

# OTIPEMISIWAK

*(Oh-t-paym'-soo-wuk) — The people who own themselves*

Fall 2018

## Summer of Progress

Open Doors Program, Skills & Employment Accord,  
90th Annual General Assembly, and much more

### Citizen Profile

Wendy Poseluzny's entrepreneurial journey

### Li Salay

Art Gallery of Alberta exhibit  
features Métis artists

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA



# Your Opinion Matters

## SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Vote, Comment & Share Your Ideas

**metis.ideascale.com**

**IdeaScale** is a chance for you to voice your opinion on issues that matter. Only you can build a strong Métis Nation.

Think of it as an engagement session from the comfort of your own home. Have your say on the major themes identified by Métis citizens in the engagement sessions held earlier this year: governance, rights, well-being, identity, and environment.

For example, climate change is a big issue. It is warming our planet to unprecedented levels and creating a wide range of issues directly impacting the traditional ways of living for Métis citizens. As the climate changes, animal habitats are lost, fish populations are threatened, and plants used for medicinal purposes are unable to grow. As caretakers of the earth, we need to change our behaviors.

Right now, there are five ideas on IdeaScale proposing to tackle these issues. Register to vote, comment, and submit your ideas, so we can combat the climate change effects on our Métis community.

IdeaScale is the place for you and all Métis Nation of Alberta citizens to influence change for a brighter future. Register now to help shape our future.

### How To Register

1. Go to [metis.ideascale.com](https://metis.ideascale.com)
2. Click "Register" and "Create Your Account" by filling out the form, or login through Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn from the IdeaScale homepage.
3. You will be sent a confirmation email, click "Complete Profile" and you will be taken to the IdeaScale homepage.
4. A pop-up window will appear congratulating you and asking you to set your password. Create a password specific to you.

Ka itouhtawn! You're ready!

Click on an initiative to read and respond to the questions we are asking citizens.

You can also vote and comment on ideas from other citizens.

The MNA is excited to have a common place to engage with you.

## Register Now to Start Shaping Our Future



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**On the Cover:** Sunrise at  
Métis Crossing during the 2018  
MNA Youth Culture Camp.  
Photo by Tania Kruk.

# CONTENTS

## ISSUE 2 / FALL 2018

- 5 Event Recaps**  
MNA 5th Annual Business Mixer, harvesting engagement sessions, and self-government citizen engagements

- 8 Celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day**  
A photo collage from the festivities at Métis Crossing

- 10 90th Annual General Assembly Recap**  
Highlights from this year's AGA held in Lac La Biche

- 14 AGA Update on Métis Rights and Self-government**  
Presentation by Jason Madden

- 16 Métis Tourism**  
From prairies to mountains, check out our map of Métis-focused tourist spots

- 18 Li Salay**  
First-ever Métis art exhibition at a major gallery

- 20 Citizen Profile: Wendy Poseluzny**  
Local entrepreneur's Métis heritage inspires artistic and cultural growth

- 22 In Memoriam: Marlene Lanz**

- 24 Recent Agreements:**
- **Open Doors Program**  
Recognizing the connections Alberta Métis have with Alberta's national parks and historic sites

- **Protocol Agreement**  
A framework for continued collaboration between the MNA and Canada



- **Skills & Employment Accord**  
A new labour market strategy for the Métis Nation

- 29 Education Funding**  
A list of the scholarships, bursaries, and grants available to Métis students

- 30 Breaking Ground**  
Construction begins on new cultural gathering site at Métis Crossing

# Moving Forward: The Summer of Progress



**T**o our new and seasoned readers, our second issue of the 2018 *Otipemisiwak Magazine* is a fitting way to reflect on our Métis citizens' achievements from the last eight months, and to look ahead at the future of the Métis Nation.

On page 18, we speak with a Métis artist and one of the curators of *Li Salay*, an art exhibition showcasing the talented works of 13 Métis artists at the Art Gallery of Alberta. This exhibition is the first hosted at a major art gallery to be themed around contemporary Métis art.

We also sit down with an entrepreneur from Fort Saskatchewan, Wendy Poseluzny, to talk about her growing connection to her Métis roots. Read more about Wendy on page 20.

Speaking of entrepreneurs, earlier this year we hosted our 5th Annual Provincial Business Mixer, which drew hundreds of Métis business

people and provided an opportunity to make industry connections as part of the newly launched Métis Contractor Database. Learn more about the database on page 5.

Over the month of April, the MNA and the Government of Alberta embarked on province-wide engagement sessions with citizens on harvesting rights. We heard you loud and clear. Your voice brings us one step closer to the creation of a new provincial Métis Harvesting Agreement. Read more about what we heard and the next steps on page 6.

Read on and you'll find a recap of our Annual General Assembly, held in Lac La Biche, August 9-12. Over 650 citizens attended to help shape our nation's future and it was wonderful to see our community come together for the 90th year. You can find the full weekend recap on page 10.

These stories are just a sample of what you will find in this issue. I hope you will continue reading.

Best wishes,

**Audrey Poitras**

President,

Métis Nation of Alberta



# EVENT RECAPS

BY AMY DILLON + LEANNE MILLER



## Métis Nation of Alberta 5th Annual Business Mixer

A Celebration of Métis  
Ingenuity and Culture

**ON MARCH 22**, we hosted our 5th Annual Provincial Business Mixer with over 400 guests. This year was a celebration of Métis ingenuity and culture, as we focused on our industrious entrepreneurs and the strides made at our cultural interpretive centre, Métis Crossing.

The Métis were some of the first entrepreneurs of Canada and this tradition continues with our talented and resourceful citizens.

During the mixer, Métis businesses had the opportunity to sign up for the newly unveiled Contractor Database. This service helps Métis entrepreneurs directly engage with commercial industry and increase their visibility among other service providers. This database is the first to focus solely on Métis-owned companies and is a valuable way to share the talents of our hard-working citizens.

The MNA welcomes all Métis-owned businesses to register via the website at [abmetisbusiness.com](http://abmetisbusiness.com). If you have any questions about the Contractor Database, please email [databasehelp@metis.org](mailto:databasehelp@metis.org).

We were also proud to share exciting developments at our affiliate, Métis Crossing. Plans for the new Cultural Gathering Centre were unveiled and Métis contractors were encouraged to submit proposals for work on the project. This new development will enhance the offerings at Alberta's premiere facility for Métis cultural experiences, education, tourism, and business development.

The official groundbreaking ceremony took place on May 14 (full details can be found on page 30), and construction is due to wrap up Summer 2019. Be sure to keep updated on the advancements of this exciting project at [metiscrossing.org](http://metiscrossing.org).

# Harvester Feedback Informs Policy Review

**THE MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA (MNA)** and the Government of Alberta (GoA) are currently reviewing the existing rules surrounding harvesting, as the current GoA policy has never been supported by the MNA. This year, we are finally making progress on a policy that is relevant to Métis people and their harvesting practices.



In August 2017, *A Way Forward* agreement was signed. This was the first step in negotiations and identified the need for collaborative engagement sessions. It also laid out a process for the MNA and the GoA to review the current policy and sets a clear path for resolution of Métis harvesting matters.

As a result of *A Way Forward*, eight engagement sessions were held throughout the province in April this year to establish a platform for two-way communication between Métis

harvesters and the GoA. In addition to the information gathered at these engagement sessions, over 750 online and paper surveys were submitted.

We have compiled this valuable information into a comprehensive *"What We Heard"* report; a compilation and summary of the engagement sessions reflecting the voices of Métis harvesters. Participants noted land restrictions and cumbersome identification processes, among other issues, as key concerns. Above all, the GoA learned Métis harvesting is more than simply hunting and fishing. It is about food, spirituality, tradition, respect, and culture.

This feedback was, and will continue to be, used to assert the MNA's position on Métis harvesting policy options. The GoA presented the information to its Cabinet on July 10, and we expect to have a decision soon.

*What We Heard* is now available online at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com). We encourage you to take a look and learn more about one of the most important aspects of the Métis way of life. ∞

*Métis harvesting is  
more than simply  
hunting and fishing.  
It is about food,  
spirituality, tradition,  
respect, and culture.*





# Self-government and What it Looks Like to the Métis of Alberta

**FOR 90 YEARS WE'VE FOUGHT FOR** the recognition of our self-government, and while there have been both trials and triumphs on this journey, we're excited to finally be getting the recognition we have strived for.

Throughout the first half of 2018, we travelled the province to speak with citizens about what self-government means to them. In this initial phase of engagement, we gathered data from over 700 citizens, through regional workshops, about the key values and principles relating to Métis self-government. This important data is summarized into four major themes:


**Governance** – A government that creates laws and policies reflecting our unique identity, values, and needs

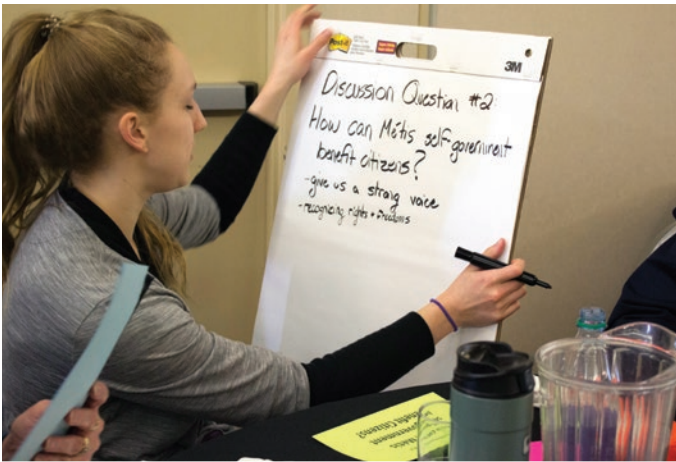
**Rights** – Continue protecting and exercising our rights to land, resources, and self-government, including the fundamental reflections of our identity, culture, and sustainability

**Well-being** – Services and programs to reflect the unique opportunities and barriers we face

**Identity** – The need to celebrate and protect what it means to be Métis through culturally-appropriate education

This feedback will help inform the initial draft of the constitution. We invite you to review the *Self-Government Citizen Engagement* report outlining what we heard so far. The report is available on our website. In the near future, there will be lots of opportunity to get your feedback on the draft constitution. Additionally, we also want citizens to provide their input on the constitution, and other MNA projects, using our new online engagement tool: IdeaScale. You can learn more about IdeaScale on page 2.

It is a very exciting time for the MNA, as we continue building a strong Métis nation, embracing Métis rights. 





### **National Indigenous Peoples Day**

is always a wonderful occasion, and this year was no exception. We celebrated with friends, family, and community at Métis Crossing, Canada's only major Métis interpretive site. Participants enjoyed voyageur canoe rides, jigging performances and contests, cultural tours, live music, and much more. We're already looking forward to next year!

Métis Crossing, an affiliate of the Métis Nation of Alberta, is Alberta's premiere facility for Métis cultural experiences, education, tourism, and business development. The 512-acre site is comprised of river lot titles from original Métis settlers in the late 1800s. For more information visit [metiscrossing.ca](http://metiscrossing.ca).



# **Celebrating *National Indigenous Peoples Day* 2018**









# 90th Annual General Assembly

August 9-12, Bold Center, Lac La Biche

BY OLIVIA BAKO

**AS SMOKE FROM THE WEST DESCENDED ON LAC LA BICHE**, so did more than 670 Métis Nation of Alberta citizens. In town to attend the Annual General Assembly (AGA) weekend, the community was ready to participate in their nation's progress, with 650 voters turning out for the Business Meeting on Saturday, August 11.



## Thursday

To kick off the weekend, we fired up the grills Thursday night for a sizzling barbecue meet and greet at the beautiful McArthur Place. In the late summer heat, citizens caught up with old friends and made new ones on the calm shores of Lac La Biche.



## Friday

As citizens packed the Bold Center, MNA representatives got straight to business Friday morning with a recap of what our affiliates have been up to and an update on the Métis Judiciary Council. Métis constitution lawyer Jason Madden also spoke about Métis self-governance throughout history, including Louis Riel's vision of a Métis Nation, the key elements of a constitution, and calling on strategies used by Métis governments throughout history.

"Tactics we've used over the years of fighting colonization or fighting the virus is political organization, asserting our rights, keeping our culture and traditions alive," Madden said.

Afterwards, the constitution workshop gave updates on self-government engagements over the last several months and the key themes that should inform the Métis Nation of Alberta Constitution: governance, rights, well-being, and identity. Learn about self-governance at [albertametisgov.com](http://albertametisgov.com), and read more about what we heard from citizens across the province in our report.



## YOUTH CONFERENCE

Youth ages 15 to 30 can start planning for the future following scholarship and funding presentations from the Rupertsland Institute for Métis Excellence, Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc., and Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards (BBMA) — the lifechanging experience of receiving a BBMA was enough for one past recipient to give a surprise speech. Youth also had the opportunity to try a few careers for themselves with hands-on demonstrations from professionals in the field.

In the afternoon, youth had the choice to get out on the water and harvest, gut, and fillet fish, practice their aim at laser tag, or finetune their beading skills in lessons taught by Métis elders (and sisters) Doreen Bergum and Marilyn Dumont.

That night, the freshly harvested fish were battered, fried up and served to lines of almost 700 citizens and their families snaking through the Bold Center. After the plates were cleared, the crowds hit the dance floor and stage for an open mic session from a few talented and brave guests.





## Saturday

### SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS

Mics are hot: Saturday marked the official start of the Business Meeting and time to voice one's opinion. All six Special Resolutions brought to the AGA were defeated in a spirited—and sometimes heated—debate.

For those unfamiliar with the process, Special Resolutions change MNA bylaws and require a 75-per-cent vote in favour to pass. To read the Special Resolutions, visit [albertametis.com/aga](http://albertametis.com/aga). Below is a summary of the resolutions, the discussion, and results.

**1. Circumstances when a Provincial Council member would no longer be a Provincial Council member (e.g. moving to another province).**

No one spoke to the motion and it was defeated.

**2. By-election to fill a vacancy in the office of the Vice President within 21 days of the vacancy occurring.**

The Special Resolution was defeated because a by-election process is not in place.

**3. Hold the AGA every second year at Métis Crossing starting in 2019 and alternating among other regions every other year.**

The divide was loud for this Special Resolution, with those in favour of



holding the AGA at Métis Crossing highlighting the area's cultural significance and the opportunity to make use of the space.

Those against argued Métis Crossing lacked the facilities, such as accommodations and washrooms, to house a large-scale event over multiple days. Others added that the MNA needed to support the Regions by rotating AGA hosting duties throughout the province.

**4. Remove from the Oath of Membership voluntary authorization of the Métis Nation to assert and advance collective rights of Métis people.**

The resolution was defeated to a round of cheers. The mover said he brought the motion forward because the oath was built on "exclusion" and takes away the authority of the local governments. Those who opposed said citizens were the ones who gave their authorization to advocate and negotiate on their behalf. Others stated that progress on Métis rights could only happen when working together. After much back and forth, President Audrey Poitras stepped up to the mic to explain that authorization was about collective rights and advancing the nation.

**5. Give Locals the sole authority to consult, with industry and government, on behalf of their members.**

The resolution stated that authority could be delegated to a third party, but delegates questioned giving an unknown third party that power.

**6. Reinstate the Métis Judiciary Council (MJC) with amendments to its terms, powers, how MJC members are selected, and more.**

This resolution firmly divided delegates. The MJC, the justice and dispute branch of the MNA, was placed on hold in 2015. This year, some citizens argued that the MJC was not arm's length, since members are appointed rather than elected, and no changes or improvements were made to subsequent Special Resolutions. Those in favour argued that having an MJC in place was better than nothing at all and essential to settling disputes. After all, one pointed out that a judicial arm is needed for the Métis Nation to become its own government; once in place, amendments could then be made to the council. Although the Special Resolution was ultimately defeated, reinstatement of the original MJC passed as an Ordinary Resolution on Sunday (see below).

### ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS

Ten Ordinary Resolutions were brought to the floor on Sunday, August 12. Ordinary Resolutions do not change the bylaws and are brought forward by members the day of the vote. Only 51 per cent of the popular vote is required to pass.

**1. Reconvene the MJC as immediately as possible to its most recent state.**

The debate around MJC was just as heated as the day before, and complicated by the fact that a decision had already been made hours earlier. On







Sunday, a vote was called for by a show of hands, which initially defeated the resolution. However, the mover said he couldn't hear the question called and requested a revote by secret ballot or a show of hands. A vote by show of hands was called again, but another request was made to recount the votes against the motion; the "Yes" vote hadn't been tallied when the "No" was called. The resolution was **carried**.

**2. The MNA support the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Indigenous content ownership, business, and community benefits, and for the MNA to explore and seek means to be a part owner for Indigenous people.**

The resolution **passed** with only a handful of people opposed. Before the vote was called, those who spoke hoped the wealth and job opportunities would be shared among the collective and not concentrated in the hands of a few, like relatives.

**3. All governing bodies who have been elected by MNA citizens, when violating the rules of removing an elected official, to seek legal opinion when necessary.**

The Business Meeting Chair ruled that the resolution was out of order because MNA bylaws and provincial laws already

have rules governing legal procedures, and that anyone can seek legal opinion at any time.

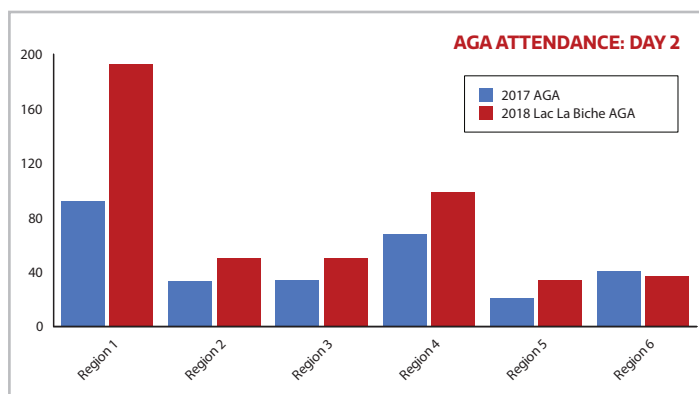
**4. The MNA proceed with drafting a constitution that will be reviewed and refined by citizens as part of ongoing engagement.**

The resolution was **carried** unanimously.

**5. This resolution had two key points:**  
**a. Create distinct ministries for Health; Children and Families; and Youth;**  
**b. and MNA Youth Council to advise the MNA President with appointing ministers.**

The Ordinary Resolution was **amended** to merge the Ministries of Children and Families with Youth. The resolution was carried.

**6. Any members who are currently before the MJC have all but their voting rights held in abatement until all parties have been heard by the MJC.**



The Chair ruled the Ordinary Resolution illegal because it went against MNA bylaws, the Province of Alberta's Society's Act, and case law heard before the court.

**7. The Assembly allow the Region One Vice President to fulfill his responsibilities, as elected, and return to his office.**

The resolution was defeated.

**8. Hire Youth Programs & Services Coordinators in each Region.**

The resolution was **carried** unanimously.

**9. Cree translator at every AGA**

This resolution was proposed following a delegate speaking Cree on another resolution and other delegates commenting that they couldn't understand, causing an unfair debate. This resolution was **carried**.

**10. French translator at every AGA**

The resolution wasn't seconded and died on the floor.

Immerse yourself in Saturday's debate and watch on our livestream. ([facebook.com/ABMetis/videos](https://facebook.com/ABMetis/videos)). [note: video starts at the 6:00 mark]

Hear the ordinary resolutions from Sunday on our livestream. ([facebook.com/ABMetis/videos](https://facebook.com/ABMetis/videos)) [note: video starts at the 19:40 mark] [🔗](#)

# AGA Update on Métis Rights and Self-government

**ON AUGUST 10**, at the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)'s 90th Annual General Assembly, Métis lawyer and MNA legal counsel Jason Madden provided an update on Métis legal issues, including Métis self-government negotiations taking place across the Nation.

Madden began with recent court cases, as well as cases to watch in 2018. He said the Supreme Court of Canada is likely to soon release its decision on the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples when applied to legislative action taken by Parliament or provincial legislatures (*Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada*).

The Supreme Court will also hear a case on the murder of Cindy Gladue, a Métis woman from Alberta, that Madden said highlighted the "failings and inhumane treatment of the justice system" when it comes to Indigenous women (*R. v. Barton*).

He also mentioned Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)'s lawsuit against the Manitoba government and Manitoba Hydro for breaching a multi-million dollar agreement. In that case, Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister called the Métis nothing more than a "special interest group," and then fundraised off anti-Indigenous attitudes (*MMF v. Brian Pallister*).

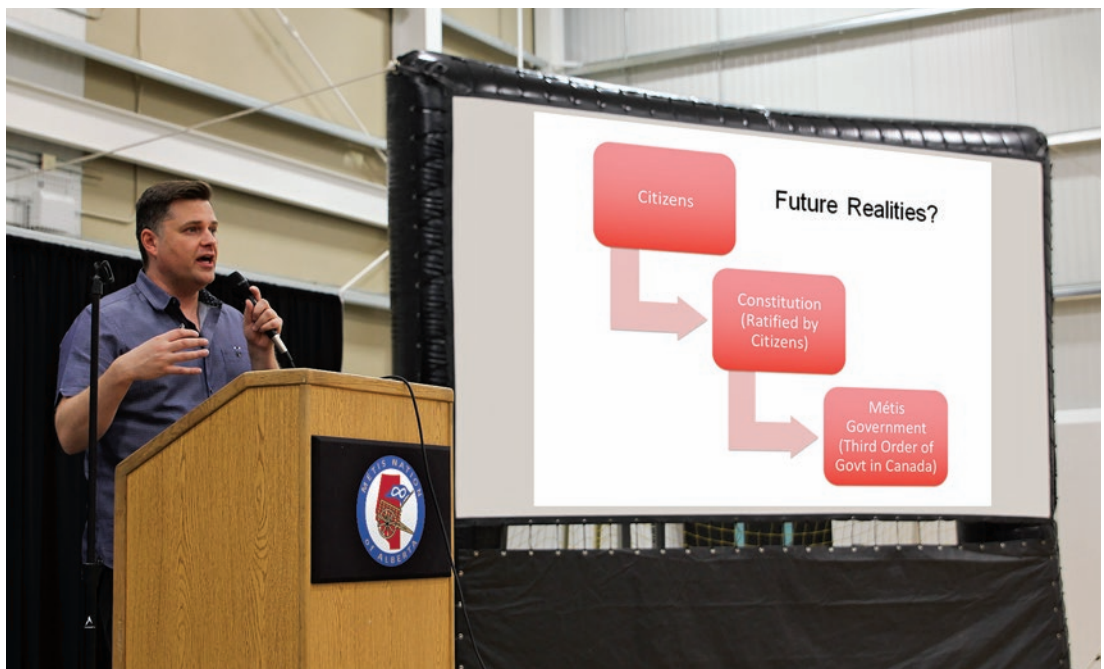
Madden then talked about significant gains being made on Métis rights and self-government. He said the "trifecta of Métis law" — the cases of *R. v. Powley*, *Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada*, and

*Daniels v. Canada*— and recent political commitments at the federal level have ushered in new negotiation opportunities for Métis governments south of the 60th parallel. Those include framework agreements signed with Métis Nation governments in Manitoba (November 2016), Ontario (October 2017), and Saskatchewan (July 2018).

The MNA signed its own Framework Agreement with Canada on November

a negotiations process on Métis rights and outstanding claims against the Crown, like Métis scrip.

Madden also explained the recent court decision of *McCargar v. Métis Nation of Alberta*, where the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench ruled in favour of the MNA and upheld bylaw changes made at the 2016 AGA. The changes added the objective of the MNA advancing negotiations with Canada to achieve a modern-day treaty.



16, 2017, which set out a negotiations process to establish a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship between the MNA and the Crown. The agreement's objectives: formally recognize the MNA's inherent right, jurisdiction, and law-making power as a Métis government; make strategic investments in the areas of health, education, and housing; and set out

The changes also clarified the MNA's authority to do so through an updated oath that represents its citizens for Métis rights, interests, and claims. A summary of this case is available at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com).

This ruling confirms the MNA is authorized to advance and negotiate Métis rights and claims on behalf of its citizens. Confirmation of this will be important



*“...any future government must be understandable and relevant to the lives of Métis living in Alberta today.”*



to ongoing discussions with the Alberta government on Métis harvesting, and when developing a provincial Métis consultation policy.

Madden added instead of the Métis Nation spending most of its time and energy in the courts, these negotiation processes have set the stage to finally consolidate the court wins, and, more importantly, achieve formal recognition of Métis governments in Canadian law through modern day treaties or self-government agreement.


One of the key steps in the MNA's self-government discussions with the Crown will be developing a constitution based on the Métis Nation's inherent right to self-government and self-determination, he noted. This next step will require the MNA to move beyond its corporate bylaws to a constitution ratified by its citizens.

He highlighted that this transformation is well on its way across the Métis Nation. Within Alberta, this process will require the MNA to build on what has worked over its history, guided by principles of democracy, liberty, and freedom, but not be constrained by its association/society structures, nor what has previously been imposed on the MNA.

This process will require clarity on: how the rights and liberties of Métis citizens and Métis communities will be protected in a future government; the roles and relationships between Métis self-government structures at the local, regional, and provincial levels; and how Métis laws will be developed and passed.

Madden emphasized that while an association's bylaws can be easily changed, constitutions are foundational and permanent. Therefore, deep and meaningful consultations are required with MNA citizens. The MNA needs to ensure it is building on its solid 90-year foundation, as well as creating a Métis Nation government that is relevant, reliable, and durable for generations to come.

As well, he said it will be up to youth and future generations to implement this new self-government reality, so any future government must be understandable and relevant to the lives of Métis living in Alberta today.

He also indicated that there will likely be some important announcements on progress regarding Métis negotiations in the Fall of 2018, and possibly new federal legislation dealing with the Prime Minister's previously announced Indigenous Rights and Recognition Framework. 

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Jason Madden, a Métis lawyer originally from northwestern Ontario, has been at the forefront of advancing Métis rights in the courts for many years and appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada in all Métis rights related cases over the last decade. He is co-managing partner at the law firm, Pape Salter Teillet LLP, and represents Métis Nation governments and communities from Ontario westward. A copy of Jason's presentation is available online at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com).



# MÉTIS TOURISM

TOURISM

The Métis have left their mark on Alberta lands in many ways, and these landscapes continue to be a source of inspiration for our people. This province is full of picturesque places where you can connect with Métis history and culture. From prairies to mountains, there's something for everyone, so check out our map of Métis-focused tourist spots!



## 1 FORT CHIPEWYAN (REGION 1)

Fort Chipewyan, AB

**W:** [fortmcmurraytourism.com/explore-wood-buffalo](http://fortmcmurraytourism.com/explore-wood-buffalo)

**P:** 780-697-3600

### Activities:

- ▶ Trapping
- ▶ Fishing

## 2 FORT DUNVEGAN (REGION 6)

Fairview, AB

**P:** 780-835-7150

**E:** [historic.dunvegan@gov.ab.ca](mailto:historic.dunvegan@gov.ab.ca)

**W:** [historicdunvegan.ca](http://historicdunvegan.ca)

### Hours:

Daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
May 15 – Labour Day

### Activities:

- ▶ St. Charles Mission Church and Rectory
- ▶ Hudson's Bay Company Factor's House
- ▶ Fur trade tour

## 9 MAHIKAN TRAILS (REGION 3)

Canmore, AB

**P:** 403-679-8379

**E:** [brenda@mahikan.ca](mailto:brenda@mahikan.ca)

**W:** [mahikan.ca](http://mahikan.ca)

### Hours:

Monday to Friday  
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Winter hours posted seasonally

### Activities:

- ▶ Hide tanning
- ▶ Plant medicine first aid
- ▶ Métis bush skills and traditional knowledge
- ▶ Traditional food (berry soup, bannock, pemmican)
- ▶ Trappers' camp

## 8 PAINTED WARRIORS (REGION 3)

Mountain View County, AB

**P:** 403-637-9138

**E:** [tracey.paintedwarriors@gmail.com](mailto:tracey.paintedwarriors@gmail.com)

**W:** [paintedwarriors.ca](http://paintedwarriors.ca)

**Hours:** Both summer and winter programs available



### 3 MÉTIS CROSSING (REGION 4)

Smoky Lake, AB

**P:** 780-656-2229

**E:** [metiscrossing@metis.org](mailto:metiscrossing@metis.org)

**W:** [metacrossing.org](http://metacrossing.org)

**Hours:** May long weekend to September long weekend

### Activities:

- ▶ Historical tours
- ▶ Live music
- ▶ Camping in Métis Trappers' tents
- ▶ Métis Voyageur Canoe expeditions

## 4 TALKING ROCK TOURS (REGION 4)

Edmonton, AB

**P:** 780-298-7992

**E:** keith.diakiw@gmail.com

**W:** [talkingrocktours.com](http://talkingrocktours.com)

### Activities:

- Canoe tours
- Hiking
- Bird and bison watching
- Indigenous story telling
- Fossil collecting

**5 JASPER TOUR  
COMPANY  
(REGION 4)**

Jasper, AB

**P: 780-852-7070**

**E:** joe@jaspertourcompany.com

**W:** [jaspertourcompany.com](http://jaspertourcompany.com)

### Activities:

- Guided walks
- Maligne Valley Cruise
- Wildlife tours
- Maligne Canyon Ice Adventures

## 6 ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE (REGION 4)

Rocky Mountain House, AB

**P:** 403-845-2412

**E:** [rockv.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:rockv.info@pc.gc.ca)

**W:** [pc.gc.ca/en/llhn-nhs/ab/rockymountain](http://pc.gc.ca/en/llhn-nhs/ab/rockymountain)

Don't see your favourite spot?  
Email your suggestion to  
[mna@metis.org](mailto:mna@metis.org)

## 7 TAIL CREEK CAMPGROUND (REGION 3)

Alix, AB

**P:** 403-742-0777

**E:** [camp@ahla.ca](mailto:camp@ahla.ca)

**W:** albertacampground  
guide.ca/campgrounds/  
tail-creek-park

**Hours:**

May - September

### Amenities:

- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Canoeing
- ▶ Baseball diamond
- ▶ Playground



**Hours:** 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.,  
May 10 – September 3

### Activities:

- Heritage Camping in Métis Trappers' tents
- Traditional games
- Moccasin making
- Bannock making
- Métis crafts



# Li Salay

The Art Gallery of Alberta showcases Métis artists at first-ever Métis exhibition at a major institution

BY OLIVIA BAKO

Imagine being told your identity didn't exist, and your family rarely, if ever, talked about your heritage.

For artist Jessie Ray Short, that's exactly what she heard.

"Personally, I've had people tell me that Métis is not real and it doesn't exist, or it's something I'm making up," she says.

Now, Jessie and fellow Métis artist Amy Malbeuf are shining a spotlight on what it means to be Métis with *Li Salay*, a first-of-its-kind exhibition of Métis contemporary art held in a major art gallery.

Jessie and Amy co-curated the exhibition showcasing 13 contemporary Métis artists from across Canada. It ran from May 5 to September 9, 2018, at the Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton.

The collection of artworks, connected by the theme of contemporary Métis art, range from film and stop-motion animation to beading, photography, performance art, sculpture, painting, and more.

"We really tried to be quite varied in the kind of work [and] the mediums that people used," Jessie notes. "In some ways it may not seem it, but the work is very traditional; it's very related to everybody's personal experiences and family connections, [and] kinship relationships within their communities.

I think that comes through in some of the work that might seem very edgy, if you sit with it and you're familiar with different techniques and stories."

What emerges at *Li Salay* are themes of labour, relationships with the land and nature, kinship, as well as the representation of women, queer, and two-spirit identities.

"We really wanted to bring women into the spotlight because a lot of the

times the only stories that we hear a lot, especially in popular culture, is about the man," Jessie says. "You hear about Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, who are very important figures, but there's also a lot of other stories we want to bring to light too."

One artist in the exhibition, Rosalie Favell, had a hard time finding contemporary art that really represented her as a Métis woman. Her response was to paint images of herself onto old photographs she had taken almost 20 years ago. In one tongue-in-cheek example, Favell wears a sash while dressed up as Star Trek Voyager Captain Kathryn Janeway in a photograph titled, *Voyager*.

"It's not always easy being an artist, and it's not always easy being Métis," Jessie adds. "There's a certain element of bravery. It was a bit intimidating to make such a big exhibition and know



PHOTO CREDITS: DAYNA DANGER, BEBESCHWENDAAM (VIDEO STILL), 2017. VIDEO, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PDA PROJECTS. KATHERINE BOYER, RUG, 2016. FOUND FABRIC, STRING, YARN, SEED BEADS, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



that we were making ourselves vulnerable, and so were the artists, and all coming together and saying, 'This is Métis art,' or some Métis art, anyway."

The exhibition came about almost by necessity. Jessie made the leap from artist to curator while pursuing a master's degree in contemporary Métis visual culture. She saw her studies as a way to reconnect with her Métis heritage on her father's side and to explore what Métis artists were doing. To her surprise, her academic research into current Métis art came up empty-handed.

Meanwhile, Amy was hitting the same roadblocks during her master's degree in Fine Arts.

"We ended up talking a lot and sharing our frustrations with this, and we also started talking about all the artists we knew who were Métis," Jessie recalls. "When we started to list them out amongst ourselves... we started to realize there's actually a lot of artists who are Métis and practising and showing their work, so how come there hasn't been a survey exhibition about Métis art in a large-scale art institution?"

From this mutual frustration



blossomed *Li Salay*, meaning "the sun" in Michif; a name they chose to bring light to Métis creations. Jessie explains, although Métis artists have been displayed in major art institutions before, they were part of a broader Indigenous lens.

The two curators then travelled across the country and met with around 50 Métis artists, before narrowing down their selections for the exhibition.

"Nobody has really looked or tried to explore... the differences with Métis art," Jessie continues. "Just because we've never gotten the space before to have a Métis art show, there hasn't been that opportunity to look at a bunch of Métis artists altogether and see if

there are themes, if there are commonalities, and maybe even differences in the works that they're producing."

As well, the exhibition is an opportunity to expose non-Métis viewers to another culture.

However, she notes the other purpose is for young and creative Métis to feel a sense of belonging, and to expand their idea of what Métis art could be.

Jessie says she hopes

to tour *Li Salay* at other major art galleries around the country, and for the exhibition to become one of many Métis art shows on this scale.

"There's a richness and a depth to Métis art and Métis people," she says. "We're just exploring like anybody else and trying to figure out what it means for us. I feel that the history, and our stories, and our traditions are important and inform the work that we do now, whether it's obvious or not." ∞

**For more information on exhibitions and programming at the Art Gallery of Alberta visit [youraga.ca](http://youraga.ca)**



**THE *LI SALAY* EXHIBITION** also featured a short film by Edmonton filmmaker Conor McNally. *Ôtênaw*, Cree for "settlement or 'a city,'" follows University of Alberta Education professor, Dwayne Donald, as he guides an Indigenous river valley tour. On taking the tour for the first time, Conor, a Métis man, was struck by the power of telling a story on the land where it happened. From this

came the inspiration for the longest film in his repertoire.

"[Dwayne] was skeptical at first," explains Conor. "It's very much an oral story. It's about the experience of being on the land as he tells the stories."

*Ôtênaw* works hard to preserve this oral exchange; the viewer is treated as a fly on the wall, watching Dwayne deliver his historical stories on a crisp November day in 2015. By shooting on 16mm film, Conor

endeavours to recreate the real-life experience of Dwayne's tour.

"I believe in the aesthetic, but also the philosophical implications of film, where you're more in the moment and you have to be dialed in..." he says.

The film briefly cuts away from Dwayne to psychedelic art effects, like the way memory recalls and suddenly fades. Most important to Conor was his promise to Dwayne; keep it about the stories. The filmmaker

was cognizant that Dwayne was allowing him to be part of a sacred exchange.

"There is that relationship between me and whoever I'm making the film with that I'm not going to exploit their knowledge," Conor says. "He's sharing stuff with me, so I need to reciprocate in an honourable way by giving him some editorial discretion."



# An Entrepreneurial JOURNEY

Wendy Poseluzny's Métis heritage inspires artistic and cultural growth

BY OLIVIA BAKO

Wendy Poseluzny always felt like she didn't fit in. A part of her was missing.

Although she knew her great-grandmother was Ojibwa, and Cree ran on her mother's side, her family didn't discuss it. Later in life she found out she was Métis, and suddenly, her enduring love of the culture made sense.

"For years I was lost trying to figure out where I was headed and what I was doing, who am I," Wendy recalls.

Since learning of her Métis heritage, Wendy's curiosity and pride for her identity has only grown.

"I'm very passionate," she explains. "I don't know much about it, but I'm learning and I can't get enough information. Now that I know I'm Métis, I identify as Métis."

Wendy received her Métis Nation of Alberta citizenship card a couple of years ago, and while she is proud to call herself Métis, it was something her family was ashamed to admit just a generation ago.

"My dad just passed last year; I always told him I was an Indian, and when I got my card he said, 'Get me my card,' " she says, reflecting on the conversation. "I don't understand why he never [did]. They just never talked about it. He remembers his mom

talking about his skin colour, that we're not allowed to talk about it. She was worried he was too dark to be in school back then with the residential schools. They never talked about it and by the time we were open to sharing it, he's no longer around. Now I have my cousins

*"For years I was lost trying to figure out where I was headed and what I was doing, who am I."*

on that side, and that's where I got most of my information."

Since discovering her heritage, Wendy began exploring her personal connection to the culture and finding ways to incorporate it into her life; as an artist, her choice was obvious.

"I've done crafts my whole life, and I've always been fascinated by Aboriginal culture and art, so I would make stuff here and there, but

financially wasn't able to open a business or do that kind of thing," she says.

Eventually she figured out a way to support her passion. With 30 years of experience in the spa industry, she combined profession with passion and opened her own handmade Indigenous craft store, *Native Wild*, in her Fort Saskatchewan waxing salon three years ago.

"I thought, 'why don't I do what I love and make a business?' because that's how you succeed," she says. "I started doing [art and crafts] in between clients, but I was selling it faster than I was making it, so I couldn't keep up with the demand. Now I do two or three days a week of waxing, and the other time I'm in the shop doing orders for people. It's slowly taking off."

Wendy has created custom bone necklaces, burned-on leather moccasins and gloves, walking sticks, fur hats, traditional clothing, and more.

"Whatever comes to mind, I just sit down and make it," she notes.

All the fur is sourced from a local trapper; however, Wendy has gotten her hands on furs in exchange for her services.

"I traded three bear rugs, deer heads, a coyote, a badger, and mounts for waxing [services]," she says with a laugh.





Wendy recently took a brain tanning course so that she could also tan her own hides.

Much of her work is made-to-order, and what isn't doesn't last long on the shelf. With the long hours required to create each piece, she's calling out to any Indigenous artists who use raw, natural materials — as well as any Indigenous painters, beadworkers, and craftspeople — to sell their creations in her store.

"It's important to collect the history that I've missed out on," she says. "And because I love living in nature, I respect the beauty of what we have."

Her vision is to create an authentic Indigenous store, different from the knockoffs she sees in tourist hubs like Jasper.

"It's Aboriginal, but not Aboriginal made; it's made in China by some manufacturer," she explains. "For me,

I make everything raw, so it's sinew to tie up, or dreamcatchers I make from willows. My moccasins are leather...I try to stay as raw as possible and real [to] nature's art."

While expanding the business to include other artisans and an online store is her key focus, it's not the only one.

At 50 years old, Wendy also dreams of creating a retreat for Indigenous youth. She already has 10 acres of land in Opal, AB and is inviting any elders and other knowledge-bearers to share with youth at the retreat.

She also hopes elders will join her on school visits to teach students about Indigenous culture and history.

"I'm passionate about how things are," she notes. "Where they stand today still frustrates me to no end, to see people in poverty... I'd like to see



new things evolve, but still keep the traditions."

At the retreat, Wendy hopes to use traditional teachings to empower people and help them realize their capabilities. ∞

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**Indigenous artists interested in selling their handmade products at *Native Wild* or participating in the youth retreats can contact Wendy at [nativewild.ca](http://nativewild.ca), call 780-589-2208, or on Facebook at Native Wild.**



# Remembering

## Marlene Lanz

December 11, 1943 – August 25, 2018

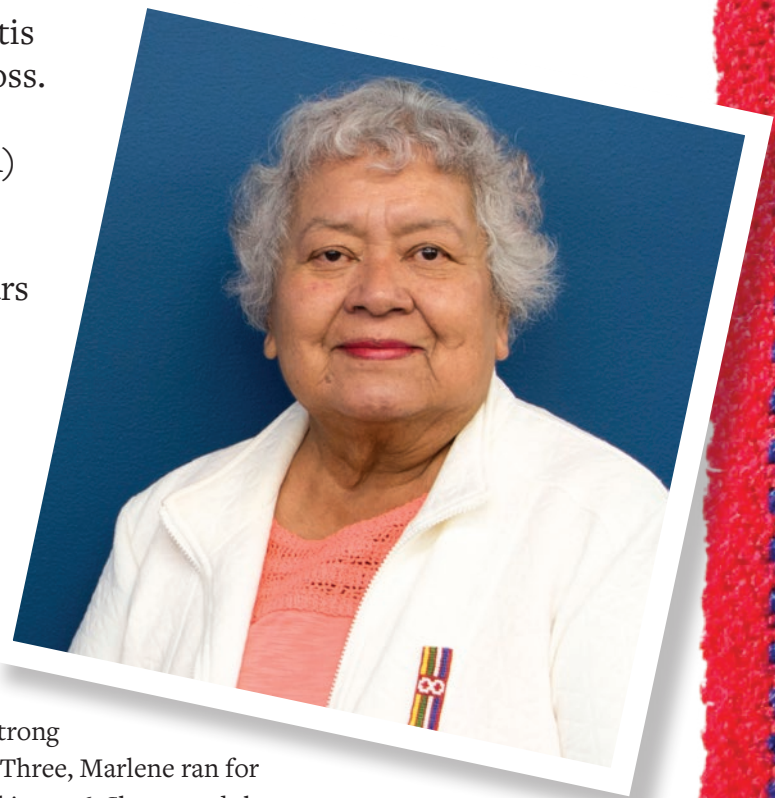
On August 25, 2018 the Métis Nation suffered a great loss. Marlene Lanz, President of Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region Three, passed away at the age of 74. Marlene served as Region Three President for 12 years and dedicated her life to the betterment of Métis in Alberta.

Born and raised in High Prairie, Marlene lived in Medicine Hat for 25 years before moving to Peace River in 1989 to work for the MNA. She started many successful programs in Region Six, including a series of workshops on how to start a business. In 1991, Marlene transferred to the Region Three office in Calgary and continued her efforts until 1994. After strong encouragement from the citizens in Region Three, Marlene ran for Vice President of the region and was elected in 1996. She served three terms as Vice President before being elected President in 2006.

Marlene dedicated her life to preserving our history. She worked tirelessly on projects at Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, Tail Creek and Boss Hill Campgrounds, and Big Valley to name a few. Her legacy is enshrined in these places for visitors to enjoy and remember for years to come.

Marlene's ongoing effort to make a difference, coupled with her social consciousness has made her name synonymous with kindness and generosity. We would not be where we are today without her tireless commitment to the betterment of Métis across the country. She will not be forgotten.

We send our deepest condolences to Marlene's husband and family. ∞









# Indigenous Peoples Open Doors Program

A new agreement with Parks Canada provides Alberta Métis free access to national parks and national historic sites in Alberta.

BY OLIVIA BAKO

Jasper National Park, one of four national parks that are now freely accessible to Alberta Métis citizens

PHOTO COURTESY TOURISM JASPER



**M**ore than a century ago, the Métis people were forcibly removed from their homes in the Rocky Mountains and elsewhere in Alberta. For decades afterwards, the gates to national parks and historic sites in Alberta were symbolically closed, meaning the Métis were treated as guests in their homeland. Now the Government of Canada is beginning to make amends.

Nestled at the foot of stony peaks at the Rocky Mountain House Historic Site, officials from both the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and Parks Canada announced on July 31 that beginning August 1, 2018 MNA citizens will have free access to national parks and national historic sites in Alberta.

The signing of the *Indigenous Peoples Open Doors Program* welcomes Indigenous Peoples to Parks Canada locations where they feel a link to or a desire to reconnect with their ancestors and culture, without the barriers of purchasing passes or permits.

Emphasizing the significance of the program to MNA citizens, MNA President Audrey Poitras describes it as another tool for the Nation to reaffirm its connection to the Métis Nation homeland.

“The Government of Canada recognizes the Métis people as distinct Indigenous People with inherent rights,” she says. “This program recognizes the connections Métis people



**ABOVE:** Parks Canada and Métis Nation of Alberta leadership signed the Open Doors agreement at Rocky Mountain House National Historical site, July 31, 2018. L-R: Dave McDonough, Parks Canada Executive Director of Pacific & Mountain Parks; Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras; MNA Co-Ministers of Métis Rights & Accommodation Bev New and Karen Collins.

in Alberta have with traditionally used lands and waters in Alberta’s national parks and national historic sites. We are excited to announce this partnership with Parks Canada.”



*“This program recognizes the connections Métis people in Alberta have with traditionally used lands and waters in Alberta’s national parks and national historic sites.”*





## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Do I need to go to the gate to get free entry?**

Yes, you need to stop at the gate of a National Park or a National Historic Site to get free access to the park/site. Upon presenting your MNA citizenship card, you will receive a park pass. Please leave the park pass in your vehicle, so Parks Canada staff can easily see it.

### **Q. What if there is no gate?**

Keep your MNA citizenship card with you in case you meet a Parks Canada employee.

### **Q. Do I need to pay for campgrounds?**

The Open Doors Program provides free entry to National Parks and National Historic Sites in Alberta. Other fees for attractions and services still apply.

### **Q. Can I hunt or practice traditional activities in the park?**

Except where pre-existing harvesting agreements exist, the Open Doors Program doesn't allow the bearer to hunt, fish, trap, harvest plants and natural objects, or remove cultural objects within the National Park/National Historic Site.<sup>1</sup>

### **Q. If I travel through a National Park regularly for business (e.g. hauling RVs**

### **through Banff), do I need to carry my MNA citizenship card each time?**

No, a park pass is not required for anyone passing through a National Park/Historic Site. However, a park pass is required for anyone stopping to use facilities of any kind.

### **Q. Does each family member in the car have to have their Métis citizenship card with them?**

Yes. Each adult needs to have their Métis citizenship card with them to gain free access National Historic Sites and Parks in Alberta. Admission is now free for youth 17 and under.

### **Q. Does this also apply to my partner who is not Métis?**

No, the Open Doors Program only applies to citizens of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

### **Q. How long will the program be in effect?**

The Open Doors Program started on August 1, 2018 and has no expiry date.

1. Hunt and trap, as defined in the *National Parks Wildlife Regulations*.

## **Heritage sites included in the *Indigenous Peoples Open Doors Program* with the MNA:**

### **National Parks**

- ▶ Banff National Park
- ▶ Elk Island National Park
- ▶ Jasper National Park
- ▶ Waterton Lakes National Park

### **National Historic Sites**

- ▶ Banff Park Museum National Historic Site
- ▶ Bar-U Ranch National Historic Site
- ▶ Cave and Basin National Historic Site
- ▶ Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

### **National Historic Sites included with park entry fees**

- ▶ Athabasca Pass National Historic Site (within Jasper National Park)
- ▶ First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site (within Waterton Lakes National Park) – closed until further notice because of the Kenow fire – see the Parks Canada website for the latest information
- ▶ House Pass National Historic Site (within Banff National Park)
- ▶ Jasper House National Historic Site (within Jasper National Park)
- ▶ Jasper Park Information Centre National Historic Site (within Jasper National Park)
- ▶ Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House National Historic Site (within Jasper National Park)
- ▶ Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station National Historic Site (within Banff National Park)
- ▶ Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site (within Jasper National Park)

### **National Park or National Historic Sites with no entry fees**

- ▶ Frog Lake National Historic Site – self-guided site
- ▶ Wood Buffalo National Park



# Consultation Protocol Agreement

Collaboration marks important milestone along road to reconciliation

BY OLIVIA BAKO

Nationhood has moved another step forward for the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). On July 19 in the halls of the Delta Bessborough in Saskatoon, the Government of Canada and the MNA signed a *Consultation Agreement*, honouring a commitment to renew a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship.

The *Consultation Agreement* outlines the federal government's duty to consult with the MNA to ensure all MNA citizens are represented.

"The signing of the *Consultation Agreement* marks Canada's commitment and recognition of the Métis Nation as distinct peoples," MNA President Audrey Poitras says. "The outcome will be opportunities to hear directly from Métis Nation of Alberta citizens on

*The agreement outlines the federal government's duty to consult with the MNA to ensure all citizens are represented.*



issues, needs, and concerns unique to our people."

The *Consultation Agreement* builds on the already productive relationship between the MNA and Canada by outlining clear roles, responsibilities, and a method of consultation between the two nations.

This document is the first sub-agreement created under the *Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation*, which was signed on November 16, 2017 by Federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett, and President Poitras.

"This consultation protocol is an important step along the road to reconciliation to strengthen Canada's

**PHOTO:** (L-R) Following the signing of the MNA-Canada Consultation Agreement in Saskatoon July 19, MNA Co-Minister for Métis Rights and Accommodation Karen Collins; MNA President Audrey Poitras; Federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett; MNA Co-Minister for Métis Rights and Accommodation, Bev New; and witness, MNA Region 3 President, the late Marlene Lanz.

relationship with the Métis Nation of Alberta," Minister Bennett adds. "We look forward to continuing to work together in a true spirit of partnership and co-operation to make progress on our shared priorities for the benefit of Métis Nation of Alberta citizens and for all Canadians." ∞





**PHOTO:** (L-R) Métis Nation Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum; Métis Nation Ontario President Margaret Froh; Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand; Federal Minister of Employment Workforce Development and Labour Patricia Hajdu; Métis National Council President Clément Chartier; Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, and; Métis Nation British Columbia President Clara Morin Dal Col.

# Skills & Employment Accord Signed

\$625 million over 10 years in Canada's 2018 budget for Métis skills & employment training

BY OLIVIA BAKO

On June 15, the Métis National Council (MNC) and the Government of Canada signed an agreement in Ottawa outlining a new labour market strategy for the Métis Nation, on top of a 10-year \$625 million federal commitment for skills and employment training.

The *Métis Nation Skills and Employment Accord* provides a framework for the MNC and Employment and Social Development Canada to jointly implement the strategy, which focuses on enhancing employment services, skills development, and job training to improve the overall well-being of the Métis Nation.

"The Canada-Métis Nation Accord is enabling the Métis Nation to make significant strides toward our social and economic development," notes Clément Chartier, President of the Métis National Council. "We look forward to

working with the Prime Minister and his ministers on this year's priorities."

This accord marks the first sub-accord under the *Canada-Métis Nation Accord* signed by the Prime Minister of Canada and Métis Nation leadership on April 13, 2017.


"The signing of the *Canada-Métis Nation Accord* last year was the first step toward a renewed relationship with the Métis Nation," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says. "These meetings provide an important opportunity to hear directly from leaders of the Métis Nation about their unique needs and concerns. We will continue to work together with the

Métis Nation as partners to address these needs, and strengthen the Canada-Métis Nation relationship for the benefit of our country and all Canadians."

The accord signing comes on the heels of the Canadian government's commitment of more than \$625 million over 10 years for the Métis Nation. The funds have been set aside in the 2018 budget for the Métis stream of the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program, which replaces the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy.

"Today's meeting with Prime Minister

Trudeau was positive, and I thank him for his commitment to a distinctions-based approach," adds Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta. "The work we are doing nationally will benefit Métis citizens in Alberta."

The Métis National Council is represented by members from the Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and Métis Nation British Columbia. 

**Budget 2018 also provides \$516 million in funding over 10 years to the Métis Nation:**

- ▶ \$500 million over 10 years to support a Métis Nation housing strategy
- ▶ \$10 million in 2018-19 to support Métis Nation post-secondary education
- ▶ \$6 million over five years to support the Métis Nation in gathering health data and developing a health strategy



# Calling All Students!

BY LEANNE MILLER

Are you pursuing post-secondary education and looking for some extra funding? Access scholarships, bursaries, and grants offered by several providers to help you reach your goals. We've put all these great opportunities for Métis students in one spot. *Good luck with your studies!*

## APPLY NOW

### Métis Nation of Alberta Scholarships

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) rewards Métis students for their outstanding academic achievements and offers financial grants, as well as award recognition.

- Art L'Hirondelle Dedicated Service Scholarship (\$1,000): For Métis students enrolled in construction or trades programs.
- Delia Gray Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000): For Métis students enrolled in any area of study.
- Honourable Pearl Calahasen Scholarship (\$1,000): For Métis students enrolled in any area of study.
- Gary Pruden Scholarship (\$500): For Métis students enrolled in any area of study.

**Apply by:**

October 31, 2018

**Find out more:**

[albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com)  
under Scholarships

**PHOTO:** Pearl Calahasen presents Chalace Campbell with the Pearl Calahasen Scholarship



## APPLY 2019

### Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards

Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards (BBMA) create possibilities for Métis students of any age. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for tuition and fees. Priority is given to first-year students. Present and past recipients are celebrated for their success at an annual awards ceremony.

**Apply by:** March 31, 2019

**Find out more:**

[ecfoundation.org/grants](http://ecfoundation.org/grants) under Student Awards

### Rebecca Kelln Métis Bursary Fund

The Rebecca Kelln Métis Bursary Fund is named after an avid

supporter of Métis bursaries for students. Bursaries worth up to \$1,000 are available for first-year students.

**Apply by:** April 30, 2019

**Find out more:**

[apeetogosan.com/bursary](http://apeetogosan.com/bursary)

### Rupertsland Institute Programs and Awards

Rupertsland Institute (RLI) strives to increase the number of Métis students who successfully complete post-secondary studies by offering two funding options:

- Higher Learning Completion Program: Financial support for post-secondary education, apprenticeship, and certificate training.
- Métis Scholar Awards: Funding for Métis individuals in post-secondary programs at select Alberta post-secondary institutions.

**Apply by:** Check website for dates


**Find out more:** [rupertsland.org](http://rupertsland.org)

### National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund

The National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund (NIB Trust Fund) is geared towards students in programs aimed at knowledge building, reconciliation, and healing.

**Apply by:** Applications open annually in March and close in June. Please check their website in March for specific dates.

**Find out more:** [nibtrust.ca](http://nibtrust.ca)

Discover additional funding resources online at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com). 



# Breaking Ground

## Construction begins on new cultural gathering site at Métis Crossing

BY SHANI GWIN



**S**miles, and even a few tears, filled the crowd at the official construction kick off for the new Métis Crossing cultural gathering centre on May 14. The site was first purchased in 2001 with the help of Georges Brosseau, Orval Belcourt, and the late Herb Belcourt, co-founders of Canative Housing Corporation and the Belcourt Brousseau Métis Awards, with the promise that the site would always be for Métis people and to celebrate the successes and culture of the Métis.

“We had some money available to buy the land and carry on the vision of creating a cultural centre,” Orval Belcourt says. “Today is a prime example of what that vision can achieve... Herb’s legacy will continue on for a long time. If Herb was standing beside me right now, you would see an

**PHOTO:** (L-R) Smoky Lake County Reeve Craig Lukinuk, Provincial Minister of Infrastructure Sandra Jansen, former Federal Minister of Infrastructure Amarjeet Sohi, Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, MLA for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater Colin Piquette, and Elder Norma Spicer.

immense smile on his face. He would be so delighted. Actually, we both are.”

The centre is scheduled to open in late summer of 2019, just in time for Métis Crossing to become a year-round attraction. Visitors will be able to explore the history of Métis people through programming and events throughout the summer, fall, winter, and spring.


For many years, the Métis Nation of Alberta has dreamed of creating a place of pride where Métis people and visitors can share culture and tradition. For Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, it was meaningful to see the dream come to life.

“Long before I was ever president, I heard people talking about how we need our own place,” she says. “And this is it, and what a beautiful place. It’s just going to get bigger and better. We now will have a facility, so it doesn’t matter what the weather is like, we can still have events and still enjoy it all. It means so much.”

The new centre will provide 10,000 square feet of gathering spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, exhibits, and interpretive spaces to engage visitors. The Government of Canada committed \$3.5 million for construction of the facility and the Government of Alberta also provided \$1 million in funding for construction and site developments.

Métis Crossing is located within the Victoria District National Historic Site, a beautiful 512-acre setting along the North Saskatchewan River comprised of five historic river lots. Just an hour-and-a-half northeast of Edmonton, it’s the perfect family weekend getaway with activities for all ages, hiking trails, campsites, and new comfort camping in Métis trappers’ tents. It is the first Métis cultural interpretive centre in Alberta and boasts a historical village, restored homesteads, nature trails, and Voyageur canoe trips.

“It’s the only major Métis interpretative centre, not only in Alberta, but in Canada,” explains Juanita Marois, Métis Crossing Development Manager. “It’s Métis driven. We have Métis people working on every aspect of the site.”

For more information on Métis Crossing and upcoming events, visit [metiscrossing.org](http://metiscrossing.org) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @MetisCrossing. 





# Are You Métis?

Application packages to become a citizen of the  
Métis Nation of Alberta are available online at  
[albertametis.com/registry](http://albertametis.com/registry)

## What you need to complete your application:



### Family Tree

Dating back to the mid 1800's



**Valid Government ID**  
& Proof of permanent  
Alberta residency



### Birth Documents

With biological parentage



**Application Package**  
Completed

Drop off or mail your completed application to any Métis Nation of Alberta Office.  
Emailed or faxed applications will not be accepted.

<b>Provincial Head Office</b>	#100 11738 Kingsway NW, Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5
<b>Region 1 Office</b>	10104 102 Ave., PO Box 1350, Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0
<b>Region 2 Office</b>	5102 51 St., Box 6497, Bonnyville, AB T9H 2H1
<b>Region 3 Office</b>	1415 28 St. NE, Calgary, AB T2A 2P6
<b>Region 4 Office</b>	11724 95 St., Edmonton, AB T5G 1L9
<b>Region 5 Office</b>	53 Main St. N, Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A3
<b>Region 6 Office</b>	621 90 Ave., Peace River, AB T8S 1G8



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# SHARE YOUR STORY

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