service to our clients and solidifies expectations on timing and capital availability. Looking forward, however, may prove challenging, as COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way people produce and/or provide goods and services with each other.

### Affiliates Partnering Together to Make a Difference: AMDI & RLI

A few years ago, AMDI experienced a significant shortfall with equity normally available to Métis entrepreneurs through the federal government’s Aboriginal Economic Program. Around the same time, RLI experienced a massive influx of clients seeking capital assistance and/or training with entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives. As this was outside the scope of conventional labour market and training initiatives where RLI places its expertise, they reached out to AMDI for support and we asked if they could help with our business development and client equity shortfall.

This ended up becoming a great partnership that has provided RLI with another means of demonstrating their reach into virtually all economic activities. It has helped AMDI reach new milestones in lending, assisting more clients in bringing their business ideas to fruition. In turn, AMDI has remained profitable, durable, and relevant to the Métis community.

In our view, the partnership brought into perspective the importance of recognizing the alignment that exists among all affiliates – we have a lot more in common than we might realize at first – as we each endeavor to advance the social and economic prosperity of Métis people in Alberta.

## Pinnacle Business Services Ltd.

Pinnacle staff provide applicants an opportunity to access government programs available through INAC and the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), as well as loan financing from AMDI. Pinnacle assists the client in developing their business opportunity and moving it into a plan of action. The primary role of the Pinnacle business consultant is to assist Métis clients in assessing their opportunities, including identifying areas of weakness and exposure to risk, and what may be required of clients to mitigate as such. To this end, Pinnacle assists clients in evaluating whether their business opportunities have a reasonable chance of becoming successful small-business ventures. The last thing we want is to see our clients fail.

The follow-up work to assessing an opportunity is developing a plan of execution demonstrating the opportunity and its implementation. Pinnacle assists clients with formalizing their opportunity and implementation plans by helping them develop a well-prepared business plan. The business plan becomes the presentation document to financiers that demonstrates the integrity of the client's proposal. The plan includes an assessment on commercial viability, capital cost and financing requirements, and the client's ability to competitively deliver the product or service under consideration.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd. assisted in the development of over 50 business plans for clients, of which 96 per cent attracted commercial financing from AMDI, while two leveraged commercial financing from another financial institution. The direct involvement of Pinnacle helped Métis people access over \$4 million from AMDI in new term loans, of which \$3.6 million was advanced during the 2019-2020 fiscal period.

Aftercare is another component of services that Pinnacle provides, ensuring clients have the appropriate accounting and bookkeeping systems in place, adequate training, and appropriate internal controls. During the year under review, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd. provided aftercare services to over 50 clients. It should be noted our consulting arm's commitment to aftercare in our projects is integral to the success of both our client's and our own organization.

## AMDI's Response to COVID-19

With the onset of COVID-19, our clients and staff at AMDI have endured the challenges of providing on-going services to Métis Albertans, while observing regulatory requirements and constraints imposed as a result of COVID-19. For example, because the economy ground to a virtual halt in early February 2020, AMDI suspended scheduled loan and interest payments for three months. We wanted to provide some relief and take the stress off clients who immediately started to confront cash flow problems by late February.

By early March 2020, the federal government developed emergency response measures for businesses impacted by COVID-19 across Canada. Some you have already heard about and hopefully been able to take advantage of programs such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), as well as the small business relief from the federal government's Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA). If you are unaware of these programs, we encourage you to call our office and the staff will assist you in qualifying for these programs.

In an effort to provide relief to Métis businesses quickly in early March 2020, AMDI helped administer an equivalent program to CEBA, called the Federal Business Emergency Loan, that specifically targeted Métis businesses in Alberta who had not already qualified for CEBA. In addition, and with help from the Métis Nation of Alberta, we also delivered a joint program called the Métis Business Emergency Loan Program that also provided relief to Métis businesses impacted by COVID-19.

On a combined basis, AMDI has helped the federal government and the MNA reach over 180 clients and \$4.5 million. If you have not yet learned of these programs, we will again encourage you to contact our office, as AMDI has really made the process efficient for Métis businesses to get the help they need as they try to negotiate both COVID-19 and the economy.

## Seamless Delivery of AMDI's Services to Métis Clients Despite COVID-19

Without exception, every business in Canada has been adversely affected by regulations imposed as a result of COVID-19. In the early days of March and April of 2020, the economy virtually halted when production and distribution of all products and services were limited to "essential" only. It will be years before we really know whether the effects of these impacts will have been temporary or permanent.

As most of AMDI's work with Métis people hinges on relationships, COVID-19 has had an immediate impact on our reach to the community. The cancellation of almost every Métis gathering throughout the year has definitely reduced AMDI's exposure to Métis clients, communities, and events – from the Local level to the Regional level, and all the social gatherings in between – constituting over a 100 functions that were AMDI's surefire way of reaching and responding to the business development initiatives of Métis entrepreneurs in Alberta.



AMDI's greatest strength has always been our seamless delivery business model that prioritizes Alberta's Métis entrepreneurs' access to capital, business planning, and business support. What we have found most surprising is that despite COVID-19, Métis entrepreneurs are reaching out to us, as they recognize the regulatory constraints imposed on our business. In turn, we continue to reach back to clients, recognizing and acknowledging these constraints, but also accepting the needs and wishes of our clients.

Life, and therefore business and the production and exchange of products and services, must and will go on. To this end, AMDI's success and long-term relevance to Métis people depends on our ability to provide financial and business support needs to Métis clients in a timely way, regardless of COVID-19 or any other risk that occurs.

## Closing Remarks

Overall, it was a steady year for AMDI, with loan growth maintaining our portfolio of \$7.5 million. AMDI continues to demonstrate its own durability, posting a net income of over \$500,000, and a steadily increasing retained earnings balance of over \$3.1 million. We remain one of the top performing Aboriginal financial institutions across Canada. Most importantly, we continue to remain relevant to our Métis community – one of the key guiding principles of our operations.

Life gets in the way of the best laid plans and COVID-19 is an acute example of what can happen when you least expect it. The true test of one's resilience, however, is how you choose to respond to it. AMDI's immediate response was to first recognize the certain damage this was going to impose on our clients. We relaxed both principal and interest payments for three months and delivered several responses on behalf of the federal government's COVID relief measures. We continue to apply flexible repayment options for our Métis entrepreneurs, as we recognize and appreciate the challenges our clients face in enduring what amounted to an effective shut down of the economy. It demonstrates, yet again, how AMDI's role continues to evolve as our clients make the transition to a new and challenging economic environment, as it is equally challenging to our business model.

It is our hope that the Métis people of Alberta will understand our commitment to positioning AMDI as the preferred lender of choice among increasingly repeat Métis businesses. Of course, the economy will be what it will be, and we will remain a reliable source of financial and business support to all Métis participating in it.

The staff of AMDI continue to work very well together and have established a very efficient office driven by a commitment to client service and care. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work this past year – most challenging, given the uncertainty – and the Board of Directors for their commitment and numerous contributions to ensuring AMDI continues to play an integral role in the growth of the Métis Nation of Alberta. ■

# 2019/20 Métis Crossing Ltd.



For decades, the Citizens and leadership of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) have dreamed and spoken of building a place to gather, to share, and to celebrate our Métis culture and history together. A milestone on this journey was reached on December 6, 2020, when the Cultural Gathering Centre at Métis Crossing was completed! This building is another testament to the ongoing determination and commitment of our leadership to pursue the dreams of our ancestors.



Clear progress toward these goals was made in a number of ways in 2019-2020. The *Experiential Interpretive Plan* was completed; a document that defines the framework within our Métis culture, will be celebrated and shared with all people. A 10-year business strategy outlining a clear path to financial sustainability was also completed. And finally, significant progress on an operational and maintenance plan was also made.

Métis Crossing is a major initiative of the MNA. It will be a premiere centre for Alberta Métis **cultural interpretation, education, gatherings, and business development.**

Our 512-acre site is designed to engage and excite visitors. Our programming will encourage active participation of visitors in activities promoting an appreciation of our people, customs, and celebrations.

Métis Crossing has identified four main goals to support this mission:

1. To share the Métis culture with all people
2. To be a gathering place
3. To achieve financial sustainability
4. To minimize capital debt

This mission and these goals are tirelessly pursued by the Board of Directors governing Métis Crossing:

- Chairperson: Audrey Poitras, MNA President
- Vice Chairperson: Dan Cardinal, MNA Vice President
- Director: Duane Zaraska, MNA Region Two President
- Director: Andy Popko
- Director and Knowledge Holder: Art Cunningham

In March 2020, the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta forced the closure of Métis Crossing, and like all MNA entities, our operations were forced to pivot to adapt to a new reality.



## To be a gathering place – Construction of the Cultural Gathering Centre at Métis Crossing

This land located, within the Victoria District National Historic Site, was purchased in 2001. To begin, the MNA created a new entity, Métis Crossing Ltd., to build Canada's first major Métis cultural centre. Phase I work began to restore historic buildings on site and add





Board of Directors  
(Clockwise from  
bottom left):  
Art Cunningham,  
Andy Popko,  
Duane Zaraska,  
Dan Cardinal, and  
Audrey Poitras



visitor services. In 2005, after approximately \$3.2 million invested, Métis Crossing was opened to the public for the first time.

Métis Crossing operated seasonally for the next 15 years. Never though, did we lose sight of the larger vision of creating a year-round cultural attraction. The realization of this dream has been reached with the completion of the Métis Crossing Cultural Gathering Centre (MCCGC) in December 2019.

After receiving confirmation of a \$1 million contribution from the Government of Alberta, and a \$3.5 million contribution from the Government of Canada, planning for this Centre began in earnest.

Ensuring that this facility instilled a strong sense of Métis presence and pride was a foundational criterion for the design and construction of this new centre. Manasc Isaac Architecture was retained to work with the MNA and Métis Crossing to design the facility and oversee the construction. The project architect, Tiffany Shaw-Collinge, is a proud Citizen of the Métis Nation, and the cultural relevance of this structure is clear to all who enter.

A fair and transparent tender process resulted in the contracting of GenMec ACL out of Bonnyville. Their workmanship and value were exemplary throughout the entire construction process and into the warranty period as well. Project completion records indicate that **12,332 / 27,448 hours** logged on this project were by Métis people – **over 40 per cent!** In addition, three of the subtrades were Métis-owned businesses. The pride of construction is unquestionable.

Construction took approximately 14 months with seasonal deficiencies that were completed in June 2020. Based on a 37.5 hour workweek, a total of 14 full-time positions were created in the construction of this facility. Countless additional hours were invested in the planning, design, and project management.

In addition to the MNA, Canada, and Alberta, important funding partnerships were built within our Threads of the Sash Community Partnership Program:



Our sincere gratitude to each of these partners who shared in our dream and contributed to the financial success of this endeavour. Métis Crossing appreciates your participation and looks forward to long-lasting relationships.

## **To share the Métis story with all people - Interpretive and Experience Design**

Métis stories have been commemorated at many places, such as the Battle of Batoche at the Batoche National Historic Site, and elements of our contributions to the fur trade are highlighted at Fort Edmonton and Fort Calgary. But nowhere, had the stories of Alberta's Métis been shared and celebrated. Métis Crossing will do this.

In 2018, a process was begun to complete an Experiential Interpretive Plan. The purpose of this plan was to develop a framework within which all interpretation would be developed at Métis Crossing. This document has become foundational in defining Métis Crossing as a distinct and authentic Indigenous destination. Our stories are defined and shared by Métis people.

The plan begins with a defining message that “Métis are a distinct nation of Indigenous people whose diversity is woven together with strong commonalities.” The six major Métis Crossing essence categories consist of distinguishing characteristics of what's important to be recalled, remembered, and recognized at Métis Crossing. This list of distinguishing characteristics, distilled from a larger list developed during a November 2018 workshop with Citizens of the Métis Nation and Métis Crossing Team Members, are essential to help tell the site's interpretive story.

The six essences are:

1. Becoming a Nation
2. Relations & Families
3. Economic Life & Entrepreneurship
4. Land & Water Relationships
5. Creative Expressions
6. Belief Systems

These essences each express a collection of Métis and universal cultural processes that form the foundation of understanding and appreciating what shapes and governs our world. Interpretation will help the visitor experience how different outcomes occur in different places at different times, yet the inner human drives propelling these actions have a similar base.

These essences guide all that we do at Métis Crossing including the development of interpretive spaces and experiences. They also provide direction to our culinary development, building design, and team training. The development of this plan was supported by the Government of Alberta's Tourism Growth Innovation Fund.



## **To achieve financial sustainability – Business Strategy**

Working with Vision: The Experience Specialists, Métis Crossing developed a 10-year business strategy. Vision is an internationally renowned firm focused on the development of meaningful and financially sustainable attractions.

Their model combines a Masterplan/space model, market model, experience model, and cost model with a business model to create long-term success. The rationale being that all facets of the attraction must be considered together rather than in isolation.

The general approach of the Métis Crossing strategy is to create a year-round business with three main income groups including day visitors, Signature experiences, and accommodation – all of which are supported by an authentic culinary program. The implementation of the plan will result in visitors wanting to spend 2-3 days at Métis Crossing, instead of 2-3 hours.

The daily admission experiences will include a Riverlot Farm petting zoo, traditional skills demonstration, history of the Métis augmented reality, family histories, and more. This year, 2019-20, our Signature experiences included Paddle into the Past and a new winter opportunity in Tales of the Trapline. Future accommodation plans include a small lodge starting 2021 and starwatching pods projected for 2022.



## To minimize capital debt – Field- and Forest-to-Table Culinary experiences

Underlying the success of our business strategy is the addition of more infrastructure and experiences. Métis Crossing continually strives to complete these with key partnerships and prudent financing decisions.

For example, a key element in the business strategy is the development of authentic Indigenous culinary experiences. Integral to this is the perspective that Métis people have always used what nature has presented to us. The animals and plants of our regions were the foundation of our diet.

In nature, these cannot be sustainably harvested at the scale we need to service visitation at Métis Crossing. We designed and proposed a Food Forest at Métis Crossing to grow our key ingredients. Western Economic Development supported the concept of our Field- and Farm-to-Forest Culinary experience through their Canadian Experience Fund program.

## Events

Shortly after completing the Cultural Gathering Centre, Métis Crossing hosted the MNA Annual Family Christmas Party. It was a wonderful event bringing together Métis families to enjoy traditional activities such as carols by the fire, sleigh rides, and crafts.

In January 2020, the first ever Tri-Council Meeting was hosted at Métis Crossing. This event brought Métis people – governors and administrators – from across Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta together to continue building towards self-government agreements.

Métis Crossing is poised for success, and this success is built on meaningful partnerships and hard work. Métis Crossing will contribute to the growth of Alberta's tourism industry in a significant way. It is also the **Place of Pride** of which our Métis people and leadership have dreamed – a place to gather, to celebrate, and to share. ■

# 2019/20

# Métis Urban & Capital Housing Corporations

## Subsidized Housing

Wholly owned by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Métis Urban Housing Corporation of Alberta Inc. (MUHC) started its operations on November 26, 1982, with the mission of providing subsidized, adequate, and sustainable housing to low- and moderate-income Indigenous families in Alberta. On April 28, 1992, MUHC received non-profit status. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funded MUHC through Section 95 funding until January 2017. Effective February 2017, Alberta Seniors and Housing division of Government of Alberta took over MUHC's portfolio and operating agreements from the CMHC.

Our vision is to continue growing and adapting as an innovative organization, while providing affordable and quality housing that addresses the changing needs of a diverse clientele; and preparing those who are able, transition into homeownership and self-reliance. We offer rental rates that are no more than 25% of household income, which allows low- and moderate-income Indigenous families to afford and experience quality housing.

## Affordable Housing

Wholly owned by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) was incorporated on September 14, 2007, as a not-for-profit corporation. Our mission is to promote and assist Métis and other Indigenous people in Alberta with affordable, adequate, and suitable housing. We offer housing at rent that is 20% below the market in Alberta, which allows low- and moderate-income Indigenous families to afford and



**Métis**  
Urban Housing  
Corporation



experience quality housing. MCHC has leased out 10 houses to Habitat for Humanity on a 99-year lease allowing and preparing Indigenous families for home ownership.

The board, management, and staff of both MUHC and MCHC share the culture and values of the people we serve. We understand their needs and treat their families with respect and dignity. We work every day to improve the quality of the houses we offer. The board of directors for each organization consists of seven dedicated and

well-qualified individuals who represent the six regions in Alberta. As an affiliate of the MNA, MUHC and MCHC are fully accountable to the Métis within Alberta. MUHC currently owns 505 properties in Alberta, housing over 2000 Indigenous peoples. MCHC currently owns 359 properties in Alberta housing over 1500 Indigenous peoples.

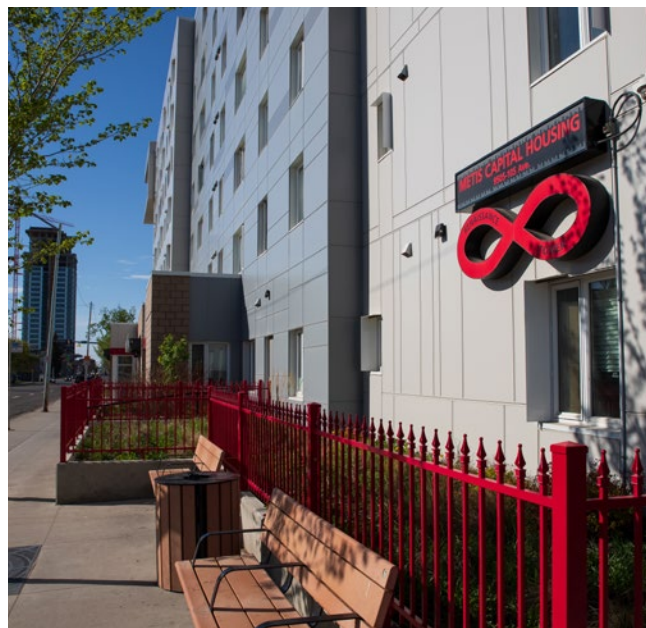
To make our programs successful we have a team of over 90 dedicated staff members assisting our clients. Our Maintenance Department is dedicated towards keeping our homes safe and secure by providing 24/7 preventative maintenance. We also engage contractors to do major renovations and all job sites are duly inspected by the team lead. The Project Coordinator ensures all jobs are completed on a priority basis.

Our Tenant Administration Department is fully dedicated to the welfare and success of our people. To assist these departments, our Administration Department looks after the day-to-day operations of the company and ensures policies and procedures are in place and followed. We have the experience, knowledge, and capacity to build and operate subsidized and affordable housing for Indigenous peoples. We have staff with many years of selfless dedication and service to ensure the well-being of our tenants.

The capacity and experience of our staff indicates our knowledge, commitment, and loyalty to the families and the communities we serve. The expertise and knowledge we have cultivated assist us to continually better our service for the people and for our organizations. MUHC, in conjunction with its sister company MCHC, has achieved various initiatives that exhibit knowledge and experience of the staff which both companies share:

1. **VOYAGEUR MANOR:** Voyageur Manor was built in partnership with the City of Edmonton as a part of the Cornerstones Plan. Under this plan, MCHC was granted capital funding of \$2,553,257 for the construction of 12 affordable row homes and the renovation of three existing homes. This project was fully funded by the City of Edmonton, and MUHC performed the project management. The project was successfully completed in September 2010 and offered safe, secure, and affordable housing to 15 Indigenous families. To date, 12 of the units are occupied.
2. **BOYLE RENAISSANCE TOWER:** Boyle Renaissance Tower is an affordable 90 unit residential complex built in partnership with the Province of Alberta under their Capital Initiatives and the City of Edmonton under their Cornerstones Plan. The project cost was \$22,000,000 and MCHC was granted capital funding of \$13,384,500. The difference in the cost was funded by internal contributions and loans. The project finished in December 2013 and opened its doors to our elders and people with disabilities. In this building, we have 30 barrier-free units available to seniors and people with disabilities, and the other 60 units are two-bedroom suites available to seniors over the age of 55. To make this project sustainable, we have five commercial units in the building; four of which are operational and provide services to our residents as well as to the public.
3. **NORRIS BUILDING & TWO DUPLEXES:** We have constructed three affordable duplexes in Edmonton near 124 Avenue and 93 street; 92 Avenue and 154 street; and 110 Avenue and 150 Street, between the years of 2011 to 2013. Two three-bedroom duplexes and one five-bedroom duplex accommodate the needs of larger Indigenous families. MCHC fully contributed construction cost of these duplexes.
4. **NIHGI MÉTIS SENIORS LODGE:** Located in north-central Edmonton, Nihgi Métis Seniors Lodge is owned and operated by MCHC.

Our 40 suites are located on three floors, enabling the residents to live in an independent apartment-style setting with a range of services and facilities. For those



in need, basic home-care service is provided under the direction of Alberta Health Services.

Since acquiring the premises, MCHC has improved services for the residents by upgrading the suites and furnishings, adding recreation, TV, phone, leisure rooms, and roof top patio. Residents enjoy visiting local attractions such as the museum and Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage. Other activities include beading and moccasin workshops.

5. **FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAM:** The Family Reunification Program (FRP) is operated by MCHC and focuses on and is dedicated to reuniting Indigenous mothers, fathers and their children by providing long-term housing with support services.

These services and programs are offered by Indigenous people for Indigenous people to produce healthier relationships and foster better outcomes based on proven results.

The goal is to assist in reuniting children in care or preserving families who may be at risk of having their children placed in care, by providing a safe and secure environment. The program is alcohol and drug free, with 24-hour staffing.

Families transition back into the community with their children in a safe home, making healthy lifestyle choices. Since opening the doors in 2013, the FRP has provided services to 51 families, including six who are currently in the program.

## Key Projects & Successes: 2019-2020

1. MCHC received additional funding from the Alberta Seniors and Housing for rebuilding of 23 homes.
2. MCHC received \$12.75m from the MNA under MNA Housing Strategy Implementation Plan. These funds are to run various programs.
3. We are constructing a Phase 2 of the FRP in Bonnyville. This program will assist 12 Indigenous families who have their children placed in care.
4. MCHC have approved 140 applications under the Home Repair Program.
5. MCHC have approved 48 applications under the Down Payment Assistance program.
6. MCHC have approved 171 applications under Rental Supplement Program.
7. MCHC have approved 29 applications under Student Rental Supplement Program.
8. MCHC have approved 753 under COVID Emergency Rental Supplement Program.

Métis Housing's Facilities Department continued to maintain and renovate homes throughout the province using in house maintenance staff as well as contractors.

### Total Renovations Completed this Year:

• MUHC units	48
• MCHC units	20
• Renaissance Tower	17
• Nighi Seniors Lodge	14
• FRP	4

### Ongoing Renovations:

63 MUHC units are currently under renovation throughout Alberta.

54 MCHC units are under renovation throughout the province. ■



# 2019/20 Métis Nation Holdings

In 1997, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) took an inactive but current company, called Métis Nation Productions, and renamed it Métis Nation Holdings Ltd. and holds 100 per cent of the shares. This entity holds title

to the MNA Provincial Office property on Kingsway Avenue and 50 per cent of the Inglewood Centre property on 111 Avenue in Edmonton. The Inglewood property is held in partnership with Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. The holding company allows for arms-length lease transactions and limited liability. The board of directors for the Métis Nation Holdings is the same as the MNA Executive.

## Métis Nation HOLDINGS

In response, the MNA Provincial Council issued direction to explore the purchase of our own building. It was reasoned that purchasing our own building would create program stability, potential for gain, and would

meet the office needs of the MNA. The parameters of the purchase were ownership should cost no more than the proposed lease and no MNA program funds could be used in the purchase.

After several months of research, a deal was concluded on the purchase of the building on Kingsway Avenue, now occupied by the MNA Provincial Office. The MNA acquired the building by assuming the existing mortgage without having to make a down payment. The MNA now holds clear title to the Delia Gray Building after paying off the mortgage in September of 2004.

Renovations undertaken in February and March of 2005 have increased the amount of office space usable for program delivery and created a more hospitable and welcoming space for our Citizens and guests. Modest renovations continued during 2006-07, designed to provide more efficient file storage and additional office space.

During 2007-08, building modifications begun with a view and focus towards energy efficiency. The years 2008-09 saw the completion of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning repair and replacement, as well as the beginning of the final phase of office modifications designed to maximize the available office space within the building. During 2010-11, renovations were completed.

The 2011-12 fiscal year saw modest upgrades to the building exterior, as well as the ongoing operation and maintenance. We continued with the exterior upgrades program, paint and finish within the interior, some modifications to the air conditioning for the server room, as well as ongoing operation and maintenance in 2012-13. Similar to the preceding year, 2015-16 saw exterior and interior upgrades, as well as ongoing operation and maintenance.



### 11738 Kingsway Avenue - MNA Provincial Office, Delia Gray Building - Edmonton

In January 1997, the building that the Métis Nation leased on St. Albert Trail was sold. Shortly after taking possession, the new owner proposed doubling the rent, which drew grave concern from the MNA.





The 2016-17 fiscal year saw significant renovations to both floors of the Delia Gray building. An open-area concept has been implemented to improve both the aesthetics and functionality of the building space, as well as accommodate a significant growth in program staffing. In 2017-18, the open-area was further developed to accommodate additional growth and increased program responsibility. Common areas and washrooms were renovated to handle increased staffing. During 2018-19, growth was the driving factor in the continued development of the space at Delia Gray. Creative use of modular furnishings has allowed accommodation of this growth while maintaining a professional atmosphere.

In 2019-20, a complete roof repair was undertaken in order to prepare for a solar panel array that will be put in place during the summer of 2020. Through the efforts of the Métis Rights and Accommodation (MRA) staff, successful applications were submitted, allowing these repairs and the go ahead at a favourable cost to the MNA. Along with an energy efficiency retrofit also planned for the summer of 2020, we look forward to an overall decreased operation and maintenance cost for the building.

## 11922 - 121A Street - Larry Desmeules Building - Edmonton

On May 1, 1999, Métis Nation Holdings completed the purchase of the building occupied by Métis Urban Housing Corporation (MUHC). This purchase was prompted by the proposed sale of the building by the previous owners. Due to the foresight of the MUHC Board, the MNA was provided the right of first refusal. The building was financed through the assumption of a mortgage and a loan to Métis Nation Holdings from the Royal Bank of Canada. Once again, no MNA program funding was used in the purchase and lease payments cover all costs associated with the building. This was a requirement put down by the MNA Board. The building has a clear title as of May of 2009.

Future plans called for additional renovations to help with increased growth of MUHC and Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC). During 2008-09, conceptual drawings for the addition of an administrative wing were created and a development permit obtained. During the fall of 2010-11, zoning issues were negotiated, a building permit was granted, and construction began in October 2010 on a 10,000 square foot addition, which was completed in April 2012.

The 2012-13 year saw the interior of the old warehouse and the majority of the old office space demolished. An upgraded, insulated warehouse with a sprinkler system is now in place. The remainder of the old office space has been converted to file storage. The roofing on the warehouse was also replaced. Landscaping and final building inspections were completed and passed.

During 2013-14, the sale of the Larry Desmeules building to MCHC was completed and was consistent with the MNA mandate of assisting affiliates wherever possible to achieve stability in program delivery.

## 12304 - 111 Avenue - Métis Veterans Building - Edmonton

On November 1, 1999, Métis Nation Holdings completed the purchase of the Inglewood Centre.

Tenants in the building include: Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. (AMDI), Pinnacle Business Services, Edmonton Métis Employment Services Centre, Alberta Family and Social Services, City Police, Mother Earth Essentials, the Métis Nation of Alberta Judiciary Council (MJC), and Métis Veterans Society.

The building mortgage was paid out and a clear title obtained in September 2010. Property management of the building, previously contracted out, has now been assumed by Métis Nation Holdings and AMDI, which holds 50 per cent of the shares in the building.



In 2011-12, major repairs included a vinyl roof membrane. In 2012-13, several leases were renegotiated at increased rates, a major replacement of the entire heating, cooling, and ventilation system was undertaken, and several tenant space upgrades were completed. The 2014-15 fiscal year saw more lease renewals at favourable rates, tenant improvements completed, and some internal shuffling of office space to see MJC move to a more appropriate location while accommodating the growth of Pinnacle Business Services.

With tenant improvements in 2015-16 to the Mother Earth Essentials and the Onion Lake Urban Office, the building is now completely leased at favourable rates.

Concentration on preventative maintenance of the parking lot, parkade, and landscaping has improved the aesthetics of the building while adding value and building longevity.

Security improvements were the focus of the 2016-17 year. Cameras were added throughout the building, and remote access electronics and monitors added to improve the safety of staff working late on afterhours training classes.

While the building is in good repair, code compliance issues were also a focus, as a number of building code changes have been made over the last couple of years. All requirements have been met. The 2017-18 fiscal year saw complete upgrades to the 3rd floor washrooms and numerous preventative maintenance activities undertaken, and 2018-19 saw complete upgrades to the 2nd floor washrooms. Major foundation work on the west wall took care of a small but persistent issue. Some electrical upgrades were completed to address aging equipment. In spite of the cost of these improvements, operating costs of the building have continued to be held at reasonable levels. A meeting space to host short-term programming needs has proved popular and will be further developed.

The 2019-20 fiscal year saw a complete energy retrofit (LED lights, smart thermostats, etc.) to the building and all heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units were upgraded to maximize efficiency. A solar panel array will be installed in the summer of 2021. Once again, successful MRA applications allowed these projects to go ahead and should result in decreased operating and energy costs. Tenant improvements were undertaken in



conjunction with lease renewals for Rupertsland Institute and the Alberta government.

## 4607 - 52 Avenue - Nekinan - Métis Crossing - Smoky Lake

In 2019-20, the Smoky Lake Continuing Care Centre was acquired through a lease arrangement in co-operation with Alberta Health Services and the Town of Smoky Lake, and has been renamed Nekinan - Métis Crossing. This 11,000 sq. ft., 20-bed facility is undergoing renovations repurposing this building into a residence for Métis Crossing staff, instructors, students, and program

resource people. The detached 4,000 sq. ft nurses residence currently acts as a storage facility while an assessment of future use is conducted. It is anticipated ownership of these facilities will be transferred to the MNA sometime in the near future.

## Other Activity

While not owned by Métis Nation Holdings, the company has invested considerable time and effort assisting in:

- The purchase of the MNA Region 1 building,
- The purchase and renovation of the MNA Region 2 building,
- The purchase of a Local building in MNA Region 3,
- The purchase of the MNA Region 4 building,
- The purchase and complete renovation of the MNA Region 5 building,
- The purchase and initial development of Métis Crossing,
- Involvement with certain MCHC projects,
- Renovations connected with Rupertsland Institute and some of its Regional Employment Services centres.

Just prior to the 2019-20 fiscal year, through a contribution from Métis Nation Holdings Ltd., 160 acres of land adjacent to the Métis Crossing property was acquired, allowing for increased options for programming and building a stronger Métis Nation. ■

# 2019/20 - 2020/21 Cree Productions

Cree Productions (1992) Ltd. was originally created to acquire, develop, redevelop, and publish learning resources about Métis people for all students in Alberta. This opportunity was made possible through the purchase of the Dr. Anne Anderson Heritage and Cultural Centre inclusive of the rights to all resources. Cree Productions has over 80 copyrighted resources with the most noteworthy publications being the Dr. Anne Anderson Cree/English resources, inclusive of a Cree dictionary.

In 1997, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), in partnership with Alberta Learning, redeveloped and published 15 beginner Cree/English books, which are available at the MNA provincial office. All the resources have received authorization from Alberta Learning and may be implemented into curricula as approved basic resources for all schools throughout the province.

In 2008-09, Cree Productions added a display case at the MNA provincial office to showcase Cree Productions wares. Throughout time and citizen requests, Cree Productions has grown into more than an educational resource. It is now a merchant of Métis products and a staple at most MNA gatherings. Behind the cultural items, you will always see a smiling face welcoming you to try on a hoodie, check out the latest design on a hat, or buy a flag to proudly fly. In 2019-20, the MNA continues to manage Cree Productions, take citizen requests on Métis merch to include, and attend MNA gatherings sharing in our Métis pride.

## Dr. Anne Anderson titles:

*(Not available currently)*

- Cree Dictionary
- Pet Beaver and Other Stories
- Cree Symbols
- Understanding Syllabic Symbols
- Beginner's Dictionary
- Let's Learn Cree
- Our Home
- WAPI
- Numbers 1 to 20 in Cree
- Numbers 1 to 1,000 in Cree
- Wild Animals in Cree
- Animals in Cree
- Insects and Spiders in Cree
- Plants in Cree
- Birds in Cree
- Opposites in Cree
- Little Hunter
- Dr. Anne on Patience, Wisdom and Love

## Additional titles:

- A New Nation (The First Métis)
- Métis Land Rights in Alberta

## Other products available:

- Men, Female & kid Sashes
- MNA Hoodies
- MNA Flags
- MNA Pins
- Lapel Sashes
- Toques
- Christmas Ball Ornaments
- Lanyards
- Infinity Earrings
- Car flags
- Shopping Cart Coins
- License plate
- Key chains
- Playing cards
- Ties
- Mugs
- Purses
- 36x72 Blue infinity flags
- MNA flags
- Brianna Lizotte's fiddling CD

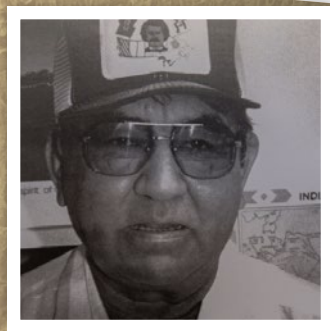
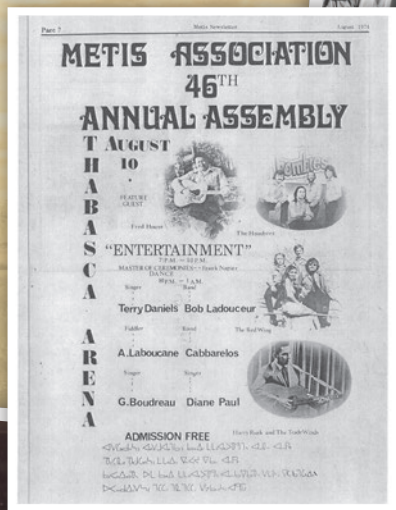
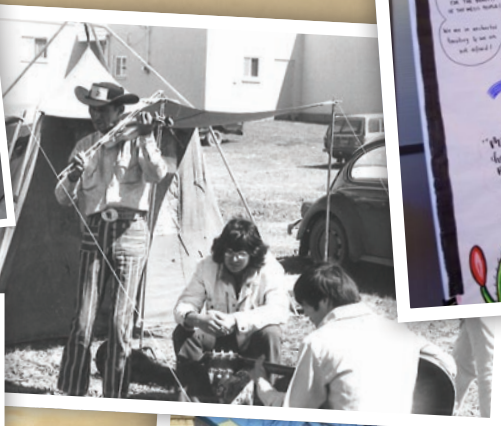
If you miss us at a gathering, come see us the MNA provincial office in Edmonton and check out the neat stuff we got in store! ■

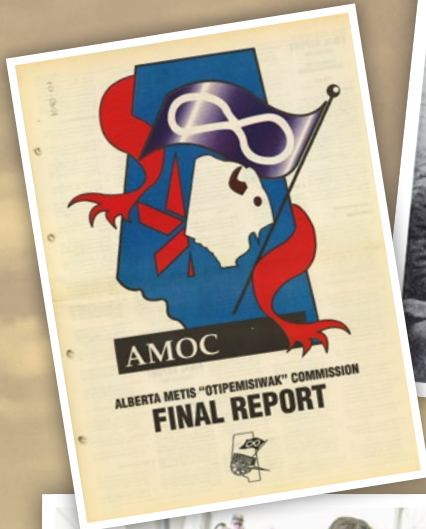
## Métis Nation of Alberta - Cree Productions

11738 Kingsway Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5  
Phone: 780-455-2200  
Albertametis.com

# CHARTING OUR PATH

## Métis Nation within Alberta Constitution





One homeland  
One province  
One city  
One people

**68th Annual Assembly**  
of the Métis Nation of Alberta Association  
August 9, 10, 11, 1996, Medicine Hat, Alberta

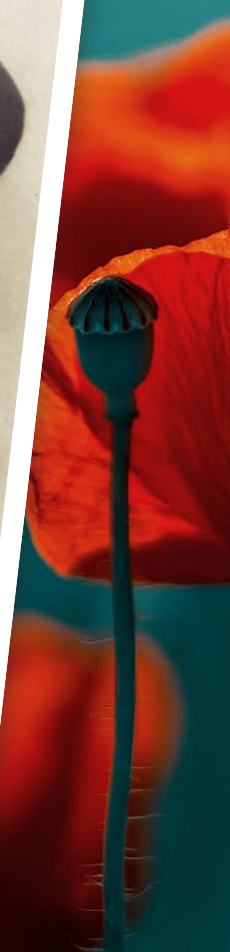
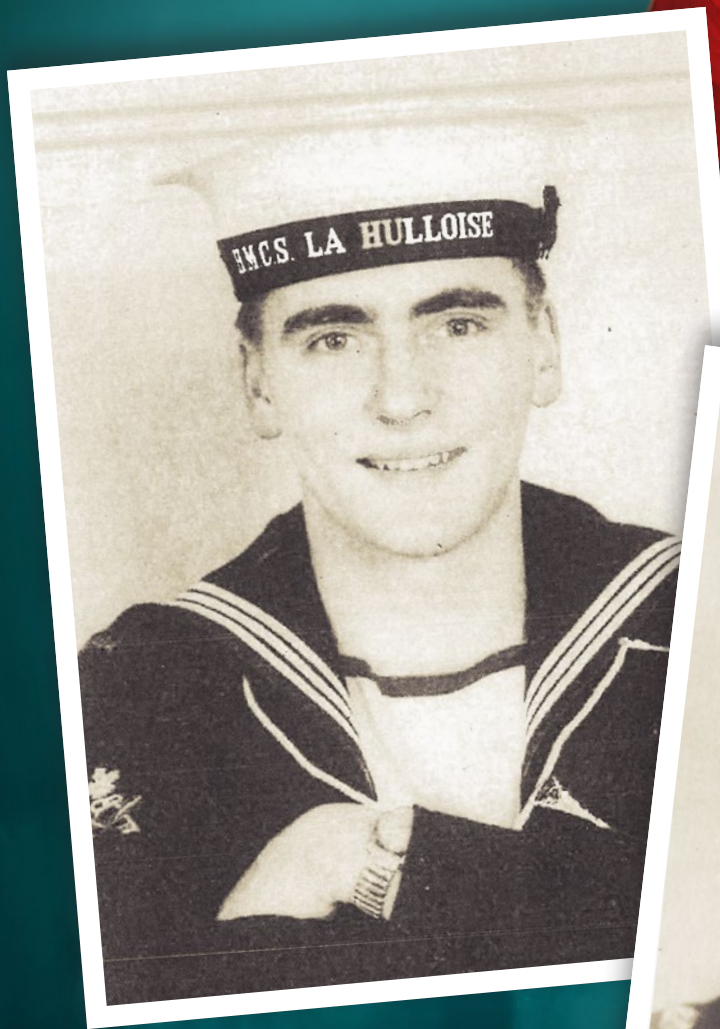
**Announcing the  
'Trial of  
Louis Riel'**  
August 9, 1996  
7:00 p.m.  
Medicine Hat  
College Theatre  
299 College Drive S.E.  
Medicine Hat, AB  
Tickets: \$5.00

For more information call (403) 526-8117  
OR toll free 1-800-252-7553



*Métis Voices.  
Métis Constitution.*

*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*

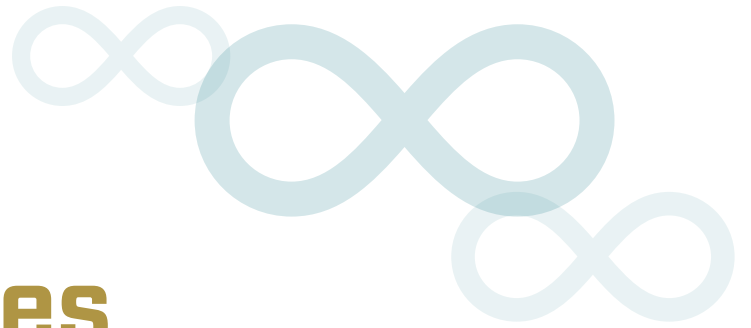


# 2020/21

DEPARTMENT  
REPORTS



# 2020/21 Children and Family Services



The Métis Nation of Alberta's (MNA) Department of Children and Family Services (CFS) is a growing and dedicated team of staff focused on providing culturally appropriate opportunities to maintain and enhance connections with family, community, and culture.

The Department of Children and Family Services is committed to developing and implementing programs and services that meet the unique needs of Métis children and families in Alberta. The Children and Family Services team hopes to walk alongside Métis children and their families through a commitment to relationships, advocacy, and access to sustainable resources embedded in culture and traditional ways of knowing.

The CFS Team aims to accomplish this through prioritizing opportunities, programs, and services that provide the necessary tools to best support Métis children and their families with initiatives in early learning and child care, child development, early literacy, family and kid-friendly activities and resources, cultural programming and education, and child intervention supports and advocacy.



## COVID-19 Programs

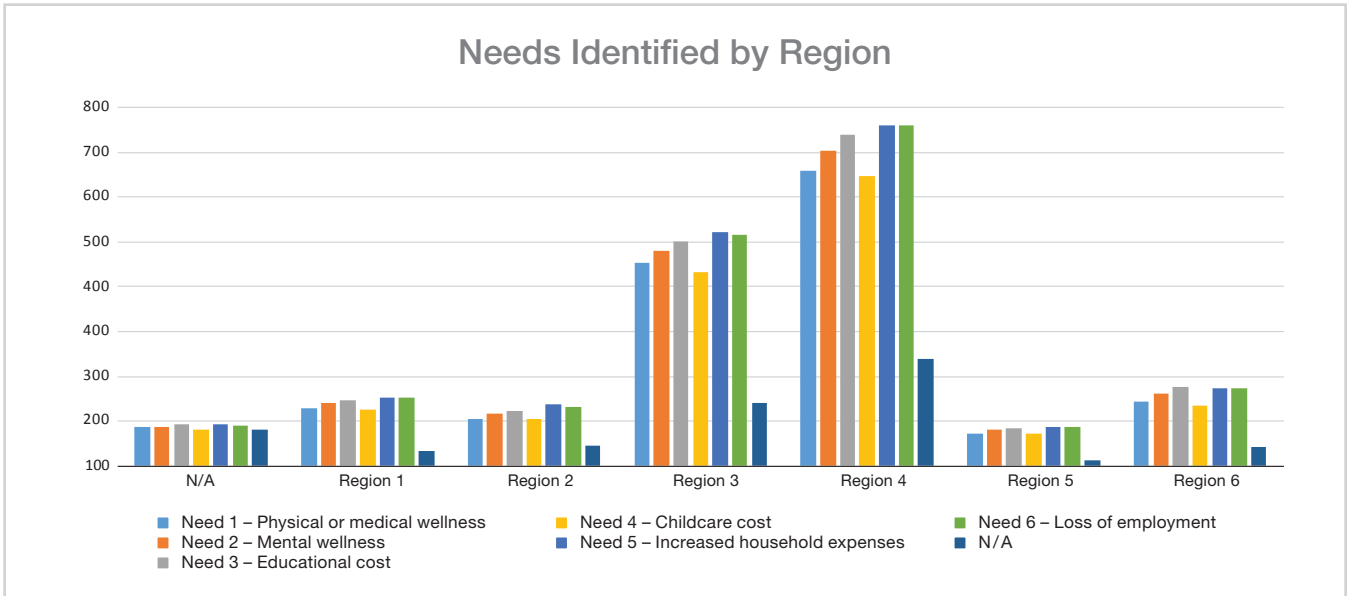
The COVID-19 pandemic created a lot of uncertainties, hardships, and challenges for all Canadians, including Métis Albertans. The CFS department recognizes that families with young children faced significant hardships related to public health measures and restrictions, which included school and child care centre closures, and new barriers to employment. In response, the CFS department developed and delivered three different COVID-19 support programs geared towards Métis families with school-aged and younger children. These programs were designed to provide Métis families with financial assistance to ensure parents could support the additional costs of schooling from home and other child care needs.

## Child Wellness Benefit (CWB)

The Child Wellness Benefit (CWB) was the first COVID-19 support program launched near the beginning of the pandemic. The CWB provided families with a one-time payment of \$500 per eligible child between the ages of 0-12 for up to three months (April, May, and June 2020) to a maximum amount of \$2,500 per household.

In total, 2,612 Métis families and 4,844 children across the province received support from the CWB program that went directly towards Métis children and families navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Métis Albertans responded to the CFS department's needs assessment questions outlining how they were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a graph of the needs assessments, captured by region.

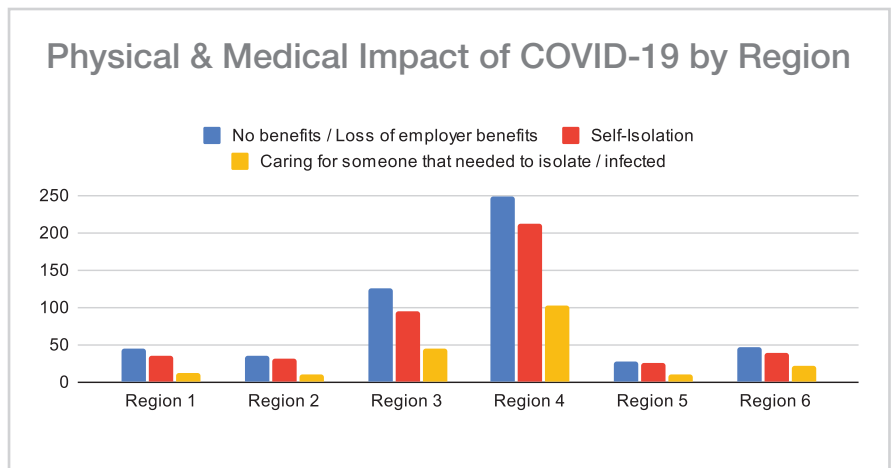
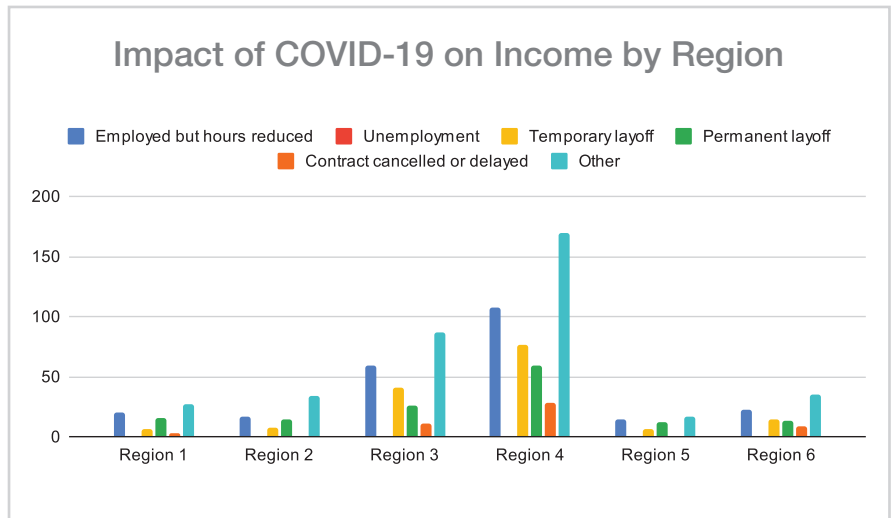




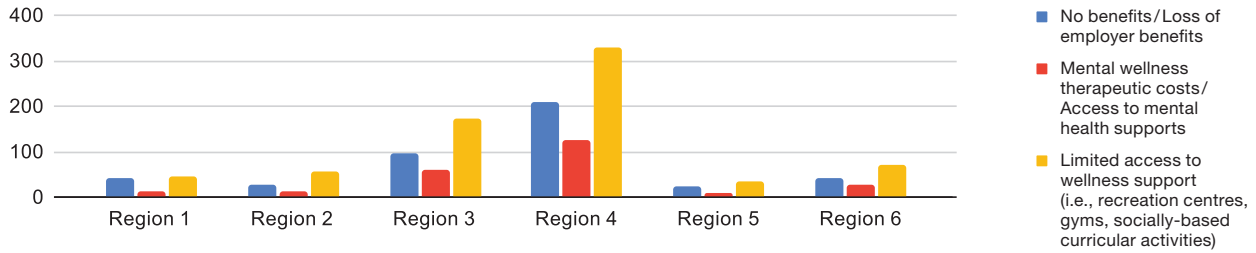
## Emergency Child and Family COVID-19 Relief Program (CFCRP)

The second COVID-19 support program the CFS department developed and implemented was the Emergency Child and Family COVID-19 Relief Program (CFCRP). This program was available to Métis families with children aged 0-12 who had lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible families received a one-time payment of up to \$500 per eligible child (0-12 years old) for three months (January, February, and March 2021) to a maximum amount of \$2,500 per household/family.

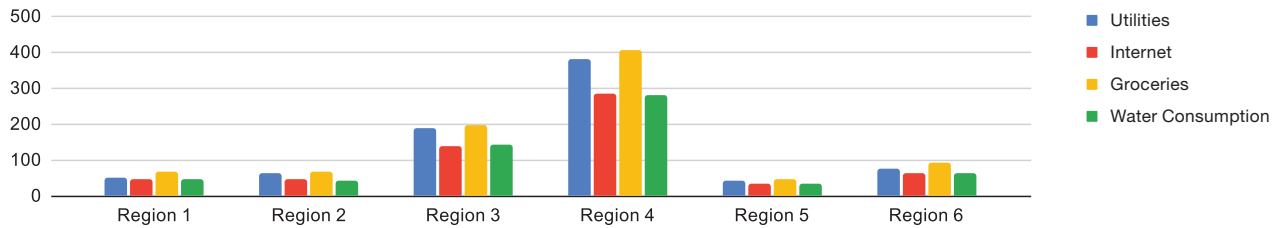
The CFCRP supported 726 Métis families during the uncertainty and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Métis Albertans responded to the CFS department’s needs assessment questions, outlining how they were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are graphs of the needs assessment, captured by region.



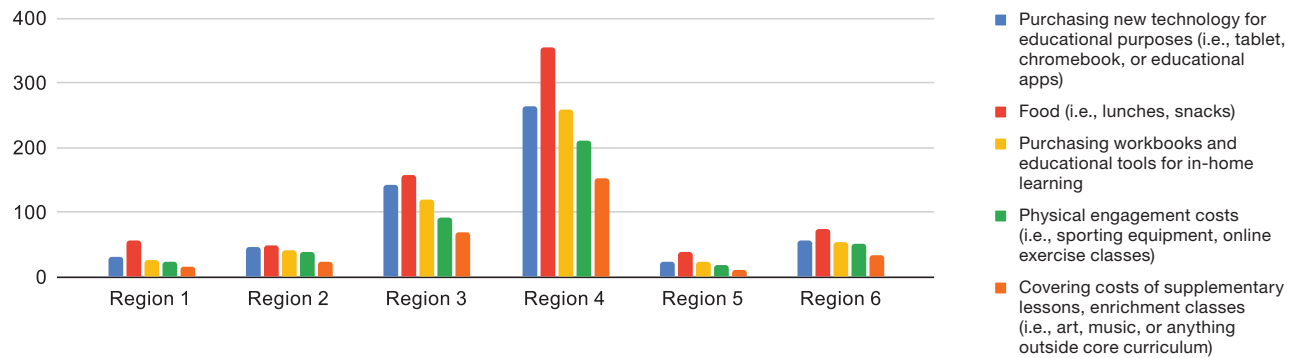
### Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health by Region



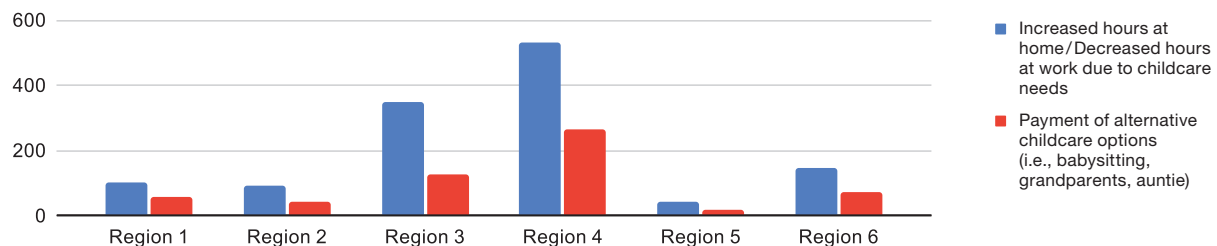
### Impact of COVID-19 on Household Expenses by Region



### Needs Assessment – Educational Costs by Region



### Needs Assessment – Childcare Costs by Region

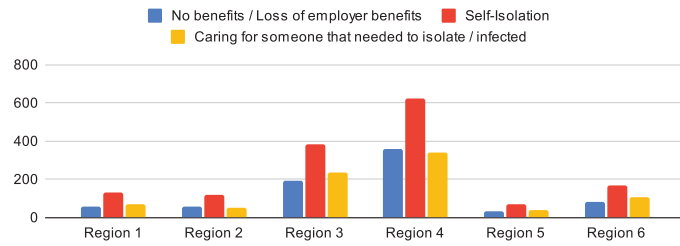


### Child and Family COVID-19 Support Program (CFCSP)

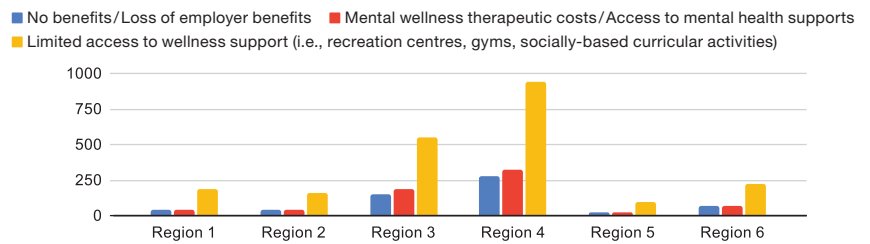
The third COVID-19 support program designed and delivered by the Department of Children and Family Services was the Child and Family COVID-19 Support Program (CFCSP). The CFCSP provided families with a one-time payment of \$500 per eligible school-aged child between the ages of 3-18 up to a maximum amount of \$2,500 per household/family.

Across the province, 2,272 Métis families and 2,502 children received support through the CFCSP for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Métis Albertans were asked questions and the responses provided CFS with a needs assessment of how they were impacted by the pandemic. Below are graphs of the needs assessments, captured by region.

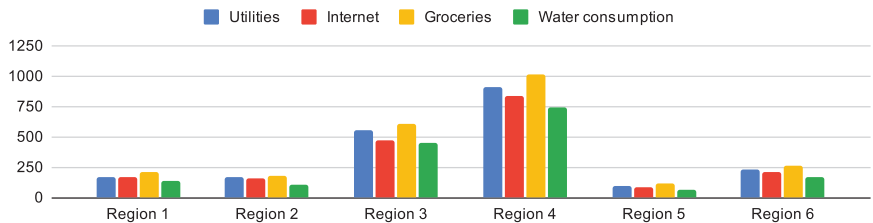
#### Physical & Medical Impact of COVID-19 by Region



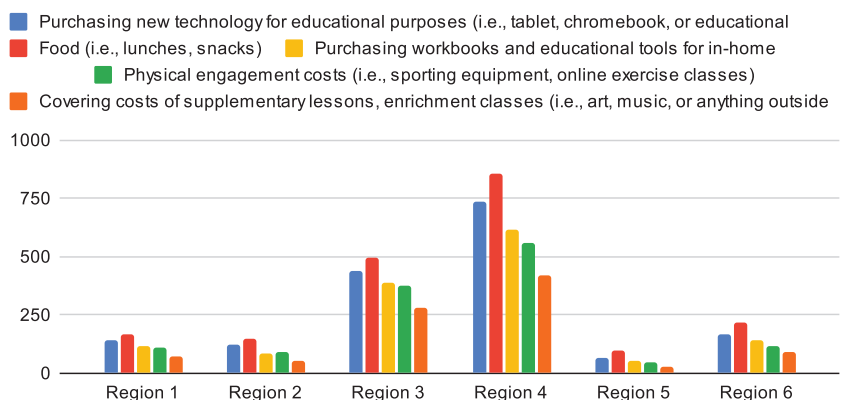
#### Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health by Region



#### Impact of COVID-19 on Household Expenses by Region



#### Needs Assessment – Educational Cost by Region





## Gear Up For School

The Children and Family Services department develops and delivers early learning programming for Métis children in Alberta aged six years old and younger

The department has identified school supply costs as a barrier to a successful educational experience for Métis families. In response, CFS developed the Gear Up For School Program, which provides Métis families with children entering pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 with school supplies. This was the second year the department ran the Gear Up for School program.

Approximately 1,000 Métis children across Alberta accessed the Gear Up For School Program in August of 2020, receiving a bundle of school supplies, including markers, pencils, notebooks, lunch kits, and water bottles. The Gear Up For School Program was a great success and provided Métis children with support to have the best possible start to their educational journey. Métis families from all six MNA regions who participated in the program expressed heartfelt gratitude.

The following are a few emails from MNA Citizens who received school supplies from the 2020 Gear Up For School program:

*"I want to thank you guys from the bottom of my heart for school supplies for my child. What a huge help for our big family."*

*"Thank you so much for the school supplies I received today. My daughter absolutely loved going through them and seeing what she'll have for the upcoming school year. Please send my thanks to the two women who I got the card and supplies from*

*today. Thanks also to all those involved in helping support our family! Many blessings to you and yours during these times."*

*"I just wanted to say a sincere thank you for the school supply packages that I picked up today for my two children. Your generosity will ensure my children start this unusual school year off on the right foot!"*

*"This is the first year I have used or known about the school supplies through the MNA, and I wanted to send a huge thank you!!! Especially with everything going on in our world this year. The supplies were a blessing. I was truly shocked and in awe. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to the whole MNA family who put all of this together for the families including mine."*

## Oskaya Ayamichikewak (Young Readers) Program

In October 2020, the CFS department was proud to announce the Oskaya Ayamichikewak (Young Readers) program in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

This program supports early learning literacy with the goal of promoting and inspiring a love of reading among Métis children and families through age-appropriate reading material. Once enrolled, Métis children receive free books delivered to their home monthly until the month of the child's fifth birthday.





Currently, 595 Métis children throughout Alberta are enrolled in the Oskaya Ayamichikewak program, and another 82 Métis children have graduated from the program.

This program is ongoing and available to eligible MNA Citizens and their families. To register for this program, email [youngreaders@metis.org](mailto:youngreaders@metis.org) to get a link to the online registration form.

## Family Christmas Party (Métis Christmas Countdown)

The CFS Department has previously been responsible for planning the annual Family Christmas Party in December, inviting Métis families throughout Alberta to gather in a centralized location and join in to celebrate the holiday season. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in December 2020, an in-person gathering was not possible and the event committee instead coordinated an engaging virtual gathering experience entitled, Métis Christmas Countdown.

The Métis Christmas Countdown was a series of short videos celebrating Christmas and Métis culture. From December 20-24, one video per day was released on the MNA's social media accounts. Each video included Métis community members sharing in culture and the joy of the season. The video segments were entitled, *Cocoa with Kookum*, *Stoves and Sashes*, *Métis Jigs and Jingles*, *Métis Jolly*

*Jamboree*, and *Storytime with Santa*. They were filmed at various locations including Métis Crossing and the Métis Nation of Alberta Provincial office.

Additionally, the CFS Department assembled 500 family Christmas packages, which contained various items meant to encourage families to actively engage in the activities featured in the videos. Some of the items included in the Christmas packages were a bannock recipe, wooden musical spoons, hot chocolate, candy canes, and a Métis Christmas children's book.

The Christmas packages reached more than 2,000 MNA Citizens, and the Christmas videos received approximately 25,000 views. Participant feedback was tremendously positive. Those who received the boxes expressed gratitude, and the comments on the social media videos reflected the joy and participation of the community.

Below are examples of some of the comments the videos received:

*"We had so much fun listening and dancing! Thank you!"*

*"Sooo fun! Beautiful video, music, and dancing. We totally feel you! Great commentary. Congrats to everyone involved!"*

*"I super enjoyed that. Great dancing and playing. Thank you so much for sharing!"*

*"I enjoyed your story. It was lovely. Merry Christmas to you and your family."*

## Community Engagement

### Michif Language Revitalization Survey

The Department of Children and Family Services is committed to revitalizing and preserving Michif, the historic language of the Métis Nation. With a better understanding of Michif fluency and levels of interest from the Métis community, CFS can support the development of language resources and programs with the goal of revitalizing Michif for future generations.

As a first step towards revitalizing Michif, CFS implemented an online survey in February 2021 to engage our Métis community and understand their fluency and level of interest in learning the Michif language. In total, we received 712 survey responses, which provided valuable information about Michif revitalization needs and priorities.

Most of the respondents emphasized the importance of preserving Michif, as it is an inherent part of Métis culture and heritage that contributes to Métis self-identity. Some citizens indicated the need to learn Michif to connect to Métis history and traditions, while others emphasized the importance of Michif as a unifying factor for the Métis community. Others noted the preservation of Michif contributes to decolonization and serves to promote the reconciliation process in Canada.

This survey serves as a foundational step towards addressing the CFS department’s knowledge gap in the identification of Michif speakers and their levels of fluency, as well as the community’s interest in learning the language.

The CFS department is grateful to the Métis community members who shared their experiences, stories, and preferences about Michif. The information provided will serve as a foundation to revitalize Michif for future generations of Métis Albertans.

### Children’s Services Survey

The Children and Family Services Department wanted to explore Métis Albertans’ experiences and perspectives of the current Alberta Children’s Services system to gain a better understanding of community needs, priorities, challenges, and successes. Early in 2020, the CFS team hosted engagement sessions, which were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020, the CFS team launched an online survey to gather additional experiences and perspectives from Métis Albertans on the current Alberta Children’s Services system. In total, 511 respondents from across all six MNA regions engaged with the department through in-person sessions, phone interviews, and the online survey. The information

# MICHIF REVITALIZATION SURVEY NEXT STEPS



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**  
Identify different dialects of Michif spoken in different regions of Alberta to support the development of corresponding resources.



**MICHIF COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**  
Develop a thorough communications plan and a database for existing Michif resources.



**ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES & PROGRAMS**  
Develop accessible Michif resources and programs for all learners.



**STRUCTURED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**  
Develop structured learning opportunities for beginners, including group classes for practicing Michif.

**GROUP LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**  
Create space for group learning opportunities for Métis Albertans.



gathered was extremely valuable in helping the CFS department identify gaps and challenges in the current Children's Services system.

The ideas and suggestions gathered from Métis Albertans were categorized into eight themes, which will guide the strategic direction of the CFS department:

- Keep Métis families and communities together
- Connect Métis families with culture and traditional practices
- Support caregivers in parenting roles and provide life skills mentorship to all Métis Albertans
- Increase access to mental health/emotional support and addictions programs, and address family violence
- Provide enriching opportunities for Métis youth, support them with continuing school and finding employment, and ensure youth have access to the services they are entitled to
- Provide financial support so families have access to quality resources essential for survival (e.g., food, housing, healthcare, child care, transportation)
- Support Métis Albertans navigating public systems (e.g., Alberta Children's Services, justice system)
- Offer assistance to seniors, elders, and people with disabilities

### Early Learning and Child Care Survey

Since the signing of the Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Accord in 2019, the Department of Children and Family Services has been responsible for developing and implementing the MNA's early learning and child care initiatives geared towards children under six years old and their families. In order to support the development of the department's strategic direction over the next 10 years, the CFS team launched an online survey of 11 questions in January and February of 2021 to uncover perspectives, priorities, and needs related to early learning and child care for Métis people living in Alberta.

Six hundred ninety-five respondents completed the survey, providing CFS with community-specific information that will help inform the department's early learning and child care strategy. Thank you to everyone who completed this survey! The information and feedback collected were incredibly valuable.

Key themes from the survey results:

- The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for Métis Albertans accessing early learning and child care services



- Many Métis Albertans face significant financial barriers in accessing early learning and child care services, both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Culturally-specific early learning and child care is important to Métis Albertans
- There are location-specific opportunities and challenges related to early learning and child care
- Métis Albertans want high-quality, culturally safe, relevant, and appropriate services
- Early learning and child care intersects with other issues such as health, child and family services, education, and policy

### Parent and Child Pilates Program

The CFS department was honoured to have hosted a virtual physical wellness program, which gave Métis children aged 4-11 years old and their families the exciting opportunity to participate in Pilates lessons with Kerri Buchberger, a Métis, Canada Games gold medalist.

Métis families from across Alberta participated in weekly virtual Pilates lessons throughout April 2021. The Pilates classes served as a much-needed opportunity to bond with family and community while under tight social restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Métis families enjoyed the low-impact physical activity, all while being inspired by the athleticism, inspiration, and generosity of a Métis Albertan, Canada Games gold medalist.

## Children's Services Introduction

The Children and Family Services department works collaboratively with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services (CS) to support Métis children, youth, and families involved with CS by advocating for further opportunities supporting the unique needs of Métis children and families across Alberta.

Department priorities include:

- Strengthening families and engaging community through Métis culture
- Providing client-centered, culturally sensitive approaches to wellness
- Helping identify Métis children/youth in care and supporting the MNA Citizenship process for children in care
- Developing Métis-specific cultural plans with CS staff and foster/kinship/adoptive families
- Offering cultural training and resources to CS staff and caregivers of Métis children/youth
- Providing advocacy, ongoing support, and community-based referrals to families in the system
- Advocating for Métis children to remain connected to their families and communities
- Ensuring Métis children and families have access to services and supports responsive to the unique needs of Métis Albertans

## Métis Family Resource Program

The Métis Family Resource Program (MFRP) works in conjunction with Alberta CS to ensure Métis children, youth, and families across Alberta are referred to the program. The MFRP aims to strengthen families and engage community through Métis culture, client-centered culturally-sensitive approaches to wellness, culturally-appropriate family plans, advocacy, and community-based referrals. The goal of the MFRP is to instill a greater understanding of Métis culture, values, and beliefs in

those who support and care for Métis children and families. Through the development of cultural plans for Métis children involved with CS, presentations to CS staff, and direct support of families with CS involvement, the MFRP is an instrumental link between Métis families and Alberta CS. This year, 18 families from all six MNA regions sought resources and supports from the program.

The Métis Resource Worker (MRW) helped identify 36 children with CS involvement and supported them through the MNA Citizenship process. Out of these 36 Métis children, the MRW completed 15 cultural plans, which included cultural activities and resources to strengthen and support their Métis identity. Cultural plans serve as a formal agreement to ensure Métis children in CS care remain connected to their heritage and community. The CFS department continues offering information and resources to Métis children and their caregivers after a cultural plan is created.

Additionally, many families of Métis children who did not have cultural plans in place prior to adoption have since connected directly with the MFRP for cultural information, opportunities, and ongoing supports. The CFS departments hopes to see more Métis children, youth, and families connecting with the MFRP, and ultimately, their culture, community, and heritage.

## Cultural plans created through the Métis Family Resource Program

Through the Métis Family Resource Program, 42 per cent of children under Children's Services care who were identified as Métis now have a cultural plan to ensure they are supported and connected to their heritage.

## Supports and Services Navigator

The Supports and Services Navigator (SSN) offers information and guidance to Métis Albertans to help them navigate and access programs, supports, and resources. Over the past year, the SSN assisted 2,004 unique MNA Citizens and self-identified Métis people.

Over this past year, the SSN facilitated successful connections for Métis individuals of all ages and regions in more than 20 areas.

Aside from COVID-19-related queries, people predominantly wanted to connect with:

- Mental health and addiction services
- Legal guidance
- Training, employment programming, and education
- Housing-assistance subsidies, repairs, and seniors' housing



- Non-insured health benefits

Solutions offered by the MNA:

- The Wellness Program
- Rupertsland Institute
- Métis Capital Housing Corporation
- Regional offices
- Dental programming
- The most referred external supports:
- The Alberta Child/Adult Health Benefit
- Alberta Works Emergency Financial Assistance
- Alberta Health Services Primary Care Network
- Opportunities for additional supports and services:
- Timely access to culturally-centered addictions and mental health programming
- Focused navigation services for seniors
- Legal system navigation and services

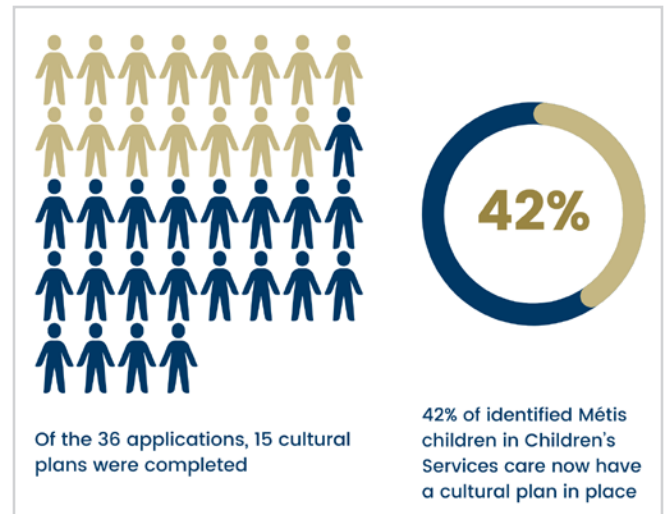
## Community Information Sessions

Community Information Sessions are a time to gather and exchange knowledge on important topics. The purpose of these sessions is to create a space where Métis people can safely learn from one another, connect to community, and enhance collective well-being. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were required to host these events virtually for the time being. During this fiscal year, we facilitated two community information sessions.

The first session occurred February 24, 2021, with the MNA's Harvesting Coordinator, Craig Letendre, presenting. The event was hosted on Zoom and livestreamed on the MNA's Facebook page. Over 90 people joined the Zoom webinar and another 100 people watched the Facebook livestream in real time. The recorded livestream was saved to the MNA's Facebook page, where it received approximately 1,000 views within the first week and over 4,400 total views since then.

This session covered:

- Harvesting as a way of life
- Criteria for obtaining a harvesting card in Alberta
- Ancestral connection to the land (pre-1900)
- Domestic fishing licenses, AlbertaRELM, and trapping
- When and where harvesters can harvest in Alberta
- Conservation, and
- The great 100 Walleye Story!



The second community information session, Foundations of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), was held on March 25, 2021, presented by Brittany Durant, the interim supervisor of the McDaniel Youth Program at Catholic Social Services and co-chair of the Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network. Approximately 20 people attended the event including members of community support organizations, caregivers, and interested individuals. The group created a safe space where participants could ask questions, share experiences and resources, improve their understanding of FASD, and dispel the stigma surrounding the topic.

This session focused on:

- Factors contributing to FASD
- The role we can each play in FASD prevention
- How to support those impacted by FASD
- Busting myths and dispelling the stigma surrounding FASD

The CFS department is looking forward to hosting more community information sessions on a bi-monthly basis.

## Closing Statement

Reflecting on both the trials and successes over past year, the Children and Family Services Department looks forward to continually developing opportunities for MNA Citizens to connect with family, community, and culture. The CFS team continues to walk alongside Métis children and families, helping them thrive by prioritizing programs and services related to early learning and child care, childhood development, intervention supports and advocacy, and cultural education and engagement. ■

# 2020/21 Communications



Every year is bigger and better than the last at the MNA but the pandemic sparked an even faster pace of progress for the Communications Department. The 2020/21 year saw so many new projects, both COVID-related and non-COVID-related. To keep up, we added some new talent to our team to support the communications needs of the provincial office departments and MNA affiliates.

We also re-focused our methods of communication to better meet the needs of Citizens during the prolonged period of isolation. When we couldn't gather in person, we did the next best thing, video content and virtual events.

We saw growth on all promotional platforms and more people engaging with the MNA's various events, programs, and initiatives than ever before.

As showcased below, our communications efforts continue to have a positive impact and we aim to keep our citizens informed and connected to community.

## Communications Projects at a Glance

Since August 2020, Communications has completed almost **200 projects**. This includes over **50 videos**, over **60 design projects**, and **70+ communications strategy/coordination projects**.

Each of these projects comes with its own set of requirements, needs, and challenges. With each MNA department and some affiliates requiring more communications support than ever, we assigned each of our team members a department/affiliate. That way, coordinators and designers become experts in the needs and expectations of each project that comes their way.

## New Website

We are very proud to announce that we recently launched the new MNA website! Many hours of design, content

creation, review, and maintenance go into a project like this and we're so glad to have a vibrant platform to match all the wonderful work coming out of the MNA.

## Bi-Weekly E-Newsletter

- Over 2,300 new subscriptions
- Email open rate is 37%. 16% above industry average

## Social Media Engagement

- Over 3,500 new Facebook followers for a total of 16,670
- 816 new Instagram followers for a total of 4,500

## Pandemic Communications

Communications continues to work closely with the Executive, Health, Child and Family Services, and Youth Programs & Services Departments to ensure Métis Albertans can easily access MNA supports, learn more about their availability, and receive updates surrounding the pandemic. We had the opportunity to conceptualize, realize and participate in many COVID-related projects. As the conversation turned toward vaccines, we worked with the Health Department to ensure MNA Citizens had everything they needed to make an informed decision on immunization. Here's a non-exhaustive list of pandemic-related communications projects we worked on:

- Vaccin-Nation Webinars
- Vaccine Informational Videos
- Auntie-Virus Social Media Campaign & MNA Vaccine Clinics
- Press releases and coordination of media
- Digital media promotion of MNA supports



## Virtual Events

With our 'new normal' taking the form of digital and video communications, Communications worked on a number of virtual events throughout the 2020/21 year. The main goal was always to cultivate a culturally safe and fun environment for all Métis Albertans to connect with their family, friends, and community. Read on to learn about the work that went into each event.

### Youth Leadership Conference

Our Métis youth are the leaders of tomorrow and the MNA works to foster their knowledge and growth in Métis self-governance. The Youth Leadership aimed to do just that with informative and inspirational presentations from Métis youth leaders and governance experts. Communications conceptualized, filmed, and edited all video content and supported with livestream logistics.

### Youth & Seniors Gathering (YSG)

With the 2020 YSG occurring just before pandemic health measures came into effect, the 2021 event was the first virtual version of the annual gathering. Communications worked closely with the Youth Department to schedule video shoots with all regional performers. All shoots took place in the Métis Crossing Gathering Hall which provided the perfect backdrop. All footage was then edited and completed with branded MNA assets. Communications also supported with the livestream platform build and promotional materials, and event day logistics.

### Alberta Métis Fest

We learned a lot from our first virtual Alberta Métis Fest last year and we were excited to bring that knowledge to a bigger and better online event. Engagement during the event was high with thousands of viewers and hundreds of comments and shares on social media.

Communications also oversaw the build of the MNA Special Events webpages (housed on the new MNA website) for Métis Fest which included a virtual artisan's market, jigging and fiddling competition pages with live voting, and a livestream portal. Now, all virtual MNA events will take place through our own website, instead of on a third-party platform.

Working with the Youth Programs and Services department, we:

- Built a brand-new interactive webpage, connected to the MNA's new website, for viewers to view, vote, and explore the day-long showcase of Métis talent
- Produced the live event working with FMAV (audio & visual) and emcees on scripts, facilitated giveaways, and dealt with any issues during the live cast
- Filmed and edited promotional videos, regional greetings, and performance videos
- Produced Métis pride and competition compilation videos
- Created a special edition of the Métis anthem video
- Ran a jigging competition with interactive voting

Livestream analytics:

- Over 1000 views
- Almost 30k minutes viewed
- Over 30 min average watch time

Engagement analytics (Facebook stream):

- 3,100 engagements
- 2,170 reactions
- 108 shares
- 841 comments
- 11,500 people reached

## Métis Week

Métis Week went virtual for the very first time in 2020. We saw many of our yearly favorites, along with some exciting new events. Remembrance Day opened the week with a heartfelt tribute video to our brave Métis veterans. In the following days, we shared a variety of video content and virtual events for all Albertans to take part in. Anchoring the week was a video commemoration of Louis Riel on November 16, the date of his hanging in 1885. Communications was also working behind the scenes on:

- Digital graphics
- Videography (filming and editing)
- Promotional support
  - Paid ads
  - Social media and web promotion
- Media coordination

## Annual (Video) Reports

As the pandemic continued, the 92nd Annual General Assembly was cancelled in accordance with provincial health measures. So that MNA Citizens could still learn about department, region, and affiliate activities, Communications scheduled, filmed, edited, and distributed video reports from each MNA region and the provincial office. You can watch them all here: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqoPJvXJyXN-ZRAOMydi\\_ltyb86lHX](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbqoPJvXJyXN-ZRAOMydi_ltyb86lHX)

## MNA Department, Region & Affiliate Support

Communications also worked with MNA Provincial Office departments, regions, and affiliates on many exciting projects in 2020/21.

Our graphic designers, communications coordinators, and videographers all



work together to ensure each project is its best. Most of the following projects require:

- Copy writing
- Strategic planning
- Social media promotion
- Design
  - Posters
  - Digital graphics
  - Reports
  - SWAG
  - Banners/signage
  - Application forms
- Videography
  - Scheduling & shooting
  - Editing
  - Design of video assets like nameplates & motion graphics

## Children and Family Services

- Kids Culture Cards
- Métis Family Christmas Countdown
- Community Information Nights
- Early Learning Materials
- Cultural workbooks for children
- Imagination Library
- Métis Resource Worker materials
- Act C-92 information sheet
- Subsequent phases of the Child Wellness Benefit (COVID-19 Support Plan)

## Health

- Vaccine Rollout
- COVID-19 Support Program
- COVID-19
- Community Engagement
- Quit Core
- Métis Wellness Program
- MNA Vaccine Clinics
- MNA/UofA Dental Programs

- Smoking Cessation
- Opioid Awareness and Training
- Comprehensive Health & Wellness Clinic
- Virtual Care Clinic
- Wellness Advocate/Community Wellness
- Maternal & Perinatal Health
- Cancer Supports

## Human Resources

- Job opening promotions
- Orange Shirt Day design

## Métis Identification and Registry Systems

- Registry Drives
- Signage
- Harvesting Information & Supports
- Promotional products (swag)

## Climate Change

- Climate Change Action Plan
- Askiy Community Monitoring
- Updated web content

## Consultation

- The Central East Transfer Out Project
- Impact Assessments
- Promotional Products (swag)

## Economic Development

- Declaration of Relationship
- Trans-Mountain Pipeline
- Alberta Métis Works
- Strategy Roadmap
- Wellbeing Outcomes



## Environment

- Land Management Engagements
- Updated Web Content
- Chronic Wasting Disease Engagements
- Community Garden
- Environmental Guardian Campaign
- Ice Fishing
- Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas

## Youth Programs and Services

- Virtual camps hangouts
- Lifeskills
- Youth Hangouts
- Cultural Enrichment
- Keeping it Riel Podcast
- Promotional products (swag) design
- Sport and Recreation Grant promotion

## Regional Offices

- Posters and signage
- Digital promotion including social media and mass emails
- Videography
- Promotional items

## Affiliates

- Digital promotion including social media and mass emails
- Communications planning and graphic design
- File sharing
- Web content
- Videography and video editing

Here in the Communications Department, we are proud and honoured to help all MNA stakeholders achieve their goals. We look forward to the wonderful work we will all do together in the coming year! ■

# 2020/21 Consultation



The natural beauty of Buttertown in Northern Alberta, near Fort Vermilion

## Introduction

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)'s Consultation Department was previously an internal team within the Department of Métis Rights and Accommodation but, since acquiring additional capacity from multiple levels of government and diversifying and expanding team roles, it became its own department in March 2021. The Consultation Department is committed to ensuring the complex obligations the Crown owes to Indigenous rights consultation, particularly the rights, claims, and interests of the Métis within Alberta as represented by the MNA, are achieved in all projects that potentially impact the section 35 Aboriginal rights of Métis Albertans.

Though the 2020-21 fiscal year contained many challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Consultation Department rose to the occasion and remained adaptive in addressing the consultation needs of Métis across the province. This included hiring a new Consultation Coordinator in Region Two, maintaining a high level of responsiveness to industry and government project notifications while working remotely, conducting groundbreaking research on contemporary and historic Métis land use in Alberta, and acquiring books and materials for a new consultation resource library to be developed in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

## MNA Pre-Consultation Program

The Pre-Consultation Program, funded by the Government of Alberta and delivered jointly by the MNA and its Regional Consultation Offices from 2019-2021, stands out as a major success for the Consultation Department. This multi-regional project involved documenting historical and contemporary Métis land use across Alberta. Through the concerted efforts of the MNA Regional Consultation Offices, leadership, and coordinators, the Pre-Consultation Program resulted in a series of in-depth reports detailing the current and historic land use activities of Métis in Alberta. This project involved interviews with hundreds of Métis Citizens and concluded with Traditional Land Use (TLU) Study Reports documenting the stories, histories, and land use of Métis geographically. The information gathered through this project will be used for years to come and contribute greatly to the MNA's ability to assess impacts on the rights, claims, and interests of the Métis Nation within Alberta.



A Yarrow plant found during a TLU study

## Resource Library

This year, the Consultation Department secured funding to create a Consultation Resource Centre & Library, with completion aimed for early 2022. Books and other materials collected up to this point will allow for quicker research on Métis history, occupancy, and land use when assessing industry and government project impacts, and also help the Consultation Department identify potential gaps in historical records so future land use studies and Knowledge Holder interviews can fill those gaps.

This new Resource Library will streamline the research process when documenting an area or community affected by industry activity by using a database system focused on relating specific and general examples of Métis land use to associated geographical areas. As of the end of the fiscal 2020-2021 year, the Consultation Resource Centre contains over 400 unique materials related to Métis rights, claims and interests. (i.e. books, historical documents, academic articles, etc.).



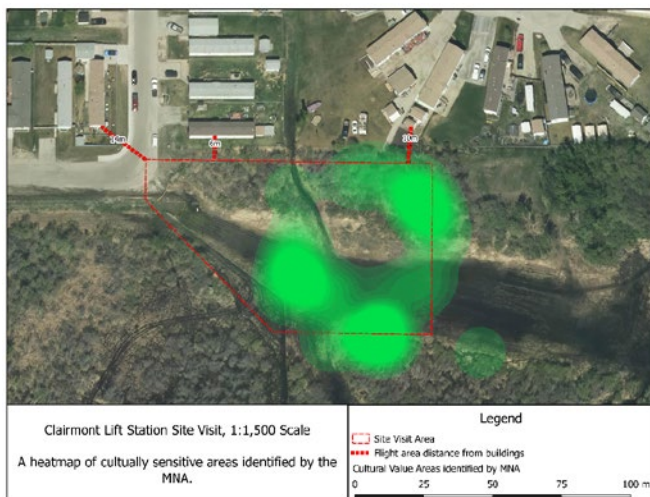
Some of the books collected for the Consultation Resource Library

## GIS Asset Generation

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are a tool the Consultation Department uses to relate Traditional Knowledge and Métis land use with the physical area affected by industry and government projects. This process often results in creating maps to better understand the impacts a project, such as a pipeline, may have on areas of land used by the Métis. These maps are also useful in communicating those impacts back to industry, government, and Métis Citizens.

To develop these maps, data related to a project area is aggregated or collected, and traditional knowledge is transferred into digital files, known as assets, that are entered into the GIS system. This area of technology has been the Consultation Department's growing focus as the number of projects continues to increase, correlating with dramatic increases in the volume of information the MNA has compiled in respect to historic and contemporary exercises of Métis rights across Alberta.

**In the 2020-21 year,**  
the Consultation Department collected or created over **560 assets** and generated over **200 maps**, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of **Métis land use** and are valuable tools to defend and assert **Métis rights, claims, and interests** throughout the province.



## Environmental Impact Assessment

As mentioned in last year's report from the former MRA department, Consultation staff undertook training to better understand Canada's Environmental Impact Assessment process and how the federal government determines project impacts on the environment. This training allowed the Consultation Team to improve the quality and efficiency of MNA responses to environmental concerns on projects. To further strengthen the relationship and funding agreements with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Consultation Team reviewed and commented on their *Practitioner's Guide for Environmental Assessments* and *Practitioner's Guide on the Duty to Consult*, respectively.

## Project Notifications & Consultation Activities

Over the 2020-21 year, the Consultation Department dealt with many projects that triggered the Crown's duty to consult the MNA on behalf of the Métis within Alberta. There were over 270 industry and government notifications received and actioned by the Consultation Department between April 2020 and March 2021. These notifications were for proposed projects, policies, and/or legislation that had the potential to adversely impact Métis rights and required at least a preliminary review for potential impacts.

Examples requiring a formal MNA Consultation notification:

- **Passing legislation or policy that could affect Indigenous peoples:** implementing fees to use Crown land, or regulating hunting and fishing
- **Issuing a permit allowing a project to proceed:** land developments like municipal infrastructure, or natural resource projects like pipelines, oil wells, or logging
- **Taking up Crown lands for development or protection:** creating new Reserves under the Indian Act, designating parks and protected areas

In practice, the day-to-day work required for fulfilling Métis consultation adequately on industry and government projects and policies often involves the following:

- **Meeting with the Crown or industry proponents** to share information about projects, policy and legislation drafts, or to develop processes for active Consultation areas





Site visit at the EPCOR E.L. Smith Solar Farm showing clearing of vegetation in preparation for construction



Orange Hawkweed, an invasive species, discovered at a site visit in the Edmonton River Valley

- **Negotiating capacity** for the Métis Nation to meaningfully participate in consultation
- **Responding to questions and concerns** raised by Citizens, the Crown, or the Proponent about a project
- **Demonstrating the existence of Métis rights, claims, and interests** through historical records research, Citizen engagements, and traditional land use studies
- **Defining and recording concerns or potential impacts** of a project on Métis rights, claims, and interests
- Maintaining a complete record of all consultation activities, such as environmental reviews, traditional lands use studies, and engagement outcomes
- Designing and negotiating mitigation and accommodation measures to offset potential impacts
- Drafting and supporting legal interventions to regulatory tribunals and courts where potential impacts have not been meaningfully addressed

## Conclusion and What's Next

The MNA Consultation Department exists to ensure projects, developments, and policies do not adversely impact the rights, claims, and interests of our Métis Citizens. To that end, the department will focus on a number of priorities in the 2021-22 year:

- Advance the Government of Alberta's recognition of their consultation obligations to the MNA
- Develop sufficient long-term federal capacity funding mechanisms for Consultation
- Complete and operationalize the Consultation Resource Centre & Library, including:
  - Organizing current materials and creating a database with a system that facilitates advancing Métis rights
  - Increasing resource availability and searchability for MNA staff and Citizens
- Increase Citizen communication and education on Indigenous rights consultation through the new MNA website

By focusing on these priorities, the Consultation Department will continue improving its capacity to respond to industry and government projects while increasing Métis Citizens' involvement in consultation activities. Education and awareness are crucial to these goals, which is why the Consultation Department is prioritizing developing accessible resources for Métis Citizens, and establishing better ways to communicate industry and government activities to those who may be affected. Our dedicated team of professionals look forward to continuing this integral work as part of your Métis government for years to come. ■

# 2020/21 Department of Health

The Métis Nation of Alberta's (MNA) Department of Health works to provide culturally appropriate, self-directed health and wellness opportunities to address the unique health profile of Métis Albertans and their communities.

Our work is grounded in the strength and resiliency of Métis people, and we are dedicated to identifying and sharing the unique health experiences of Métis Albertans. This translates into advocacy, policy, programs and services development, while incorporating key concepts of cultural safety.

Our department has two core pillars – community wellness and health research. These pillars are entirely grant funded as well as complimentary as research flows into action or advocacy.

## HEALTH RESEARCH

Partners with organizations in academic and health sectors to recognize and investigate the health experiences of Métis Albertans as distinct from other Indigenous groups.

## COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Committed to developing programs and services that will result in the betterment of health outcomes for Métis Albertans.

## Community Wellness Pillar Highlights

### The Compassionate Care: Cancer Transportation Program

MNA Citizens have expressed the financial cost of needing to travel to and from appointments as a barrier to

seeking the treatment they require. The Compassionate Care program helps to alleviate some of the financial stress Métis Citizens are faced with during a difficult and often costly time by offering financial reimbursement for some of the costs associated with travel to and from their cancer-related medical appointments.

This program is made possible through funding from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC).

### Program Highlights

Available to MNA Citizens of all ages residing anywhere in Alberta who must travel a minimum of 50km (one-way) to attend their cancer-related appointments.


Individuals who plan on using personal transportation must have access to an operational vehicle and a driver (e.g. family member, friend, etc.) to take them to and from appointments. They must provide a proof of appointment letter from their medical provider and their MNA Citizenship number or ID to access the program.

MNA Citizens will attend their cancer treatment at the facility where they are receiving treatment and be responsible for finding their own transportation method. Reimbursement for mileage, bus fare, and parking (up to \$40 reimbursement for parking per appointment) will occur after the appointment has taken place and will be mailed out directly to the provided home address.

### Common questions received about this program


***Why only cancer? What is in place for people with other medical needs?***

As CPAC funds this program, only those travelling to a cancer-related appointment are eligible to receive this benefit. For a different service that may help alleviate some of the financial burdens of being away from home for medical appointments, please visit our section on the Medically Necessary Accommodations program.




## DENTAL SERVICES


Through our collaboration with the University of Alberta's School of Dentistry, we are now able to offer Métis Nation of Alberta Citizens a variety of affordable dental services.



**YOUTH DENTAL**  
Services for children ages 3-16 include exams, cleanings, fillings, and extractions. These services are provided by the pediatric dental program.




**ADULT EMERGENCY**  
Citizens 18 years and older can receive emergency tooth extractions and root canals at an affordable cost. The treatment fee is \$100 covering the initial exam, consult, and x-ray. Depending on services required, there may be additional charges ranging from \$79 – \$141. The dental clinic direct bills most insurance plans.




**SUBSIDIZED DENTURES**  
This program assists citizens who need work on existing dentures or who need their first set. The cost for a new set of dentures is \$850 which covers the exam and any required x-rays. The dental clinic direct bills most insurance plans.  
**NOTE:** Must have no teeth for 9 to 12 months prior to getting dentures. The MNA does not recommend having dental procedures, such as having any teeth pulled, to qualify for this program.

To book your appointment, or if you have any questions, email [dental@metis.org](mailto:dental@metis.org) or call 780-455-2200.



Métis Nation of Alberta · Health Department  
Delia Gray Building · 11738 Kingsway Avenue · Edmonton  
780-455-2200 · 1-800-252-7553 · [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com)  
@abmetis @albertametis



## Métis Nation of Alberta Dental Program

The MNA's Dental Program provides target groups of MNA Citizens access to high affordable and high-quality dental care. This program is graciously funded through a partnership with the University of Alberta Faculty of Dentistry and is located at the University of Alberta School of Dentistry, where third and fourth year undergraduate dental students provide these services under the supervision of a practicing dentist.

As of now, there is no funding for the MNA Dental Program and operates due to the partnership formed between the MNA and University of Alberta School of Dentistry.

Currently there are three programs available\*:

- Youth Dental Program – MNA Citizens aged 3–16
- Adult Emergency Dental Program – MNA Citizens 18+
- Denture Program – all MNA Citizens who have been without their natural teeth for 9–12 months and are needing complete upper and lower dentures\* These programs are subject to change based on the schedule of the University of Alberta.

## Common questions received about this program

### Can I be reimbursed through my regular dentist?

No, we cannot cover the costs of private dental clinics. The services are provided through our partnership with the University of Alberta School of Dentistry.

### Do you cover orthodontics for youth?

No, this program includes hygiene appointments, and all follow up work needed (such as fillings, extractions, etc.). Any work requiring a specialist would be referred out from the University of Alberta School of Dentistry.

### Why only Edmonton?

This program is offered in Edmonton through our partnership with the University of Alberta School of Dentistry.

## Youth Dental Program Key Highlights:

- The MNA Youth Dental Program has been an overwhelming success. The clinic saw over 130 Métis Youth between July 2020 and March 31, 2021.
- Feedback received indicates families are very pleased they can access this program at no cost to their family.

### What can you reimburse other than transportation costs?

Parking costs associated with travel to a medical appointment can be reimbursed with provision of a receipt up to a maximum of \$40 per appointment. This rate was determined based on the average cost to purchase a weeklong parking pass at most Alberta medical hospitals.

### How long does it take to get reimbursed?

Cheques can sometimes take up to a month or more to be processed and mailed by the MNA.

## Key Highlights:

The Cancer Transportation Program has received extremely positive feedback and has been noted multiple times that these critical medical appointments would not have been possible without the support of the MNA.

MNA Citizens can access applications and important program information at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com). All inquiries can be emailed to the Health Programs Administrator at [health@metis.org](mailto:health@metis.org), or call the MNA provincial office at 780-455-2200, and ask to speak with the Health Programs Administrator.

## Adult Emergency Dental Program Key Highlights:

- The MNA Adult Emergency Program referred over 70 Citizens to the University of Alberta between April 1, 2020 and March, 31 2021.
- Feedback received for this program shows Citizens are very pleased they can access affordable dental care.
- There is a large demand to expand the dental services available to adult MNA Citizens, as individuals are wanting to see more preventative oral health care services available.

## Denture Program Key Highlights:

- The MNA Denture Program referred one MNA Citizen between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

To register or if you have any questions, please e-mail: [dental@metis.org](mailto:dental@metis.org), or call the MNA Head Office at: 780-455-2200, ask to speak with the Health Programs Administrator.

## Medically Necessary Accommodations Program

The Medically Necessary Accommodations Program, assists MNA Citizens in accessing free, safe, and reliable accommodations when traveling to Edmonton for medically necessary appointments or treatments. This program was created to help alleviate some of the financial stresses of needing to travel for medical reasons.

The program is made possible through financial support from Alberta Health and the Urban Programming of Indigenous Peoples.

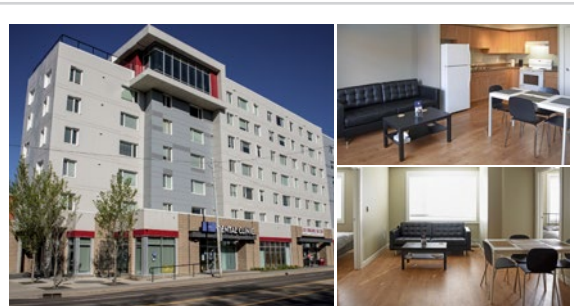
### Who qualifies for this program?

This program is available to MNA Citizens, ages 18 years and older, living in Alberta who must attend a medically necessary appointment or treatment in the city of Edmonton. If you wish to access this program, you must be travelling at least 50km from your home address to your medical appointment. A proof of appointment letter from your medical provider and an MNA Citizenship number or ID is required.

Requests for accommodations cannot be made more than 90 days in advance of a medical appointment, and no less than seven days before to allow for adequate processing time.

### Where will this program take place?

This program offers a 1 – and 2 – bedroom suites at Métis Capital Housing Corporation's Renaissance Tower in



## MEDICALLY NECESSARY ACCOMMODATIONS

**If you are travelling to Edmonton for your medical appointments and need a safe place to stay, we can help!**

With the support of Alberta Health and the Urban Programming of Indigenous Peoples program, we are able to offer MNA citizens safe, accessible, and FREE accommodations at Renaissance Tower in Edmonton.

One-bedroom and two-bedroom suites are available featuring a kitchen, full bathroom, and access to the Tower's pool, hot tub, gym, private garden area, recreation room, and sauna.

### TO QUALIFY, YOU MUST:

- Be an MNA citizen
- Have a medical appointment in Edmonton that is at least 50 km from your home address
- Provide proof of your appointment from your physician
- Be 18 years of age or older

For more information or to apply, call the Health Programs Administrator at 780-455-2200 or email [health@metis.org](mailto:health@metis.org).

*This service is offered on a first come, first served basis.*



Edmonton. One of these suites is a fully accessible unit. Those accessing this program can check-in the day before their appointment and stay for the agreed upon amount of time. The length of stay is determined based on the logistics of the medical appointment the person is attending.

## Common questions received about this program

### Can you pay for my hotel instead?

We cannot cover privately booked hotel costs through this program. Due to COVID-19, the MNA will book eligible participants to stay at the Chateau Louis hotel in Edmonton. Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, only the residential suites at Renaissance Tower in Edmonton will be used for this program.

### I paid out of pocket can you reimburse me?

No, for this program we cannot cover personal accommodation expenditures.



MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA  
∞ REGION THREE

# LET'S TALK TOBACCO

Have experience with tobacco in the following areas?

- Cigarettes
- Electronic Cigarettes (vaping)
- Smokeless Tobacco (snuff, chewing)

Share your stories, and help us create health resources for Métis Albertans.

---

**JAN 25** MNA Region 3 Office  
1415 - 28 Street NE  
Calgary · 10am-2pm

---

**No judgements, just conversation!** You do not need to have plans to quit to attend.  
Lunch provided. Open to MNA citizens and self-identifying Métis. Must be 18+.  
Participants will receive a \$50 honorarium. Mileage provided if you live 100+ km away.

To register contact **Kyla** at 403-569-8800 or [kprakash@metis.org](mailto:kprakash@metis.org).

Need to apply for MNA citizenship? We can help! Contact our Registry Team at the provincial office or visit our website for application information.



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Sign up for our newsletter.  
[albertamemis.com/events](http://albertamemis.com/events)

### **Why only Edmonton? Why isn't there an 'MNA House' in each region?**

This program is offered in Edmonton as the Renaissance Tower is owned and operated by Métis Capital Housing Corporation, an affiliate of the MNA. The Department of Health is continuously looking for funding opportunities to extend similar services to other MNA regions.

### **I need to travel to visit my family member, but I have no place to stay, can I stay at the suites?**

Unfortunately, no. As the suites are in high demand, they are intended to support those who are traveling for medical appointments, not as emergency housing. However, the MNA continues to seek ways to fund visitors as we know they support the health and well-being of those in hospital.

### **Key Highlights**

- Between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, the MNA provided accommodations for 30 Citizens attending medical appointments.
- The feedback received from Citizens accessing the Medically Necessary Accommodations Program has

been extremely positive. Many Citizens would not have been able to cover the costs associated with needing to travel due to medical reasons. This offers the individuals or families a sense of financial relief, allowing them to focus on their health.

MNA Citizens can access applications and important program information on the MNA website at [albertamemis.com](http://albertamemis.com). All inquiries can be sent to the Health Programs Administrator by emailing [health@metis.org](mailto:health@metis.org), or calling the MNA Head Office at 780-455-2200, and ask to speak with the Health Programs Administrator.

### **Next Steps:**

The MNA has seen an increasing demand for Medically Necessary Accommodations. The MNA recognizes these demands and is in the process of furnishing two new two-bedroom suites at the Renaissance Towers. Two more suites will allow the MNA to provide more Citizens with accommodations during trips to Edmonton for medical purposes.

## **MNA Tobacco Reduction / Cessation Portfolio**

In community consultations led by the MNA in 2020, Métis Albertans shared there was a need for tobacco cessation programming that was culturally relevant and specific to Métis Albertans. In response to community voices and Métis-specific health research acknowledging increased rates of cancers often associated with commercial tobacco use, the MNA successfully obtained funding to provide relevant tobacco cessation supports.

Funding for this project is provided through two separate grants:

1. Health Innovation in Cancer Prevention (Alberta Health Services)
2. Tobacco Control Strategy (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada)

## **MNA QUITCORE**

### **Program Highlights**

QuitCore is a free group support program providing individuals with the tools, strategies, and skills they need to reduce or quit their tobacco use. It also provides an opportunity to share and connect with other MNA Citizens who are trying to achieve similar tobacco-related goals. QuitCore consists of six sessions which occur once a week for approximately two hours. Topics covered

include but are not exclusive to tobacco cessation techniques, stress management, nutrition and physical exercise, individual goal planning, and relapse prevention. A maximum of 20 individuals attends these sessions, which are facilitated by the MNA's Community Prevention Practitioner (CPP) and an Alberta Health Services (AHS) co-facilitator. Upon completion of QuitCore participants can receive a \$500 Blue Cross Benefits Card to use towards Nicotine Replace Therapies (NRT) and/or other cessation medications as well as a QuitKit in the mail, containing numerous items to help them on the rest of their journey.

To be eligible to join QuitCore, you must be 18+, an MNA Citizen, and have access to internet and Zoom conferencing.

### Project focus or objectives for 2020–2021:

Offer four virtual QuitCore Programs to MNA Citizens across the province.

## Key Highlights

### Partners, key findings, successes, and challenges

AHS has been a great partner in helping the MNA to adapt an existing program in meeting the needs of Métis Albertans.

Documented successes include regular and engaged participants, a high response rate for feedback surveys, the ability to secure a co-facilitator each time, the ability to offer a peer support group following QuitCore for continued encouragement and motivation, and all adaptations have been received well by our Métis community.

**As of June 2021 three 6-week programs have been completed.**

### Adaptations included:

- Opening/closing prayer
- Quotes from community consultations
- Translations in Michif
- QuitKits with sashes
- Peer support group
- Eligibility to join quit retreat
- Newly created worksheets and resources
- Distribution of feedback surveys
- Prize draws at every session
- Weekly reminder emails with materials and resources
- Bring in a prescribing pharmacist for session two
- Include cultural ways to address stress, tobacco use, and triggers



**You're invited!**

∞ THE MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA'S FIRST EVER ∞

## VIRTUAL QUIT RETREAT

**SATURDAY, JULY 17 · 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM · ZOOM**

**Celebrate Métis culture through traditional teachings and activities while learning techniques to help on your tobacco journey.**

The MNA's Tobacco Reduction Program is bringing you and your family (virtually) to Métis Crossing for a day to learn new self-care techniques and connect with Métis culture, tradition, and other Métis Albertans who have completed QuitCore.

**ATTEND ONE, TWO, OR EVERY SESSION!**

10:00 am – 11:30 am	Expressing Yourself in a Traditional Way with Krista Leddy
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Traditional Tobacco Teachings & Tea Ceremony with Brenda Holder
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Métis Finger Weaving & Sash Teachings with Krista Leddy
3:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Emotional Freedom Techniques with Brenda Holder
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Intro to Jigging with Krista Leddy

**PLEASE RSVP BY JUNE 28, 2021**  
*This event is first come, first served.*

**Joining us? Email Kyla at [kprakash@metis.org](mailto:kprakash@metis.org) with:**

- What session(s) you'd like to attend
- Name and age of attending family members
- Your mailing address

Evaluating the program highlighted a few challenges including varying abilities of participants to navigate Zoom, occasional participants dropping out after the first session, and not having any men sign up or complete the program. We also ask for patience as COVID-19 has caused a delay at Alberta Blue Cross which has made it challenging in getting the NRT cards to participants prior to program completion.

**As of June 2021 36 Métis Albertans have completed Quit Core have been completed.**

### Accessing the program

- MNA QuitCore can be accessed through our social media, website, and our upcoming programs are posted on our webpages, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Notifications about this program also are distributed through our provincial email newsletter, *The Voyageur Voice*.
- If you do not want to wait for the MNA to host a program, you can join an AHS quit session here [albertaquits.ca](http://albertaquits.ca)
- to start your tobacco change journey.

## What's next

- Priorities will be to continue to host QuitCore sessions both virtual and in-person.

- In the fall, the MNA will be piloting a 2-weekend QuitCore.
- There is no end date for QuitCore, but it is currently being evaluated by external third-party evaluators.

## Quit Retreat

During community engagements on experiences with tobacco use in Region 3 and 4, Métis Albertans voiced that a culturally specific tobacco cessation/reduction intervention would provide a safe space for people to work towards their change goals. Consultation participants shared that this type of intervention would allow Métis Albertans to share knowledge and life experiences with one another and build social connections.

In other research projects spearheaded by the MNA (e.g. the MNA's Suicide Knowledge Awareness Project, MNA's Health Forum in 2019), it was shared by Métis Albertans that connections to both culture and community are considered sources of strength. In other words, these types of connections are supportive, and in some cases foundational, to overall well-being.

In response to the needs, counsel, and suggestions of Métis Albertans, the MNA has incorporated cultural components in its tobacco cessation/reduction intervention programming. The MNA has also created opportunities for Métis Albertans to come together in group support scenarios and contexts to facilitate community connections. It is expected that providing opportunities to connect with culture and community throughout the intervention process will support Métis Albertans interested in changing their tobacco use.

The MNA's weekend and one-day Quit Retreats (virtual and in-person options) were designed to meet the needs of Métis Albertans in Region 3 and 4 who have a desire to reduce or quit their tobacco use. By combining evidence-based tobacco cessation strategies with Métis-specific cultural activities, Métis Albertans will have an opportunity to meet their health goals in a relevant, fun, and meaningful way.

The MNA Quit Retreat intervention combines tobacco cessation support, Métis cultural activities, and an opportunity to connect with community and land of Métis historical significance. Due to COVID-19, the MNA developed a Virtual Quit Retreat (VQR) option which does not include in-person gatherings. It does, however, provide opportunities to engage with other community members and Métis culture. The MNA's weekend, one-day, and virtual Quit Retreats provide Métis Albertans who may feel isolated or alone with an opportunity to connect, share their tobacco journeys, and learn from others

in similar situations. While these events are primarily focused on helping people through their tobacco journeys in a culturally significant way, they also play a role in bringing Métis Albertans together to celebrate and plan for change in a safe and inclusive environment.

## Project focus or objectives for 2020–2021

The purpose of the MNA's Quit Retreat is to bring Métis Albertans who wish to make tobacco-related behaviour changes together for learning, exploration, and connection. Métis Albertans who attend these events will:

- Gain knowledge about nicotine dependency, withdrawal, and cravings.
- Gain knowledge on a variety of quitting techniques (physical and psychological).
- Be provided an opportunity to practice behavioral quitting techniques to build personal skills.
- Be provided an opportunity to connect with fellow Métis Albertans and individuals who are roughly in the same stage of change.
- Be provided an opportunity to connect with culture through community, art, prayer, and food.
- Be provided an opportunity to practice strategies for stress management, healthy eating, and physical activity.
- Be provided an opportunity to practice healthy lifestyle behaviours.
- Participate in self-reflection and self-exploration activities.
- Gain knowledge on trigger management techniques.
- Gain knowledge on communication techniques.
- Acquire an abundance of tobacco cessation and reduction resources and worksheets to take home.

## Key highlights

- July 17, 2021, will be the first Virtual Quit Retreat; 15 people have registered for the inaugural event!

## Opioid Awareness Portfolio

The MNA recognizes the current opioid crisis in Alberta and Canada. Prior to the pandemic, the MNA indicated a commitment to bringing educational resources and tools related to harm reduction, safe consumption, and overdose response.

In response to the pandemic, the MNA saw a need to adapt opioid and naloxone educational resources to a virtual platform. This is generously funded through an

extension of the Opioid Crisis Management and Action Plan provided by the Alberta Health.

## Key highlights

- The Health Department partnered with instructional design team Onlea to create interactive online opioid and naloxone modules. Completed in March 2021, these modules will be live on the MNA website and offers Citizens a chance to learn more about the current opioid situation in Alberta, how to respond to an opioid emergency, and obtain a completion certificate.
- The MNA also reached out to regional offices and offered naloxone facilitator training in early 2021.

## What's Next

Moving forward, the Department of Health will evaluate this program and use this information to seek sustainable funding opportunities and adapt or change the program.

# Health Research Highlights

## Chronic Disease Portfolio

The main project within the chronic disease research portfolio is the Transitions in Care project, which explores Métis Albertans' experiences of living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. This project is being delivered by the MNA in collaboration with the University of Alberta School of Public Health and the AHS Analytics and Performance Reporting Branch.

## Project Overview

The Transitions in Care project aims to explore health outcomes and access to diabetes care for Métis Albertans living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

This will be accomplished through an approach combining data collected through a quantitative/retrospective population cohort study based on Alberta administrative health data (Phase 1) and qualitative community-engaged research with Métis Albertans living with diabetes (Phase 2). While epidemiological data is valuable to inform the health status of Métis Albertans with diabetes, conversations with Métis Albertans allow for us to explore the collective experiences of living with diabetes and accessing care.

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA



**DIABETES SURVEY**

**DRAW FOR 1 OF 5 PRE-PAID VISA CARDS!**

The MNA Health Department is looking for Métis Albertans to take part in an online survey to share their experiences of living with diabetes and accessing diabetes care.

*Topics will include access to health services, diabetes self-management, and supports for living with diabetes.*

Survey participants must be:

- Métis Albertans
- 18 years of age or older
- Living with Type 1 or 2 diabetes

**Take the survey now at {link name}**  
**SPRING 2020**

For information, please contact **Melissa** at [mscott@metis.org](mailto:mscott@metis.org).



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## Key Highlights

- The Transitions in Care research survey was offered to Métis Albertans in July 2020. There was a total of 862 people who participated in the survey.
- The survey revealed Métis Albertans wanted more culturally centered management, such as having a diet that reflects traditional foods and medicines for treatment.
- Areas for further inquiry for one-on-one interviews with Métis Albertans will explore challenges and barriers Métis Albertans experience when managing their diabetes, and the experiences they have when accessing supports and services related to diabetes management.

## What's Next

- Métis Albertans will be offered the opportunity to participate in one-on-one phone interviews with the Research and Project Coordinator – Chronic Disease starting in July 2021. Information on signing up for an interview is available on the MNA website at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com).



- We will analyze the interview data and prepare a community report to share with Métis Albertans on their experiences living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.
- We will also prepare an epidemiological report on diabetes, along with other articles, reports, and presentations for the Métis community, other stakeholders, and academic audiences.

## Cancer Portfolio

The current project within the MNA cancer portfolio focuses on the Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy project, funded by CPAC.

### Project Overview

The project focuses on Métis Albertans' cancer journeys and involves the development and delivery of the MNA's Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy which is intended to:

- Outline future actions for the MNA.
- Provide recommendations for Cancer Control Alberta (CCA) to include in the Alberta Indigenous Cancer Action Plan.

The MNA's Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy will be informed by qualitative data from 2018 and 2019 engagements with Métis Albertans and their caregivers with focus on their cancer journey. It will also include and be informed by, epidemiological data, a literature review, and an environmental scan.

The key goals of the project include:

- Collecting and sharing data specific to Métis Albertans.
- Developing a cancer strategy that centers on the self-determined priorities of Métis Albertans.
- Improving healthcare providers' understanding of cancer and the cancer journey, as experienced by Métis Albertans.
- Understanding the role of the MNA in engaging, learning from, and responding to the cancer needs of Métis Albertans and their families.
- Developing and offering culturally meaningful resources to support Métis Albertans and their families in all stages of their cancer journey.
- Creating and sharing knowledge on Métis Albertans experiences with cancer with our community, project partners in the Alberta Cancer Control system, and academic audiences.
- Developing and providing Métis Albertans and their families with supports and services responsive to their needs and experiences. The Compassionate Care Cancer Transportation Program is part of this and

offered to Métis Albertans through the Department of Health's Community Wellness pillar.

### Key Highlights

Key accomplishments between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021

- Scale-up of the Compassionate Care: Cancer Transportation Program to offer financial assistance to Métis Albertans in all regions. The implementation of this program is currently ongoing through the Department of Health's Community Wellness pillar.
- Cancer Journey Video Resource: Five professionally produced videos featuring Métis Albertans sharing personal stories about their cancer journey and will soon be launched publicly.

### What's Next

- Looking forward, the Department of Health will use this information to:
- Finalize the Cancer Care Course including validating the content with Métis Albertans.
- Complete the Métis-specific Cancer Journey Guidebook and validating this resource with Métis Albertans.
- Complete a literature review and environmental scan to validate and interpret findings to inform the MNA's Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy.
- Develop the MNA's Alberta Métis Cancer Strategy.

## Maternal Child Health Portfolio

Within the Maternal and Child health research portfolio is Lii Zaanfaan: Understanding the Health and Well-being trajectories of Métis Children in Alberta.

This project is a partnership with the University of Alberta's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and builds on the MNA's previous project Ehawawisit: Maternal and Perinatal Health Outcomes Among the Métis in Alberta, and the Influence of Proximal, Intermediate, and Distal Determinants of Health.

### Project Overview

This project will evaluate the longitudinal health and well-being trajectories of Métis children in Alberta and will explore the impact of determinants of health on their health and well-being.

- Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, this project will look at 10 years of health and health

services, use data among children born to Métis mothers, as well as explore other aspects of children's emotional, social, and material well-being.

- The results of this project will be used to inform the MNA's strategy in supporting the health and well-being of Métis children, and will help inform the planning of culturally competent programming and supports that promote Métis children's health.

## Key Highlights

Since the beginning in April 2020, we have started work on all aspects of the project and have devised new methods that will allow us to document the experiences of Métis caregivers, their children, and the Métis community while respecting COVID-19 public health measures.

## What's Next

Later in 2021, the MNA will be releasing a survey for caregivers of Métis children to gain a better understanding of the experiences and factors influencing their children's health and well-being, as well as engaging with Métis Citizens to hear their experiences and perspectives about children's health.

## Mental Health Portfolio

The current project within the Mental Health research portfolio is Weaving Métis Identity and Knowledge in Suicide Prevention Approaches. This project is funded through the AHS Valuing Mental Health Innovation and Integration Research Grant and the AHS Honoring Life Indigenous Health Program.

## Project Overview

This project has two main goals:

1. To gather Métis experiences, knowledge, and perspectives related to suicide
2. To develop a response to suicide that is founded in this Métis Knowledge and experience

## Key highlights

### Partnership

The Department of Health conducted three community engagement sessions with the MNA Health Committee, MNA Provisional Youth Council, and MNA Elder's Council. These sessions explored suicide and its prevention as it relates to the experiences and perspectives of MNA committee members. Complementing this knowledge, the Department of Health has partnered with the University of Alberta's School of Public Health to conduct

a critical scoping review of how Indigenous Knowledge is incorporated into suicide programming for Indigenous populations globally.

### Key Findings

Thematic analysis of the engagement sessions and the systematic scoping review has been completed. Analysis of the MNA engagement sessions has revealed a diverse range of knowledge and concerns in responding to suicide.

The five most represented themes are:

- Promotion of approaches which connect with Métis community and culture
  - Promotion of approaches which connect with the land
  - Recognition of the systemic factors relating to suicide
  - Recognition of the need to de-stigmatize mental health and suicide
  - Recognition of the importance of connecting with Métis identity
- Among these themes, connection to community and culture was highly represented in all three sessions. In addition to these findings, the School of Public Health's scoping review identified three major themes, along with a collection of general recommendations and lessons learned.

The three primary identified themes are:

- The use of cultural and community connections in suicide prevention
- The integration of Indigenous Knowledge in suicide programming
- Decolonial approaches and Indigenous ownership of programs

## What's Next

Moving forward, the Department of Health will use this information to create a Life Promotion Guide to support MNA programs in addressing suicide. Founded on the knowledge collected from Métis Knowledge Holders, this guide will:

- Celebrate life and recognize community and culture are paramount to suicide prevention.
- Be further informed with Métis Knowledge through co-development with MNA departments engaged in cultural and community-based programs.
- Provide a framework for future suicide prevention initiatives adaptive and individualized to meet local community needs.

# COVID-19

## Impact of COVID-19 on Métis Albertans

Through our information sharing agreement with Alberta Health’s Analytics and Performance Reporting Branch Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit, the MNA monitored the status of COVID-19 among our community.

### Highlights for the MNA are as follows

- 3287 confirmed and 31 probable cases of COVID-19 (6.67% of the registered MNA Citizenship)
- 129 people were hospitalized
  - Average age for COVID-19 case hospitalized is 52 years (range 8–95 years of age)
- 25 people were treated in Intensive Care Units (ICUs)
  - Average age for an ICU stay is 55 years (range 16–81 years of age)
- 14 people died from COVID-19
  - Average age for COVID-19 cases that died is 78 years (range 62–94 years of age)

## COVID-19 Immunization status of MNA Citizens

The MNA is pleased to report:

- 31,162 MNA Citizens have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine (as of June 23, 2021)
- 13,078 MNA Citizens have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine (as of June 23, 2021)

## MNA COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

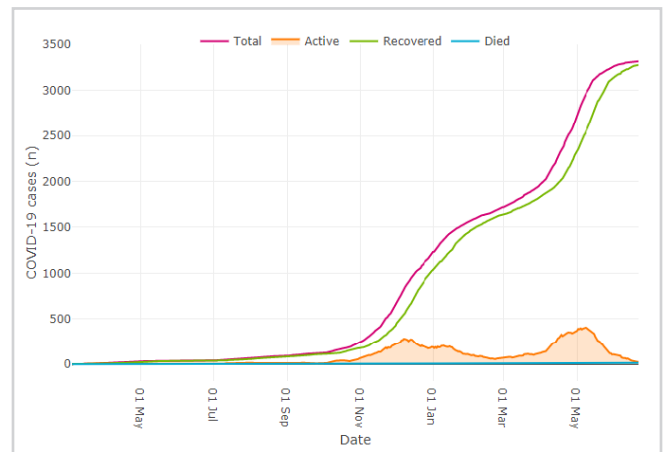
In response to the voice of Métis Albertans who shared a desire to receive health services in a culturally safe manner, the MNA advocated for and was successful in hosting five Métis-led COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Funded federally, these clinics were made possible with the partnership of Alberta Health and AHS.

### Key Highlights

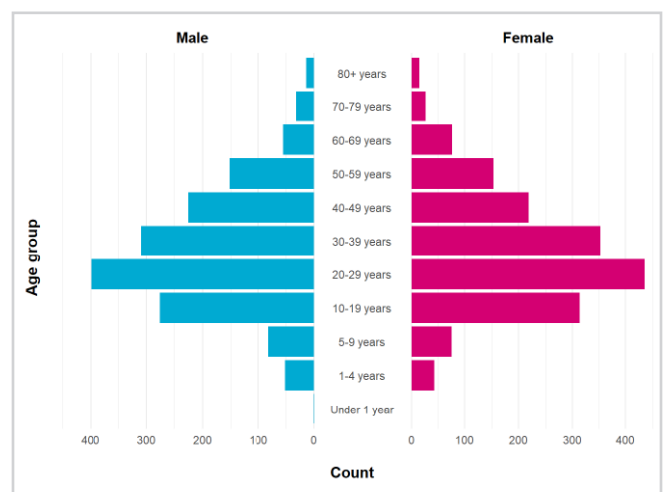
- Clinics took place in Edmonton (2), Calgary, Lac La Biche, and Fort McMurray in March, April, May, and June of 2021.
- 3215 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were administered across the province at the MNA hosted clinics.



COVID-19 in Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Citizens



COVID-19 cases in MNA Citizens by day and case status. Recovered is based on the assumption that a person is recovered 14 days after a particular date, if they did not experience hospitalization or death



COVID-19 cases in MNA Citizens by age group and gender

Region	Calgary		Central		Edmonton		South		North		Alberta	
Age Group	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses	At Least 1 Dose	2 Doses
18–34	2428	626	981	245	4,533	1,209	2,003	487	528	149	10,474	2,717
35–49	1,772	705	745	298	3,146	1,226	1,621	587	338	149	7,622	2,965
50–64	1,386	935	752	456	2,336	1,573	1,523	938	269	166	6,268	4,068
65+	664	560	470	376	1,249	1,039	1,025	824	209	178	3,617	2,977

Count of people immunized by age group and immunization status in MNA Citizens by AHS Zone

## COVID-19 Comprehensive Survey

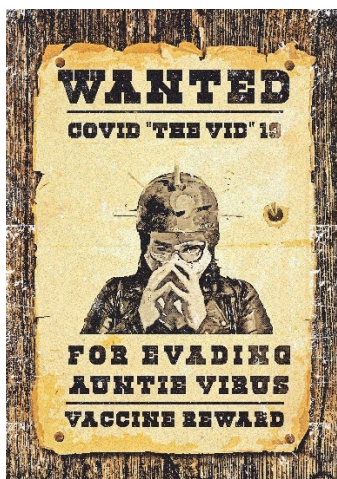
The MNA recognizes the significant impact COVID-19 has played this past year across every domain of people's lives. In response, the Department of Health undertook initiatives to help better understand and support MNA Citizens.

Misi Yehewin (Big Breath): Understanding COVID-19 Experiences and Perceptions among Métis Albertans

The Department of Health offers its sincere gratitude to the more than 1,500 Métis Albertans who shared their knowledge, experiences, and perceptions with us. Your voice is part of the first study in Canada to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the health and wellbeing outcomes of Métis people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and supported by academics from the University of Alberta (Dr. Maria Ospina and her team) and the University of Ottawa (Dr. Ian Colman), this survey has two objectives:

1. Examine longitudinal trajectories of physical and mental health, and well-being of Métis people in Alberta during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Explore Métis perspectives about the impact of COVID-19 and public health orders in Alberta on physical and mental health, health behaviors, cultural expressions, and community and family support.



The results of this survey have provided valuable information the MNA has used to advocate for Métis-specific vaccination clinics, COVID-19 funding opportunities, and more.

The survey was distributed in waves with the first being distributed in December 2020 and the second in March 2020. The final wave will be provided to community in fall 2021.

### Next Steps

- Preliminary analysis of wave 1 is underway, supported by academics at the University of Alberta. A community report will follow.
- A final analysis of waves 1 through 3 will occur and once wave 3 is complete; will be analyzed, and a community report will be compiled.

### Mental Wellness & COVID-19

Recognizing the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of Métis Albertans, the MNA has received a commitment from Indigenous Services Canada to support two streams of activities:

1. Surge Capacity: **expanding mental health services** to meet increasing demand, including the procurement of mental health human resources.
2. Adaptation: to support culturally safe adaptation of mental wellness services to the COVID-19 context, including front line service delivery

and the **implementation of targeted approaches to support mental wellness needs.**

Two initiatives have been developed under this funding: The MNA Mental Wellness Program and the Regional Mental Wellness Initiative.

## MNA Wellness Program

Prior to the pandemic, Métis Albertans shared stories of resilience and the challenges they face related to mental wellness. In response, the MNA developed and launched a province-wide wellness program generously funded through federal COVID-19 supports.

## Program Overview

This program provides access to 12 hours of free, professional, short-term, goal-oriented counselling or life skills support.

Support is provided in areas such as:

- Personal well-being
- Managing relationships and family
- Addressing workplace challenges
- Taking financial and legal control in life

Sessions are held over the phone, video, or instant messaging and available in French and English by calling 1-877-729-0261.

## Key highlights

### Partnership

The Department of Health, guided by engagements at the 2019 Annual Health Forum, has partnered with Alberta Blue Cross and service provider Homewood Health to provide access to all MNA Citizens.

## Key Findings

In the first quarter of 2021 (February to April) 170 MNA Citizens accessed this program.

- 91.8% accessed counselling services
- 7.1% accessed life smart coaching
- 1.2% accessed online web supports

A majority of those accessing the services identified as female, and the age spread is indicated with the graph on the right.

## What's Next

Moving forward, the Department of Health will evaluate this program and use the information to seek sustainable funding opportunities and adapt or change the program.

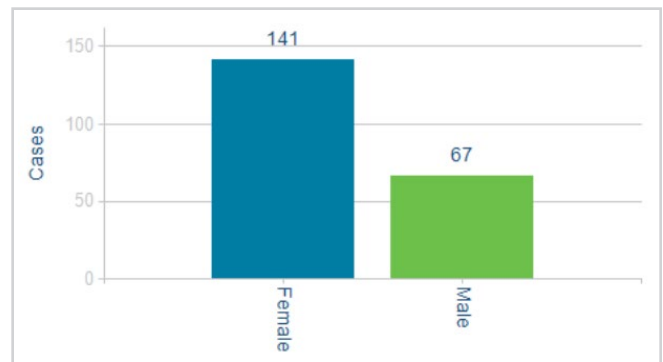
## Regional Mental Health Initiative

The purpose of this one-time COVID-19 funding is to provide the MNA Regions with increased capacity in responding to the mental health and wellbeing needs of their communities. Activities and allocation of resources is outlined by the regions.

Examples of activities include\*:

- Mental health human resources
- Cultural programming
- Financial disbursement for mental health support and services
- Food security
- Peer support groups
- Guest speakers and training
- Traditional ways of knowing

\*These activities are defined and implemented by the MNA Regional offices ■



Age Group	Q1
20 and Under	23
21–30	32
31–40	48
41–50	34
51–60	19
61 and Over	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>

# 2020/21 Environment and Climate Change

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Environment and Climate Change Department was formed in early 2021. Our department is divided into two sub-teams: Climate Change, and Environment. Our Climate Team is responsible for delivering the MNA Climate Change Action Plan, including collaborative projects related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, citizen engagement, and sustainability. Our Environment Team is responsible for our environmental monitoring and conservation efforts, including Askîy, the MNA's community-driven environmental monitoring initiative.

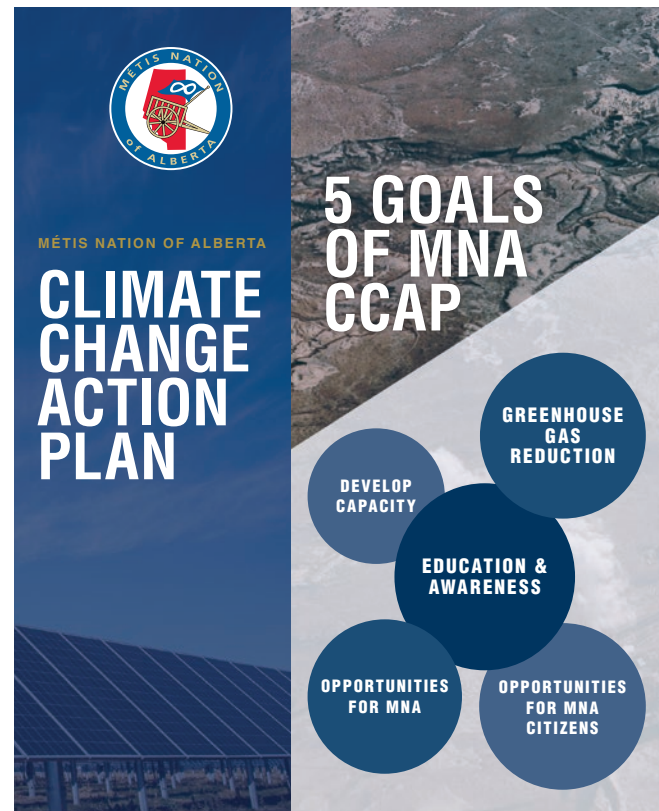
## Climate Team

Métis people in Alberta continue to be impacted by climate change in many ways. Traditional Métis ways of life are threatened by unpredictable weather patterns causing an increase in extreme events such as wildfires and floods, changes in water accessibility and quality, and shifting populations of animals, fish, and plants. During the 2017 MNA Annual General Assembly, Citizens directed the MNA to undertake activities to mitigate the effects of climate change for its Citizens. The following excerpt is from the MNA 2017 Annual General Assembly Ordinary Resolution #1 (Peace River, AB):

*"...The MNA Annual General Assembly fully supports the MNA in designing and undertaking climate change initiatives and programs, including actions aimed at **reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**, and **increasing Métis involvement and awareness of climate change while creating capacity and economic opportunities** for Métis Citizens."*

In response, the Climate Team developed the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), with five overarching goals:

1. Reduce GHG emissions
2. Create opportunities for MNA institutions (e.g. cost savings, economic sustainability, investment)
3. Create opportunities for MNA Citizens (e.g. income, jobs, training, cost savings, careers)



4. Increase MNA capacity to implement climate change programs (e.g. expertise, resources, staff, tools)
5. Increase understanding of climate change and encourage social change to take action

The Climate Team structured several initiatives to meet one or more of the MNA CCAP's five goals. We currently have ongoing initiatives in the following areas:

- Citizen Engagement
- Renewable Energy
- Energy Management and Efficiency
- Waste Management and Sustainability
- Health and Climate Change

## Citizen Engagement Initiative

Receiving insights and information from Citizens is essential to building relevant programs, services, and resources to advance our Nation. Citizen engagement is an element in all Climate initiatives, which aims to provide MNA Citizens with tools, skills, and resources to be able to take action on climate change.

Key objectives include:

- Delivering workshops, events, and sessions (virtual and/or in-person if safe to do so), and providing resources on a variety of MNA-specific areas of interest around climate change
- Developing future climate action toolkits for MNA Citizens to apply knowledge and skills
- Publishing a website to continuously share resources, knowledge, skills, and tools to engage MNA Citizens on climate action.

Project Highlights:

- In collaboration with Métis Urban and Capital Housing Corporations (MUHC and MCHC), the Climate Team provided a training session hosted by Community Power. MUHC and MCHC staff learned about home energy efficiency to increase capacity and support energy management of the Housing portfolio.
- A youth sustainability and plant walk engagement was hosted in 2019 to share traditional knowledge on local plants and sustainable living practices.
- In 2019, the Climate Team partnered with Newo Global Energy to host engagements across the province, educating Métis Albertans on energy efficiency and sustainable living practices in a holistic way.

Future Work:

- An MNA and Affiliates Climate Table for the Climate Team to deliver information on available Climate programs that may interest or serve the affiliates' needs and to collaborate on climate-related work
- A webpage about the Environment and Climate department's work and other important climate resources
- A series of social media posts with information and resources on how to participate in climate action.
- A "Sustainability Tip of the Week" in the MNA's biweekly newsletter, Voyageur Voice

## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Between 2017 and 2020, the MNA engaged **over 1,700 attendees at over 144 events** on topics ranging from energy efficiency and renewable energy, to waste reduction and sustainable living

**4,800 Viewers**

attended the first ever MNA Climate Virtual FB Live Event

**100% Attendees**

would recommend the Housing Education Engagement Event



Youth Sustainability and Plant walk engagement hosted in summer 2019, Edmonton.

## Community Garden Tour Livestream

**OCT 01**

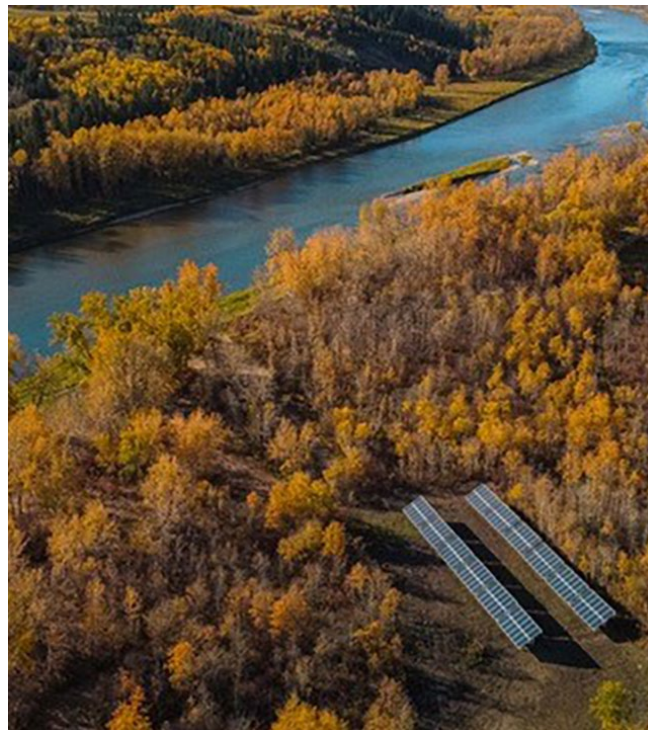
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
FACEBOOK.COM/ABMETIS



One of the virtual engagements hosted this year was the Community Garden Tour Livestream.



The roof top solar installation at the Region Five office in Slave Lake.



An overview of the solar installation at Tail Creek Campground in Region 3.

## Renewable Energy Initiative

The goal of this initiative is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by generating energy from renewable resources, while provide community benefit, cost savings, and energy sales. This initiative acts at two scales: micro-generation, and community generation.

### Micro Generation Solar Projects

The MNA has completed 34 “own-use” or micro-generation solar systems on MNA and affiliate-owned office buildings and residential units to produce clean energy and reduce electricity costs at the sites.

- 16 MUHC residential units, Calgary (11) and Edmonton (5)
- 9 MCHC residential units, Calgary
- Larry Desmuelles Building for MCHC, Edmonton
- Region One Office, Lac La Biche
- Region Two Office, Bonnyville
- Region Five Office, Slave Lake
- Elders Caring Shelter, Grande Prairie
- Local 87 Hall, Calgary
- Local 87 House, Calgary
- Tail Creek Campground
- Métis Crossing Workshop

Based on projections from the 37 sites producing electricity, it is estimated 290 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced annually, saving the MNA and its affiliates approximately \$53,000 on electricity bills. This is the equivalent to: planting 4,850 trees, removing 90 vehicles from the road each year, or powering 70 Alberta homes.

Future Work:

- Completing the Delia Gray, Métis Crossing Lodge, and Métis Veterans Building solar projects by Fall 2021
- Selling carbon credits as an additional revenue stream for the micro-generation solar projects

### Métis Crossing Solar Project

The Métis Crossing Solar Project (MCSP) is a Métis-owned community-generation solar project located at Métis Crossing in Smoky Lake County. It is a collaboration between the MNA, the Town of Smoky Lake, and Smoky Lake County. The 4.86-megawatt AC project will reduce GHG emissions and generate economic and community benefits for all community partners. The MCSP will be the largest 100-per-cent Métis-owned solar power project in Alberta and will serve as a model for both grid-scale community-generation and partnerships with Indigenous communities. It will also be one of Alberta’s first community-generation projects as defined under





North end of Métis Crossing land ready for the The Community Generation Solar Project.

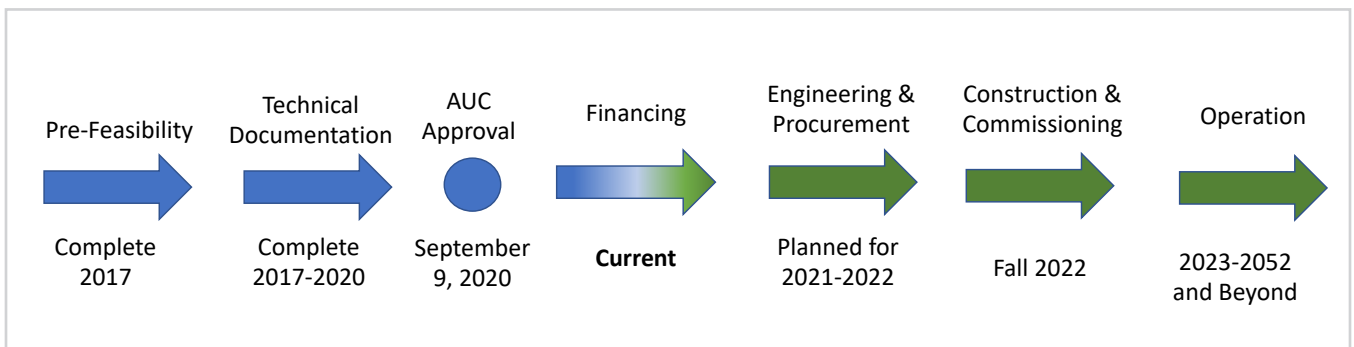
Alberta’s Small Scale Generation Regulation. This project will offset the current electrical load of all MNA operations, a portfolio of over 15 commercial and large-scale residential buildings, and over 800 residential units throughout Alberta.

As part of the partnership, a portion of revenue will be dedicated to a local community development fund supporting other green energy and sustainable development around Smoky Lake, while the county will benefit from the project’s tax revenue. Revenues will also help the MNA fund social, environment, and economic initiatives for Métis Albertans.

The project’s pre-development work has been completed, including the pre-feasibility and technical documentation

phases, and was granted regulatory approval by the Alberta Utilities Commission in September 2020. Following the finalization of funding and/or financing, the project will begin the engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning phases for a target energization date of Fall 2022.

When complete, the project is expected to generate 8,700 megawatt hours and offset roughly 4,900 tonnes of carbon-dioxide equivalent emissions annually, and 118,000 tonnes over the project’s lifetime. This is equivalent to offsetting the electricity consumption of nearly 1,200 Alberta homes per year.



MCSPP Project Timeline

## Energy Efficiency and Energy Management Initiative

The goal of this initiative is to reduce energy use through energy efficiency and management, resulting in cost savings and GHG reduction.

### Energy Efficiency Assessments and Retrofits

The Climate Team completed energy efficiency assessments at 427 MCHC and MUHC units and 14 MNA-owned properties by Fall 2019, and continues exploring funding opportunities and programs to implement recommended retrofits at MNA and affiliate properties.

Completed energy efficiency retrofit projects:

- Region Two Office (Bonnyville)
- Region Five Office (Slave Lake)
- Region Six Office (Peace River)
- Métis Veterans Building (Edmonton)

Currently planned or underway energy efficiency retrofit projects:

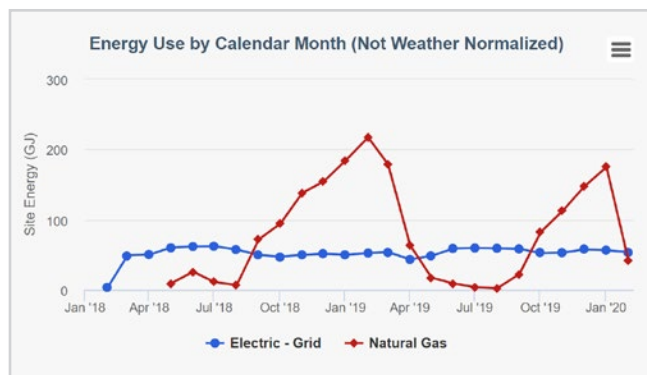
- Local 87 (Calgary)
- Tail Creek Campground (Stettler County)
- Delia Gray Building (Provincial Office, Edmonton)

### Energy Management

The MNA uses an energy management system to track electricity, natural gas, and water consumption. The data collected will provide a baseline for energy usage and GHG emissions of and allow the MNA to set and achieve its climate goals. There are currently 8 MNA and affiliate sites taking part in this initiative.

Future Work:

- Update the energy management project and launch the newly-designed MNA and Affiliates Energy and Sustainability Tracking Program
- Participate in the Edmonton Corporate Climate Leaders Program to support and expand the energy tracking initiative
- Develop a baseline GHG inventory of historical energy use and GHG emissions, then set targets and a plan for GHG emissions reduction that align with the MNA Climate Change Action Plan



Energy tracking for the Delia Gray building.

## Sustainable Living and Waste Management Initiative

This initiative aims to create awareness and promote waste reduction and sustainable living projects for the MNA, its affiliates, and Citizens. This initiative is being developed starting with sustainability pilot projects at the Provincial Office.

Project Highlights:

- In 2019, the Climate Team held composting and plant walk events to promote sustainable living practices
- In early 2020, MNA staff volunteers formed the MNA Green Team to revitalize green spaces around the Provincial Office. The idea for a community garden was spurred from initial MNA Green Team discussions.
- The MNA Green Team installed the community garden, in partnership with a Métis-led permaculture consultant, as an educational centre on traditional Métis permaculture growing techniques and plant uses for MNA Citizens and the public.
- In mid-2020, centralized waste bins were installed at the Provincial Office as a pilot project to promote more consciously sorting waste by MNA staff.
- In October 2020, a Facebook Live event was conducted at the MNA Community Garden, with a Live Q & A on the garden, a garden tour, and a tea-making demonstration.
- In June 2021, an MNA Community Garden sign was installed in front of the MNA Provincial Office.

Future Work:

- Implement waste tracking through the Delia Gray waste bin project
- Further education and engagements: waste bin promotion, garden video series on seed planting and harvesting, and additional garden signs installation in Michif and English
- Expand pilot projects to other sites



The community garden at the Provincial Office.



MNA staff volunteers sift soil for the Community Garden at the Delia Gray building in Edmonton.

## Health and Climate Project

During 2018-19 climate-focused engagements sessions, MNA Citizens provided feedback on the intersections between climate change and the effects on their mental and physical health. As a result, the Environment and Climate department collaborated with the Health department on a data dissemination, research, and engagement project. This tool will allow for prioritizing and targeting health and climate change issues in future projects. Reporting back to community members on findings will be a key element of this work.

### Project Objectives:

- Gain a deeper understanding of Métis-specific risk factors and current global approaches to risk assessment related to climate change and health (mental and physical)
- Create a validated Métis climate change vulnerability tool that reflects the intersections of climate change and health among Métis Albertans
- Increase Métis Albertans' awareness on how climate change may be impacting their health
- Build the MNA's capacity to measure health risks and vulnerabilities related to climate change

### Work to date:

- Analyzed previous MNA engagement notes, identifying comments and themes pertaining to climate and health
- Literature review of health and climate change journal articles that focus on tools or approaches to health and climate change in an Indigenous context. What current global approaches to Indigenous risk assessment (or methodology) related to climate change and health are known?



The centralized waste bins for the waste management pilot project at the Provincial Office.

### Future Work:

- Compare and analyze major themes from the literature review and related engagement data from Métis Albertans
- Conduct community engagement sessions to present suggestions for the MNA Health and Climate tool/framework
- Assess, evaluate, and refine the developed tool based on community engagement feedback prior to implementation

## Closing Message – Climate Team

The MNA Climate Team will continue to build upon the initiatives under the Climate Change Action Plan, a five-year framework directed by MNA Citizens and their values, to ensure the long-term effectiveness and success of these climate initiatives. We will continue to collaborate and work on behalf of the MNA and its affiliates to fulfill the mandate from Citizens to act on climate change.

For more information on any of our initiatives or projects, contact the Climate Team at [climate@metis.org](mailto:climate@metis.org).

## Environment

Métis people in Alberta maintain a holistic connection with the environment. Métis people's ability to practice their traditions and culture is dependent on an interconnected ecosystem supported by clean air, water, and land. Since the MNA Provincial Council passed a Resolution on the Environment in 2019, the Environment Team has been undertaking activities to monitor and bring awareness to environmental changes and impacts. The following excerpt is from the 2019 MNA Provincial Council Resolution on the Environment:

*"...the MNA Provincial Council fully support the MNA in designing and **undertaking environmental initiatives and programs**, including community-based climate monitoring as per the Askîy initiative, aimed at **fulfilling the Environment pillar goals, increasing Métis involvement and awareness of environmental changes and impacts**, and creating capacity and economic opportunities for Métis Citizens."*

The MNA has designed and undertaken environmental initiatives and programs aimed at fulfilling three Environment pillar goals:

- Protection of Tradition and Culture
- Reducing impacts on the environment
- Community-driven involvement

The MNA's Environment Team works to fulfill the goals of the Environment Pillars through the following initiatives:

- Askîy Community-Based Climate and Environment Monitoring
- Environmental Conservation

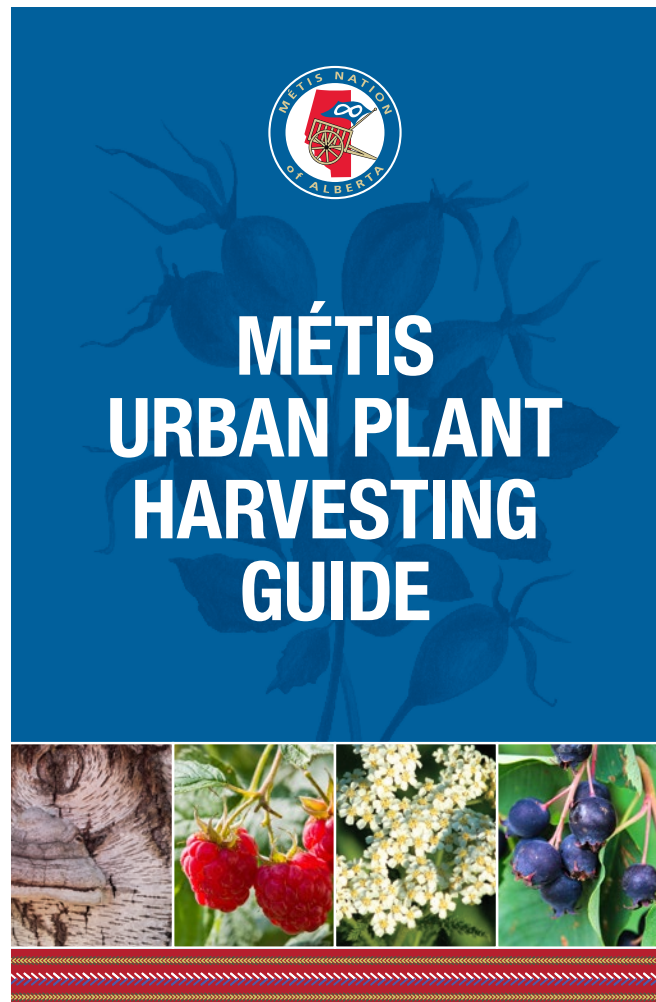
### Askîy Community-Based Climate and Environment

The Askîy (Cree for "Earth" or "land") initiative aims to undertake environmental monitoring using methods that braid Métis Traditional Knowledge with western science. This initiative was developed through a three-phase approach, with the final phase implementing monitoring activities. In March 2020, the Environment Team initiated the monitoring phase by launching a series of projects aimed at addressing the concerns of Métis Citizens across Alberta. The projects have generally focused on traditional plants, fish, and wildlife.

### Traditional Plant Projects

#### Traditional Plant Survey

In June 2020, an online survey was used to engage with Citizens regarding traditional plant knowledge, use, and



The cover of the Métis Urban Plant Harvesting Guide

health-related concerns. Survey results were intended to inform the development of traditional plant monitoring projects.

#### Project Highlights:

- 429 survey participants
- The most targeted berries for harvesting were saskatoons (63 %), raspberries (41 %), and blueberries (40 %)
- Citizens harvest both on public and private lands:
  - 53 % harvest from private land they, or their family, own
  - 50% harvest on crown land
  - 22% harvest from land owned by others (landowner agreements)
- 347 concerns regarding traditional plants; 37 per cent related to herbicides/pesticides



Environment Team members at a berry monitoring site in Calling Lake Provincial Park.



Environment Team members identify plant species at a monitoring location in Métis Crossing.

**Sustainability Scholar Project**

In 2020, the Environment Team hired a University of Alberta student through the Sustainability Scholar program to investigate Citizen concerns regarding pesticide/herbicide use in urban areas.

Project Highlights:

- The student’s research project examined different municipalities’ weed abatement strategies, what precautions Citizens should take when harvesting in their areas, and the bylaws regarding urban harvesting
- The project resulted in the creation of an urban harvesting guide to be shared with MNA Citizens

Future Work:

- In 2021, the MNA expanded this research by hiring another student to produce a rural harvesting guide

**Berry Health Monitoring**

To monitor berry plant health and density over time, the Environment Team established monitoring sites across Alberta. Monitoring locations were selected based on Citizen suggestions. The number and types of berry plants were counted along 50-metre transects.

Project Highlights:

- In 2020, established 23 monitoring sites across all MNA Regions
- Counted over 18,000 individual plants, consisting of 17 species of berries and medicinal plants
- Most counted species: blueberry (35 %), wild rose (23 %), saskatoon (21 %), raspberry (14 %)

- In 2021, expanded monitoring to examine reproductive success (flower-to-berry ratios) and climatic variables at each site
- In 2021, established 13 additional monitoring sites across all MNA Regions
- Counted the flowers and buds of 1,200 plants
- A chokecherry plant in Region Five had the most bunches of flowers, numbering over 250

Future Work:

- Hold traditional plant camps to facilitate knowledge sharing among MNA Citizens, especially by connecting knowledge holders and youth.

**Métis Crossing Plant Biodiversity Project**

In 2020, a University of Alberta student through the Sustainability Scholar program was hired to help launch a long-term plant biodiversity monitoring project at Métis Crossing. This project will monitor how natural, climatic, and anthropogenic factors influence plant species richness and structure.

Project Highlights:

- 12 monitoring locations across the different land use areas
- Identified a total of 71 plant species in the monitoring first year

Future Work:

- Continue monitoring activities at Métis Crossing in 2021
- Expand monitoring activities to additional survey locations



MNA Fish Health project team with fish caught from North Wabasca Lake in March 2021.

## Fish Projects

### Fishing Survey

In 2020-2021, the Environment Team secured funding to launch a fish monitoring program, beginning with an online survey to engage Citizens on their fishing habits, traditional activities, and concerns regarding fish and their habitats.

#### Project Highlights:

- A total of 370 survey participants
- The survey found Métis Citizens rely on fish as an important food source, and that familial connections and Traditional Knowledge play an important role in their harvesting activities
- The most targeted species were Walleye (62 %) and Northern Pike (50 %)
- Citizens identified 190 lakes they harvest from and shared lake-specific concerns
- The most common changes noted by Citizens were decreases in fish size and declines in fish abundance

### Fish Health Monitoring

In the winter of 2020-2021, the Environment Team launched a fish health monitoring project focused on sampling six lakes across Alberta, one in each MNA Region and harvesting area. A team of Métis harvesters and MNA staff members travelled to each lake and fished using gill net and rod and reel. Each fish was measured, weighed, and examined for health indicators. Harvesters took fish home to consume, where they would fill out palatability surveys to share with the Environment Team.

#### Project Highlights:

- Fish were harvested from Lac La Biche, Moose Lake, Gull Lake, Pigeon Lake, North Wabasca Lake, and Sturgeon Lake
- A total of 90 fish were caught across all lakes: 57 Lake Whitefish, 17 Walleye, 15 Northern Pike, and 1 Burbot

#### Future Work:

- Examine traditional fish health indicators through interviews with Métis Elders and Knowledge Holders
- Develop a fish health assessment tool using knowledge shared by harvesters and tested by MNA Citizens at community ice fishing events

### Fish Community Monitoring Program

In 2021, the Environment Team is launching a community monitoring program focused on collecting lake-specific information on fishing activities, successes, concerns, and palatability from Citizens through online surveys. The information collected will inform which locations and concerns need to be investigated through future monitoring. The MNA will hold seasonal prize draws to reward Citizens who participated.

### Wildlife Projects

#### Migratory Birds Harvesting Survey

The Environment Team, with funding support from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), completed its migratory bird harvesting surveys for the 2019 and 2020 harvesting seasons. The primary purpose of these surveys is to collect harvesting data from Métis harvesters in Alberta to share with CWS and inform migratory bird conservation; however, the survey has expanded to examine other topics of interest.

Project Highlights:

#### 2019 Results

- 332 survey participants for the 2019 harvest season
  - 1,369 bird harvests were reported, consisting of 20 bird species
  - Harvests were reported across 33 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in Alberta
  - The most common migratory bird species harvested were Mallard (34 %) and Canada Goose (25 %)
  - Recorded 26 unique Métis names for migratory birds

#### 2020 Results

- Expanded survey focus to include ground bird harvest numbers
- 390 survey participants for the 2020 harvest season.
  - 3,829 bird harvests were reported, consisting of 34 bird species
  - Harvests were reported across 90 WMUs in Alberta
  - The most common migratory bird species harvested were Mallard (33 %) and Canada Goose (32 %)
  - The most common game bird species harvested were Ruffed Grouse (74%) and Spruce Grouse (16 %)
  - Recorded 39 unique Métis names migratory birds and game birds

Future Work:

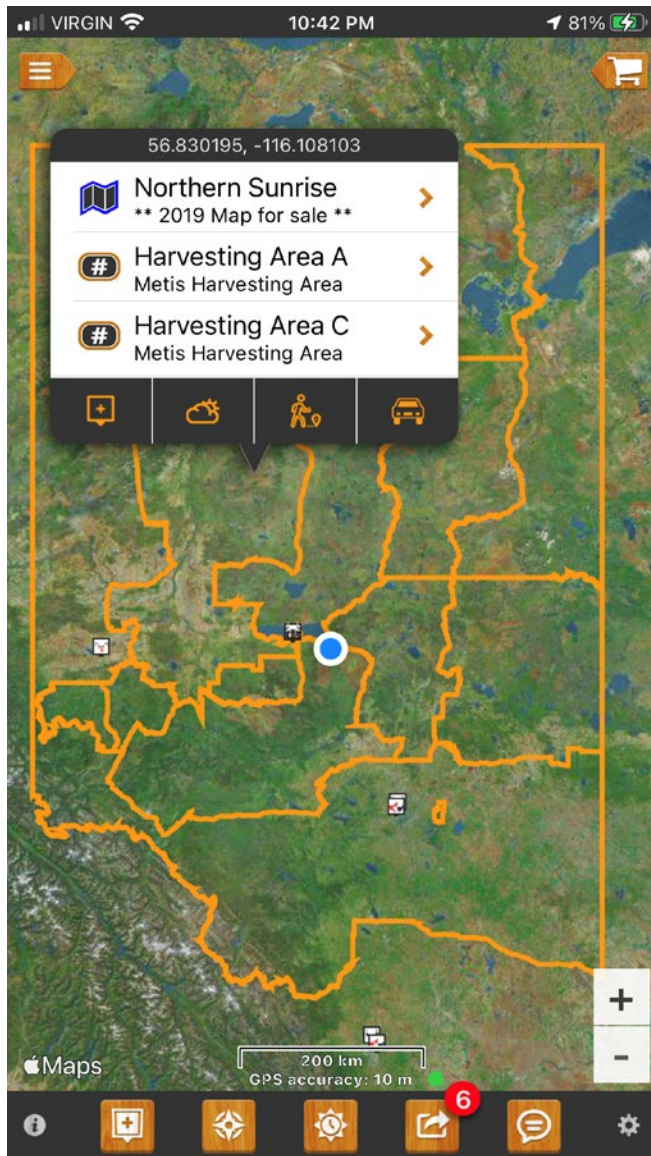
- Continue and expand this project to examine the harvest of additional organisms and plants
- Develop an online portal where Métis harvesters can report their harvest
- Explore further opportunities to collaborate with CWS.



The migratory birds harvesting survey was advertised using this image (above) on social media.



The fishing survey was advertised using this image (above) on social media.



The Métis Harvesting Areas layer displayed in the iHunter app.

### Chronic Wasting Disease & Caribou Conservation

Since 2018, Citizens at engagements have expressed concerns about declines in the number and health of wildlife. Woodland caribou were commonly identified by Citizens as a species in need of protection. In 2020, the Environment Team secured funds to explore concerns regarding caribou conservation and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Alberta.

#### Project Highlights:

- MNA staff joined National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium working groups and launched a CWD education and awareness campaign
- Shared CWD information through the MNA's social media and bi-weekly newsletter

#### Future Work:

- Hold Citizen engagements in 2021 to discuss CWD and its potential impacts on both Citizens and caribou populations

Photo: CWD\_Post

Caption: General information on CWD was shared with this image (above) on social media.

### iHunter Survey Project

In 2020, the MNA partnered with the Alberta Conservation Association, University of Alberta, and the developer of the iHunter smartphone app. This partnership allowed the Climate Team to develop an in-app survey for Citizens to report harvesting information and observations during hunting trips.

#### Project Highlights:

- A small group of MNA Citizens and staff tested the app survey feature in the spring of 2021
- The Métis Harvesting Areas layer and Métis Harvesting Policy document were added to the iHunter app

#### Future Work:

- Develop and release the in-app survey later this year

### Future Wildlife Monitoring Projects

- A provincewide remote camera trap project where Citizens can share images they capture with the MNA community
- A winter tick monitoring program where ticks will be counted from MNA Harvester-submitted moosehide samples.

## Environmental Conservation Initiative

The Environmental Conservation Initiative aims to undertake conservation projects that will protect the lands, waters, and air Métis Citizens rely on in Alberta to practice their culture and traditions. This recent initiative was recently developed in response to the Environment Team expanding its activities, including creating a Métis-led conservation area in Alberta. Projects through this initiative will work in tandem with Askîy to fulfill the goals of the MNA's environment pillars.

### Métis Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) Project

In 2019, the Environment Team acquired funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada to develop a





The IPCA survey was advertised using this image (above) on social media.

Métis-managed IPCA in Alberta in three phases: Planning, Evaluation, and Implementation.

- The Planning Phase, initiated in 2019, focused on researching existing IPCAs and potential avenues to establish one. Planning Phase activities continued into 2020 with a series of online engagement sessions and surveys seeking Métis Citizens' priorities and vision for a Métis IPCA.
- The Evaluation Phase, currently underway in 2021, is evaluating potential sites and building partnerships to establish a Métis IPCA in Alberta.
- The Implementation Phase will occur once a site has been secured, partnerships built, and a management plan developed.

Project Highlights:

- In November 2020, held six online engagement sessions and online surveys, with feedback from over 500 MNA Citizens
  - Analyzed the data from engagements and surveys and developed evaluation tools for assessing potential sites and partnership opportunities
- In May 2021, the MNA hired a Conservation Coordinator to lead the IPCA project

Future Work:

- Until a site has been secured and a management plan established, the Environment Team will continue to explore land securement opportunities, evaluate potential sites, and engage with prospective land management partners
- Re-engage with Citizens to ensure the established IPCA reflects the vision of the Métis people in Alberta.

## Closing Message – Environment Team

Over the last two years, the Environment Team has transitioned from planning an environmental monitoring program to delivering one. The Team has launched a variety of new projects guided by Citizen concerns regarding plant, fish, and wildlife resources, and has welcomed new staff members to oversee these projects. We are excited to complete this work on behalf of our Citizens and share the results of our efforts.

A major focus of the Environment Team's activities has been to keep Citizens informed and involved in our efforts to monitor and address environmental concerns. With the introduction of the COVID-19 virus to Canada in 2020, MNA Citizens faced unprecedented hurdles, disrupting nearly every aspect of their lives, including how they engaged with our Team. Most activities, traditionally held in-person, were shifted to a virtual environment, forcing both MNA staff and Citizens to adapt. We appreciate our Citizens' continued efforts to engage with us throughout the last year.

While we have learned new skills and plan to continue some virtual Citizen engagement activities, we look forward to eased restrictions allowing us to gather and engage in-person again. The Environment Team will be creating opportunities to do so at our upcoming community fish camps and traditional plant harvesting camps. Details will be shared on the MNA's social media pages @albertametis and in the bi-weekly newsletter.

We encourage Citizens to reach out to the Environment Team at [environment@metis.org](mailto:environment@metis.org) if they have any questions about our projects and initiatives. ■

# 2020/21 Intergovernmental Relations



Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) is not a new task, but it is a new department in the Métis Nation of Alberta. Our focus is on building or maintaining key relationships with governments and beneficial partners to advance the goals of the Métis Nation, and ensuring our potential partners understand who we are, what we do, and what we are capable of.

IGR started as support to the MNA executive and negotiations with the Government of Canada. We also managed the relationship with the Government of Alberta (GoA) through the 2017 *MNA/GoA Framework Agreement*.

In the past year our role has grown, and we are establishing a new unit that will support the MNA's governance and relationship building with all government and beneficial partners and advance our priorities benefitting Métis Citizens. Economic Development is one of these priorities and you can read more about our Economic Development portfolio below.

The IGR department's focus has been negotiating with the Government of Canada in advancing our self-government negotiations, addressing our outstanding claims and concerns with governments, supporting key engagements with governments, and supporting the whole MNA in dealing with governments at all levels. We also are a point of contact for Citizens and potential stakeholders seeking answers that fall outside the scope of other MNA departments, which we explain in more detail in the Citizen Relations section.

## Government Relations

### Government of Canada

Our major activity for the past year has been continued negotiations with the Government of Canada to advance our self-government recognition and build our ability to serve Métis Citizens. In 2019, we signed a historic agreement with Canada, the *Métis Government Recognition and Self-government Agreement* (MGRSA). Upon signing

this agreement, the MNA has been recognized as the government of the Métis Nation within Alberta.

It should be noted this agreement is not asking the MNA be recognized as the government of Métis Citizens in Alberta but confirming to Canada that this is the case. We have never asked another government to give us recognition, but rather to recognize we are self-governing and to figure out how that fits within confederation – and we are helping with that. We have always maintained we are the government for Métis Citizens in Alberta, and now other governments have clarity that they must recognize this fact.

The MGRSA also sets out a road map for recognizing this reality in legislation. The MNA, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and Métis Nation – Saskatchewan are collaborating with Canada to develop enabling legislation that will entrench and protect this recognition within the Canadian legal system. This will be another monumental step that closes opportunities for governments to ignore our position as representatives of Métis Citizens in Alberta.

Of course, this work cannot happen without dedicated financial support. The MGRSA requires negotiating fiscal financing agreements to fund the transition to self-government from the *Societies Act of Alberta*, and ongoing funding to support the government of the Métis Nation within Alberta. In 2021, the MNA and Canada signed an *Interim Fiscal Financing Agreement* dedicated to supporting our transition to self-government. There are a lot of factors that need consideration and preparation to move into self-government, such as a Constitution, laws, and information management systems, to name a few.

Negotiations also involve working to settle outstanding MNA claims against Canada, specifically scrip. We all know scrip was detrimental to the Métis Nation and was rife with fraud, that was in fact supported by Parliament of Canada, against Métis people. This will not stand, and we have agreement from Canada to establish a process to address this. Currently, Canada has established processes to deal with outstanding claims of First



Nations, but have not had to settle Métis claims until recently. Our job is to get it done.

A major step towards establishing our government in Canada is developing a Constitution to guide us. The MNA Constitution Commission was created at arm's length for this purpose. Initial engagements with key representatives were held in early 2021. This draft Constitution will then be brought to MNA Citizens for review this Fall, edited as needed, and finalized. Once completed, we hope to have a strong and representative Constitution that all Métis Citizens are proud of that guides our government into the future. The Constitution must be ratified through a provincewide vote and IGR has supported with establishing this process to ensure all MNA Citizens have the opportunity to vote.

## Federal Legislation

Canada has taken a more proactive approach to Indigenous people in the past few years and engaged with us more often on initiatives that potentially impact the rights and interests of the Métis Nation. This means we have been involved with developing key federal legislation proposed in the past year. Notably, Canada passed legislation requiring them to incorporate the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) principles into government operations, and implement Indigenous languages legislation passed in 2019. The UNDRIP legislation is an extremely daunting task, as Canada was built on colonization and has an entire system meant to benefit non-Indigenous Canada. We will be working with Canada to identify and alter key operations and legislation that contradict the UNDRIP principles.

Finally, we have also been key support in developing distinction-based Indigenous health legislation that Canada announced as a key priority. We cannot express completely how needed this legislation is. Currently, there is no inroad for Métis health in the federal government. Albeit, Canada has recently been supportive of Métis Nation governments addressing certain aspects of Métis Nation health, it is often hampered by existing systems, such as the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, which oversees First Nation and Inuit health but does not have needed mechanisms addressing Métis health and well-being. Distinction-based legislation is an opportunity to build something that will support Métis health and well-being. The MNA has been collaborating with sister governments on a collective position to influence this legislation's development. It is anticipated this legislation will be drafted by the end of the year or early 2022.

## Government of Alberta

In 2017, the MNA and Government of Alberta signed a 10-year framework agreement outlining expectations of all parties in the relationship. Our goal is to establish clear processes for us to engage with Alberta in building policies, processes, and legislation that could impact Métis Citizens, and ways we can work together to address issues of mutual concern. While this can be, and has been, a struggle at times, we remain confident we will establish these key processes to ensure we are able to inform Government of Alberta decisions.

The Alberta framework agreement also establishes a process for consistent engagement between the MNA and Alberta through a technical working group. IGR leads

this process through monthly meetings with Alberta officials to discuss needs, complete necessary reports, and conduct required reviews of the process to track progress in implementing the overall agreement.

## Supporting MNA Executive, Departments, and Affiliates

As a part of our role in maintaining relationships and ensuring our governance processes are respected, IGR supports our Health and Children and Family Services departments in their sub-table engagements with Alberta. These tables are essentially the “mechanism” through which we can advance our priorities within the province of Alberta and the government. For example, the MNA vaccine clinics resulted from relationships established via the sub-table. We will continue supporting our departments in their engagements to ensure our preferred processes are communicated and officials are held accountable to agreements their government has made.

We have also supported federal initiatives, such as housing, homelessness, early learning and child care, child and family services, and infrastructure.

IGR is a key support to the MNA Executive and executive activities. For example, we are part of the senior officials shaping the Permanent Bilateral Mechanism (PBM) contained in the Canada/Métis Nation Accord. The PBM is the process through which key priorities of the Métis Nation and the Government of Canada are identified, agreed upon, and actioned. Past sub-accords signed by the Métis Nation and Canada (Housing, Homelessness, Early Learning and Child Care, Post-Secondary Education) came about through the PBM process, which highlights its effectiveness and importance in advancing our interests.

As a part of the PBM process, we also participate in senior officials tables at the Métis Nation level where key discussions and activities take place, like establishing priorities and agendas for PBM meetings and the Prime Minister Summit. We also act as an intermediary between leadership and senior officials in communicating activities and decision requests that may arise from our activities.

The MNA meets with various provincial and federal leaders throughout any given year. IGR is often there to support these engagements as IGR can either action items that result from these meetings or engage the proper arm of the MNA to take on the task.

## Citizen Relations

There are often times when requests, questions, or initiatives do not have an obvious endpoint. For example, the MNA does not currently have capacity in the justice

area. When we receive an inquiry related to this, it often ends up with IGR. This particular example has been a high request for some time, but resources to build necessary capacity have been unavailable. Resources are still slim, but IGR is working to identify ways to build capacity so we can support Citizens navigating this intimidating and confusing system.

Other examples of questions and issues we receive:

- Métis rights (e.g. tax exemption, land access, land ownership, uninsured health benefits)
- Land rights
- Establishing a Local Council
- Bylaw inquiries
- Questions related to current news (e.g. Black Live Matter protests, recent Alberta Crown Lands policy)
- Racism and human rights concerns

## What's Next

IGR supports all the MNA does to ensure our position as a Métis government in Alberta is understood and recognized. By accessing funds, we will further our ability to address the needs of MNA Citizens.

In the next year, we will continue fighting to advance the Métis people of Alberta's interests and needs. We anticipate having an established Constitution and be well along the path to building the structure and laws of the Métis government in Alberta. This has been something Métis Albertans have waited a long time for.

As a part of our work with Canada, we will continue negotiating a process to settle our outstanding claims against the Government of Canada.

We also want a process through the provincial framework agreement to facilitate meaningful participation in Government of Alberta decision-making. This will ensure no adverse impacts result from their decisions. This work will also support building new, beneficial relationships with Alberta ministries, agencies, and departments to support Métis Albertans' needs provincially.

We will also support MNA departments and affiliates in their dealings with governments and other partners to ensure all obligations are recognized and considered in decision-making. This, essentially, ensures governments are accountable to the MNA based upon agreements they have made with us. ■

# 2020/21 Economic Development

The Economic Development Team continues to undertake initiatives to support and promote economic growth for Métis Albertans by:

- Identifying commercial and industrial investment opportunities
- Promoting Métis businesses
- Fostering strategic relationships with the business community
- Supporting joint venture opportunities

## Alberta MétisWorks

The Alberta MétisWorks business directory and procurement platform is open to any business. The directory spans all industries and services including financial professionals, lawyers, contractors, oil and gas service providers, tourism operators, and more.

- With over 185 registered Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Citizen-owned businesses featured on the website, Alberta MétisWorks is one of the largest collections of verified Métis businesses in Canada
- On a monthly basis, the site averages over 2,000 unique visitors and more than 67,000 page views

While Alberta MétisWorks was designed to be a business directory, it is also a tool to create meaningful connections and help businesses find opportunities across Alberta and beyond. This includes:

- Procurement project opportunities from MNA industry partners
- Connecting businesses with funding and support opportunities offered by Apeetogosan, Business Link, Government of Alberta, or any other relevant opportunities
- Promoting training and employment opportunities through Alberta MétisWorks, with the help of our affiliates, partners, and government



- Upon request, providing support letters to registered Métis businesses applying for procurement opportunities

This program is supported by our affiliates, partners, businesses, Citizens, and MNA Provincial Council through the MNA's Provincial Economic Development Strategy. Métis business owners and community members guide our program development through continued feedback and engagement.

Marketing the site to industry has led to building several business-to-business relationships, mainly in the oil and gas industry. Industry has been using Alberta MétisWorks to seek out Métis contractors where they have project opportunities. Looking into the future, Alberta MétisWorks will connect businesses to learning opportunities through Apeetogosan, Business Link, and the Government of Alberta. Alberta MétisWorks will also feature employment opportunities and share information about grant programs and funding to help the business community grow and succeed.

## Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC)

The MNA is seeking the AIOC's support to guarantee a \$20 million loan to participate in a limited equity partnership in the Slave Lake Biomass/Gas to Diesel Project. Originally brought forward by MNA Region Five leadership, the Economic Development Team has worked closely with partners Expander Energy Inc. and BBA Engineering Ltd. to analyze this potential opportunity to invest in a renewable natural resource project.

Expander Energy Inc. is a technology company founded and owned by Albertans, that has developed and patented its own technologies to answer the challenges of creating low carbon, high-performing fuels for Alberta, Canada, and the world markets. They are building Canada's first Biomass/Gas to Liquids plant in Slave Lake, in partnership with Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd., a multi-generational sawmill.

The project will utilize Expander's innovative Biomass/Gas to Liquids (BGTL) process technology to convert biomass (forestry wood waste) and natural gas into 420 barrels per day (BPD) of renewable low-carbon intensity (CI) diesel, jet fuel, and hydrogen.

The facility is strategically located next to the Vanderwell sawmill, which will provide the biomass feedstock for the proposed plant. The site is logistically favourable, with its easy access to highway and rail. The Slave Lake area has enough biomass to support a 4,000 BPD project with a capital expenditure of \$600 million. Vanderwell has enough biomass of their own to supply a 1,000 BPD plant, and there are four other equally-sized mills in the area to meet future demand.

The BGTL™ Project intersects the forestry and energy sectors, as its design incorporates carbon capture and sequestration, the sale of carbon, production of carbon credits, and the production and sale of the hydrogen commodity.

Together, Expander and the MNA have signed a Declaration of Relationship and a Letter of Intent. The MNA chose this project because it aligns well with:

- a. AIOC's vision, objectives, and criteria for supporting shovel-ready projects
- b. The MNA's Climate Change Action Plan's five goals under its Renewable Energy Initiatives:
  - Greenhouse Gas Reduction
  - Opportunities for the MNA
  - Opportunities for MNA Citizens

- Develop Capacity
- Education and Awareness

c. The Economic Development Strategy 2019-2022 and Roadmap and its goals to develop:

- Economic self-sufficiency of the MNA and its Regions
- Durable socio-economic prosperity of MNA Citizens
- A thriving Métis entrepreneur class

There is an imperative need to take climate change action, and the MNA recognizes initiatives like this provide the skilled Métis labour force opportunities to reallocate its experience toward sustainable resource development. This unique opportunity both promotes the economic interests of Métis Citizens and helps meet the growing demand for sustainable fuels. It also represents a significant opportunity for Métis businesses and contractors who may be involved in its construction, operation, and forestry biomass harvesting. Moreover, the long-term benefits of producing a high value, non-toxic, biodegradable, and odourless diesel fuel for remote and Indigenous communities extends beyond the Métis Nation.

## Building Strong Relationships

In the spirit of reconciliation, the MNA is redefining its approach toward businesses whose projects affect Métis people and our traditional lands; therefore, the MNA has taken an opportunity to define reconciliation for itself and approach business relationships in a new way.

The Economic Development Team invites businesses to engage with this new mutually-beneficial approach through a Declaration of Relationship, which describes the MNA's perspective on relationship building.

With this approach, the MNA prioritizes business relationships based on key principles. Principles do not impose obligations, rather, its binding power arises from the good faith and integrity of the parties involved. In the growing climate of reconciliation, this principle-based approach appropriately reflects traditional Métis socio-legal ways of relationship building.

The MNA has identified the following key relationship principles:

- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity

These principles also include value:

- Educating relationship partners about the Métis Nation and our culture
- Identifying mutual commercial opportunities
- Learning about our partners

The MNA's overall industry relations and economic development principles:

- Attract investment into Métis communities
- Advance reconciliation
- Promote professionalism
- Encourage education
- Benefit Métis Citizens

By engaging with the MNA, businesses are implementing and affirming a traditional Métis approach toward relationship building and helping advance reconciliation by informing its economic development projects with these principles.

In exchange, the MNA offers its endorsement to businesses regarding projects that may impact Métis people or traditional lands.

The MNA offers unique advantages and can:

- Support a company or project, which may help an organization be more competitive when bidding
- Offer access to the MNA's network of businesses and entrepreneurs

- Give access to, or knowledge about, projects of interest to benefit prospective companies
- Supply a detailed summary of Métis business services and capabilities across Alberta
- Assist with accessing MNA Regions and communities for consultation purposes

The MNA is proud to have entered Declaration of Relationships with the following organizations in 2020-21:

1. Arnett & Burgess Oilfield Construction
2. Avid Energy Services and Apex Well Servicing
3. BBA Engineering
4. Crocodile Products
5. Dechant Construction
6. Enbridge
7. Expander Energy
8. Kiewit
9. TC Energy

The Economic Development Team will continue seeking opportunities to develop relationships with willing partners across Alberta through the Declaration of Relationship process, as well as continue growing Alberta MétisWorks' business listings to support economic growth for Métis Albertans. ■



# 2020/21 Métis Identification and Registry Systems

Our team in the Registry Department is committed to maintaining integrity for identifying Métis in Alberta, while providing exceptional support and service to its Citizens and MNA applicants. Our main goals for 2020/21 has been to continue growing the Nation by decreasing wait times to issue citizenship through creating efficiency in the card process and implementing operational changes in the Registry database.

Last year, we were very successful in obtaining a significant number of applications; however, we heard feedback from the Métis community they wanted a reduced wait time. We needed to create a more efficient process to deal with the influx of applications while decreasing the amount of time it took to receive citizenship. COVID-19 impacted our ability to be out in the community, however, it allowed us to focus our efforts solely on creating efficiency in the application process.

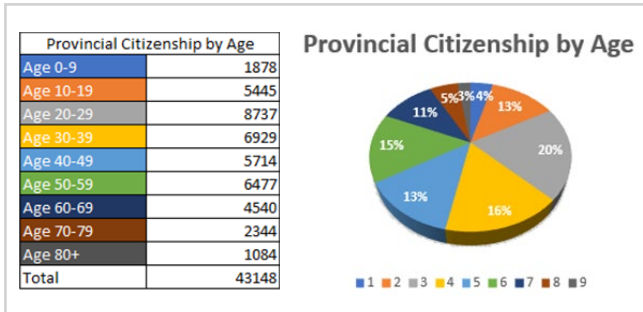
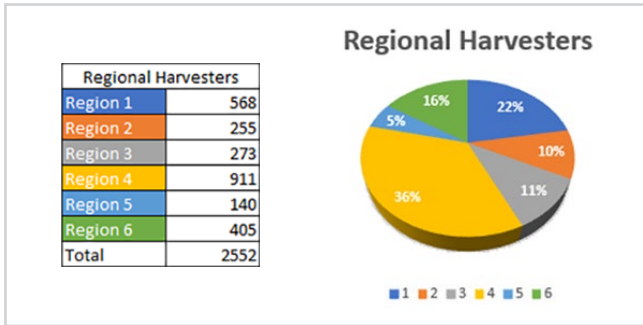
As a department, prior to the pandemic, Registry relied on physical files that were passed on along each step of the process. We looked at ways we could become paperless which allowed us to send staff home to work. Updates to the Registry citizenship database created more efficiency, and therefore directly impacted the process for issuing citizenship by shortening the overall timeframe.

We have been able to compile data showing two thirds of our applicants reference a current MNA cardholder. This allowed us at one point to process these referenced files in approximately five to six months. Files not referencing a current MNA Citizens may take longer, depending on if we require additional documents to be ordered by the MNA or by the applicant.

With the closure of MNA Provincial Office and face-to-face meetings, we were no longer able to complete in person Intake for applications. Initially, we were concerned







this would impact the overall number of applications we received; however, we were pleasantly surprised to find we still received a high number of applications via mail, with the highest months being 600 and 700 applications received, respectively.

Improving communication with applicants has been another focus in the operational changes we implemented in the Registry database. Applicants now receive auto-generated email or letter updates at crucial touchpoints to ensure they are up to date on the status of their application. Through auto-generated emails or letters, we will provide information such as their Registry Agent, affiliate links, updated address forms, and more to that they are well informed throughout the process.

Our Registry team was also essential in assisting both MNA affiliates, as well as departments within the MNA in verifying Métis Citizens and their eligibility to receive crucial COVID-19 relief programming when they needed it most. Confirming Métis identification ensured affiliates and departments were able to meet their deliverables.

Despite the unusual events in this past year due to COVID-19, the Registry department was able to process over 4,100 new applications and was able to issue citizenship to 5,500 Métis in Alberta. This is the highest citizenship increase in a single year in the history of the MNA.

We will continue to promote, identify, and register MNA Citizens and harvesters with a focus to further decrease the wait time for issuing citizenship in 2021-2022. ■



## Everything you want to know about MNA citizenship!

Join us for a virtual information session on application requirements for Métis Nation of Alberta citizenship. Featuring presentations by Métis Nation of Alberta Registry Department and Rupertsland Institute.

**Wednesday, February 24**  
**5:00 pm to 6:30 pm via Google Meet**

To register for this event contact  
**Sharon Bourque** at [sharon.bourque@epsb.ca](mailto:sharon.bourque@epsb.ca) (Eastglen High School)  
or **Matthew Kleywegt** at [matthew.kleywegt@epsb.ca](mailto:matthew.kleywegt@epsb.ca) (Queen Elizabeth School)

Métis Nation of Alberta · Provincial Office  
Della Gray Building · 11738 Kingsway Avenue · Edmonton  
780-455-2200 · 1-800-252-7553 · [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com)

Facebook: @abmetis Instagram: @albertametis

**Stay Informed!**  
Sign up for our newsletter: [albertametis.com/events](http://albertametis.com/events)

## Become a Citizen!

Are you Métis and looking for something more? Become a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta!

**Start the application process today and access opportunities such as:**

- ∞ Culture & community connections
- ∞ Harvesting rights
- ∞ Housing supports
- ∞ Educational scholarships
- ∞ Business development opportunities
- ∞ And so much more!

Be part of the progress!

# 2020/21 Youth Programs and Services



The Department of Youth Programs and Services is committed to addressing the unique needs and challenges that Métis youth face in Alberta. Over the past year, the department has continued working hard to meet these needs and challenges; we have adapted our programs and events to follow all public health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep staff and Citizens safe.

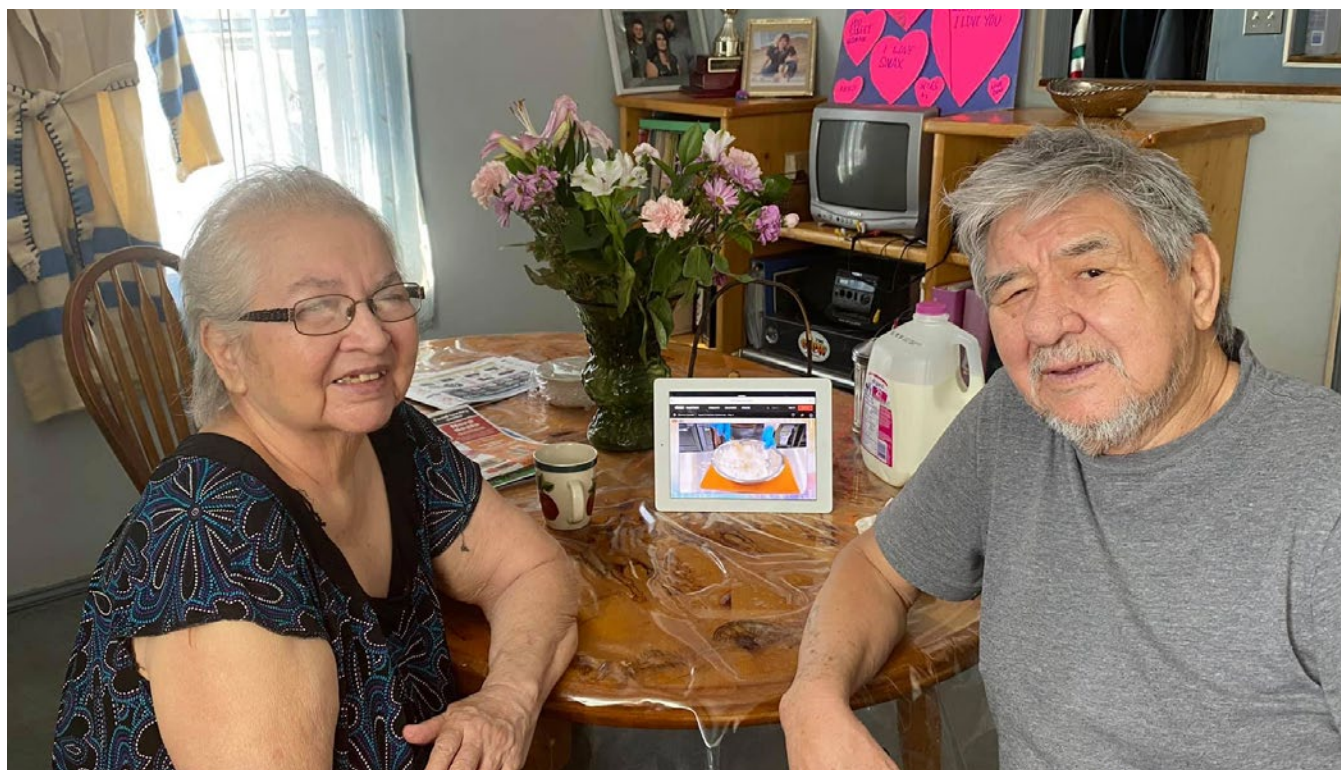
Throughout 2020-21, the Youth department supported youth and families in maintaining, establishing, and enhancing connections to their community and culture, as well as the future leaders of the Métis Nation by collaborating with the Provisional Youth Council of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA).

## August 2020 – July 2021 Update

### Youth and Seniors Gathering

On February 20 and 21, 2021, the MNA held the 5th Youth and Seniors Gathering virtually for Citizens to view on Facebook livestream and our website platform designed specifically for this event. The Youth and Seniors Gathering is an annual provincial event; this year with the switch to a virtual format, we had an online viewership of approximately 2,000 livestream views throughout the weekend.

The event was developed with the vision to encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing between youth and



Métis Citizens watching YSG 2021.

seniors. Each year is an opportunity for Métis Citizens to gather, share knowledge and stories, participate in cultural activities that are unique to Métis people, and grow their sense of belonging to the Métis community.

This year's theme was, "Our Past, Our Future, Our Story." The Department of Youth Programs and Services hosted Métis performers, keynote speakers, and cultural facilitators who transferred their Métis knowledge, culture, and traditions to Métis youth through presentations, pre-recorded music and dance showcases, and a variety of other cultural videos.

### Alberta Métis Fest

On June 26, 2021, the MNA offered the 3rd annual Alberta Métis Fest. This year's event was once again delivered virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time. The aim of Alberta Métis Fest is to celebrate Métis culture and facilitate connection amongst the Métis community in Alberta.

This virtual event included a combination of live and pre-recorded videos. All six MNA regions were invited to participate and showcase the talents of three performers from their respective regions. Each Provincial Council member also had the opportunity to provide video greetings that played prior to their region's performances.

The event also included a jigging and a fiddling competition, comprised of Métis jiggers and fiddlers who submitted videos through an online call-out for submissions. Each competition was judged by a team of professionals and winners received cash prizes.

Although Alberta Métis Fest was virtual, community members could connect with other Métis Albertans on our online platform, and interact through several live giveaways and contests.

Overall, the event was very well received by the community and was a wonderful way to connect MNA Citizens to one another at such a challenging time. Over 1,010 viewers watched the live event through the online platform and another 3,200 engaged on the MNA Facebook page.

### Virtual Youth Leadership Conference

On Saturday, September 26, 2020, the Department of Youth Programs and Services held its first Virtual Youth Leadership Conference, with a focus on *Governance and Leadership*. A key priority for the Youth department is to: educate, empower, and support Métis youth in becoming involved in the governance process of the Métis Nation of Alberta to ensure a strong future for generations to come.

**Alberta METIS FEST 2021**  
VIRTUAL

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26 ∞ 10AM - 5PM**

**LIVESTREAM @ albertametis.com**

**MUSICAL PERFORMANCES**  
Jigging & Fiddling Competitions

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA

**CHANGE.**  
IT STARTS WITH  
*youth*

**Virtual YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 26 | 12-4 PM**

- Inspirational Métis Youth Leaders
- Meet Your MNA Youth Council
- #MetisCheck TikTok Challenge
- Virtual Chat Q&A
- Entertainers including fiddler Alex Kusturuk
- Prizes & Free Swag

**Come for an afternoon of woke conversations with Métis youth leaders in your community and leave feeling empowered to make a difference!**

Register by September 21, 2020 at [albertametis.com/events](http://albertametis.com/events).  
Open to MNA youth aged 12 to 29.

Have questions? Need help? Call **Lorie** at 587-338-9013 or email [youth@metis.org](mailto:youth@metis.org).

*Tune in... get in on it!*

🎵 📺 📷 📱 @ABMetisyouth

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA

Each year, the Youth department hosts a Youth Conference during the Annual General Assembly, so to address this priority during the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held using an online platform and featured a variety of speakers, digital presentations, and cultural performances.

The conference was centered primarily on youth leadership, governance, and youth empowerment. Speakers included Métis Canadian Common Law and Indigenous Legal Order student Colby Lizotte; MNA Youth Council Chair Brett Chernow; and Métis law student Jessica Mayhew.

This conference gave Métis youth the chance to gather in a virtual format and see the future of the Métis Nation from a youth perspective, partake in cultural workshops, and connect with each other in a safe way.

## Sports and Recreation Grant

Sports and recreational activities are vital to the health and wellness of Métis youth. Low-income Métis youth often are unable to participate in sports and recreation activities due to financial barriers. To ease the financial struggle and ensure Métis youth have increased opportunities to participate in sport and recreations activities, the Department of Youth Programs and Services launched the Sports and Recreation Grant.

The Sports and Recreation Grant is available to Métis Albertans who are the parent or guardian responsible for a Métis youth aged 5-17 living in their household. Youth aged 5-17 are eligible for a maximum of \$500 per application period.

This financial support can be used towards registration costs, equipment costs, and travel costs. This program will be available for a minimum of two years, and there are two application periods per year:

- 1st period: September 1 - November 30, 2020
- 2nd period: April 1 - June 30, 2021

A total of 914 applications were approved in the first application period, and 1,683 applications in the second period.

## Virtual Youth Camp

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth department adapted our virtual bi-weekly youth group into a summer-camp themed weekly group for July.

Throughout the month, this virtual summer camp immersed Métis youth aged 12-29 in their culture and helped connect them to each other using virtual camp experiences. The camp offered weekly cultural workshops, community building opportunities, and



**Becoming a pro takes practice.** Our Youth Programs & Services department is offering the Sports and Recreation Grant for youth aged 5 to 17. **Receive up to \$500** towards travel costs, equipment, or registration fees.

**APPLICATION PERIOD:**  
**September 1 – November 30, 2020**  
**and April 1 – June 30, 2021**

### Eligibility:

- Youth or parent/guardian must be an MNA citizen
- Must reside in Alberta
- Parent/guardian and youth must live in same household

Applicants may only apply once per application period. **For more eligibility requirements, information, and to apply, visit [albertametis.com/events](http://albertametis.com/events)**



Youth & Seniors Gathering Métis Child and Family Jiggers Filming.



Métis Week youth crafting circle.

facilitated discussions. All supplies and materials were provided to registered youth prior to the camp, so they could fully participate in cultural activities such as: tufting, beading, and finger weaving.

The camp was an amazing opportunity to connect youth to their culture, and to other youth in the community during the pandemic.

### Virtual Fiddle Camp

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we were excited to offer a Virtual Youth Fiddle Camp for MNA Citizens aged 12-29. The camp took place virtually Saturday, July 24 and Sunday, July 25. This virtual camp was focused on the traditional Métis fiddle and was open to youth of all skill levels.

### Regional Youth Coordinators

In response to the Ordinary Resolution passed at the 90th Annual General Assembly on August 11 and 12, 2018 in Lac La Biche, the Youth Programs and Services Department hired six full-time Regional Youth Coordinators (RYCs) to work out of each of the six Regional Offices and assist with developing, coordinating, and implementing Métis youth programs and services in their respective region. Each RYC has specific programming goals set out, which includes running ongoing Cultural Enrichment Programs, Life Skills Programs, and a weekly youth group.

The RYCs have made huge strides within their respective regions, and we have seen their programs and services grow and expand as more MNA Citizens participate. Due to COVID-19 and provincial gathering restrictions, in-person programming was moved to a virtual setting.

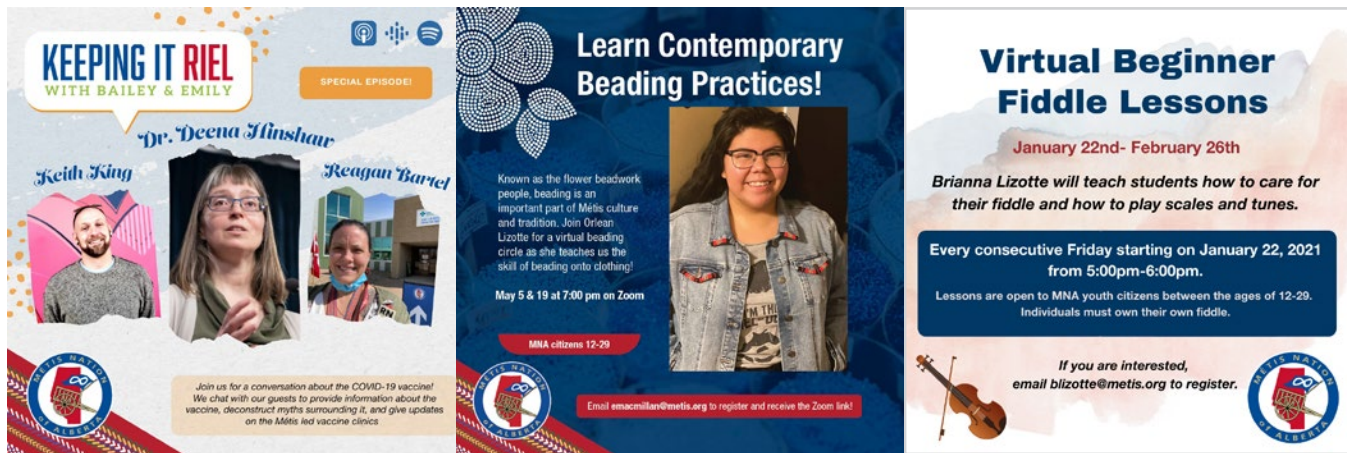
However, once it is deemed safe to resume programming within the community, all RYCs will continue to build relationships and run Cultural Enrichment and Life Skills programming, as well as restart their weekly regional youth groups.

### Cultural Enrichment Programs

Since the 90th Annual General Assembly, the Department of Youth Programs and Services has delivered a variety of Cultural Enrichment Programs across the province in each of the six regions. These regional programs are planned by the RYCs and facilitated by Métis cultural experts from across the province.

Cultural enrichment programs include, but are not limited to:

- Jigging
- Fiddling
- Beading
- Embroidery
- Traditional medicines
- Bannock making
- Finger weaving



Cultural Enrichment programming is vital to connecting Métis youth with their culture and keeping those valuable traditions alive for future generations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth Programs and Services Department has ran virtual Cultural Enrichment programming to meet our deliverables. These programs are open to all Métis youth across the province and are held virtually on platforms such as Zoom.

## Life Skills Programs

The Department of Youth Programs and Services has delivered a variety of Life Skills Programs across the province in each MNA region. These regional programs are planned by the respective region's RYC and facilitated by experts from across the province (many of whom are Métis).

Life Skills programming includes, but is not limited to:

- Cooking classes
- Financial planning
- Non-Restricted Firearms Safety courses
- Hunter's Education courses

Soon, we will be offering first aid and babysitting courses to Métis youth in Alberta.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our department has continued running virtual Life Skills programming to meet our deliverables. These programs are open to all Métis youth across the province and are held virtually on platforms such as Zoom.

## Online Programs

Throughout the past year, the Youth Team has offered a variety of virtual programs, social media campaign, and mail-out kits to Métis youth. Due to public health restrictions preventing in-person programming, these types of online programs have been vital to us effectively connecting with Métis youth across the province during the pandemic.

Free online life skills courses through Spectrum Safety have continued being available to MNA Citizens throughout the past year. We have also launched a virtual Hunter's Education training course for MNA youth harvesters.

The Youth Team has also continued releasing episodes of its *Keeping it Riel* podcast. Season 1 officially ended in October 2020 with an interview of Métis rights lawyers, Jean Teillet and Jason Madden. Season 2 of the podcast launched on March 15, 2021 with Métis hockey player Sheldon Souray, and the rest of the season is currently ongoing.

During Métis Week 2020, our department planned a variety of virtual events, social media campaigns, livestreams, and videos that were released throughout the week. This included but was not limited to:

- A special *Keeping it Riel* podcast episode on the life of Louis Riel
- A kitchen party with Brianna Lizotte
- A jigging tutorial livestream with the Métis Child and Family Dancers
- The launch of #TheFutureIs... campaign, designed to highlight the accomplishments of Métis youth in Alberta.



All of these and more can be found on our social media pages.

Our department also continued mailing out kits, such as Wellness Kits to promote Métis youth’s mental well-being, as well as a variety of cultural craft kits including beading, embroidery, and finger weaving kits.

### Youth Council

The MNA’s Provisional Youth Council has continued its work as the voice of Métis youth within the province. They are the political voice for Métis youth within Alberta, and they are dedicated to ensuring that Métis youth voices are being heard at all levels. They have continued to direct the Youth Programs and Services Department on program and service development so that we can best meet the needs of Métis youth across all six regions.

### Conclusion and What’s Next

It has been another incredible year for the Youth Programs and Services department. We have been able to further our connection with Métis youth in Alberta during the COVID-19 pandemic by developing new, exciting virtual programming. Through these virtual initiatives, we have provided amazing opportunities to Métis youth provincewide by connecting them to their community, their culture, and other Métis youth.

Our department has successfully ran a variety of large-scale virtual events to connect with MNA Citizens across the province. These events included: Youth and Seniors Gathering, Alberta Métis Fest, the Virtual Youth Leadership Conference, and more.

Despite the fact we have been unable to gather in person, we have received an amazing response to these events, as people have been able to gather virtually with each other, and feel connected to their culture and the wider Métis community. We have also continued to run smaller-scale Cultural and Life Skills programming for Métis youth, while also implementing a variety of other virtual initiatives and social media campaigns to keep Métis youth involved and connected.

In the future, Citizens can expect the Youth Programs and Services department to continue:

- Developing informed, quality programming for Métis youth within Alberta
- Building Métis youth’s sense of belonging and connection to Métis culture and community
- Engaging with Métis youth across Alberta through programs specifically for them

We are excited to soon begin in-person programming, once it is safe to do so and public health measures allow. We look forward to hosting our large-scale events in person, and for our RYCs to once again run programming within their respective communities.

Connecting with Métis youth is truly the best part of what the Youth Programs and Services department does, and we look forward to continuing this work over the next year. ■

*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*





# 2020/21

REGIONAL  
REPORTS



# 2020/21 REGION ONE



**James Cardinal**  
President  
Region One



**Jason Ekeberg**  
Vice President  
Region One

## 2021 Emergency Funds

In 2020-21, our office had many emergencies requiring home repairs.

With Region One having access to emergency funds, we have helped many of our Citizens, which includes Citizens who reside in the community, as well as surrounding communities of our Region.

Unfortunately, with events like the overland flooding, many people were affected.

It gives us great honour that we can work alongside the Provincial Office and leadership. Setting up home appraisals, doing assessments for home repairs, implementing programs, along with previous programs the Métis Nation had in place, we were able to assist our Citizens whose homes were impacted.

Citizens who experienced uncontrollable events where something stopped working or needed to be fixed, such as a furnace giving out in the middle of winter, the emergency funds helped with those expenses as well.

## 2021 Wood Harvesting Assistance

Our cold winters can be very hard on people. We have seniors that have minimal mobility, along with Citizens who do not have the means to harvest wood to keep themselves and their families warm.

For some of our Citizens, their only source of heat and warmth is a wood stove. Region One was able to access the harvest supply of wood and deliver it to those Citizens who were in need. The wood harvested was loaded to Citizens, chopped, stacked, and ready to go, ensuring they had a warm winter at home.

## 2021 Senior Support

Starting in April of 2021, we were fortunate enough to assist some of our most vulnerable Citizens, our elders and seniors. Our Region One office provided grocery cards to our senior Citizens aged 60+.

We had phoned all our senior Citizens to inform them of the assistance that was available and accessible to them. Scheduling while restrictions were in place due to COVID-19 was a task like no other; it was time consuming and a lot of hard work from our Region One staff members.

Our seniors, thankfully, were amazing through it all. They were punctual and so grateful for the assistance they received.



## COVID Relief

COVID-19 had an impact on everyone. Lots of our Citizens lost their jobs or had hours reduced. Students had no choice but to attend school through online learning and courses, increasing the expenses of many homes.

With COVID Relief funding, we were able to assist Citizens with grocery cards in the hope that by providing grocery cards, it would help eliminate the expense of setting money aside for groceries so our Citizens could use their money for other bills they may have had.

This program was ongoing through 2020-21. Due to limited funds, as well as the Citizenship base in Region One, we tried our best to help as many as we could. Unfortunately, not everyone was able to access this relief, as we ran out of funds so quickly.



## 2021 Health & Wellness

The Health & Wellness Program was an emergency support program to assist Citizens dealing with uncontrollable loss of employment, or reduced hours, due to the impact of COVID-19. This program helped eliminate the stresses of purchasing necessities through fuel and/or grocery cards.

Citizens with medical appointments requiring travel out of town were also assisted through our Health & Wellness Program. If our Citizens were unable to travel to their out-of-town appointments, our office was able to provide transportation and driver arrangements to ensure no appointment was missed.

The Health & Wellness Program was also open to the uncontrollable circumstance of a funeral, helping Citizens with the cost of groceries for the service that followed. ■

# 2020/21 REGION TWO



**Duane Zaraska**  
President  
Region Two



**Andrea Sandmaier**  
Vice President  
Region Two

## Greetings from Region Two President Dwayne Zaraska

I first would like to say that it is a great honour to work for and represent the great Citizens of Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region Two. It is so welcoming that we can gather for the 93rd Annual General Assembly at a place we can all call our own, Métis Crossing. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented times, to say the least, and had many challenges that went along with it.

Region Two was not an exception to the challenge, but we all worked together as a team to make things work. Our team in the Region continues to grow, and the work produced has been amazing. Andrea Sandmaier, your regional Vice President, and the rest of the regional staff, continued work from home during the pandemic, while I maintained daily operations in the regional office. This was important in keeping our Citizens and staff in a safe environment, and helped to stay healthy.

Region Two has continued to build relationships with business, industry, and community.

### Pandemic Relief Program

Our Region stayed busy during the pandemic with our Pandemic Relief Program. I do want to commend the Region Two staff for helping make it all work, as we continued to assist and provide the services needed for our Citizens during the most unprecedented time.

Our program has assisted just under 1,000 Citizens across the region including adults, seniors, and children.

Some further supports during this time included Chromebook computers for families who needed to continue studies at home and did not have access, or could not afford to, supply a computer.

We have distributed close to 150 personal protective equipment kits to families and seniors.

During the relief program, we also assisted around 20 seniors with some extra work around their homes, which included lawn maintenance, exterior window washing, general cleanup, and some light gardening.

## Industry Relations

I am very proud of the many achievements the Region has made despite challenging times, not only the pandemic, but the complete change in our economic environment. We are in the process of lining up a business partnership that will yield direct benefits to Citizens. We need to be certain that it is a good partnership, agreements are managed, and a solid legal agreement is established.

Our relationships with industry in our region are becoming stronger, and the support from them has helped the region a little bit, and passed on to benefit the Citizens.

Some have provided funds for programs, which we will provide after the province reopens.

A portion of this funding has helped purchase Chromebook computers for those who had to continue their studies online while schools were closed.

Other industry funding is being set aside for language retention. We will, once we are able, hold beginner Michif classes. Language retention is so important in preserving our culture. It is one of the elements that make us one of the three Indigenous groups of people in Canada.

Vice President Andrea Sandmaier continues to learn and grow in her role as Vice President and has taken the lead on our Region's mental health initiative, holding a seat for our region on the Bonnyville Indian-Métis Rehabilitation Centre, as well as her involvement in other important work in the region.

## Consultation

Region Two has done some amazing work in the area of consultation. Our team has conducted numerous engagements, traditional land use (TLU) surveys, tabletop discussions, and planning engagements.

We have completed the Pre-Consultation project with the Government of Alberta consisting of over 100 engagements with Region Two Citizens. A final report was created documenting the historical and current usage of the region by Citizens.

Extensive ground-truthing activities were conducted, where we took Citizens into the field to get a better understanding of the importance of the land and its associated value to Métis culture.



Ground truthing at Wolf Lake. Standing: President Duane Zaraska and Gerald Germain. Seated (L-R): Viola Sahumberger, Vice-President Andrea Sandmaier, Ashley Shaw and Lindy Harrison.

Our region is conducting the MNA's first post-construction TLU, which will be completed by the end of August. Studies have included Métis knowledge and culture in approximately 10 environmental management and infrastructure development plans within Alberta. We performed five to seven virtual tabletop sessions with various Region Two Citizens and successfully expanded our network and reach, including two Citizens in the southern part of the region who had not previously participated in any engagements.

We have strengthened and created new relationships with proponents, and by the end of September 2021 will have completed at least 25 TLUs on various projects that may impact Aboriginal rights, claims and interests of Citizens within Region Two.

Thank you to our hardworking Consultation Coordinator Ashley Shaw for all her efforts and for really strengthening our region. Our regional administration has done a great job during the pandemic keeping Citizens informed, assisting with program inquiries and information, and playing a huge role in our pandemic relief rollout plan. Thanks Viola Shaumberger for always going the extra mile and being so helpful to our Citizens. Great work.

## Community Involvement

We are so happy to be slowly getting back to regular operations in our region. We have really missed our regional on-site youth coordinator since the beginning of the pandemic, and look forward to bringing back youth programming to the region. We plan to continue with some youth night activities and engaging with the schools in the region. This also is so important as our youth are both our present and our future. They need to continue to learn and retain our vibrant culture. We are also fortunate that

Bonnyville Bingo nights have returned, and we can conduct our own bingos once again. This is fantastic, as the money from the bingo program helps support our Citizens for medical travel and some bereavement assistance.

Our region continues to hold representation on many boards in the community. I am very honoured to represent the region on many different boards and organizations. I am president of Zone II Bingo with the Bonnyville Bingo Association, a member of the Board of Directors at Lakeland Industry and Community Association, a member of the Lakeland Industry & Community Association (LICA) Governance Committee, and this past year chaired LICA's Education and Outreach Committee. It is very important that we stay connected with this synergy group to monitor and study the Beaver River Watershed, and an airshed zone. LICA focuses on environmental monitoring, environmental management, and community education and outreach, all important to the Citizens of the MNA.

I was approached in the last year to help organize and sit on a very important committee with a very important focus, the Bonnyville Youth Hub of Services. It is a gathering, drop-in centre where youth can go and feel welcome and comfortable. Here we can connect them with the services they require or may not know about. The location will be called "The Hive." This is a fantastic initiative that will serve the Bonnyville community and area well.

In 2014, I was appointed to the Métis Crossing Advisory Committee, as I served as the Minister of Culture, Seniors, and Veterans. What an honour to serve in this capacity. Veterans hold a special place in my heart, and I will continue to support them in any way possible. I was delighted to provide support and help the veterans on the trip to France for the 75th anniversary



Benefit pancake breakfast for Sansom and Cardinal families at Region 2 office.



Back to school Backpack program: Presenting a backpack to Diamond Paranteau. Photo by Viola Shaumberger.



Métis Crossing Board of Directors

of D-Day. We all visited Vimy Ridge, Omaha and Juno beaches, Paris, and the town of Rouen. What an honour it was. In 2018, I was elected President of Region Two, and stayed on the committee as president of the region.

In 2020 another board was established, and that is the Métis Crossing Experience Company, which I was appointed to as well. Being involved with Métis Crossing has been a real honour and a very valuable experience for me. I am so passionate about Métis Crossing, making it an enjoyable appointment. Watching and participating in the development of the Crossing has been so exciting and fun. I am so thankful for the opportunity.

Staying connected and building community relationships are important to us in Region Two. Since we worked with St. Paul and have the Métis flag flying in the town, I reached out to other communities to do the same. On National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2021, the Canadian Armed Forces at 4 Wing Cold Lake raised the flag for the day. We worked with the Town of Smoky Lake to raise our flag for Métis Week in November 2019, beginning another strong relationship.

Gatherings were of course limited, but we managed to have a fundraising benefit to assist the Cardinal and Sansom families, and a Seniors Drive Thru Pancake Breakfast during Indigenous Peoples Week this past June. It was great to see familiar faces and we look so forward to more events and gatherings as we start to open again following the pandemic.

Our Region has been very supportive of our Citizens and try to support them in their pursuits as much as we can. A few athletes were given support to help them pursue their dreams of a career in sports. Good luck to all of them.

In the past year, attending ceremonies and graduations have



Presentation of Sash to Lyndsey Michaud at North East Alberta Apprenticeship Initiative in Bonnyville, Alberta. Lyndsey achieved dual trade tickets- Journeywoman Electrician and Instrumentation. Photo by Dee Dee Cormier.



Presenting sponsorship to hockey player and MNA Citizen Ali Macaulay. L-R: Vice-President Andrea Sandmaier, Ali Macaulay, and President Duane Zaraska. Photo by Viola Shaumberger.



Indigenous Peoples Day Pipe Ceremony at Bonnyville Hospital. L-R: Ethan Vasseur, Harvey Dufresne, President Duane Zaraska, Region 2 Elder Francis Dumais, Rodney John, Jimmy Pipe, and Pipe Ceremony Assistant Darryl Knight. Photo by Courtney Claude.

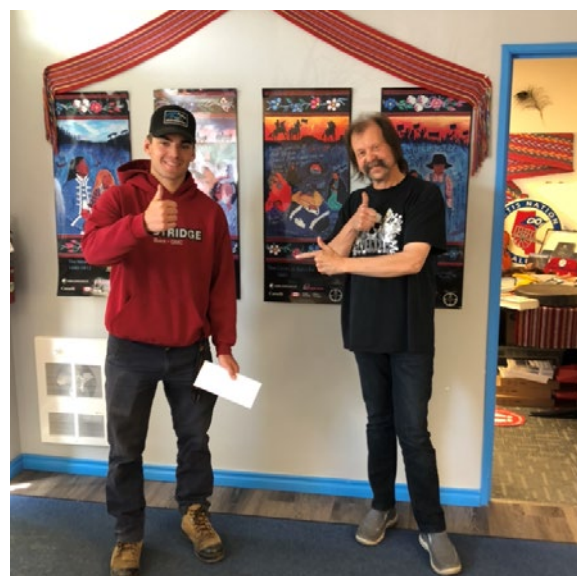


Flag raising at CFB 4-Wing Cold Lake, Indigenous Peoples Day 2021. Photo by W.O. Kevin Proulx.



Left: Smoky Lake Flag Raising Ceremony

Right: Presenting a cheque to support Junior A hockey player AJ Macaulay. Photo by Tehgann Pasichnuk.





Sash Presentation to Ecole Notre Dame High School Graduates - June 26, 2021. L-R: President Duane Zaraska, Shaylynn Feser, and Brendan Smith. Photo by Vince Spilla.

been limited, but some smaller events were either attended or a virtual presentation was submitted. Virtual greetings were provided for two different Portage College locations, as well for the Northeast Alberta Apprenticeship Initiative. In June, I had the honour again of presenting sashes to the Métis graduates of École Notre Dame, here in Bonnyville. I am so proud of all the graduated and honoured to provide greetings for the achievements of our Métis graduates.

We are very happy and excited to get back to normality, as we near the end of the pandemic and get back to more events, gatherings, and programs in our region. We very much enjoy our Citizens' visits and welcome you back to the office. We look forward to communicating with our Citizens and assisting in person.

Negotiations for business partnerships are ongoing and should get better traction as the economy opens up. We will continue to build relationships with industry, business, and communities across the region. Presently, we are working with the Town of Bonnyville to raise yet another Métis flag in the town and host a community barbecue.

This summer, Region Two is distributing relief and fun with family fun kits. We are continuing our Pandemic Relief Program for those who are still in need of assistance. We are so happy that we could assist a little during tough times. I am presently involved with a group of organizations to erect a memorial for the children who died in residential schools. This memorial will hopefully be completed in fall 2021 or early spring 2022. I look forward to the next year and more progress for Region Two.

In 2019, after 90 years of perseverance and struggle, the MNA signed a self-government agreement with the Government of Canada. I was so thrilled and honoured to be there and be part of it. This, of course, set the wheels in motion for a lot of intense planning and development of the Métis Government Constitution. This is so monumental and probably the biggest endeavour by the MNA ever. It is my hope that we can get this accomplished and end up with a Constitution that is suitable and a benefit to all Métis Albertans.

Thank you to all the citizens of Region Two for allowing me to lead our great region. I hope everyone enjoys the 93rd Annual General Assembly.

Regards,

**Duane Zaraska**  
President, Region Two



Alberta Métis Fest 2021. President Duane Zaraska and Cory Poitras. Photo by Shelley Poitras.





## Vice President Andrea Sandmaier Annual Report Highlights 2020-2021

Although the last year has been challenging with the pandemic, I have continued to work on many different initiatives that support the overall well-being of the Citizens of the Métis Nation within Alberta, as well as supported and assisted, when possible, the Region Two Consultation/Climate Coordinator and Youth Coordinator.

To this end, I sit on the following boards and committees:

- Board Member/Treasurer – Bonnyville Indian Métis Rehabilitation Centre
- Committee Member – Balancing the Wheel (formally Empowering Indigenous Women)
- Committee Member – Lakeland Restorative Justice Committee

I have also supported several initiatives within Region Two and the province:

### COVID-19 Supports

- Senior Financial Supports Program
- Family Financial Supports Program
- Family Fun Kits – ages 2 to 11
- Seniors Lawn Maintenance
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) Distribution
- Vermillion Mask Distribution



### Justice Initiatives

- Continue supporting the families of Jake Sansom & Maurice (Morris) Cardinal
- Assisted in organizing and participating in the Drive-thru Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser for the Sansom & Cardinal Family
- Participated in the Alberta Police Act Review, Victims of Crime Review, and Indigenous Police Relations Review
- Through my work on restorative justice, I have completed training in “Introduction to Restorative Justice – Criminal Matters”
- Attended The Centre for Race & Culture Systemic & Institutional Racism roundtable
- Attended the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters Leading Change seminar
- Participated in the Women of the Métis Nation – Les Femmes Michif Otipimisiwak National Action to End Gender-Based Violence engagement
- Working with New Dawn Métis Women’s Society on a Violence Against Women initiative
- Attended the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – Cold Lake event
- Participated in the Residential School #215 Vigil hosted by Cold Lake First Nation
- Participated, along with Cold Lake First Nations, in the City of Cold Lake Canada Day Memorial Ceremony honouring and remembering the children that didn’t make it home



In support of Sansom and Cardinal

## Mental Health & Wellness Initiatives

- Rural Mental Health (RMH) Network Animator Training: This training included me and six other dedicated Métis women from Region Two. With this training, we applied and received a grant from the Canadian Mental Health Association to host eight events throughout this year to support mental wellness. Along with the training from RMH, I have been able to take Psychological First Aid and Trauma Informed Care Training.
- Presented “The Importance of Culture to Mental Health” to the RMH Network
- Developed the Region 2 Mental Health & Wellness Program, including the “Finding Your Rhythm – Mental Wellness & Addiction Speaker Series.” To date, we have hosted two virtual events, which included speakers Theo Fleury, Blaine Constant, Faith Eagle, and Alex Kusturok
- Attended the Alberta Suicide Prevention Cooperatives What We Know Now Conference.
- Participated in the Indigenous Youth Life Promotion session

## Cultural Initiatives

- Assisted Paulette Dahlseide with organizing the New Dawn Métis Women’s Society Region 2 Conference, as well as supporting other New Dawn initiatives in Region Two
- Attended the Métis Week flag raising at Portage College
- Represented Region Two at the Remembrance Day Ceremony in Fishing Lake Métis Settlement
- St. Paul de Métis Museum Committee: With the exceptional work of this team, we now have a new exhibit at the St. Paul Museum. Our work is ongoing and we look forward to expanding this project.
- Presented Métis culture and history presentations with Cultural Advisor Marilyn Lizee to the Rural Mental Health Network and to the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre in Cold Lake
- Assisted the Lakeland Multicultural Association with their “Culture Bag” initiative for Indigenous History Month



- Indigenous People’s Day 2021:
  - Presented “Métis History & The Métis Experience in Residential Schools” to Cold Lake Middle School
  - Attended the Cold Lake Friendship Centre Celebration & Feast
- I was honoured to be asked to participate and bring greetings from the Métis Nation of Alberta to Cold Lake First Nation’s Treaty Days
- Assisted with organizing the Town of Bonnyville Métis flag raising



Left:  
Kamloops  
215 Cold Lake  
Vigil

Far left:  
Fishing Lake  
2020

- Assisted and participated in the Vermilion Library & Watershed Society with two summer camp sessions:
  - “Take a Hike in Nature’s Garden” with Métis Knowledge Holder Rhonda Hodgson
  - “Furs, Feathers & Fun” with Region Two Elder Francis Dumais and Knowledge Holder Carrie Goldsmith

## MNA Initiatives

- Participated in the Provincial Council Constitution roundtable
- Attended Provincial Council meetings
- Participated and supported in regional consultation initiatives
- Attended the Rupertsland Institute – Awards of Excellence virtual event.



Above: Benefit pancake breakfast for Sansom and Cardinal families at Region 2 office. Left: Crisis Centre 2021



- Along with President Zaraska and Region Two staff, organized and participated in the Region 2 Seniors Drive-thru Pancake Breakfast
- Attended virtual Alberta Métis Fest
- Participated in the Canadian Rural & Remote Housing and Homelessness Conference
- Supporting the development of the Family Reunification Program in Bonnyville and the development of the MNA Children’s Authority.

I am committed to moving the Métis Nation of Alberta forward and believe it is the strength of unity and diversity that creates a strong community and a strong Métis Nation. I look forward to listening to music, visiting, and being together as a community at the 2021 Annual General Assembly.

Wishing you good health.

**Andrea Sandmaier**  
Vice President, MNA Region Two ■

# 2020/21 REGION THREE



**Lawrence Gervais**  
President  
Region Three



**Judy Gentes**  
Vice President  
Region Three

## Region Three Report: April 2020 – March 2021

COVID-19 had significant impacts to Region Three's activities and events. In a normal year we would present Business Mixers, an AGM, Dances, weekly Senior activities, Métis Week events, Golf tournaments as well as our participation in other Events all over Southern Alberta. These are the times when our Staff and Leadership have an opportunity to communicate and reach out to our members. Our efforts during this challenging year left us to communicate online. Digital and Social Media, such as a Podcast, Zoom events and Cultural videos being our only recourse from this Pandemic. Our hope is to meet again. I want to take this time to thank all the Elders, Staff and Volunteers for all their hard work over this challenging year. Especially, the ones who helped us remain calm in these uncertain times.

## COVID – UPDATE

### Rupertsland Institute COVID Allocation

- MNA Region 3 - \$15,000
- MNA local 87 (Calgary) - \$10,000
- MNA local 2003 (Lethbridge) - \$10,000
- MNA local 492 (Red Deer) - \$10,000
- MNA local 1880 (Pincher Creek) - \$10,000
- MNA Local 8 (Medicine Hat) - \$10,000
- MNA local 845 (Rocky Mtn House) - \$10,000

### MNA Provincial Council Allocation – Phase 1 and Phase 2

- MNA Region 3 - \$700,000 – \$360,000 locals = \$340,000 MNA Region 3

### MNA Regional Council Allocation

- MNA local 87 (Calgary) - \$60,000
- MNA local 2003 (Lethbridge) - \$60,000
- MNA local 492 (Red Deer) - \$60,000
- MNA local 1880 (Pincher Creek) - \$60,000



- MNA Local 8 (Medicine Hat) - \$60,000
- MNA local 845 (Rocky Mtn House) - \$60,000
- Total - \$360,000

### COVID Management Allocation

- MNA local 492 (Rent) - \$1,200
- MNA local 845 (High-Speed Internet) - \$1,200

### Other COVID relief

MNA local 1880 Pincher Creek - \$20,000 – Grassy Mountain Coal Project – Benga Mining Ltd.

## Capote Fashion Program – [metisfashionshow.com](http://metisfashionshow.com)

The Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 3 and Parks Canada (Banff National Park) worked together to create a new cultural tourism product reflecting Métis culture. The project focused on a traveling Métis Fashion Show that will showcase the selected outerwear designs while sharing Métis stories and culture. HBC blankets were commissioned for the design; a nod to the company's historic connection to the Capote and an opportunity to discuss the Métis connections.

We searched for fifteen interested Métis fashion designers or textile artists with design experience to create an original piece of outerwear representing Métis culture using an HBC blanket. (11) were chosen from across the Métis Homeland and five (5) were selected by a panel of jurors based on a set of predetermined criteria. The Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 3 purchased the patterns of the five selected designs for use to create an inventory for a MNA Region 3 travelling fashion show.

The five (5) selected designs will be featured in the new traveling Métis Fashion Show and will be showcased at community events across the Métis Homeland as a way to share and celebrate Métis culture.

We are very happy to have selected Bruce Dumont (MNBC), Matt Hiltermann (MNA), Jeremy Tymiak (MNA), Donna Kennedy (MNA) and Melanie Rose (MN-S). We would also like to thank everyone who participated and we look forward to our gathering in the near future.

## Michif Language – Mike Parks

From April 2020 to December 2020 the Michif Coordinator had 4 projects under the Michif Language grant.

- The 'Métis Monopoly' game (Pimohtewin)
- A fur trade game with cards
- A fur trade game with dice (Meskotona)
- A Michif-English Audio CD

All 4 projects were completed by December 2020.

From January 2021 to March 2021. There have been 3 projects under the Language Grant.

- A Michif Scrabble game
- A Michif Virtual Tour
- A Michif Language Podcast

All 3 projects are currently in production and are nearing completion.

## Youth – Kristen Acuña

### Projects currently working on/waiting for approval:

- Region 3 youth group
- R3 monthly bigger youth events – Self defense course, Skiing, trampoline park and Charlie Kerr event
- September jigging lessons – Pincher Creek, Medicine hat and Lethbridge

- October jiggging lessons – Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House
- Youth Cookbook
- Youth leadership conference - Provincial youth initiative planned by Regional coordinators

## Projects I have accomplished

- Sports and Rec 2x application period completed next period opens September 1st, 2021
- Wellness Kits – On going
- Hunters Education – On going
- Virtual summer camp – I hosted one night of finger weaving
- July 1st Naloxone training to Brenda's house in Edmonton via Zoom
- Youth and Seniors gathering February
- Financial literacy program – 2 seminars
- Virtual youth hang out weekly all year but then handed over to Briana in December
- Métis week Region 3 Calgary Public Library
- Mask distribution August 2020
- Alberta Culture Days – Region 3 hosted the Alberta Culture Days. This was a youth focused event. We decided to do an artisan callout via social media. We had a couple responses. I then reached out to youth that have attended programming in the past. We had each of the presenters record themselves and submit it in a google doc. We worked out a timeframe to post each video over social media for a 5-day period. We were very pleased with number of views, comments and shares our videos received.

## Métis History – Matt Hiltermann

### Projects completed, April 1, 2020-March 31, 2021

- September 11, 2020: Script for video about Pemmican
- September 25, 2020: Video on the Métis history of Calgary for Alberta Culture Days
- September 30, 2020: Consultation on the U of C's Landscape Plan
- October 20, 2020: Brief on the historical and cultural significance of Tail Creek for Keyera
- October 29, 2020: Script for video on the role of Métis in the early history of Calgary
- October 29, 2020: Capote historical Brief for Parks Canada



- November 12, 2020: Research, script-writing and recording of five videos about the Métis history of Calgary for Métis week
- November 12, 2020: Article about the Métis History of Rouleauville for RETROactive blog
- December 31, 2020: Fact Sheet RE: Métis history in Southern Alberta
- January 11, 2021: Métis Trivia fact sheet
- January 11, 2021: Lady Isabella Hardisty-Lougheed article for RETROactive
- Projects Completed since April 1, 2021:
- Scripts for Virtual Community Engagement videos
- Consultation with SAIT Students RE: GIS project
- From Buffalo Hunters to Cattle Ranchers article for RETROactive

### Projects in progress:

- Pemmican, Middlemen, and the Blackfoot trade
  - Applied for grant in February, 2021
  - Received grant July, 2021
  - Research ongoing; final report to be completed by February 28, 2022
- Traditional Land Use Survey of City of Calgary Parks
  - Undertaken July 2021
  - Research ongoing
  - To be completed November, 2021
- Virtual Community engagement videos
  - Scripts completed
  - Filming and editing to be completed

## Solar Installation and Climate Change – Mary Pupo

- Solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) Systems have been installed at the Local 87 House, Hall and Tail Creek Campground. These systems provide electricity for use at the sites and will provide a credit on the electricity bills should any excess electricity be produced. (Completed)
- **Energy Management:** The solar production data for the Local 87 and Tail Creek sites will be monitored to ensure it is delivering the maximum benefit to the Region and Local. Utility retail data will also be tracked for Tail Creek Campground to monitor energy usage and the effectiveness of the implemented energy efficiency measures. (Ongoing)
- **Energy Efficiency and Safety Upgrades:** Funding has been secured from the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples grant program for safety and energy efficiency upgrades to the Local 87 house and hall, and Tail Creek Campground. Planning and execution of these projects will be carried out, to be completed by December 2021. (In Progress)

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns with the Region 3 Climate Initiatives:  
Mary at mpupo@metis.org

## Tail Creek Campground and Redevelopment Plan – John Parkins

- In my February report, I indicated that I had been in contact with River Engineering specialists at Alberta Environment and Parks to determine if they could be of assistance in narrowing the scope of an unfunded engineering study to illustrate that the building site will be safe from flooding in a 1:100 year flood event. I have now been informed that no assistance is available from these specialists due to a lack of technical information.
- Golder Associates has now completed its draft study on behalf of Alberta Environment and Parks on the Red Deer River upstream of the Park. It has been determined that this study has no bearing on the Tail Creek location as the Golder study area ends at the bridge over Highway 11 which is about 38 road kilometers from the Tail Creek site which is at the Highway 21 bridge.
- The four engineering firms that I've consulted on this agree that the Golder study is of no use as site specific information is needed. I have been advised by Stantec Ltd. that the cost to do a hydrology study would exceed

the cost of the buildings that we have placed deposits on. While this cost is far in excess of the other quotes I've received, Stantec is the firm that is most familiar with the site having done two reports for the Region.

- Based on the Stantec assessment, a letter from President Gervais has been sent to County officials citing the difficulty in meeting the flood study condition, and asking for a meeting to discuss other alternatives. As this is a recent initiative, a response has yet to be received.
- I reported previously that holdbacks had been applied to a contract executed with 1799082 Alberta Ltd. o/a Coalta-Starr Consulting and Contracting, a Métis owned company, to clean up ice jamming damage along the riverfront, to conduct the annual pre-opening cleanup of the campground, and to do groundskeeping. At that time, I reported that two separate holdbacks had been imposed to ensure that the remaining work of relocating a debris pile and of burning the debris piles. While the debris piles on the beach area have been burned, the unburned debris and ashes have not been removed, nor has the pile of logs been cut to firewood lengths or burned as required by the terms of the contract. The contractor has advised that he is not prepared to complete the contract, and I'll be looking at alternatives to complete the work.
- A meeting with Regional Manager for Rupertsland took place at the site and another is scheduled for next week. This may lead to a project preparing the Park for opening using Rupertsland clients, rather than volunteers as have been used in the past.
- I met with representatives of Green Light Power at the site last week and am expecting quotations on electrical, septic, decking and other aspects of the Project. These will be analyzed in comparison to other quotations received or expected.
- In preparation for a restricted opening of the Park next month, Alberta Health Services and the MNA's Director of Health were consulted to determine what COVID-19 related restrictions and precautions should be taken.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. John Parkins, Project Manager. 403-948-7169

## Fire Mapping Project – Ross Pambrun

Since the start of the project, the Métis National Alberta Association Region 3 and developers have made significant progress in the development of an online application for fire mapping. In the previous year we have come to find many obstacles and many frustrations. Thankfully, we have been able to navigate many of these challenges successfully and the development of the application is on schedule to be complete in September 2021.

At the beginning of development, the group identified several data inputs that would be required in-order to achieve the result of predicting wildfire risk within the wildland urban interface (WUI). Accuracy and reliability in these inputs would be essential to produce reports that provide stakeholders with useful information. Although a time-consuming process once these inputs were established application development can then take place.

Our initial data input to the project was to develop an accurate fuel grid that categorizes all the fuels of Alberta according to the Fire Behavior Prediction (FBP) System. Initially it was our intention to rely on existing spatial vegetative information. However, we quickly realized that this approach would lead to inadequate and inaccurate results.

On advice from specialists in the field of remote sensing and geomatics it was determined that the next best option was to leverage the computational power of machine learning and pair it with high resolution satellite imagery. Thankfully, this method has been remarkably successful in producing accurate and reliable results in all areas of the Province. Unfortunately, it is a time-consuming endeavour, but one that will produce exceptional results when used as an input for wildfire risk mapping within the WUI.

### PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS:

#### Classifying Alberta's Fuels

The most important achievement that has been established in 2020-2021 has been the processing of raw satellite imagery. Our method is successfully obtaining satellite imagery at a resolution of 10 metres and is outputting an accurate fuel grid based on the fuel types of the FBP system. This fuel grid will be the most important component of the project and will allow us to predict wildfire hazard within the wildland urban interface. At current we are approximately 85% complete in classifying the approximately 660 000 square kilometres of Alberta.

We expect to complete the entire classification process in the next month. Once complete we will then be able to move on to the development of the online mapping application.

#### Creating a Web Presence

In the past year we have secured a relationship for website allocation, loaded the website with essential web security features and are establishing an FTP location for our raw data to be housed. The domain name WildfireExposure.ca has been licenced for use and will be the location of the final web application. Having a web presence will allow the web application to be disseminated to the largest possible audience and allow select users the ability to beta test our data once the application is ready.

#### Other – New Office Setup, Website and Other Support

1. Office signage – Connection
2. Updated: Metis3.org Website active and developing
  - Developing security and page development
  - Transition support
  - Tobacco Support
  - Penn Test – Vulnerability assessments
  - Email development and support
  - Zoom education program video for seniors.
3. Supporting online engagement
  - Métis Fashion Show – Media and software collaboration and development
4. Continuing development of WUI Software development project
  - Initial Annual report completed and submitted
5. Completed Project development for Covid Communication Strategies
  - Online Connection
  - Media development
6. In- Office Tech support
7. Equipment Redeployment and office
8. Weekly Office and Media Meetings





## Jason Chernow – Digital Media Manager

- Support for Covid Crisis hotline
- Post production for 37 episodes of The Squeaky Wheel Podcast
- preproduction, shooting, and postproduction for 9 Métis Week videos
- preproduction, shooting, and postproduction for 8 Alberta Culture Days Videos
- Creating Social Media posts
- Writing and submission of grant applications

## Ila Vivier – Seniors Coordinator

- During the month of April I spent approximately 12 hours on the phone with the Seniors. I also delivered the first batch of Calgary Co-op gift cards.
- In May I started delivering \$300 cheques to seniors as part of Phase 2 of Covid-19 Assistance Program. I continued to do a wellness check as well.
- In June I continued to check on seniors and as worked on hosting an outdoor bingo. I attended 2 Zoom Staff meetings as well as a Business Mixer.
- In July 28th we hosted our first Bingo Blast outdoors following all AHS regulations. Needless to say it was an overwhelming success which the seniors enjoyed immensely.



- In August saw us host two more outdoor bingos which once again the seniors enjoying themselves.
- In September 25th we hosted our last outdoor bingo as the weather got considerably colder. These bingo were such a hit with the seniors and they really looked forward to them. It gave them the opportunity to get together with friends and have fun at the same time.
- In October 14th we worked with Monterey Co-op Pharmacy to ensure our seniors, along with a few staff members received their flu shots. About 20 seniors participated. Overall it was a smooth running flu shot clinic and we received some very positive feedback from the seniors as well as the Pharmacy Manager John Uy Cana. Hopefully we can arrange another one this fall.
- In November Continue to call seniors and do wellness checks. Attended Zoom staff meetings. For Métis Week I participated in a short video at Heritage Park where I discussed Jane Livingston with Matt Hilterman. It was a fun morning and I enjoyed making the video and sharing my knowledge about the Livingston Family.
- In December Completed a report for ( NHSP ) New Horizons for Seniors Program. Continue to call seniors

and do wellness checks. Attend a couple of Zoom Staff meetings. We hosted a Coffee & Conversation with the seniors on Dec 18th. and I attended a Business Mixer Dec 17th.

- In February Attended Zoom staff meeting and as well meeting to discuss upcoming Coffee and Conversation with the seniors. Hosted the Coffee & Conversation with the seniors Feb 17th with Regan Bartel talking about Mental Health Issues,



- Attended a Zoom Business Mixer February 18th.
- In March Contacted seniors regarding Covid vaccinations and assisted those who needed help in accessing information. After receiving a call from a Calgary Co-op Pharmacy regarding Covid vaccinations that were available I began calling seniors to book appointments and help them with consent forms then emailing to pharmacy. Assisted approximately 40 seniors to obtain their Covid vaccination.
- I attended a business mixer as well as hosting a Coffee & Conversation with the seniors. I also attended two Zoom staff meetings. .

## Elder Report – Doreen Bergum

- University of Calgary – Circle of Elders Advisory Council
  - Included Elders from Treaty 7 – Blackfoot, Kainai, Piikani, Siksika, Tsuu T’ina First Nation and Stoney Nakoda (Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations) Métis & Inuit
  - Michael Hart – Vice Provost for Indigenous Engagement
- During the COVID Year, Michael Hart had a check-in meeting once a month to check up on his Elders Circle of Elders and if they needed assistance in any way he would provide.
- During the year we participated in the following subjects: Protection of First Nations, Métis & Inuit Knowledge, Elder’s Declaration, and A year of National Collaborative Dialogues Indigenous Initiative’s in Canadian Universities. Emergency meeting was called to pray for the 215 unmarked children’s graves and their families in Kamloops.
- University of Calgary – Landscape Elders Committee – Jane Farabee – Working at changing the Landscape of U of C to make it a safer place for Indigenous Students.

- Attended the U of C Graduation on July 22 & 23, 2021 Honoring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Graduation Student’s. So proud of our Métis Students, 120 Indigenous Students and 60 were Métis Graduates. Kerry Moore and myself did the Sash Presentation. Also, participated the Virtual Graduation at the Olds College Graduation, allowing Kookums, Mushoms and family members to present the Sash to the Graduates.
- University of Calgary – Carla & Craig Ginn – Participated in two Métis specific research projects; Métis Spiritually and Métis Mental Health and addictions. Google: Walk with Me, Craig Ginn Lac Ste Anne 2020 and check out the Video that I submitted family pictures of Lac Ste Anne to the project.
- Alberta Teacher’s Association – Melissa Purcell – ATA Indigenous Advisory Circle
- Twelve Indigenous Elders from across the province involved in the Firsts Nations. Métis and Inuit Curriculum. Please Google Alberta Teacher’s Association and check out the Stepping Stones Program to see the progress we have made on this project. A list of a few topics we have covered: Provincial Update on Draft K-6 Curriculum, 2021 Annual Representative Assembly, Medicinal Garden at Barnette House - Edmonton and Naming Boardroom, and Dismantling Anti-Indigenous Racism.





- On the Elders Advisory Council for the Calgary Public Library.
- Métis Elder for the Glenbow Museum
- Opening & Closing Prayers and Jigging Lessons for the following Organizations:
  - Region 3 Calgary Staff Meetings
  - Region 3 Regional Council Meetings
  - Region 3 Consultation Meetings
  - Business Mixer
  - Coffee with the Seniors
  - Rupertsland Job Fair
  - Rupertsland Virtual Staff Meeting
  - Canada Energy Regulator Conference
  - Lawrence Gervais Métis Presentation - Airdrie Museum
  - Olds Indigenous Days
  - Cooper's Crossing School Airdrie - Moccasin Project Grade 1 - 5
  - Grandmother Circle
  - Circles of Reconciliation Olds College
  - Workforce Forward
  - Parks Canada – Bernie Ouellette – Teach Jigging and Métis Dance to Summer Students
  - IAMC/NRCAN/RNCAN – Indigenous Partnerships – Opening pray and Jigging Lesson
  - Calgary Aboriginal Awareness Week – Carried Métis Flag with Treaty 7
  - University of Calgary – Métis Elder for Summer Students
  - Parks Canada Judging Capotes for Fashion Show
  - Calgary District Rotary Club
  - Canadian Museums Association – Juanita Marios – Métis Crossing
  - New Dawn – Alberta Women’s Group
  - Miywasin Friendship Center – Healing and Reconciliation Week
  - Métis Education Red Deer College ■

# 2020/21 REGION FOUR



**Tracy Friedel**  
President  
Region Four



**Gary Gagnon**  
Vice President  
Region Four

## Brief Overview of Annual Activities – April 01, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Region Four's annual core budget continues to be \$169,000, stemming from the 10-year MNA-Government of Alberta Framework Agreement signed in 2017. This annual complement of Framework funding is administered, on the Region's behalf, by the MNA Provincial Office.

An additional approximately \$60,000 is made available by the MNA Provincial Office to Region Four each year. Region Four receives no core funding from the federal government.

As of March 31, 2020, no Ministry roles have been assigned to Provincial Council members.

The Regional Council focuses on a number of objectives in support of advancing the interests of Métis Citizens in Region Four:

1. Ensuring financial accountability through an annual audit of the Region's financial information
2. Expanding Region Four's human resource capacity, as funding permits
3. Strategic planning to better position Region Four to advance its mission through developing strategies and identifying key priorities
4. Communications planning to ensure Citizens living throughout Region Four have access to pertinent and timely information
5. Supporting the interests of Region Four Locals, as funding permits
6. Renewing Region Four's representatives on MNA committees and councils
7. Ensuring a functional and independent Métis Judiciary Council

## Participation and Activities Region Four Undertook This Fiscal Year

### MNA Governance Activities

#### Provincial Council meetings:

- April 28, 2020 (videoconference)
- May 26, 2020 (videoconference)
- June 30, 2020 in Smoky Lake
- October 14 & 15, 2020 in Edmonton
- February 22, 2021 in Smoky Lake

**MNA Annual General Assembly:** None held in 2020-21

#### Shareholder Meetings:

- May 19, 2021: Métis Child & Family Services Society

**Métis National Council Assemblies:** None held in 2020-21

**National Events:** None held in 2020-21

#### Regional Council Meetings:

- April 2, 2020 (conference call)
- May 28, 2020 (conference call)
- January 16, 2021 (conference call)

#### City of Edmonton engagement, including but not limited to:

- Indigenous Framework Engagement
- Indigenous Culture & Wellness Centre
- Community Energy Transition Strategy
- Touch the Water Promenade
- Edmonton-Strathcona County Footbridge
- FIFA Human Rights Planning

#### Other Local Municipality engagement, including but not limited to:

- Town of Devon: Treaty Six & Métis Nation flag raising
- City of St. Albert: St. Albert Place smudge ceremony
- City of St. Albert: Opening of Nakî Transit Centre Park & Ride
- City of St. Albert: Métis Week gathering
- Strathcona County: North Strathcona County Regional Park
- City of Beaumont: Métis flag raising for National Indigenous Peoples Day
- City of Beaumont: Métis Week Proclamation



Above: St. Albert Métis Week 2020. Below: Beaumont Métis Week 2020



## Alberta Government engagement, including but not limited to:

### Alberta Energy:

- Minerals strategy
- Geothermal resource development
- Coal policy development

### Alberta Health:

- COVID-19 Urban Indigenous

### Alberta Environment & Parks (various engagements)

## Government of Canada engagement, including but not limited to:

- Department of Fisheries & Oceans
- Environment & Climate Change Canada
- Trans Mountain Expansion Project (TMX)
- Trans Mountain economic participation
- Parks Canada
- Service Canada Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

## Engagement regarding major projects

- E.g. TC Energy, AltaLink

## Other Activities:

- Indigenous Advisory & Monitoring Committee activities (Trans Mountain, Enbridge Line 3)
- West Hearth Attack Event (West Hearth Seniors Complex)

## Featured Project for 2020/21

### COVID-19 Support to Métis Citizens Living in Region Four

Shortly following the onset of the pandemic, Region Four was provided funding through the Indigenous Community Support Fund (via MNA Provincial Office) for the purpose of supporting Métis Citizens adversely affected by the pandemic. This support was ongoing through to spring 2021 in the form of food hampers, grocery gift cards, Chromebooks for seniors, etc.

Region Four is deeply appreciative to the support staff who worked diligently over the past year to ensure prompt, efficient service to those most deeply impacted by the pandemic.



## Future Planned Activities

### Business Development

Work is underway to further advance economic development capacity for the Region, including with a focus on Métis Opportunity Inc., Region Four's economic development arm.

### Enhancing Relationships with our Neighbours

Extensive involvement with the City of Edmonton and neighbouring municipalities will continue.

### COVID-19 Support

Region Four will provide ongoing support to those in need for as long as resources are available.



Above & below: Food hamper assembly



## In Memoriam

It was great sadness that Region Four lost a faithful servant and Elder in January 2021. Below, we offer words of remembrance by Regional Council member Melanie Omeniho (Local 1886):

Gloria, more than anything, was my friend, but the message that I would like to leave all of you with is that Gloria enriched the Métis Nation with her heart and soul. She worked diligently representing and supporting the interests of our Indigenous



Elder Gloria Laird

community in her work and in all the things she undertook to do.

The Métis Nation - Region Four was honoured to have her as their Elder since 2011. She supported and worked with

the community in all things that they asked her to do. She often came at a moment's notice and was always there with kind words and a generous smile for everyone. She also attended many of our Métis women gatherings and Youth and Elder events ... she loved to be active in many of the cultural events and engagements that were hosted over the years.

She played many roles, one of which was through her job working with Indigenous youth. She was a strong advocate and offered love and hugs to each of them whenever she could. Gloria was the Elder on the Edmonton Aboriginal Coalition for Children Services for more than 20 years.

This past summer Gloria was given a Métis Cultural Award by Region Four for her many years of service. The Métis Nation honours her and sends their best wishes to her family and friends. To Shane and her granddaughters - thank you for sharing such an amazing and gifted women with all of us. ■

# 2020/21 REGION FIVE



**Elmer Gullion**  
President  
Region Five



**Hilda Lambert**  
Vice President  
Region Five

## **Good day and Tansi from your Region Five Leadership**

This past year has been very challenging on many levels for everybody, however, we are honoured to have kept busy serving our Citizens throughout the tragedy of this COVID-19 global pandemic.

We want to acknowledge those families who have lost loved ones, and our hearts go out to each and everyone struggling to keep their sanity during these difficult times. As a Nation, we will stand strong together and in unity when it matters most.

Since we could not gather and host a multitude of in-person events or group activities for much of last year, we pulled together to reach out and help as many Region Five Citizens as possible in financial duress. Our office received numerous calls, text messages, and thank you letters from Citizens each month expressing sincere gratitude.

We had quite the momentum going on various projects, but some of our initiatives came to a halt or stalled in late March 2020, such as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. President Gullion and Vice President Lambert did, however, participate in the follow-up for this process behalf of Region Five in February 2021. Nonetheless, our team did get much work done in all departments and completed several projects.

We continued to work positively with industry, and pertaining to ongoing government correspondence, working in support of and toward our own Métis Consultation Policy in Alberta by contributing to our credible assertion application, which in turn correlates to achieving our very own Métis self-government.

While adhering to all COVID-19 safety protocols, being mindful as restrictions fluctuated from month to month, and working closely



with our Council and a small team of temporary support staff, we successfully delivered various supports to assist hundreds of Citizens.

We made it as easy as possible to apply for funds safely from home, as key staff worked from home to assist with intake for the following 2020 COVID-19 Response Plan programs:

- Region 5 Support Fund - April/May/June Support Fund of \$300/month
- Extended Support Fund to July 2020 of \$200
- Emergency Elder Care Packages – Personal protective equipment (PPE), Cultural Kits, and \$50 grocery cards over a period of four months, delivered to seniors' homes or picked up by appointment
- Assisted with costs for medical specialist or procedure appointments out of town; ongoing through Rupertsland Institute (RLI) program funds
- Healthy Food Box Program - Fresh produce and canned goods from local farmer's markets and grocery stores, along with grocery cards; Scheduled distribution pick-up days in the communities of High Prairie, Slave Lake, and Wabasca



- Christmas Giveaway - \$75 gift cards, PPE, and chocolates/candy bags for the children
- Ongoing pick-up appointments for free PPE supplies from our office
- Chromebooks for those who missed the RLI deadline. Region Five gifted 10 units to Métis students and to the active Métis Locals in our Region

Over 1,000 payments in 2020 were made out to Citizens in greater need via e-transfer payments or manual cheque mail-out. We were pleased to assist those who suffered a loss or shortage of work due to the lockdown of businesses, schools, and workplaces, and those on a fixed income. This assistance included allocations to the Wabasca Métis Local office, so they could also help their Métis community members with similar supports.

Proposals were written to TC Energy and Second Harvest Food Rescue to help supplement costs for the Food Support Programs. We would like to also recognize the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Provincial Office for making these programs possible by disbursing this much needed federal funding to the regions to assist Métis Citizens.

We want to also acknowledge the Rupertsland Institute for their sponsorship of the Community Emergency Support Program, as funds they provided enabled us to quickly plan and respond by finding capable part-time staff to support and mobilize the response plan in the Spring of 2020 and into the Fall. It was arduous, to say the least, to find staff or volunteers willing to assist with program delivery in person during a pandemic. The self-isolation also takes its toll on everyone to varying degrees.

We also assisted 65 early learning Métis students from kindergarten to Grade 6 throughout the Region, with the Back-To-School Backpacks Initiative, which included school supplies and \$100gift cards.

## Upcoming Student Services Learning Centre

Rupertsland Institute is still planning on moving into the adjacent office once they are approved for Métis student and employment services again. We also have the Slave Lake Adult Education Committee inquiring about office space for foundational/life skills learning courses and one-one-one tutoring instruction for their clients. They are a registered Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) group and charitable organization aiming to move onsite later this year, once certain fundraising efforts are achieved. Rent for office space is so high in Slave Lake that cost-sharing with other non-profit organizations to open a Learning Centre is exciting, plus a win-win for all lifelong learners.

## S-11 Logging Company & Kathleen Métis Land Issue

Logging has been fairly steady, and the year prior proved successful, however the Fall was a slow period. There is potentially more quota and S-11 is mapping area to grant us and our two partners for logging, and negotiation proposals have been put forward.

There will be further planning for new projects and funding allocated towards Métis student bursaries and future Elder/Youth Culture Camp partnerships. In the meantime, some of our profits from the S-11 Logging Trust account have been used to supplement our core budget to cover operational costs: regular maintenance and repairs to our building, Regional salaries, audit fees, etc.

Legal fees for the Kathleen Métis land claims case are also paid for with these funds. There has been a mediation process underway pertaining to the land, and we are scheduled to participate in a second session, in the hopes of achieving a mutual agreement. This land was previously utilized by Métis families for decades and was previously owned by the Kathleen Métis Local, which our Regional representatives and Regional leadership are following up on.



## COVID-19 Programs Update - Brenda Genaille, COVID-19 Resource Support Worker

In January 2021, we hired Brenda Genaille for a term

position as the Region Five COVID-19 Support Worker. This opportunity has allowed her to meet many new people within our Region. When she began her employment, Region Five had been assisting Citizens with much needed resources during the tumultuous time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Utility Relief Support Program provided two utility relief payments to 290 Citizens who met the eligibility requirements: 1) A valid MNA Citizenship ID number, or verification from the Provincial Office's Registry Department that their application was in process; and 2) A copy of a recent utility bill providing current proof of address within Region Five. Once the eligibility criteria were met, Citizens were issued \$200 per household, with the first payment between January and April 2021, and the second payment in May 2021.

In conjunction with the Utility Relief Support Program, the Region Five MNA Office offered the Grocery Card Food Support Program to 703 Métis Elders, students, and families who held a valid MNA Citizenship card, or who could provide verification that their citizenship was in process. Eligible Métis Citizens received a \$100 grocery card monthly.

In collaboration with Region Five Vice President Hilda Lambert, we prepared and submitted a proposal to the MNA Provincial Office for a COVID-19 Mental Health Support Coordinator. This Coordinator will be based out of Region Five and will offer virtual and small group programming, plus referrals to other supports. Funding is approved and the job description created. The new Miyomuchihoon Métis Health & Wellness program will commence in August 2021.



## Regional Consultation Coordinator Report - Walter Andreeff

### MNA Region Five Greenhouse Gas Emission offsets

The 11.1 kilowatt solar panel system at the Region Five Office has been functioning all year round in all conditions. The system was energized in September 2019 and has reduced our year-round electricity operating costs. Additional electrical power not required by our office is fed back into the electricity grid when the sun is shining, and it provides a credit to our electricity bill.

Solar panel information and power output data can be seen on the SolarEdge public monitoring website under "MNA Region V Solar Power." Approximately 7694.43 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by using the sun's energy, which is roughly equivalent to planting 229 trees.



## Region Five Consultation Matters

On September 10, 2019, Alberta Ministry of Indigenous Relations informed MNA Provincial Council that development of a Métis Consultation Policy will not be moving forward. Since then, the MNA has been busy. On June 14, 2021, the MNA launched a lawsuit by filing a request for judicial review of the Alberta government for negotiating in bad faith with the MNA for abandoning its obligation to negotiate with the Métis Citizens of Alberta on a Métis Consultation Policy.

MNA President Audrey Poitras said, “We feel we have no option; the Government of Alberta does not recognize we have [Métis] rights in this country.”

The Region Five Consultation Committee (RCC) and the MNA believe a consultation policy would ensure our Lesser Slave Lake historical Métis community would be consulted on land use decisions that could affect our Indigenous rights. The Crown, as represented by the province of Alberta, has an obligation to act honorably with Indigenous people in negotiating and consulting in good faith on issues that will impact them. Today, they are not.

Region Five Citizens are encouraged to contact their local MLA to support the development of an MNA Métis Consultation Policy with Alberta. If you need further information on this issue, please contact Walter.



Above: Slave Lake Local 19 Elder Elmer Kreutzer at Fawcett Lake  
 Below: Margaret Davies at Lesser Slave Lake  
 Bottom left: Region 5 Elder Herb Anderson near Gift Lake



The Region Five RCC is comprised of Region Five President Elmer Gullion and Vice President Hilda Lambert, Wabasca Métis Local 90 President William Bill Auger and Vice President Diane Kim Gladue, Slave Lake Métis Local 19 President Shane Combs and Vice President Beverly Lambert. As a group, we have met over a dozen times the past 12 months to discuss regional industrial projects, oil company site visits, and economic development. When we could not meet face-to-face due to COVID-19 restrictions, we shifted our meetings to phone conference, and later to meetings online. That is how we have been doing our business since April 2020. With great relief, we will all be glad to meet in person later this year.

From August-September 2020, the Regional Consultation Coordinator arranged consultation and leadership training for RCC members. This has been helpful in introducing them to Métis consultation and rights.

In Fall 2021, the Consultation Coordinator plans to conduct a series of meetings and workshops on Métis consultation principles throughout the region, and also bring the storyboard “Elders” project, developed in Region Five last fall through the hard work of Traditional Land Use technician Beverly Lambert and Métis artist Lorna Dancey.

In early 2020, the Consultation Coordinator and assistant Kristin Fenner gathered Traditional Use Information (TUI) and TUI locations placed on maps from the Métis people across Region Five, in total meeting and hearing from over 100 people in meetings and personal interviews. The work continued throughout the summer of 2020 with day-long, field-based interviews of elders and community knowledge holders at several locations within the region.

Last year, Region Five was selected by the MNA as one of the regions to represent our MNA Credible Assertion Process and Criteria Application (CAPCA) to Alberta Indigenous Relations. In developing our CAPCA application, the Region, through its contractor, constructed several maps and wrote a report showing large areas where Region Five Citizens hunt and practice our harvesting and cultural activities. Our information from 2020 was included in the MNA Credible Assertion application to the Alberta government earlier this year.

The Consultation Coordinator has been submitting statements of concern to specific Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) projects in Region Five over the past year. In most cases, because of red-tape reduction changes under the Alberta government and its resistance to undertake proper Métis consultation with the Métis Nation, your representative does not get proper consultation to represent you, our statements of concern are not acknowledged, nor issues addressed by the provincial government regulator for various reasons.

## TC Energy

Work continues with TC Energy on four of their local projects, including building a pipeline north of Red Earth this winter, and putting in a short segment under the Wabasca River using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) methods.

Region Five undertook a Traditional Land Use (TLU) study on the Red Earth pipeline in winter 2018, and for a few days last December (2020) and February (2021) Beverly Lambert and Walter Andreef looked over the HDD location with a snowmobile and sled. We made



some recommendations to TC Energy and, between ourselves and likely other Indigenous groups who made some similar observations, TC Energy changed their construction and drilling plan.

TC Energy also provided training to our RCC members of the technical elements of HDD. The work is continuing, but soon to be completed, on the Goodfish and Buffalo Creek compressor stations north of Slave Lake.

TC Energy has been asked by the federal government’s Major Projects Office to form an Indigenous Working Group (IWG) for the Red Earth Caribou Range, with Region Five at the table representing the Métis community. TC Energy is a favoured partner in undertaking consultation with your Region Five Office.

## Slave Lake Biomass/Gas to Liquids plant (BGTL™)

This past year, Walter Andreef has been working with consultant Art Cunningham and Trevor Anderson from the MNA provincial Economic Development Team on the Expander Energy Project. Expander Energy Inc. plans to build the Slave Lake 22 million liter a year Biomass/Gas to Liquids plant (BGTL™), the first of its kind in North America, which will produce net zero carbon intensity diesel fuel, jet fuel, and blue hydrogen.

The \$35 million facility is the first in a series of plants for the Slave Lake area, which could ultimately produce over 200 million liters a year, for an estimated total project cost of \$800 million. The project will be located at the Vanderwell Sawmill facility in Slave Lake.

The MNA is a proud supporter of the project. As President Audrey Poitras stated: “There is an imperative need to take climate change action, and the MNA recognizes that initiatives like this provide an opportunity for the MNA to implement its Economic Strategy by participating in this sustainable resource development. We believe that this opportunity resonates with traditional Métis values for using our resources effectively and wisely.”

## Alaska to Alberta Railway

The Alaska to Alberta Railway Development Corporation (A2A Railway) has proposed constructing a 2,270 kilometre rail project through portions of Alberta, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Alaska.

Region Five has received a contribution from the company to allow for engagement and discussions with our Métis community as the project continues. The project is



currently undertaking environmental assessments this summer and has been meeting with our RCC online over the past year.

If Region Five Citizens would like to participate in consultation training, field-based studies, or have questions on Consultation and Economic development-

related activities, please call Walter Andreeff at (780) 380-1468. All Métis businesses in Region Five are encouraged to contact us so we can continue developing our data base and promoting local Métis businesses to local industry developers.



## Harvesting Coordinator Report - Beverly Lambert

- **June - August 2020:** As the Regional Youth Coordinator at the time, worked on Wellness Kits for the MNA Mental Health Project.
  - Packing Finger weaving kits and flower beading kits during the COVID-19 pandemic.



- **August 28, 2020:** Mask distribution day, for a total 9,650 masks distributed. Yay, Region Five Team!
- **August to September 2020:** In the first week of September, Beverly Lambert transitioned from Youth Program Services Department to Traditional Land Use Study Technician.
  - **September 8, 2020:** Training Level 1 Impact Assessment Act & Level 2 Advanced Training (Impact Assessment Process)
  - **September 23 & 24, 2020:** Received a Certificate of Completion - Aboriginal Consultation/ Negotiating at a Consultation Agreement Workshopo
- September 10, 2020: Working on TLU agenda for community engagement and TLU work on pre-consultation program. Beginning of Consulting Contract with Zone 5 Economic Development Corporation, along with Project Manager Walter Andreeff.
- Beverly began making arrangements to meet with photographer Lorna Dancy and plan the Storytelling and Photo Exhibit Project, co-ordinating and scheduling times and places for each interview to take place. Beverly accompanied Lorna across the Region to listen to the elders share life stories, their culture and

traditions. As one of the Regional Knowledge Keepers chosen by Regional leadership, Beverly was also interviewed by Lorna.

Interview locations:

- Canyon Creek
- Gift Lake
- Faust
- Wabasca
- Trout Lake
- McLennan

This project was both an honour and a great adventure to travel out to the various areas within the Region to showcase our Regional Elders.

- **November 23, 2020:** Project presentation at the Slave Lake Inn & Conference Centre



Left to right: Photographer Lorna Dancey, Region Five Consultation Coordinator Walter Andreeff, and Region 5 Traditional Land Use Study Technician Beverly Lambert.

- **December 1, 2020:** (Day 1) Travelled to Wabasca for field work – HDD remediation location. We walked over land on foot, on the HDD location's eastside, breaking through ice into muskeg in several places. Water flowed under the ice and underneath the pipeline right of way, 2 kilometres east of the HDD location. We could not go around the water because it was too large of a wet area. We were also unable to access the location from the west end by vehicle. Upon returning, we stopped to look at some tracks west of the Wabasca River Bridge. We got out to follow the tracks down an old road. The tracks were from two wolves following a deer. About 500 metres in, all that was left of the deer was stomach fluids and what appeared to be particles of bones in the wolf feces. We took pictures and headed back to Wabasca.
- **December 2, 2020:** (Day 2) We drove out to Buffalo Creek Compressor Station. On the way out to the site, we picked some birch conk. When we arrived at the Buffalo Creek Compressor Station, it was very loud. We took a quick video and pictures of the site, drove down the road to look for tracks and saw cow and bull moose



tracks. Further down the road we stopped to walk into an abandoned site to look for signs of caribou and saw old and new deer tracks. Drove back to Wabasca and returned by night fall.

- **December 3, 2020:** (Day 3) Drove out to Larcanna site and area to observe wildlife tracks and look for caribou tracks. We saw lots of deer and prairie chickens on the main road. Took a video, few pictures, had lunch, and headed back for the trip home to Slave Lake.
- **December 7, 2020:** Region Five staff worked on TC Energy-Region 5 Christmas event organizing gingerbread contest submissions, Christmas card registrations, shopping for supplies for candy bags, decorating office, setting up office event following COVID safety practices
- **December 18, 2020:** Christmas event planning and working hard to make a great Christmas celebration!



- **January 6, 2021:** Planning of TLU field work in Wabasca – TC Energy HDD location site revisit. Coordinated daily agenda, financials/budget, vehicle rental, accommodations, contractor, emergency equipment and supplies. We arrived on time at the TC Energy site



Lakeside Leader catches the Region Five staff in action, waving at the kids going home from school on the buses and in vehicles! "Merry Christmas to All!" Santa yells. It was another successful event!



as scheduled. We went to unload the equipment and the skidoos were not running properly. I then assisted the contractor with loading one of the machines, and the other one was not running. We then made the call to shut down and I made other arrangements to have another contractor come out to finish the job scheduled for the next morning.

- February 3, 2021:** (Day 3) Travel out to HDD location. We arrived on time at the TC Energy site as scheduled, unloaded equipment, proceeded down the cutline to the end of the pad site and came across caribou tracks. We counted about seven different tracks in the herd, on the berm both on and off the pad site. We proceeded down the cut line and stopped to look at different tracks; rabbit, lynx, and moose came close to the riverbank. We went on foot to look at the various trees and picked some Birch Conk. We looked at the orange survey markers set up for the future pipeline project. Before we crossed the river, we looked at bear claw scratches up high on the trees, both older and newer. We then crossed the river and once we got over the edge, we went to observe the cabin to the right of the trail, which was a family member of Randall's. We

then proceeded to look at both sides of the clearance and discussed the different types of plants that grow along the tree line that locals, including Randall's family, used: raspberry leaves for poor circulation, wild mint (*Mentha arvensis*) for mint tea used for colds and congestion. This area is still utilized and has a history of the local Indigenous peoples who travelled along the river, hunting and gathering medicinal plants.



Crossing Wabasca River

TC Energy horizontal hydraulic drilling (HDD) location



## R5 Environment Coordinator Report - Jordan York

Jordan York joined the Region Five team in July 2020 as an Environment and Consultation Assistant. After a few months of working for the MNA, he found his niche working with the Environment Team and quickly transitioned into a new role as an Environment Coordinator. The focus of Jordan’s work was to support the Environment Team’s ongoing projects through the Askîy Community-Based Climate and Environmental Monitoring Initiative, while planning to expand Askîy to include wildlife monitoring projects during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Jordan played a key role in the Environment Team’s efforts to develop a process to hold online Citizen engagements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Environment Team’s first online engagement sessions were held in November 2020 to gather Citizen input on potentially establishing a Métis Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) in Alberta. He also became involved in the Oil Sands Monitoring program in the fall of 2020, holding the MNA Region Five seat on the Interim Indigenous Caucus (IIC) and participated as a member of the Indigenous Community-Based Monitoring Advisory Committee (ICBMAC).

- **February 9, 2021:** Beverly Lambert accepted offer letter for Harvesting Coordinator position. For the next few weeks, Beverly transitioned from Region Five’s Traditional Land Use Study Technician to setting up her new role as Harvesting Coordinator.
- **February 10 to March 1, 2021:** Harvesting Coordinator training on database submissions, processing Harvesting applications, and working with Harvesting Lead Craig Letendre. Bev continues to process Harvesting applications, assisting Citizens provincewide, answering questions on fishing and Harvesting practices, and processing daily Harvesting application submissions. Beverly is especially proud of having worked through all old applications, following up on all incomplete submissions, and successfully catching them up in record time with the Harvesting team working through COVID remotely. All applications processed from 2019-2021 are to date!



Jordan examines blueberries on a plant at a berry health monitoring location east of Lesser Slave Lake in the fall of 2020.



In the fall of 2020, Jordan assisted the Environment Team with berry health surveys across Alberta. In Region Five, four berry health monitoring sites were established for combined total count of 836 berry plants.

In the winter of 2020-21, Jordan assisted the Environment Team and a group of Métis harvesters with fish health surveys on lakes across Alberta. In Region Five, the project team surveyed North Wabasca Lake in March 2021, catching a total of 38 fish (whitefish, northern pike, and walleye), which were measured and examined for health indicators. ■



Above: Berry health monitoring locations in Region Five.

Below: Jordan York (right) measuring a Walleye caught during the fish health survey on North Wabasca Lake in March 2021



# 2020/21 REGION SIX



**Carol Ridsdale**  
President  
Region Six



**Barry Dobb**  
Vice President  
Region Six

## President's Message

It has been an exciting and progressive year, here in Region Six! As we move toward putting the COVID-19 pandemic behind us and emerge even stronger as part of the Métis Nation of Alberta government, it is Region Six Council's pleasure to report on the amazing adventures and successes that we have realized in the Northwest over the 2020-21 fiscal year.

## Governance

Region Six continues the efforts identified in our 2019 strategic planning session to strengthen our regional governance table through inclusion of Métis communities.

The Manning Local 2020 council and President Georgina Supernault are now active participants at the Region Six council table, and they are currently working toward an adhesion to the MNA-Region 6 Consultation Protocol Agreement.

Following the passing of Elder Ruth Kidder, who served as President of the Peace River Local 78 council, President Donna Evans has now assumed the role and been working hard at the table, on behalf of her community.

Region Six is blessed with an incredibly talented and committed council at our governance table which, following these new additions, includes:

- President Carol Ridsdale, Region Six
- Vice President Barry Dobb, Region Six
- President Angie Crerar, Grande Prairie Local 1990
- President Donna Evans, Peace River Local 78

- President Tracy Brown, Valleyview Local 1929
- President Kevin Watchorn, Fairview Local
- President Bobbi Paul-Alook, Fort Vermilion Local 74
- President Georgina Supernault, Manning Local 2020

A focus for the governance structure in the 2021-22 fiscal year will be to inform and educate incoming Local leadership and their Councils about the MNA Region 6 Consultation Protocol Agreement and how they and their local Citizens can get involved in Consultation activities. To support our Citizens and Locals in accessing information, programs, and services, the new Region Six website was launched this year, as promised! Check us out at [albertametisregion6.ca](http://albertametisregion6.ca)

## Honouring Our Elders

Region Six Council wishes to express our sincerest gratitude for the valued support and service of the following Elders in our community:

### Elder Angie Crerar

Angie Crerar grew up in Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories. Her fondest memories are those of family. She recalls living off the land, canning, hunting, gardening, and fishing, the great values and life skills taught to her by her mother and father, the basis of a wonderful way of life, of being a Métis.

In 1947, that way of life changed for Angie when she was taken from her home, her family, and her community, and placed in the residential school in Fort Resolution. For years, Angie struggled and endured the way of life the residential school was now telling and teaching her was the right way, and how her strong teachings from her parents were wrong. Angie stood up for what she believed in, she stood up for those who could not stand up for themselves. She was determined not to let her spirit be broken, she is now and was then a survivor.

Angie left the residential school when she was 17 years old with a mixed sense of values and an indecision as to who she really was. But somewhere deep down inside, she still had strong roots embedded from the past. Angie started her life but was not prepared for the outside world. After 10 years of living in Yellowknife, she knew she had to make a change for her children and family, so in 1966 she moved to Grande Prairie where she met the most influential people in her life, her husband Doug Crerar, her Métis sister Marge Mueller, and Elder Dorothy Walter. They all showed her that life is wonderful and worth living, and removed the many years of doubt and uncovered those long ago treasured Métis roots.

## Honouring Métis Veterans

Region Six Council recognizes and honours the contributions of all veterans, past and present, and their service to our country, in support of the many freedoms we enjoy.

President Bobbi Paul-Alook of Fort Vermilion Local 74 undertook a significant amount of work, in partnership with the Fort Vermilion Hallet-Hansley Legion Branch 243, to identify Métis veterans from the Fort Vermilion area. A fitting video tribute to those veterans, as well as a number of First Nation veterans who shared both family and community with the Métis in Fort Vermilion, can be found on the Region Six website.

Thank you to the following Fort Vermilion area veterans and their families:



Today, Angie and her husband Doug have a beautiful family of 10 children, one adopted son, 23 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Angie has been a key player in many local, provincial, and national partnerships, initiatives, and programs in the City of Grande Prairie, including the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Grande Prairie Regional College, Children's Services Authority, and many industry groups.

One of the most successful and rewarding endeavours spearheaded by Angie was the creation of the Elder Caring Shelter. She saw that Elders in her community needed a home, food, and companionship, thus the creation of the Elders caring shelter.



Angie has led a life of triumph and recognition, which is evidenced by the numerous awards she has been honoured with:

- In 1987, she was named Volunteer of the Year by Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
- In 2003, Angie was the Lifetime Achievement recipient at the Esquao Awards
- In 2005, she received the Centennial Award in Grande Prairie, as well as the prestigious Governor General Award
- In 2008, she was named the Hometown Hero by the City of Grande Prairie

- In 2012, Angie received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, as well as recognition for 33 years of service to the Friendship Centre movement.

But above all, Region Six recognizes and is grateful to Angie for her most important triumph, she is a Métis, a survivor, and is always willing to give of herself on behalf of her Nation and community.

## Elder Everett Supernault

Everett was born July 13, 1937, to Laurent (Larry) Suprenant and Gertrude Knott. In those days, school officials often spelled the names of the incoming students as they sounded, which led to Everett carrying the spelling of Supernault as his surname.

Born and raised in the Fairview area of northwest Alberta, Everett's most fond memory with his father was hunting. While his father went out to track an animal, Everett would stay behind and look after their team of horses. When asked what he remembers most about the early years, he'd tell you everything moved slower when you had to travel by a team of horses or on a saddle horse.

Everett talked about the reason he never took up smoking: his brother Charlie would sneak their grandmother's pipe and smoke it. By the time it was Everett's turn on the pipe, they could see their grandmother coming back and Charlie would make him put it back, so Charlie would not get into trouble.

Everett left home to join the army around 1956, where he was stationed in various bases across Canada. He then chased the rodeo circuit for eight years riding bulls, qualifying twice for the Finals at the Calgary Stampede.

Over the years, Everett held various positions of employment, from driller in the oilpatch to owner of a water well service, and farmer.

Everett met his wife Susie Houle at his brother Charlie Supernault's place in Edmonton. They had three children, Michael Henry Supernault (1973), Nadine Lee Stephens (1976), and Larry-Everett Alexander Supernault (1978). They lived in Fort St. John, British Columbia until the mid 1980s when they settled in Eureka River, Alberta where he still resides today. Everett survives Susie, who passed away following a two-year battle with cancer on August 22, 2017. As a devoted father, Everett was involved in watching or coaching many sports for his children. That devotion carried on when he became a grandpa to Jessyka Richelle Stephens in 2011, and again in 2014 following the birth of Addison Jordan Stephens.

Everett enjoys and looks forward to volunteering yearly at the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage, a tradition he hopes his children will continue. The Métis Nation of Alberta and

Region Six leadership gratefully recognize Everett for his expansive and authoritative traditional Indigenous knowledge with respect to flora and its various uses as food and medicine for our people. As a result of Everett's willingness to share that knowledge with the Nation, particularly with our youth, that knowledge will continue to live on, and those practices can be protected by the Métis Nation forever.

## Region 6 Consultation & Rights

Despite slower economic times, the northwest part of the province has continued to host significant development projects and proposals from both industry and government. Region Six, for its part, is active in protecting and advancing Métis rights, claims, and interests on behalf of the Métis within Alberta through implementation of the MNA-Region 6 Consultation Protocol Agreement, and we have participated in some notable projects over the last fiscal year.

As home to the Peace River oilsands development, Region Six leadership and the Consultation Office actively participate in governance committees of the joint Oil Sands Monitoring, which is delivered through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta. In Region Six, the first-of-its-kind tripartite Consultation, Mitigation, and Accommodation Agreement was reached with the Region, the County of Grande Prairie, and Aquatera in support of necessary infrastructure improvements that also protected Métis rights and traditional values. Additionally, Region Six participated in developing recommendations to the Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks in respect to the Bistcho Lake Caribou Range Plan, which aims to protect and restore habitat for this valuable species.

## Local Reports

### Valleyview Métis Local 1929

This past year was extremely busy for our Local. The loss of the renter in our building allowed us to reopen a Métis office on main street Valleyview. The office was staffed by Zachary Smith from May-August 2020. Zac was hired with financial assistance from Rupertsland and Region Six as our summer student. Zac assisted with COVID Relief support distribution, inside painting of the wall, the Smart Wildfire event, and other activities in our Local. Our Local was able to have the building's flooring updated, as well as some minor repairs at the building.

All the Métis Grade 12 grads were acknowledged by our Local with a sash, a gift, and featured on our Facebook page.



Due to COVID health restrictions on gathering, we were only able to have Local executive meetings. In June 2020 for National Indigenous Day, we had the Métis flag raised by the Town of Valleyview. Our Local Executive was able to provide the second round of COVID relief with support from Erica Jorgenson. We participated in the Purple Ribbon of Hope campaign and provided baskets to elders in our community. This initiative included three local Métis youth who helped with packaging and delivering baskets.

We will be planning our Annual General Meeting (AGM) for this fall, as pandemic restrictions have resulted in our Local being one year behind in holding our AGM. We look forward to more events and gatherings in the coming months.

### Peace River Local 78

Métis Local 78, which serves Peace River, Grimshaw, and Nampa and area, was inactive throughout most of this past year. With the loss of our much beloved President Ruth Kidder in February 2020, the Local was at a standstill.

During this year, we were unable to move forward with meetings and gatherings due to the pandemic. However, at a meeting of the Board, that was finally able to happen in March of 2021, where we restarted the Local by filling the Executive from within the existing board members.

We are grateful to the Region Six Office for stepping in and fulfilling the needs of the Local 78 community during this past year.

We are looking forward to 2021 and fulfilling our roles within the Board, working with the community and advocating for the needs of the Métis in our Local.

## Local 78 Executive:



### **DONNA EVANS, PRESIDENT**

I grew up in Eureka River but have lived for almost 40 years in the Grimshaw/Peace River area. I have two grown children and two wonderful grandbabies. I love camping, reading, photography, and gardening. I work with

Rupertsland Institute and am honoured to be serving the Métis community as the current Local 78 President. I will strive to work with and advocate for the needs of the community.



### **CAROL WANOTCH, VICE PRESIDENT**

I have been a long-time board member of Local 78 and am happy to be a part of the renewed board. I am married, have two sons who gifted me with two beautiful daughters-

in-law, and four beautiful grandchildren. I love spending time with family, friends, and loved ones. My hobbies are cooking for my family, sewing, reading, listening to music, and camping.

I am looking forward to assisting the Board and Local 78 wherever I am able to.



### **SYDNEY RIDSDALE, SECRETARY-TREASURER**

Hello, my name is Sydney Ridsdale, and I am the secretary and treasurer for Métis Local 78. I am from Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement, and currently live

in Peace River, where I work at the Region Six office. I am also a 3rd year student at the University of Alberta. Once I am finished my Bachelor of Education degree, I would like to become an elementary school teacher. My hobbies include reading, writing, renovating and decorating my house, and travelling. I am excited to contribute to Local 78. I think we can do a lot of good for the community!

As a volunteer board and executive, we are looking forward to this coming year and working with the community. As of this date, we are working towards the new year and looking forward to planned Métis events and future meetings.

## Grande Prairie Métis Local 1990

With the support of the Rupertsland Institute, Region Six, and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Local 1990 provided support to Métis Citizens during the pandemic this past year. Through various funding programs, Métis Local 1990 was able to provide food hampers, gift cards, and gas cards to many youth, Elders, and families. Additional to this, we also continued our regular services of Métis Citizenship applications, Harvesting applications, and general support where needed.

Through a partnership with Rupertsland and Region Six, Métis Local 1990 was able to hire a Métis summer student the past two summers to support our work and our Citizens. Our students have helped with COVID relief programs, Métis Citizenship applications, and Harvester applications. The Summer Student Program through Rupertsland has created an opportunity for Métis youth to work directly with Métis Local 1990 and learn about our rich culture and history, along with our regular business.

Métis Local 1990 is honoured to share our new partnership with Control Tech. This partnership is one we are proud of, as Control Tech supports our programs and services for our Métis people.

We also moved. We are very grateful for the support to keep our doors open and to find a space that will allow us to continue our programming.



## Rounding the Corner from COVID-19

Working with MNA Provincial Office, Region Six made significant efforts to ensure our Citizens had access to the support they needed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most significant of our COVID-19 programs was the Emergency Financial Assistance Program, which provided relief funds directly to Citizens to support basic needs. The Region Six Office administered three rounds of the

program, with intakes in April, June, and November 2020, using an online portal launched days after the program was confirmed. Over 75 per cent of our applications were submitted through the online portal. Emergency assistance was provided to over 2,792 people, in 823 Métis households. Region Six Council is incredibly proud of the work that our staff undertook to support our Citizens.

During the pandemic, Region Six also worked very closely with our Locals, providing financial support to offer relief at a local level targeted to the unique needs of each community. These initiatives included food hampers for Elders, gift card programs, and even Chromebooks to support remote learning for students in Valleyview, Peace River, Fairview, Grande Prairie, Manning, and Fort Vermilion.

As we turn the corner from the pandemic, Region Six will continue to work with the MNA to design and fund programs that now focus on rebuilding our lives as Métis Citizens.

## Remembering Residential Schools on National Indigenous People's Day

It was 25 years ago when Governor General Romeo LeBlanc proclaimed National Aboriginal Day, which we now recognize and celebrate as National Indigenous Peoples Day, on June 21. It is no coincidence that this day, which was identified to the Government of Canada as early as 1982 by Indigenous peoples across the country to become a day honouring our Nations, is also the summer solstice. It is a day of deep cultural and spiritual significance and power for the Nations who have lived on this land since time immemorial.

But this year, marking that day during events across the northwest felt much larger than in past years. This year we were reminded of the deep tragedies of our experiences as Métis within the colonial development of Canada. Following the devastating discovery of 215 unmarked graves of Indigenous children at the site of a former residential school in British Columbia, and the discovery of hundreds of others across Canada in the days since, we marked this National Indigenous Peoples Day as a day of mourning, in honour of our children who didn't make it home.

In Alberta alone, there were 25 residential schools that our families' children were forced to attend, some of which were in Region Six communities like Fort Vermilion and Assumption, and we know that at least 821 of those children never made it home. The media and governments alike will try to convince you that this is, "just an unfortunate chapter in Canada's history." But it's

not really history at all; in Alberta, the last of residential school didn't close until 1988.

The crimes and atrocities faced by our people are not historical events to be remarked as unfortunate and quietly forgotten. Region Six leadership spoke at events across the northwest in June and July to deliver a simple message to all Canadians and government officials: The atrocities of residential schools are crimes of today. Those crimes must be meaningfully addressed by the Crown, with the active participation of our Nations, including prosecuting the more than 5,000 perpetrators who are still alive today. Without meaningful justice for all Indigenous people, including the Citizens of our Métis Nation, reconciliation will remain just another empty promise.



## Closing Remarks

As always, Region Six and our Council remain steadfast in our commitment to our Citizens and being a vibrant and dynamic part of the Métis government in Alberta. Despite the many challenges we have faced over the past fiscal year, we have continued to deliver significant outcomes and successes in programs and services. Much of that success is owed to the amazing administrative team we are blessed to have in the Region Six office, and with the support of the MNA Provincial Office. Region Six Council and I look forward to seeing each of you in person at this year's Annual General Assembly, and at all of the Métis festivities we will be able to hold in person once again.

Sincerely,

**President Carol Ridsdale**

## Region 6 Environment & Climate Change Report

Tawnshi everyone,

The Region Six Environmental Department is collaborating directly with the MNA Climate Leadership team in Edmonton to achieve projects designed to empower Métis communities and youth, engaging them in the important work of preserving and promoting Métis traditional land use.

The following projects were initiated in 2018, continued (and completed) in 2019, and are active at this present moment:

### Retrofits Project: Region Six Peace River Administration Building

After an energy efficiency audit in 2018, an assessment report was finalized, and recommendations such as electrical upgrades and energy efficient furnaces replacements were carried out in 2019. Presently, we are investigating the suitability to install solar panels in the Peace River office administrative building or Valleyview office, in case the Peace River's building roof is not suitable.

### Renewable Energy: Solar Panel Installation

In Grand Prairie, the Elder's Carrying Shelter's building had the roof appraised and replaced, and solar panels were installed in October 2019. The new installed solar panels, with a total capacity of 18 megawatts, produced 7,700 kilowatt hours of electricity until the end of June, saving \$672 and avoiding 4.4 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

### Energy Management Project: MNA Building Sustainability

Region Six is proposing to increase the sustainability of MNA buildings by working on these main initiatives.

A database tracking building energy use and performance was created to allow individuals and departments to make decisions to reduce their carbon footprint, while also creating financial value. This database will continuously track electricity, natural gas, water consumption, and electricity production.

### NEWO Energy Efficiency Seminars

NEWO Energy is an Alberta-based, Indigenous-focused organization committed to approaching educational projects with a holistic, cultural perspective. The Home Energy Efficiency Seminars were conducted in September 2019 in Fort Vermilion, Fairview, and Grande Prairie. The sessions aimed to educate MNA Citizens on energy efficiency and sustainable living practices, including practical and simple ways to reduce energy use and save money.

### Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHs) Weather Monitoring Station

A CoCoRaHs weather monitoring station was installed in December 2019 within the Region Six property limits to provide accurate information on precipitation and snow within the Region. Currently, a young Métis volunteer (9 years of age) stepped up to contribute to the local Métis youth community, and is eager to add to his own personal growth.

### Roof Repair and Mold Remediation

A grant application for roof repair and mold remediation was submitted in May 2020 to the Alberta government to re-establish the Youth Center in Peace River. Government response is expected by November 2021.

The Region Six Environment Team will continue working and implementing climate monitoring, and become active contributors to community well-being via educational programs and an active community involvement with local partners.

## Region Six Youth Program Coordinator Report

### Pre-COVID-19 (July-February 2020)

#### Life Skills Programs

Over this last year, I ran a number of Life Skills Programs across Region Six. I ran three Unrestricted Firearms classes in Fairview and Grande Prairie, with a total of 22 participants who all successfully completed the course. Additionally, I held two cooking classes in Peace River where participants learned to make stew, Bannock, and Christmas cookies. We also held a canning class where participants made pickles and salsa.



## Cultural Programs

From September until March, I ran a bi-weekly Lunch and Learn Session at Glenmary High School over the lunch hour. We had an average of 12 students and did beading, embroidery, and finger weaving. I facilitated a number of embroidery classes, both regionally and provincially. In August, I had the opportunity to assist the Fort Vermilion Local in a three-daylong day camp that featured fish scale art and canoeing. At the Region Six AGM, I organized a youth and elders storytelling session with five elders.

## Community Engagement

In order to connect with youth, I organized classroom presentations in Fairview, Peace River, Worsley, and Grande Prairie. These classroom presentations included a jiggling presentation and storytelling. Until we were forced to shut down in March, I had been running a weekly youth group in Peace River with activities like pumpkin carving and cookie decorating.

## Provincial Initiatives

The MNA Youth department's largest events are the two youth camps that we hold every summer: The Voyageur Camp, and Oskayak Kapayshiw Youth Camp. We also hosted the annual Youth Conference at the MNA's Annual General Assembly. In November 2019, the Youth team held Discovery Day during Métis Week, featuring cultural programs, speakers, and activities for students. Our HEADSTRONG summit, a two-day mental health event, was held in Grande Prairie in January 2020. The Youth and Seniors Gathering, a cultural event to promote connection amongst youth and seniors, was held in Edmonton in February 2020.

## Post-COVID-19 (March-July 2020)

In March 2020, COVID-19 caused us to socially distance, resulting in online programming. I created a mailout embroidery kit and tutorials to be sent to youth. I also hosted three months of a virtual book club totalling 37 participants, as well as guest appearances from authors Katherena Vermette, Jesse Thistle, and Marilyn Dumont.

Additionally, I created and mailed out Wellness Kits containing mental health resources, exercises, and activities to go youth.

The Youth team was also busy processing Youth Emergency Benefit applications to provide financial support to youth and their families during this difficult time. ■



*Honouring Our  
Métis Veterans*



# 2020/21

AFFILIATE  
REPORTS



2020/21

# Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.

## History

Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. (AMDI) was created in 1984 under a federal government contribution agreement with Native Economic Development Program, an initiative promoted by Industry, Science, and Technology. The total committed funds for the creation of AMDI was \$8.8 million.

In 1988, AMDI commenced operations by providing commercial financial services and business management advisory services to Métis entrepreneurs throughout Alberta. Under the original Federal Government Contribution Agreement, \$800,000 was expensed on the initial start-up costs, while the capital pool of \$8 million was disbursed in stages.

AMDI has lent out over \$80 million since 1988 and helped in the creation of over 1,200 Métis-owned businesses throughout the province of Alberta, while maintaining our capital base of \$8 million. Our success is largely due to our clients who have successfully capitalized on their opportunities. AMDI has become an intergenerational service provider as the children (now adults) of clients we assisted long ago approach AMDI as their parents once did. What a great thing to have accomplished – we imagine it is what the framers had envisioned.

The purpose of AMDI is to help Métis entrepreneurs start or expand their business ideas and we hope our clients, past and present, pass on their experiences in dealing with us to other Métis entrepreneurs who may be considering first steps to becoming owners of their own business.



## Report on Operations

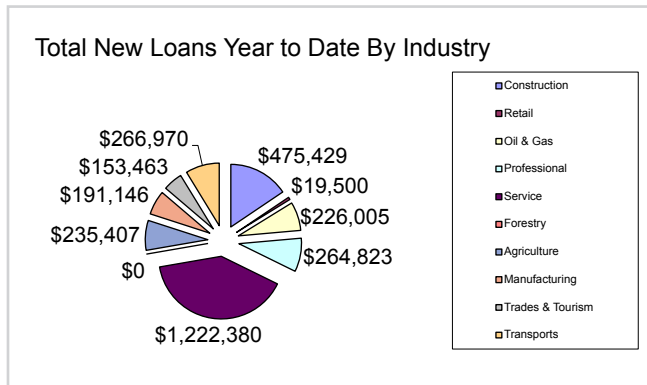
During the period April 2020 to March 2021, AMDI approved \$3.055 million in funding assistance to new and existing business, constituting a decrease of about 40 per cent year over year, not bad considering the economy was essentially shut down for this entire period. The

lending we did conduct was essential-service related. We were, however, incredibly busy providing COVID-19 relief Federal Business Emergency Loans, amounting to \$7.6 million and 225 clients. Moreover, we were also tasked with providing COVID microbusiness relief to both settlement and off-settlement Métis clients and Métis collectives, amounting to \$3 million and over 500 clients.

A total of \$22 million in applications were received over 2020-21, constituting a 57 per cent increase in self-employment initiatives expressed by Métis entrepreneurs. The service, retail, and trades sectors comprised the majority of applications, amounting to \$3.05 million in loans, which the service sector continues to lead. Regional participation was relatively balanced across all six regions of the province.

As usual, most of the new loan applicants this year took advantage of the Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (MEAP), as the non-repayable contribution serves to substantially reduce debt-servicing costs associated with acquiring assets for business operations. Loans to businesses included, but were not limited to, construction, retail, agriculture, professional, oil and gas, and service-based businesses, as well as some tourism and transports. The service and trades sector dominated this year's lending, representing a strong component of what we do and a low-risk profile to our portfolio, while complimenting Rupertsland Institute's long-standing training initiative. In general, the total loan demand was relatively evenly distributed across all industries,

suggesting that Métis entrepreneurs are penetrating and participating in every sector of the economy.



## AMDI’s Response to COVID-19

Since March 2020, AMDI has delivered COVID-19 business relief programming to Métis clients, although these programs are tenuous as the country returns to normal social and economic activities. Currently, we continue to offer the Federal Business Emergency Loan, and the Indigenous Community Business Fund for micro and collective businesses. If you are unaware of these programs, I encourage you to call our office.

As of March 31, 2021, we accomplished the following:

TOTAL AMDI LENDING BY FUND APRIL 1 - March 31, 2021			
	APPROVED	DISBURSED	# of Clients
AMDI LOAN FUND	3,055,123	2,425,674	26
Micro Business Emergency Loan	2,490,000	2,435,000	72
Federal Business Emergency Loan	5,160,000	5,160,000	153
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>10,705,123</b>	<b>10,020,674</b>	<b>251</b>

The Federal Business and Microbusiness emergency loans have provided a massive relief to clients, especially during the early phases and the second wave of the pandemic (December 2020 to April/May of 2021). Of course, these relief efforts may be transitory, however, our overall impression is that people are diversifying, modifying, or restructuring their businesses to accommodate ongoing changes to COVID-19 regulations.

Some businesses were not terribly impacted by COVID-19 at all. In fact, they are doing better than ever, particularly most essential services. People are forward looking, so this shouldn’t be surprising. Most are now realizing that interim relief measures provided by the government, while helpful, are not a viable substitute for long-term durable success. Clients I talk to seem concerned about this most, especially women (more on this below).

## Seamless Service Delivery to Métis Clients Remains, Despite Covid-19

Without exception, every business in Canada has been adversely affected by regulations imposed as a result of COVID-19. In the early days of March and April 2020, the economy virtually halted when production and distribution of all products and services were limited to “essential” only. It will be years before we really know if the impact was temporary or permanent.

As most of AMDI’s work with Métis people hinges on relationships, COVID-19 has had an immediate impact on our reach to the community. The cancellation of almost every Métis gathering throughout the year has definitely reduced AMDI’s exposure to Métis clients and communities, from the Local and Regional levels to all the social gatherings in between, constituting over 100 functions that were AMDI’s surefire way of reaching and responding to business development initiatives by Métis entrepreneurs in Alberta.



AMDI’s greatest strength has always been our seamless delivery business model that prioritizes Alberta’s Métis entrepreneurs’ access to capital, business planning, and business support. What we found most surprising is that despite COVID-19, Métis entrepreneurs are reaching out to us, as they recognize the regulatory constraints imposed on our business. In turn, we continue reaching back to clients, recognizing and acknowledging these constraints, but also accepting our clients’ needs and wishes.

Life, and therefore the business of producing goods and services, must and will go on. To this end, AMDI’s success and long-term relevance to Métis people depends on our ability to provide financial and business support needs in a timely way, regardless of COVID-19 or any other risk that occurs.

## Other Investments

### Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (MEAP) Renewal

For over 25 years, Apeetogosan has provided external delivery services to Aboriginal Business Canada's business development program. As part of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) initiative to increase the delivery capacity of its external partners, ISC continues to support the small business development program. For the 2020-21 fiscal year, AMDI delivered about \$1.08 million in equity to over 40 Métis entrepreneurs, the result of a one-year renewal of ISC's support for the equity program. Now called the Métis Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (MEAP), AMDI provides the single window of access to equity and commercial finance capital to all Alberta Métis entrepreneurs. As you might imagine, this means a lot to AMDI as it ensures better service to our clients and solidifies expectations on timing and capital availability.

### Affiliates Partnering Together in Response to COVID-19: AMDI & RLI

A few years ago, AMDI experienced a significant shortfall of equity normally available to Métis entrepreneurs through the federal government's Aboriginal Economic Program. Around the same time, the RLI experienced a massive influx of clients seeking capital assistance and/or training with entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives. As this was outside their scope of education, labour market, and training initiatives where RLI showcases their expertise, RLI reached out to AMDI, as we reached out to them, to see if they could help with our business development and client equity shortfall.

This ended up becoming an enduring partnership that has provided RLI with another means of demonstrating their reach into essentially all economic activities. It has also helped AMDI reach new milestones in lending, as we assisted more clients in bringing their business ideas to fruition, which in turn reaffirmed our shared mandate. Moreover, AMDI has remained profitable, durable, and increasingly relevant to the Métis community.

Now fast forward to the COVID-19 pandemic and again AMDI finds itself coordinating resources with the Rupertsland Institute, this time to enhance and encourage Métis women in microbusiness development. As it turns out, the majority of clients applying to the Indigenous Community Business Fund for COVID relief, a program that recognizes microbusinesses were affected by lockdowns and restrictions on social gatherings, were women.

Conservatively, we estimate \$20 million in goods and services were exchanged in the Métis women

microbusiness space in Alberta. We also learned these microbusinesses had a nutritional and nurturing source of production, whose value extended beyond baked goods, sewn ribbon dresses, childcare and entertainment, aesthetics, and home care for the elderly. These microbusinesses are inextricably tied to the community's well-being by a passionate source of commitment and aspiration, intertwined with the matriarchal need to provide for the family. Throughout COVID, we have learned the scope of Métis women in microbusiness is incredibly diverse and dynamic.

Going forward with Rupertsland, we will be developing a microbusiness loan program that will provide commercial financing and entrepreneurship workshops aimed at instilling confidence in Métis women looking at self-employment as a reliable source of income.


### Pinnacle Business Services Ltd.

**Recognizing & Encouraging the Durable Participation of Métis Women in Micro Business**

A Joint Initiative of Rupertsland Institute  
&  
Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc.

Key Provisions:

1. Business Counseling and Targeted Workshops,
2. Commercial Loan Finance Availability, and
3. Follow-Up and Business Supports



Pinnacle staff provide applicants access to government programs from Indigenous Services Canada, loan financing from AMDI, and assist in developing their business opportunity into a plan of action. The primary role of the Pinnacle business consultant is to support Métis clients in assessing their opportunities, including identifying and mitigating areas of weakness and risk exposure. To this end, Pinnacle Business Services helps clients evaluate whether their business opportunities have a reasonable chance of becoming successful small-business ventures. The last thing we want is to see our clients fail.

The follow-up work to assessing an opportunity is developing a plan of execution demonstrating the client's opportunity and its implementation. Pinnacle assists clients with formalizing their opportunity and implementation plans by helping them develop a business plan. The business plan becomes the presentation

document to financiers demonstrating the integrity of the client’s proposal. The plan includes an assessment on commercial viability, capital cost and financing requirements, and the client’s ability to competitively deliver the product or service under consideration.

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd. assisted in developing over 30 business plans for clients, helping leverage \$3.055 million in commercial financing from AMDI.

Aftercare is another component of Pinnacle’s services, ensuring clients have accounting and bookkeeping systems, adequate training, and appropriate internal controls in place. During the year under review, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd. provided aftercare services to 45 clients.

## On the Road Again

One of the ways we have always reached and assisted Métis clients is we get in the car and travel to see them. In fact, this has been the basis of most of our relationships. The staff at AMDI have always contended this is the best part of what we do – learning what Métis people are doing, how they are contributing to the economy, and how we can help them.

COVID -19 initially made travel difficult, yet we still responded to clients’ needs. As time has made new information on mitigating COVID -19 available, we have essentially resumed normal operations. Our subsidiary, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd., is and always has been the major conduit for reaching and servicing clients, starting with a phone call and finishing with capitalizing a unique Métis business opportunity.

Here are just a few examples of clients and their respective projects we have assisted throughout the year and through COVID-19.

### Titan Oilfield Hauling - Leon Provencher

Leon Provencher is owner of Titan Oilfield Hauling, providing transportation of oil and gas production equipment, heavy hauling, and hot shot delivery service to the drilling industry. Titan maintains a new and modern fleet of equipment and, despite the perils brought on by COVID-19, is looking at expanding the fleet this year.

### True North Modifications Inc. - Ken Braget

True North Modifications Inc. is a full-service valve company offering new valve distribution, valve modifications, and servicing at a large shop in south Edmonton. Mr. Ken Braget, owner of True North, is a proud MNA Citizen and instrumental in maximizing

Indigenous employment in his company (presently 40 per cent). True North’s mission is “changing industry while changing lives.” Apeetogosan and Pinnacle are very proud to support Ken Braget and his team at True North Modifications.



Leon Provencher of Titan Hauling and Ken Balcom of Pinnacle Business Services



Ken Braget, President of True North Modifications and Ken Balcom of Pinnacle Business Services



Alyssa Johnston and Ken Balcom

### Bone & Biscuit - Alyssa Johnston

Imagine trying to start a business during the COVID-19 disruption. That is exactly what Alyssa Johnston did as she worked with Pinnacle and Apeetogosan to open her new Bone & Biscuit franchise in Spruce Grove. The store specializes in the retail sale of raw and fresh pet food and pet accessories and is part of a growing chain of franchise stores across Canada. The store opened for business in mid-June.

### Naoka Incorporated - Shelly Mandeville

Naoka Incorporated is a unique Métis-owned company specializing in the manufacturing and supply of vehicle safety whips under the brand names, “Aurora All-in One Whip” and the “Polaris Premium Whip.” Shelly Mandeville is President and owner of Naoka and has been instrumental to its success since inception in 2011. COVID-19 has presented many challenges to the company, from changing manufacturing processes,



Shelly Mandeville, Naoka Anderson, and Ken Balcom

to limiting the number of people in the shop at one time, to sourcing new local supplies of raw materials. Apeetogosan and Pinnacle are very proud of Naoka’s success in developing innovative products that contribute to a safer workplace.

### Closing Remarks

Overall, it was a steady year for AMDI, with loan growth maintaining our portfolio of \$7.5 million. AMDI continues to demonstrate its own durability, posting a net income of over \$500,000, and a steadily increasing retained earnings balance of over \$3.1 million. We remain one of the top performing Aboriginal financial institutions across Canada. Most importantly, we remain relevant to our Métis community – one of the key guiding principles of our operations.

Life gets in the way of the best laid plans and COVID-19 is an acute example of what can happen when you least expect it. The true test of one’s resilience, however, is how you choose to respond to it.

AMDI’s immediate response was to first recognize the certain damage this was going to impose on our clients. We relaxed principal and interest payments for three months and delivered several response measures on behalf of the federal government and Métis Nation of Alberta’s COVID relief. We continue applying flexible repayment options for our Métis entrepreneurs, as we recognize and appreciate the challenges our clients face managing an effective shut down of the economy.

It demonstrates, yet again, how AMDI’s role continues to evolve as our clients transition to a new and challenging economic environment that is equally challenging for our business model.

It is our hope that the Métis people of Alberta will understand our commitment to positioning AMDI as the preferred lender of choice among increasingly repeat Métis businesses. Of course, the economy will be what it will be, and we will remain a reliable source of financial and business support to all Métis participating in it.

The staff of AMDI continue to work very well together and have established a very efficient office driven by a commitment to client service and care. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work this past year – most challenging, given the uncertainty – and the Board of Directors for their commitment and numerous contributions to ensuring AMDI continues to play an integral role in the growth of the Métis Nation of Alberta. ■



# 2020/21

## Métis Crossing Ltd.

Métis Crossing began as a major initiative of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). It is growing to be a premiere destination for Alberta Métis **cultural interpretation, education, gatherings, and business development**. Our 512-acre site is designed to engage and excite visitors. Our programming encourages active visitor participation in activities promoting an appreciation of our people, customs, and celebrations.

Métis Crossing has identified four main goals that drive all that we do:

1. To share the Métis story with all people
2. To be a gathering place
3. To achieve financial sustainability
4. To minimize capital debt

This mission and these goals are tirelessly pursued by the Board of Directors governing Métis Crossing:

- Chairperson: Audrey Poitras, MNA President
- Vice Chairperson: Dan Cardinal, MNA Vice President
- Director: Duane Zaraska, MNA Region Two President
- Director: Andy Popko
- Director and Knowledge Holder: Art Cunningham

In March 2020, just two months after the Cultural Gathering Centre at Métis Crossing was completed, the intense impacts of the



global COVID-19 pandemic became very real in Canada. Along with all other interpretive centres and tourism operations, Métis Crossing was forced to shut its doors. These impacts continued to be felt throughout the fiscal year.

Our sincere appreciation must be expressed to the MNA, who very early in the pandemic pledged their support to the Métis Crossing Board of Directors, and all other affiliates. Métis Crossing has come too far,

and our work within the Métis Nation must continue. Even though Métis Crossing was not able to generate its projected revenue, the MNA supported our core operations so that we did not reduce the size of our team, and developmental work could continue in earnest.

The tourism industry, or visitor economy, has been among the hardest hit during the pandemic. Within this sector, Indigenous tourism has been devastated. Early projections indicated that up to 65 per cent of the tourism operators in Canada would not survive the pandemic.

After conversations and planning with numerous sector leaders, Métis Crossing made the decision to continue implementing our business strategy. Instead of minimizing our operations to survive, the Métis Crossing Board of Directors pursued developing a new Lodge at Métis Crossing. The intent is to be the anchor driving recovery of the visitor economy in northeast Alberta.



## COVID-19 Impacts on Operations

Given the growing COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, Métis Crossing was forced to close our doors to the public. Our team transitioned to a work-from-home model where the planning of Métis Crossing experiences and developments continued.

On July 2, 2020, Métis Crossing was allowed to re-open to the public with numerous restrictions and COVID-19 safety protocols in place. Our visitor numbers were limited to 10-person cohorts to minimize any potential spread of COVID onsite. We are proud to report that no COVID cases have been linked to our operation.

Later that fall, in November 2020, Métis Crossing was again forced to close as the virus spread rapidly in Alberta. These new restrictions were even more stringent than the previous set, and the Métis Crossing team again began to work from home.

## Operational Successes

Supported by the Rupertsland Youth Summer Employment Program and Canada Summer Jobs Program, Métis Crossing was able to hire **14 summer staff** in addition to our core team of four people. This summer team was able to provide engaging visitor experiences, serve delicious Métis cuisine, and maintain our growing facilities throughout the summer. Grants made it possible to employ these students, even though COVID restrictions limited the number of paying guests through our gates.

Métis Crossing team:

- 4 core team members (3 Métis and 1 local)
- 14 summer staff (11 Métis and 3 local)

We welcomed over 700 general admissions. In addition, we sold 590 tickets for our Signature Experiences, and 100 camping nights in our campground.

The beautiful new Cultural Gathering Centre also began fulfilling its role as a gathering place by hosting its **first wedding, first graduation, and first celebration of life**. We have grown into a place where all family and community events can be held.

In addition, our unique indoor/outdoor integrated design was perfect to host outdoor events, increasing our COVID gathering capacity to 100. We were honoured to welcome our partner, Indigenous Tourism Alberta, to host an Indigenous Tourism Summit in September 2020. The event was held on the deck overlooking the river and was the ideal location for Indigenous operators from across

the province to come together, share our experiences, and plan to re-build our sector.

The open-design concept inside was also ideal for smaller groups looking to safely host workshops and meetings. Even with limited indoor capacity (50 people), Métis Crossing was able to host over 60 corporate meetings.

We also pivoted our operations to host six different film crews to use the amazing setting for their own project developments. Our interpretive team adapted our programming to a virtual setting and implemented virtual programming for corporate and educational partners.

## Community Participation

Participating and contributing to our cultural, geographic, and sector communities are values we hold high. The Métis Crossing team are members of and contribute to the following community organizations:

- University of Alberta Native Studies Faculty Council
- Nehiyawaskiy Indigenous Peoples Arts Co-op
- Indigenous Edmonton Tourism Working Group
- Smoky Lake Region Economic Development Strategy Working Group
- Smoky Lake Regional Community Development Committee
- Smoky Lake Heritage Board
- Victoria Home Guard Historical Society
- Smoky Lake Community Learning Council
- Smoky Lake Pumpkin Growers Association

### “To share our Métis story with all people”

This goal of Métis Crossing guides what we do. Our Experiential Interpretive Plan and Business Strategy provide both a framework for sharing and a roadmap for continued growth.

Important advancements this year included the mural program in the Gathering Hall. This project was a unique collaboration between Métis beader Lisa Shepard and artist Stephan Gladue. The mural brings our open kitchen to life with visual stories of Métis life.

Work also began on a storywalk, a self-guided trail engaging our young guests with an interactive story about life travelling the trails to Tail Creek. The boards are designed for tales to be changed seasonally so that there is always a reason to return to Métis Crossing to learn more.

A very exciting addition is the Riverlot farmyard. Building on our existing two homesteads that belonged to the Cromarty and Sinclair families, we have added both traditional plants and animals. As part of our Food Forest

project, research was done on traditional gardens and the “orchards” that fed our riverlot families. Both were planted. In addition, riverlot farm animals have joined our family. Our main stars are Annie and Frannie, the sheep. The barn is also filled with chickens, ducks, and rabbits. They bring such life to the farms.

The Cultural Gathering Centre was designed to be a space in which experiences could occur. We have an amazing gallery space meant to host travelling exhibits, the first of which, “Hiding in Plain Site,” is currently on loan from Museums and Archives Canada. “Hiding in Plain Site” shares a pictorial history of the early formation of our Nation.

Two new Signature Experiences were also added:

- *Walk in our Mocs* - an archery program where our guests take a hike through the woods looking for signs of animals. When they reach the program area, they learn key archery skills and take their turn shooting our 3D animal targets.
- *Whispers from the Stars* - an evening winter program. Interpreters share stories of the skies and stars. Our telescopes allow guests to take a deeper look into night sky.

## Capital Developments

Though COVID impacted the tourism sector heavily, the Board of Directors decided to continue the path outlined in the business strategy. By continuing our growth, Métis Crossing will become the anchor that drives tourism recovery post-pandemic. In the spring, we received a \$1 million contribution from Alberta Indigenous Relations and work began on the new Lodge at Métis Crossing. This addition will facilitate guests coming to Métis Crossing for not just 2-3 hours, but for 2-3 days. Construction began in July 2020, and completion is planned for fall 2021.

The Lodge will feature family rooms, hostel-style rooms, and executive suites. It is beautifully situated, overlooking the North Saskatchewan River. The open lobby features a gorgeous two-story stone fireplace that warms both the bistro on the main floor and the lounge on the second floor.

Also in our strategy, we defined our dream to have bison roam the north end of Métis Crossing. This development will create an engaging and interactive place to share the story of the buffalo hunt and the growth of our Nation. In October 2020, Métis Crossing signed a Declaration of Relationship with Len Hrehorets of Lonesome Pine Cattle Company to develop a joint venture that would see the development of a wildlife park at Métis Crossing. Expect to see these majestic beasts late fall.



The future will see many capital projects completed, including the storywalk, directional signage, wildlife park, and the Lodge at Métis Crossing. Our community participation will also continue, especially with Smoky Lake and the development of their Economic Development Strategy, providing even more reasons to visit Métis Crossing. Our friends at the Town of Smoky Lake and Smoky Lake County are important partners to ensuring our successful growth.

Though challenging, 2020 allowed Métis Crossing to lay the foundation to becoming both a warm gathering place and a major destination in northeast Alberta. Our culture, past, present, and future, continue to be celebrated as people gain a true appreciation of the spirit and strength of Alberta’s Métis Nation. ■



# 2020/21

# Métis Urban & Capital Housing Corporations

## Subsidized Housing

Wholly owned by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Métis Urban Housing Corporation of Alberta Inc. (MUHC) started its operations on November 26, 1982 to provide subsidized, adequate, and sustainable housing to low- and moderate-income Indigenous families in Alberta. On April 28, 1992, MUHC received non-profit status. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funded MUHC through section 95 funding until January 2017. Effective February 2017, the Alberta Seniors and Housing division of the Government of Alberta took over MUHC's portfolio and operating agreements from CMHC.

Our vision is to continue growing and adapting as an innovative organization, providing affordable and quality housing to address the changing needs of a diverse clientele while preparing those who are able to transition into homeownership and self-reliance. We offer housing at a rental rate that is no more than 25 per cent of household income, allowing low- and moderate-income Indigenous families to afford and experience quality housing.

## Affordable Housing

Wholly owned by the MNA, Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) was incorporated on September 14, 2007 as a not-for-profit corporation.

Our mission is to promote and assist Métis and other Indigenous people in Alberta with affordable, adequate, and suitable housing. We offer housing at a rental rate that is 20 per cent below the market rate in Alberta which allows low- and moderate-income Indigenous families to afford and experience quality housing.



**Métis**  
Urban Housing  
Corporation



MCHC has leased out 10 houses to Habitat for Humanity on a 99-year lease, allowing and preparing Indigenous families for homeownership.

The Board of Directors, management, and staff of both MUHC and MCHC share the culture and values of the people we serve. We understand their needs and treat their families with respect and dignity. We work every day to improve the quality of houses we offer. The Board for each organization consists of seven dedicated and

well-qualified individuals representing the six regions in Alberta.

- Chair: MNA President Audrey Poitras
- Region 1: Laura Waniandy
- Region 2: Isabel Myshaniuk
- Region 3: Jeannette Marie Hansen
- Region 4: Currently vacant
- Region 5: Solomon Auger
- Region 6: Benita Galandy

As an affiliate of the MNA, MUHC and MCHC are fully accountable to the Métis Citizens within Alberta. MUHC currently owns 505 properties in Alberta, housing over 1,300 Indigenous peoples. MCHC currently owns 370 properties in Alberta, housing over 700 Indigenous peoples.

To make our programs successful, we have a team of over 90 dedicated staff members assisting our clients. The expertise and knowledge we have cultivated help us to better our service for the people and our organizations. MUHC, in conjunction with its sister company MCHC, has achieved various initiatives that exhibit the knowledge and experience of the staff both companies share.

## KEY PROJECTS & SUCCESSES: 2020-2021

- MCHC received \$2,096,528 from the federal government under Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy through the MNA. This program is for Métis individuals and families who are homeless or on the verge of being homeless. There are several supports available for the most vulnerable group of our society.
- MCHC received \$12,187,500 from the MNA under the MNA Housing Strategy Implementation Plan. These funds were used for the Home Repair Program, Home Ownership Program, Rental Supplement Program, Replacement Reserve, and housing operations.
- As of June 30, 2021, MCHC has supported:
  - 323 families under the Home Repair Program and distributed over \$4.97 million.
  - 255 families under the Down Payment Assistance Program and distributed over \$3.55 million.
  - 814 families under the Rental Supplement Program and distributed over \$1.29 million.
  - 185 students under the Student Rental Supplement Program and distributed over \$80,000.
- Since last year’s reporting, MCHC has distributed another \$1.5 million to support 728 families under the COVID Emergency Rental Supplement Program.
- A total of 90 MUHC units were repaired and made available for occupancy.
- A total of 221 MCHC units were repaired and made available for occupancy.
- Ongoing renovations as of June 2021:
  - 11 Métis Urban Housing units throughout Alberta
  - 26 Métis Capital Housing units ■



# 2020/21

# Métis Nation Holdings



In 1997, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) took an inactive but current company, called Métis Nation Productions, and renamed it Métis Nation Holdings Ltd., holding 100 per cent of the shares. This entity holds title to the MNA Provincial Office property on Kingsway Avenue and 50 per cent of the Inglewood Centre property on 111 Avenue in Edmonton. The Inglewood property is held in partnership with Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. The holding company allows for arms-length lease transactions and limited liability. The Board of Directors for Métis Nation Holdings is the same as the MNA Executive.

## Métis Nation

### HOLDINGS

In 2019-20, a complete roof repair was undertaken to prepare for a solar panel array that will be put in place the summer of 2021. Through the efforts of the MNA Environment Team, successful grant applications

were submitted, allowing these repairs and the array to go ahead at a favourable cost to the MNA.

In addition, an energy efficiency retrofit (upgrading to LED lights) is currently underway for the summer of 2021, which the Environment Team also successfully applied for. We look forward to decreased operation and maintenance costs for the building in the near future.

### 11738 Kingsway Avenue - MNA Provincial Office, Delia Gray Building - Edmonton

In January 1997, the building the Métis Nation leased on St. Albert Trail was sold. Shortly after taking possession, the new owner proposed doubling the rent, which drew grave concern from the MNA.

In response, the MNA Provincial Council issued direction to explore the purchase of our own building. It was reasoned that purchasing our own building would create program stability, meet the MNA's office needs, and have potential for gain. The parameters of the purchase were that ownership should cost no more than the proposed lease and no MNA program funds could be used in the purchase.

After several months of research, a deal was concluded on the purchase of the building on Kingsway Avenue, now occupied by the MNA Provincial Office. The MNA acquired the building by assuming the existing mortgage without having to make a down payment. The MNA now holds clear title to the Delia Gray Building after paying off the mortgage in September 2004.

### 11922 - 121A Street - Larry Desmeules Building - Edmonton

On May 1, 1999, Métis Nation Holdings completed the purchase of the building occupied by Métis Urban Housing Corporation (MUHC). This purchase was prompted by the proposed sale of the building by the previous owners. Due to the foresight of the MUHC Board, the MNA was provided the right of first refusal. The building was financed through the assumption of a mortgage and a loan to Métis Nation Holdings from the Royal Bank. Once again, no MNA program funding was used in the purchase. Lease payments cover all costs associated with the building, which was a requirement put down by the MNA Board. The building has a clear title as of May 2009.

The remainder of the old office space was converted to file storage when a 10,000-square foot office tower addition was completed in April 2012. In 2013, the warehouse was insulated and upgraded, with the addition of a sprinkler system. During 2013-14, the sale of the Larry Desmeules building to Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) was completed. This action was consistent with the MNA mandate of assisting affiliates wherever possible to achieve stability in program delivery.

## 12304 - 111 Avenue - Métis Veterans Building - Edmonton

On November 1, 1999, Métis Nation Holdings completed the purchase of the Inglewood Centre.

Tenants in the building include: Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., Pinnacle Business Services, Edmonton Métis Employment Services Centre, Alberta Family and Social Services, City of Edmonton police, Mother Earth Essentials, the Métis Nation of Alberta Judiciary Council, Rupertsland Institute, and Métis Veterans Society.

The building mortgage was paid out and a clear title obtained in September 2010. Property management of the building, previously contracted out, has now been assumed by Métis Nation Holdings and Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., which each hold 50 per cent of the shares in the building.

The year 2019-2020 saw a complete energy retrofit (LED lights, smart thermostats, etc.) to the building and all HVAC units upgraded to maximize efficiency, followed by a solar panel array to be installed in the summer of 2021. Once again, successful Environment Team applications allowed these projects to go ahead and should result in decreased operating and energy costs.

Tenant improvements in 2020-21 were undertaken in conjunction with lease renewals for Rupertsland, the Alberta provincial government, Métis Veterans Society, and Mother Earth Essentials. Common-area flooring upgrades were also completed in 2020-21.

## 4607 - 52 Avenue - Nekinan – Métis Crossing - Smoky Lake

In 2019-2020, the Smoky Lake Continuing Care Centre was acquired through a lease arrangement in co-operation with Alberta Health Services and the Town of Smoky Lake, and renamed Nekinan (“Our Home”).

This 11,000-sq.ft, 20-bed facility has undergone extensive renovations during the 2020-21 fiscal year to repurpose this building into a residence for Métis Crossing staff, instructors, students, and program resource people. Renovations include: roof repair with skylights, kitchen renovation, repurposed laundry room, repair and paint throughout building, replacement of all plumbing fixtures, new shower rooms, state-of-the-art key fob security system with cameras, upgraded LED light fixtures, new bedroom furniture, upgraded common area with air conditioning, new sidewalks and steps.

A detached 4,000 sq. ft nurses residence currently acts as a storage facility while an assessment of future use is conducted.

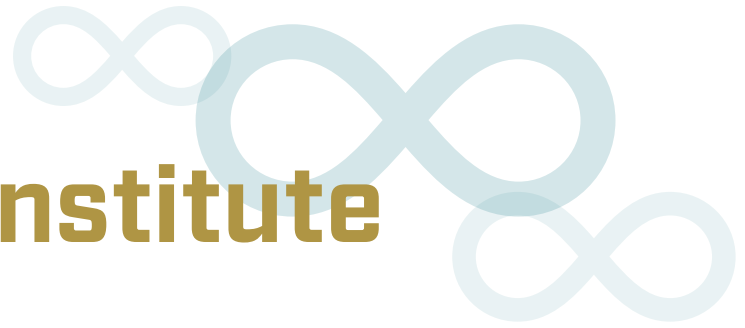
Also this year, a complete roof repair was undertaken to prepare for adding six to eight more residential rooms in the 2021-22 year. It is anticipated that ownership of these facilities will be transferred to the MNA sometime soon.

## Other Activity

While not owned by Métis Nation Holdings, the company has invested considerable time and effort assisting in:

- The purchase of the Region One building
- The purchase and renovation of the Region Two building, including a complete roof repair, major sidewalk upgrading, and solar array resulting from the MNA Environment Team’s successful application in 2020-21
- The purchase of a Local building in Region Three
- The purchase of the Region Four building
- The purchase and complete renovation of the Region Five building
- The purchase and initial development of Métis Crossing
- Certain MCHC projects and renovations connected with Rupertsland and its Métis education service centres
- Just prior to 2019-20, acquiring 160 acres of land adjacent to the Métis Crossing property, through a contribution from Métis Nation Holdings Ltd., to allow for increased programming options ■

# 2020/21 Rupertstland Institute



Greetings,

On behalf of the Rupertstland Institute (RLI) Board of Governors, I am proud to present this two-year report on RLI's programs and services starting April 1, 2019 and ending March 31, 2021.



## Rupertstland Institute

MNA affiliates. Nearly 3,000 job postings were available to job seekers, many who were interviewed for positions, and workshops with job search advice were offered during the job fairs.

This report will summarize activities, results, and outcomes of the programs and services offered by RLI over the two-year reporting period and will include:

- Community Emergency Support Program
- Métis Emergency Business Program
- K to 12 Chromebook Initiative
- Rupertstland Student Emergency Program
- Métis Training To Employment Program
- Post-Secondary Education Program
- Métis Student Services Program
- Rupertstland Métis Student Association

In mid-March 2020, RLI staff began working remotely due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and after developing a secure online platform for client file management in under a month, RLI continued its suite of programs and services with few interruptions. Numerous health and safety policies, practices, and procedures were introduced early on to limit potential exposure to the virus for staff, clients, and the public, as not much was known about COVID-19 at the time.

Additionally, RLI staff working under the Métis Training to Employment (MTE) Program created online events to support Métis Citizens. For example, in the fall of 2020, MTE hosted its first-ever Opening Doors Virtual Job Fair and another online job fair in spring 2021. The events attracted more than 600 participants, including Métis Citizens looking for work, and hundreds of employers and recruiters from the private and public sectors such as the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) government and

### MTE results April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021

Métis Training to Employment Results	2019-20	2020-21
Employed	842	661
Self-Employed	54	33
Returned to School	292	240
<b>Total Outcomes</b>	<b>1188</b>	<b>934</b>

In addition to rolling out urgently needed COVID-19 relief support for some of the hardest hit Métis Citizens in the early part of the pandemic, RLI launched new programs and services on November 2, 2020 to fund eligible college and university students in all years of study. Previously, RLI has provided funding for final year of studies, including one-year certificates and trades under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, so the new programming significantly increases supports three to four times for eligible students enrolled in recognized post-secondary institutions in Canada.

Under the new Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program, broad annual supports are available while specific supports based on individual needs are available under the Métis Student Services (MSS) Program. For example, a client requiring a laptop may receive up to \$500 in subsidy support under the MSS program, as well as other specific supports based on a needs assessment completed with one of RLI's professional counsellors.



As of March 31, 2021, the following is a summary of new PSE and MSS supports provided to eligible post-secondary students:

#### Annual PSE supports:

- First year university degree: 170
- First year college diploma: 120
- Second year university degree: 142
- Third year university degree: 196
- Post-graduate degree: 75
- Total: 703 PSE supports

#### Needs-based MSS supports:

- Post-secondary school registration application fees: 15
- Technology supports (laptops, software, etc.): 49
- Sundry supports – tutoring, mobility, and emergency supports: 10
- Total MSS supports: 74

During the early days of the pandemic, RLI launched a number of programs to provide essential workers and supplies to Métis communities through the Community Emergency Support Program. This program supported community-driven initiatives led by MNA Regional Councils and Métis Locals. In some instances, administrative workers were hired to help complete online applications for emergency government COVID relief programs; drivers were deployed to deliver essential supplies like PPE, water, and medicine to needy Métis Citizens. Métis communities received timely support while at the same time creating a stimulus for the struggling local economy to support Métis Citizens seeking employment.

RLI also joined Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Corporation in supporting the newly created Métis Emergency Business Program. This resulted in nearly 250 Métis entrepreneurs and businesses receiving stimulus supports to bridge economic conditions largely paralyzed by the pandemic.

As schools shutdown to reduce the spread of the virus, RLI and the MNA launched a provincewide initiative delivering 3,078 Chromebooks to Métis families with K to 12 students studying in virtual classrooms from home.

In July 2020, the Rupertsland Student Emergency Program (RSEP) was launched after community-based consultations identified a number of areas where post-secondary students were struggling (e.g. rent and groceries) due to the pandemic. This program was administered with support from Métis Capital Housing Corporation, who also provided rent subsidies to Métis Nation students.

#### Supports provided under RSEP as of March 31, 2021

Eligible Students	Subsidy Type	Amount	Total
640	One-Time Payment	\$ 760	\$ 486,400
204	Grocery	\$ 500	\$ 102,000
299	Rent	\$ 1,000	\$ 299,000
137	Rent & Groceries	\$ 1,500	\$ 205,500
41	Laptops	\$ 500	\$ 20,500
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,113,400</b>

Finally, RLI is committed to promoting connections between Métis communities and students. This was one of the drivers behind the creation of the Rupertsland Alumni Association. Post-graduates who received supports under the PSE program were also encouraged to volunteer in the Métis community to obtain a completion bonus at the end of their studies. More than 1,800 Métis Nation students, including 245 high school students, have registered with the Rupertsland Métis Student Association since launching in the fall of 2020.

Sincerely,

#### Lawrence Gervais

President, Region 3  
Métis Nation of Alberta  
Ex-Officio MNA Board of Governor of  
Rupertsland Institute ■

# Notes

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