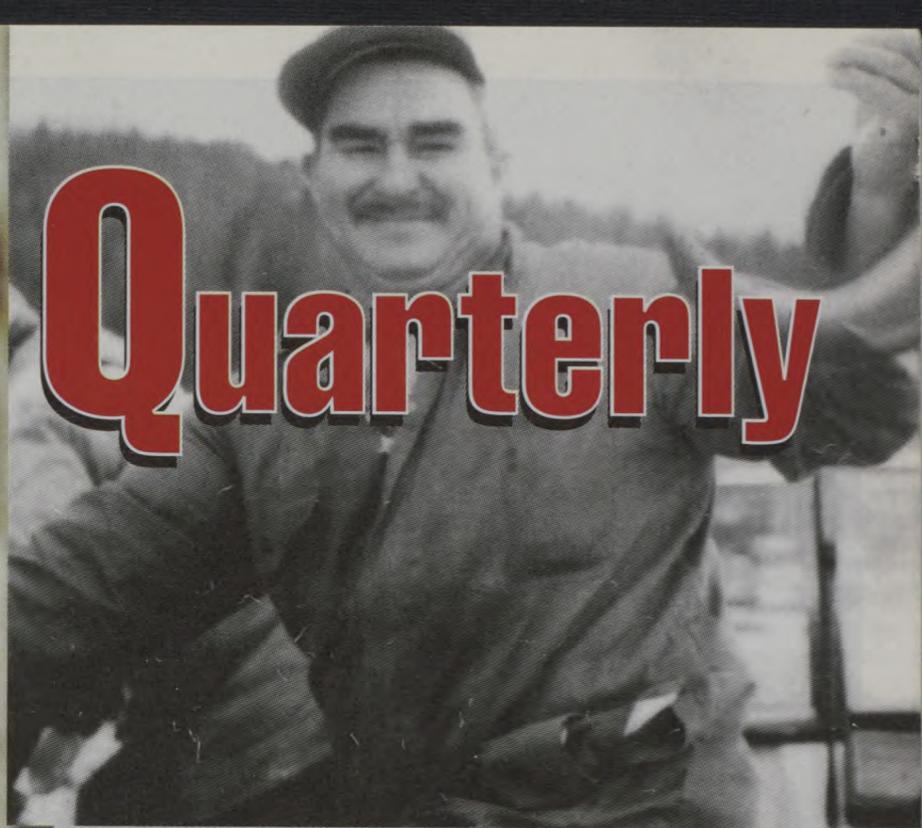




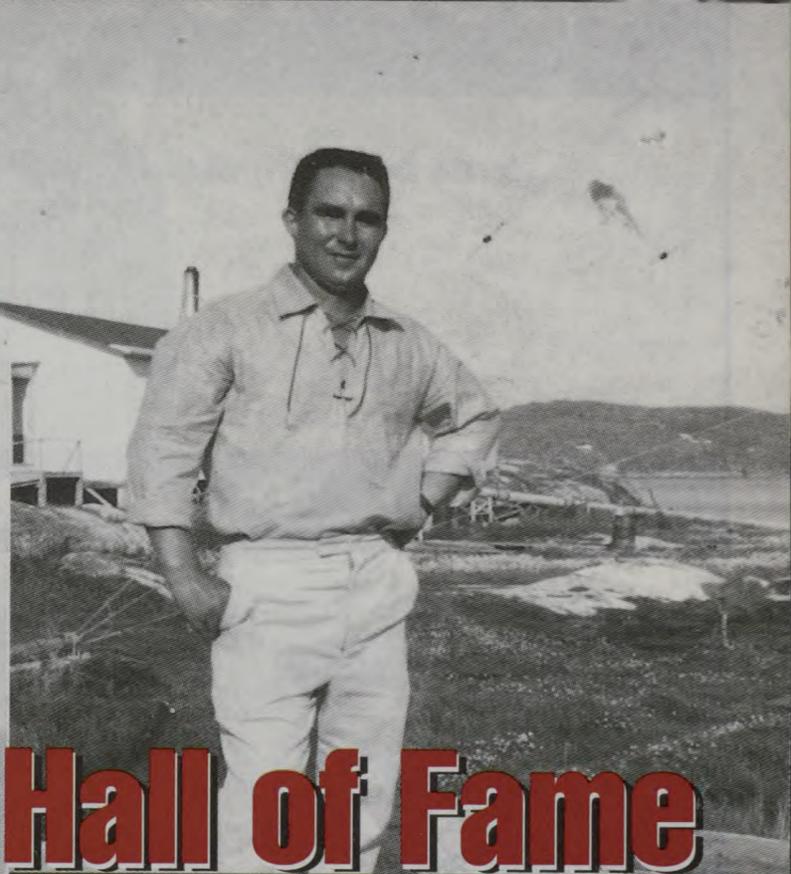
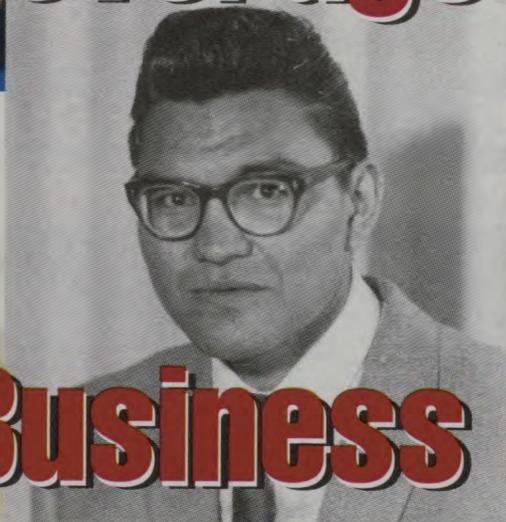
*NOT* business as usual!

# Windspeaker Business Quarterly



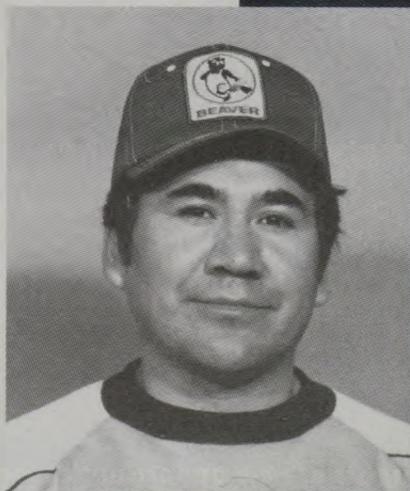
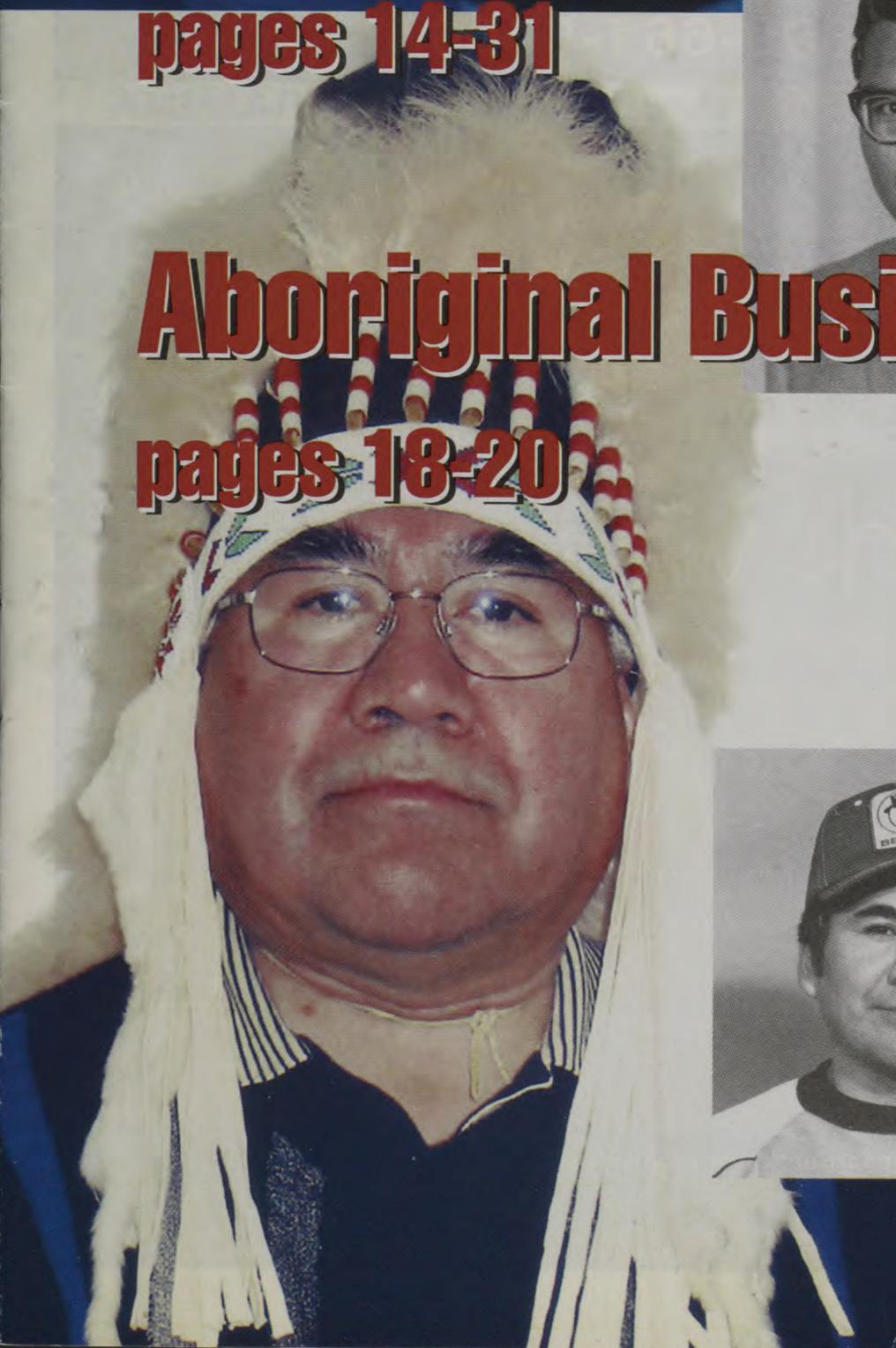
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First Quarter – Spring 2007



Business Quarterly

### 2007/2008 Schedule:

Edition	Booking	Pub.
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Q3 - Fall	06-Sep-2007	October
Q4 - Winter	29-Nov-2007	January
Q1 - Spring	28-Feb-2008	April

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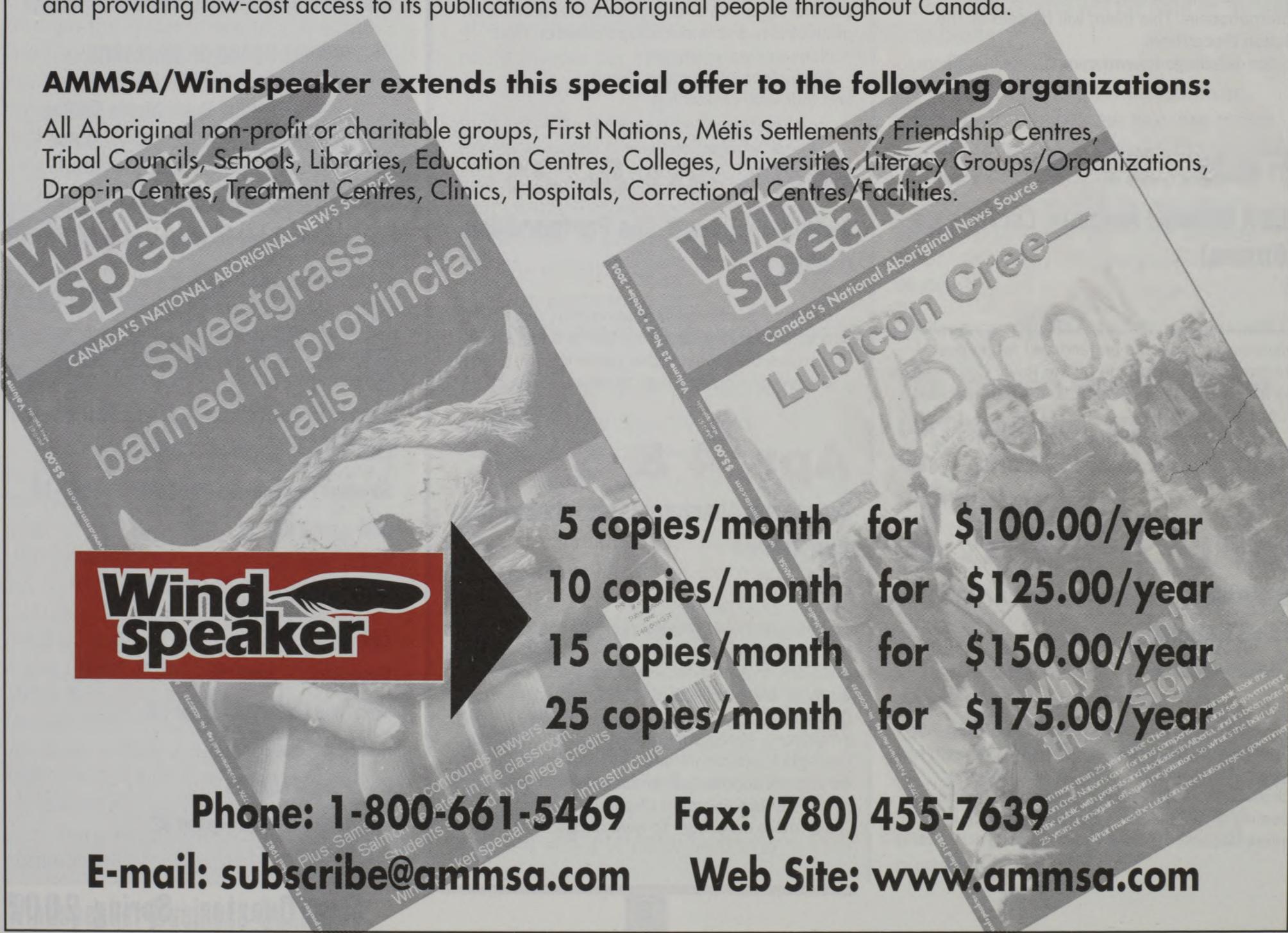
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## On The Agenda

### Feb. 25–Mar. 2 Mar. 8 & 9

#### Negotiation Skills Training (Banff, Alta.)

Learn how to prepare and negotiate on important issues through this six-day program at The Banff Centre. This high impact program is geared to Aboriginal leaders, lawyers, policy advisors and anyone interested in obtaining expert advice on how to become a powerful negotiator.

Call 1-888-255-6327 or register online at [www.banffcentre.ca](http://www.banffcentre.ca).

### Feb. 27 & 28

#### Gaming In Canada (Toronto)

This gathering will look at regulatory compliance for legal gaming in Canada and risk management and practical tips for protecting your online gaming operations in Canada and internationally. This event will be held at The Sutton Place Hotel.

For details go to [www.canadianinstitute.com](http://www.canadianinstitute.com).

### Feb. 27–Mar. 1

#### NAFA National Forestry Conference (Ottawa)

This workshop for Ontario First Nations will discuss the progress on land and resources recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996 as they pertain to First Nations.

For more information [www.nafaforestry.org](http://www.nafaforestry.org).

### Mar. 7– Mar. 9

#### Environmental Law and Canada's First Nations (Vancouver)

This conference will explore the convergence of Aboriginal rights and environmental laws and will give participants the tools to deal with the challenges facing resource industries and those dealing with issues of Aboriginal rights and interests.

#### Symposium on First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act: Working Together! (Vancouver)

The objective is to examine the potential value of FN-CIDA for communities considering economic development opportunities, to discuss the implications of regulating a First Nations project under a federal regime with provincially-replicated regulations, and to examine how other First Nations can learn from current economic development initiatives that are being advanced under FN-CIDA.

For information go to [www.mining.ubc.ca/FNCIDA.html](http://www.mining.ubc.ca/FNCIDA.html)

### Mar. 9 & 10

#### First Nation Power Summit (Calgary)

Participation is open to First Nation leaders and managers, chiefs, councillors, tribal councils and government employees. The conference will explore the areas of energy projects, production of electricity and relationships between First Nations and governments.

For further information, email: [ken.thomas@sasktel.net](mailto:ken.thomas@sasktel.net).

### Mar. 20 & 21

#### Aboriginal Oil and Gas Partnerships (Calgary)

Building collaborative relationships between Aboriginal communities and the oil and gas industry is the focus of this gathering.

For more information go to [www.infonex.ca](http://www.infonex.ca).

### Apr. 4 & 5

#### Unlocking Aboriginal Potential in the Workforce (Ottawa)

This national Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement conference will explore new solutions to Aboriginal workforce development and employment problems and offer strategies in Canada. This conference will bring together employers, Aboriginal employment practitioners, managers, educators and members from the career development community to network. It will be held at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier.

For more details go to [www.ahrdcc.com](http://www.ahrdcc.com).

## Business Quarterly

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## Inking the deal

### **A new Web site has been launched by the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Corporation**

that will show all that is available to travellers from the 90 Aboriginal business and corporations in the organization. The Web site, called Our Culture, Your Greatest Adventure!, can be found at [www.staq.net](http://www.staq.net).

### **Funding has been received by the Committee for Career Advancement of Aboriginal Women in New Brunswick**

and will be used to support the organization of a conference in the province. The conference represents the third and final phase of the Gathering Voices project, which identifies issues affecting Aboriginal women and works to develop successful strategies to address them. The funding comes from the Aboriginal Women's Program through the department of Canadian Heritage. The program works to enable Aboriginal women to influence policies, programs, legislation and decision-making that affect their social, cultural, economic and political well-being in their communities and in Canadian Society.

### **Sheila Watt-Cloutier, the Canadian Inuit environmental activist, has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.**

She joins former United States vice president Al Gore in the chase for the prize, both nominated for their work on climate change by two Norwegian parliamentarians. Watt-Cloutier, 53, is from Kuujuaq in northern Quebec. Until this summer, she was head of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, an organization representing about 155,000 Inuit living in Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Russia. She is currently writing a book entitled *The Right To Be Cold*. The Nobel committee will award the prize in December. Last year there were almost 200 people nominated.

### **The Battlefords Tribal Council, through the Gold Eagle Community Development Corporation, is contributing \$50,000 for a regional plan to explore the economic potential of a Battlefords Yellowhead Heritage Park in Saskatchewan.**

The park would be a destination area that could combine tourism, commercial, recreation and cultural facilities. Western Economic Diversification Canada is throwing into the hat about \$267,000 and the Battlefords Regional Economic Development Authority will provide \$10,000.

The funding will go towards hiring architects, engineers and a business consultant to develop a plan to assemble the park and to investigate whether it will be practical and affordable for the Battlefords area. The park could involve constructing a new multiplex recreation facility, performing arts centre, hotel, First Nations heritage park, powwow facility, health spa and casino. The tribal council is part of the Battlefords Communiplex Committee, a joint partnership with the City of North Battleford, the Town of North Battleford, and several community associations and organizations.

"These kinds of partnerships show the leadership role that Saskatchewan communities play in local economic development, said Clay Serby, deputy premier and minister of Regional Economic and Cooperative Development. "I am proud to see so many interests working together on a common goal that can benefit the entire region."

Chief Pauline Okemow said the multi-party investment project will result in a significant number of new jobs and services in the Battlefords area, based upon major growth in regional and international tourism.

### **The federal government has topped up a \$120-million conservation and economic development initiative on the central and north coast of British Columbia with \$30 million.**

The announcement was made Jan. 22 by John Baird, federal minister of the environment. The Great Bear Rainforest agreement is a partnership between the province, First Nations, industry and environmental groups, who have raised \$60 million from private sources. The go-ahead on the initiative however, was contingent on \$30 million in matching funds from both the federal and provincial governments. Premier Gordon Campbell pledged his \$30 million last year.

No priorities have been set for the money on Haida Gwaii, nor is it clear how First Nations from the tip of Vancouver Island will be able to access the funds.

First Nations representatives have talked about shellfish aquaculture projects that may now become more reality than dream. The funding is also earmarked for resource management initiatives connected to consensus land use plans, which have already been signed by 14 coastal First Nations.

### **The Seminole Indian Tribe has purchased the famed Hard Rock Cafe business for \$965 million.**

The deal is for Hard Rock's casinos, restaurants, hotels and what is believed to be the world's largest collection of rock memorabilia. The Seminoles were the first tribe in the United States to get into the gaming business, and had already partnered with Hard Rock in hotel and gaming and entertainment complexes in Florida. Experts say the move is a bold one, making the tribe an important player in the gaming and hospitality business.

# Law prof calls for ethical investing

Lobbying governments is not the only way to seek social justice. It may not even be the most effective way to go about it.

That was the message Osgoode Hall Law Professor Benjamin J. Richardson delivered to an audience of law professors, lawyers, law students and others at the Indigenous Law and Legal Systems: Recognition and Revitalization conference at the University of Toronto Law School on Jan. 27.

Richardson began his presentation, entitled "Protecting Indigenous peoples through socially responsible investing," by asking the audience to imagine what would happen if a bank refused to finance a mining venture because the mining company hadn't worked out environmental and revenue-sharing concerns with the Indigenous peoples living where the mine would be located.

If ethical considerations were put alongside financial considerations, the world would begin to change, he said.

The law professor said the lessons learned from the socially responsible investing movement (SRI, also called ethical investing) could be used to force changes in ways that political activism has so far failed to accomplish.

"We need to wean ourselves off of our

preoccupation with the state-state power, state sovereignty-and recognize that the financial sector is also a leviathan, a source of great power," he said.

**While there are a number of mutual funds whose managers do consider ethical, social or environmental questions...most have not completely abandoned relying only on the profit motive as the main decision-making factor.**

"When we strategize on exactly who we should be targeting to challenge developments that we think are inappropriate, we focus always on the state. I'm suggesting to you that there are other sources of power."

Richardson said business-friendly governments give the financial sector more and more power without a matching increase in accountability.

"Unfortunately, the news is going to get worse because the financial sector is increasing in size. We're in an era that some commentators describe as 'finance capitalism.' Finance capitalism involves the ceding of sovereignty by the state through deregulation and

privatization to the capital markets."

He reminded those in attendance that SRI is not a new thing. It has had its successes in both the distant and more recent past.

Quaker communities, for example, kept their investments away from companies involved in the slave trade in the United States in the 1700s, and investors all over the world played a role in ending apartheid by refusing to invest in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s.

Richardson noted that ethical investment is not a tool that is available to most Indigenous people, simply because they do not have large amounts of money to invest. But

it's a method that people who are sympathetic to the struggles of Indigenous peoples can make use of, he added.

While there are a number of mutual funds whose managers do consider ethical, social or environmental questions when deciding where to invest, most have not completely abandoned relying only on the profit motive as the main decision-making factor. Some have made what he suggested were mostly symbolic gestures.

"Some of these funds boycott tobacco and/or gambling as if that fixes everything," he said.

SRI is gaining momentum around the world, and there are a number of organizations that are pushing for corporate accountability.

BankTrack, a Netherlands-based network of civil society organizations and individuals, tracks the operations of the private financial sector-commercial banks, investors, insurance companies, pension funds-and its effect on people and the planet.

And the United Nations sub-commission on the promotion and protection of human rights passed a resolution in 2003 that established "UN norms on the responsibility of transnational corporations."

But, while some countries have regulations or laws in place to ensure that the private sector is responsive to its shareholders' wishes, many do not.

"We'll have to return our attention to the state regarding corporate governance," Richardson said.

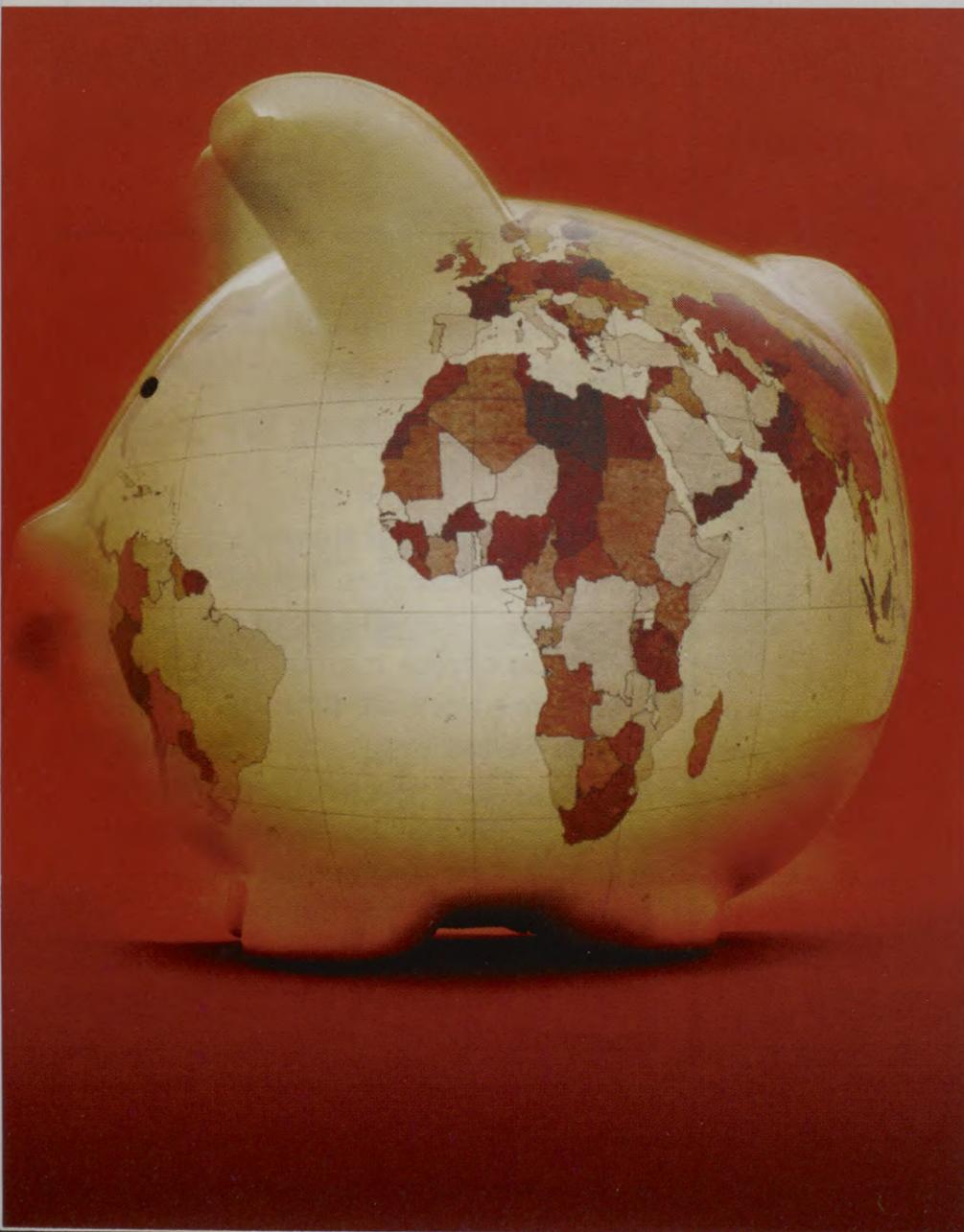
He said governments could encourage more responsible corporate behavior by making reporting of actions towards socially responsible goals mandatory and by creating regulations that strengthen corporate governance models so that shareholders have the right to demand accountability from company managers.

Governments can also decide to make public pension funds employ SRI principles. Richardson noted that Sweden, France, Norway and New Zealand have already done this.

"The CPP, however, is under no such obligation," he added.

Before arriving at Osgoode Hall in 2003, Richardson studied, taught or worked around the world, earning his doctorate in resource management and environmental science and law in Australia before teaching at universities in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. He has worked as a legal consultant in East Africa and Nepal.

*By Paul Barnsley*



# Corporation wants to be a big fish in a big pond

**T**here's an old saying in business—go big or go home. And from the talk around the table at the Uu-a-thluk Council of Ha'wiih (chiefs) meeting on Jan. 25 and 26, that saying is particularly true when dealing with the seafood industry.

The meeting was held at the House of Gathering at Hupacasath in Port Alberni, B.C., organized to put together a work plan with the goal of increasing Nuu-chah-nulth economic access to aquatic resources and to turn Nuu-chah-nulth into big players in the seafood business.

There was a simple theme for the meeting articulated by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council's fisheries manager Don Hall: More Fish, More Jobs, More Money.

He told the gathering that in the 14 years he's been on the scene in the territory, he's witnessed the steady decline of Nuu-chah-nulth access to the sea resources and the economic benefits that come with that access. Yet Hall is optimistic that there is a turn-around on the horizon, through treaty negotiation and fisheries litigation, and he wants the Nuu-chah-nulth people to be prepared to reap the rewards of success in those areas.

Simon Lucas told the chiefs there is a ready market for seafood, and recounted a meeting with Korean buyers who wanted to purchase crab, and a lot of it. In fact, they wanted one million crab, and the Nuu-chah-nulth had to say no, "because we were not organized."

A similar story was told by meeting chair Tommy Happynook, who spoke about the newly formed Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood Development Corporation, which grew out of the Nuu-chah-nulth Shellfish Development Corporation. The seafood business has eight Nuu-chah-nulth tribes as shareholders, has developed a brand (Nootka), and has met with trade partners for distribution and marketing expertise. Corporation representatives have also met with buyers from Brussels who are looking to purchase thousands of tons of product per month.

"We have about six buckets," Happynook laughed.

But what it proves is the market is large and lucrative and the players in the market have to be large and ready to provide.

He invited chiefs to come out to the corporation's annual general meeting on

Feb. 26 where they would be discussing business prospects and inviting other Nuu-chah-nulth tribes to hop on board to increase the size of the entity.

Charlie Cootes Sr. said there was also opportunity in the auxiliary areas of the marine environment. He said the community had to build capacity to prepare the young for the future. He said there was a real shortage of seafarers and a massive hiring boom coming. There is opportunity for the young, he said, if they are prepared and trained.

He also said it was important to make connections with powerful people in industry, and told of billionaire Jimmy Pattison's speech at a recent Aboriginal economic development conference.

Cootes told the chiefs that Pattison was looking to partner with First Nations on good business ideas. Cootes said Pattison shared a secret of his success—competitive edge.

The Nuu-chah-nulth's competitive edge is that they live where they do business and know intimately their environment.

Stanley Sam agreed that traditional knowledge and experience should not be underestimated.

Cliff Atleo reminded the chiefs that Nuu-chah-nulth had always lived and provided for their families from the sea, and it was the government and its policies that pushed them farther and farther away from that endeavor. And the government has admitted its part in the decline in Nuu-chah-nulth access to the resources and should be made to make amends. He advised the chiefs to remember the history.

Cootes said remembering the history was important, but it was also important not to get stuck in the past. It was a time to prepare for the future and take advantage of the opportunities that are ahead.

The council of Ha'wiih also looked at how other Aboriginal groups had benefited from court decisions that provided them with more access to the fisheries, from the Boldt decision in Washington State, where the Lummi got 50 per cent of the fishery, to the Marshall decision on the East Coast of Canada, where increased access to the lobster fishery caused violent confrontations. Representatives from the Lummi Naiton are expected to attend the next council on April 12 and 13.

*Reprinted from Ha-Shilth-Sa*



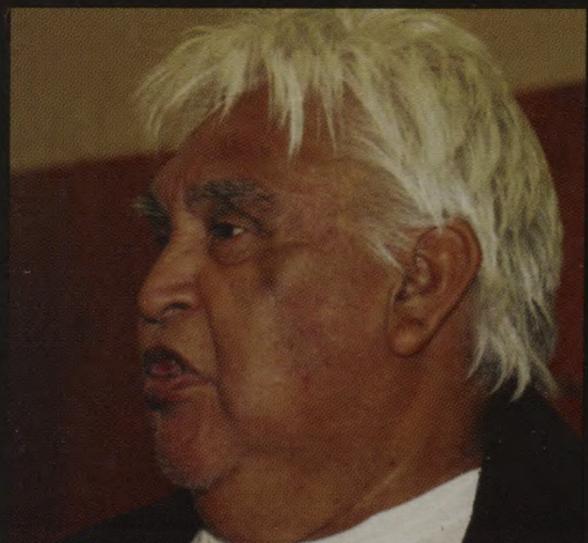
Stanley Sam



Tommy Happynook



Charlie Cootes Sr



Simon Lucas

# 2010 Four Host First Nations logo unveiled



Photograph by M. Morning Star Doherty

## Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish and Lil'wat Chiefs cut the ribbon and unveil the "Four Host First Nations" logo with B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell

The unveiling of the Four Host First Nations logo at Tourism British Columbia's 2010 Aboriginal Business Summit in Vancouver on Feb. 1 was one of the high points of the three-day conference.

The logo symbolises the joint efforts of the participating First Nations—Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish and Lil'wat—to contribute to the spirit and success of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

A special ceremony was held to unveil the logo, supported by more than 100 members of the four nations, dressed in their beautiful regalia. They walked into the ballroom of the Sheraton Wall Centre, dancing, singing and drumming.

As Chief Leah George-Wilson (Tsleil-Waututh), Chief Leonard Andrew (Lil'wat), Chief Ernest Campbell (Musqueam), Chief Bill Williams (Squamish), British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell and VANOC Chairman Jack Poole unveiled the Four Host First Nations logo, the sound of the drums became louder and louder, and the spirits of those present grew stronger and stronger.

While there is controversy surrounding the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, as there is with most international sporting events that cost enormous amounts of money that some feel could better be spent on low-income housing, education,

drug and alcohol rehabilitation, environmental healing and more, there will be some positive, far reaching benefits for the Aboriginal people of the region.

One of the possible benefits will be the recognition of some of the world's most interesting and beautiful cultures and environments, which should translate into economic development opportunities for First Nations people throughout the province.

A well-produced 2010 Winter Games will generate greater interest in Aboriginal products, such as traditional foods, culture and eco-tourism, and much more.

Tewanee Joseph, the executive director and CEO of the Four Host First Nations Secretariat, is working to fulfil the mission of the organization, which is "to ensure that the games are a great success, and that long after the games are gone, permanent physical and human legacies live on to enrich and benefit our communities."

"The logo is so important because it is based on a principle of respect; respect for the traditional territory on which the games are taking place. The other thing we hope to do with the logo is to build a brand, and by 2010 we hope to have a recognizable brand that is based on excellence, recognition and respect. People will be able to identify that we will have products that we're able to sell," said Joseph. "To carry that brand beyond 2010 will build a real legacy around Aboriginal products."

For one young and talented Coast Salish artist, the legacy has already made itself felt. Four Host First Nations logo designer, Jody Broomfield explained his involvement with the project.

"A contest was held about a year ago, open to any artist from the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations," said Broomfield. "As soon as I heard about the contest, I went to work on some designs, and it took me about a week's time to get the right one. I was notified a few months later that I had won and I can say that I was in absolute shock. The announcement was overwhelming, that's for sure. I was speechless!"

"The design represents peace and unity within a sacred circle. Each of the faces represents the Four Host First Nations. The outer circle represents our ancestors, who have passed on before us and watch over us on a daily basis. In the middle of the design are four arrows, which point to the four cardinal directions—north, east, west and south—welcoming the world to Vancouver in 2010."

Apprenticed with Klatle-Bhi (Cloth Bay), a well-known Kwakwaka'wakw/Coast Salish artist in a studio within the Capilano community in North Vancouver, Broomfield has been an artist since he was a child and is very devoted to learning his culture and the history behind the art.

by M. Morning Star Doherty

## Announcements

### The First Nations Bank of Canada announced record earnings of \$1.39 million for the year ended Oct. 31, 2006.

This is up 270 per cent from the prior year. Contributing to the increase is strong loan growth and improved income margins in net interest income. Low loan losses and the holding of non-interest expenses to levels comparable to the prior year also benefited the bank's income performance.

Total assets grew 19.3 per cent, a significant increase over the 2.97 per cent realized in the prior year. Total assets grew to \$181.2 million with loan volume of \$127.3 million, up 18.9 per cent from last year.

"The bank continues to grow market share in existing core markets while expanding to new regions where the fundamentals of the local Aboriginal economy are strong," said Arden Buskell, president and chief operating officer. "Fiscal 2006 was an outstanding year in terms of growth and profitability, which is a function of our customers and the commitment of our employees to provide quality service."

### Mackenzie Environment Solutions, owned by Denendeh Investments Inc. (DII), has signed an exclusive contract to be the distribution and sales representative for ENPAR Technologies Inc.

Mackenzie has been granted the right to market, sell and utilize ENPAR's electrochemical technologies for treating ammonia, arsenic and metals and nitrate. Applications include municipal waste water, mine water and other industrial waste waters, as well as drinking water. The exclusive coverage encompasses the Northwest Territories, the McKenzie River Watershed, northern sections of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, as well as Nunavut. DII is owned by the Denendeh Development Corporation, a private company owned 100 per cent by the Dene of the Northwest Territories. DII and ENPAR will offer solutions to existing and future water contamination problems, such as ammonia, arsenic, metals and potentially radionuclides.

### A new report has recommended that British Columbia return half of its forest revenues to First Nations.

The study, released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, looked at nearly 130 forest accords brokered by the province with First Nations over recent years.

The main recommendation of the report is that the province should return to Aboriginal communities the \$2 billion it collects from stumpage fees, monies paid by forest companies to the government to harvest on Crown lands. While B.C. has attempted to return part of the stumpage fees to First Nations, the report says the efforts are inadequate.

"The money flowing back to First Nations from these accords is just \$35 million per year, only 3.5 per cent of the stumpage revenue stream," said Ben Parfitt, resource policy analyst and author of the report. "That certainly isn't enough to bring much-needed economic development to more than 100 First Nations."

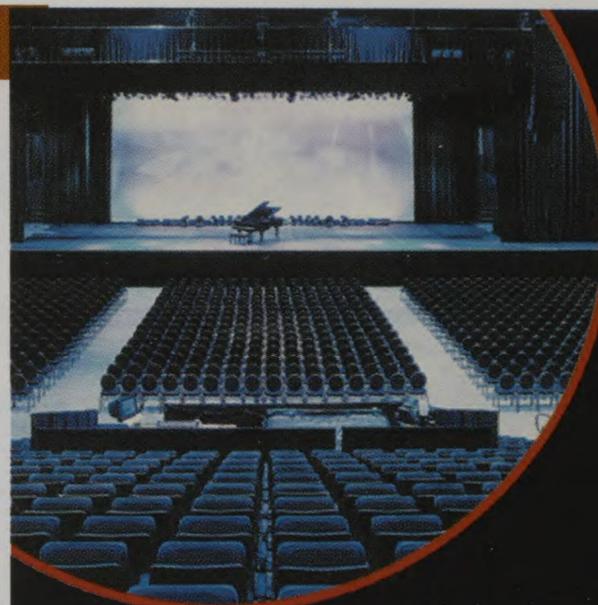
The First Nations Summit in B.C. is welcoming the report and its criticism of the existing formula. "The current valuation process fails to compensate First Nations for the resources extracted from their territories," said Dave Port of the Summit's political executive.

### Mark your calendars for the 20th annual Canada's West Marketplace trade show, where more than 650 tourism professionals from around the world will gather from Nov. 25 to 28 this year.

The marketplace brings together British Columbia and Alberta tourism suppliers with tourism buyers in one location, this year in Whistler, providing an excellent forum for tourism businesses to promote their range of products to tour operators, wholesalers and travel media representatives from Europe, Asia/Pacific and the Americas.

"We are excited about hosting the 2007 event," said Rod Harris, Tourism BC president and CEO, "as Whistler moves closer to hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

Last year's show was held in Banff, Alta., and had the highest buyer attendance and delegation in the show's history.



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# Economic development more than a way out of poverty

**F**or anyone interested in economic development issues for First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples, Saskatoon was the place to be from Jan. 23 to 25.

More than 700 delegates met at TCU Place for Best Practices in Economic Development, a conference hosted by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), the Clarence Campeau Development Fund (CCDF), and the government of Saskatchewan.

It sought to stimulate more Aboriginal economic development and improve employment participation in all areas of the Canadian economy. The conference offering was part of a commitment made by Premier Lorne Calvert as a result of the first ministers meeting in November 2005 where the Kelowna Accord was hammered out.

Invited delegates came from across the country, and each was a leader in their area. Representatives of numerous governments and organizations were present, including Chief Lawrence Joseph of the FSIN, Clem Chartier of the Métis National Council, Premier Calvert and Saskatchewan Party leader Brad Wall, British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell, and Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams.

Ron Rivard of the CCDF helped organize the conference, and gave opening remarks. He was excited to work with everyone.

"The planning for the conference allowed government, Métis, and Aboriginals to work together" he said. "Aboriginal people have not worked together too successfully in this country, and history bears that out. But here we talked about issues we could agree on and move forward with. The conference has workshops facilitated by some of the best people doing the best work with some of the most successful strategies. People have come from all over Canada, and they are able to take that information home and share it with their

communities."

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Phil Fontaine also spoke to open the conference and noted there are about 3,000 small businesses in Canada run by Aboriginal entrepreneurs. He believed that the way out of the poverty that has long plagued Aboriginal communities was stored in the knowledge of the delegates. He said solutions to that poverty required communities to work together and build on their strengths.

Besides the workshops, the conference included a panel discussion with Bernd Christmas, the first Mi'kmaw to become a lawyer in Canada, Marty Klyne, the president and CEO of the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, and Dr. Wanda Wuttunee, a member of Red Pheasant First Nation and associate professor and acting head of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba.

Christmas, who has extensive experience on national and international boards and commissions and a deep understanding of Aboriginal perspectives, noted there have been many Aboriginal business successes in

the last 30 years, but there is still a long way to go.

"Economic development is only one part of the whole," he said. "A lot of things have to come together. You can't do things in isolation. You can pump money into health care and it does amazing things for the human spirit, but once the dollars run out, what continues the process that was started? Hence you need economic development and companies in the private sector with job creation. We as Indigenous people have to build our economies, build our might, reclaim the powers that may have been dwindled over the years, and become [true partners] in Canada between all levels of government."

Klyne also spoke of economic development being a very complex matter. But he said that the factors that lead to economic development become clear by looking at examples like the Peter Ballantyne Band or the Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskatchewan. He also noted that studying any successful business will show the key factors.



Photograph by CNW Group/Assembly of First Nations

**AFN National Chief, Phil Fontaine (left) and Scott Bradley, Director of Business Development, Bell ICT Solutions, sign a memorandum of understanding in Saskatoon.**

"Business is business, and business development transcends the differences."

Marty Klyne noted that federal spending on Aboriginal economic development is only four per cent of the amount allocated to social programs. As well, 87 per cent of the entire budget is spent on reserve, yet 70 per cent of the Aboriginal population lives off-reserve.

"The amount spent on social programs needs to be kept up," he said. "Social issues are important when there is not the environment to create business growth and appropriate development strategies. But to get out from under that, more needs to be invested by government, today, to create an environment that is conducive to growth of economic and political institutions. To be a competitive, more productive Canadian economy, we cannot exclude any part of our people, especially Aboriginal."

Wanda Wuttunee noted that her training allows her to understand business. What she finds fascinating is the question of how to bring balance to business. She asked the Prince Albert Grand Council how they balance values of capitalism with community values, and they came up with what she calls community capitalism

"We have the tools of business," she said, "and we use those tools within the context of how it fits within the community. That's something that we do as Aboriginal people, but that's not something that's talked about in business schools. So it's critical that we

figure out not only that we want to be in business, but how we do it."

She also lauded the co-operative business model.

"Co-operatives are an example of a social enterprise that is really in sync with Aboriginal perspectives."

The other important factor is how success is measured.

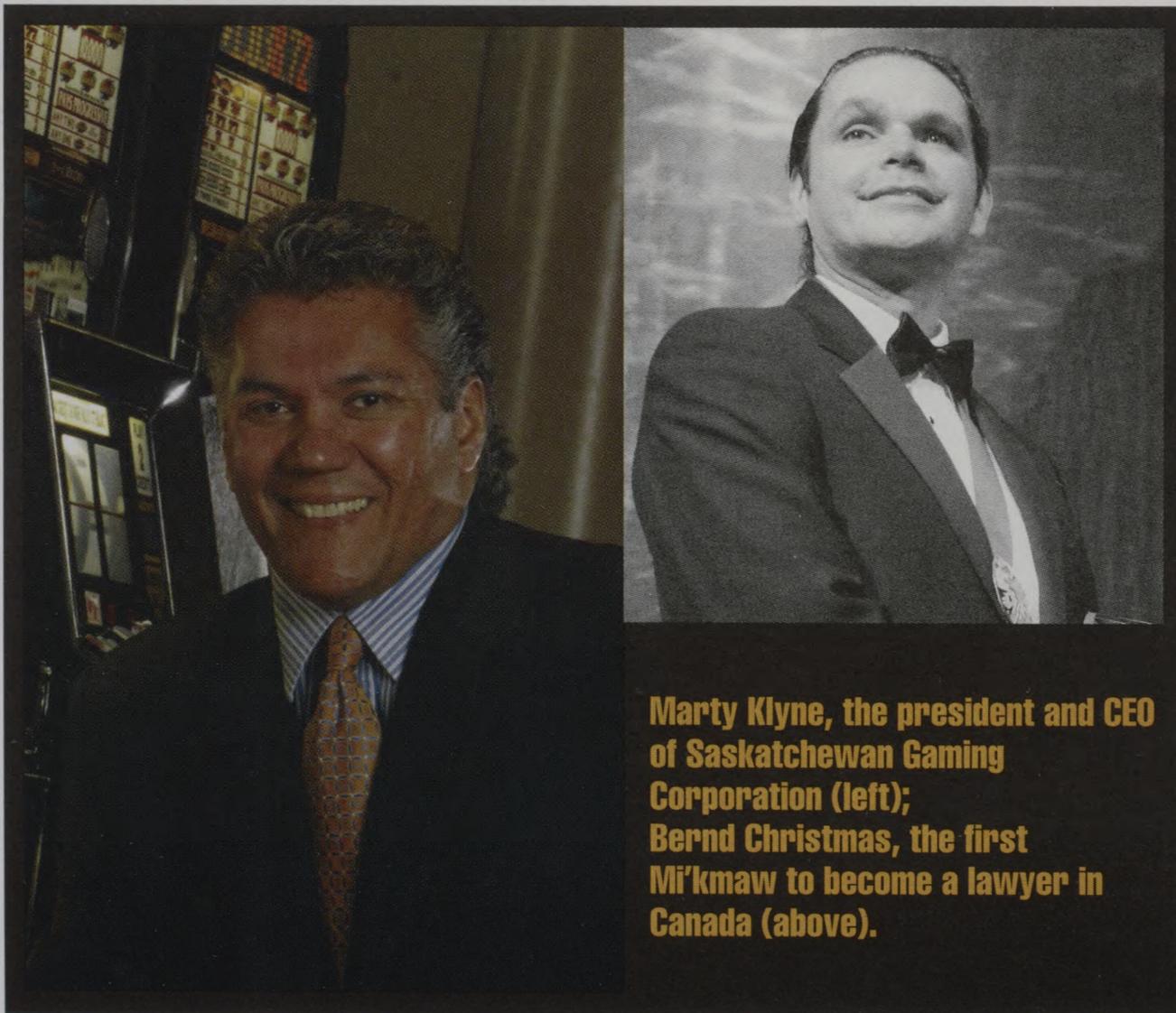
"We have to look at what's working and support that," she said. "One person moving out of poverty and being a contributing member of the local economy is a success. There are many other measures, beyond profitability and employment – including those, but beyond them – that are meaningful to communities, and that we can point to with pride."

Those attending from out of province agreed.

Shawn Atleo, AFN regional chief for B.C. Assembly of First Nations, said that the specifics of how to build a business are important, but the political will has to be there.

"The political environment has to be one that is conducive to economic development," he said. "I'm really happy to see the premiers here, and the Aboriginal leadership. What this will do is make sure that economic development rises to the top as a priority, and secondly, build something that's going to be a sustainable economic development framework for First Nations right across Canada."

By Peter Derbawka



**Marty Klyne, the president and CEO of Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation (left); Bernd Christmas, the first Mi'kmaq to become a lawyer in Canada (above).**



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# The journey from corporate citizen to business partner

By Lee Ahenakew

**W**e are entering an unprecedented era of economic growth for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and community-owned business. The factors for prosperity continue to fall into place, including court recognition of inherent rights, legislative tools, population increases, education and access to opportunities.

The Aboriginal community is flexing new economic muscle, and business needs to pay more attention to reap the benefits of working with Aboriginal communities.

The nature of the relationship between mainstream business and the Aboriginal community has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Where once corporations paid attention to Aboriginal communities due to their altruistic desires to be a good corporate citizen, many corporations are now focusing efforts on relationships with Aboriginal communities because it means profitable growth for their business.

In 1986 the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) became the first organization to work between corporate Canada and the Aboriginal community. CCAB connected Aboriginal entrepreneurs to powerful corporate networks, and helped people get jobs. CCAB facilitated the desires of corporations to be good corporate citizens to the Aboriginal community.

The environment has changed since these early beginnings in corporate Aboriginal relations. Take for example the Mikisew Cree Nation Supreme Court decision. The decision requires companies to consult with First Nations if developments are going to affect their inherent rights on their traditional territory.

The Mikisew decision provides First Nations with power to negotiate Impact Benefit Agreements (IBA).

An IBA normally provides employment and business opportunities to communities. IBA's are being negotiated for huge developments, such as diamond mines, gas pipelines and hydro dams.

The value of IBAs reach hundreds of millions of dollars. Often the benefits are in the form of set-aside contracts. As long as a community can build businesses to realize these opportunities, often through partnerships, they have the capacity to expand into other markets and continue to grow.

Non-Native people are fond of saying that First Nations people had every opportunity to become just as prosperous as their ancestors did when they came here. That simply is not true.

For more than a century the Indian Act has prevented individuals from owning homes, First Nations from increasing the value of their land through servicing and taxes, community access to bond financing and contractors from getting bonded and has erected many more barriers to economic development too numerous to list here.

The impediments to business development on reserve are being removed one by one. There are legislation, facilities and organizations in place to allow First Nations to develop their economies. Some legislative examples include the First Nations Land Management Act and the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act. There are also private sector business solutions, including chartered bank loan programs for reserve-based business and infrastructure, and insurance products for on-reserve business. In addition there are self-government agreements and 21<sup>st</sup> century treaties that remove the Indian Act altogether.

All these initiatives have unlocked the potential for First Nation communities to realize the wealth in their land, people and collective force as nations. With every one of these initiatives, First Nation people come one step closer to having the same opportunities that other Canadians enjoy on their land.

The Aboriginal communities' greatest growing resource is its people. The registered Indian population has increased in the last 20 years from 360,000 to 730,000 people. People under the age of 25 make up approximately 65 per cent of that total.

Corporate Canada needs to take a second look at the opportunities presented by the Aboriginal community. Canada's corporations are investing in developing countries in the Caribbean or South America. Aboriginal communities represent the best developing economies in the world in which to invest. Aboriginal communities now have the people, economic facilities and legislation behind them to tap into Canada's economy, one of the best economies in the world.

The growth of Aboriginal economies will dwarf the growth rate of other developing economies.

Mainstream corporations need to plan for the impact of Aboriginal communities and create business plans specifically for the Aboriginal market. Aboriginal nations represent real economies with new tools to grow.

There is still a need for corporate citizenship in Aboriginal communities. In comparison to the rest of society, more Aboriginal people live in poverty and ill health. There are new programs that facilitate both corporate citizenship and business partnerships. The Assembly of First Nations recently launched the Corporate Challenge, and CCAB has the Progressive Aboriginal Relations Program.

These programs provide a better road map for all players to follow.

**Lee Ahenakew is the principal of 4Sight, a management consulting firm that helps Corporate Canada do business with First Nations. [www.4sightconsulting.ca](http://www.4sightconsulting.ca)**



Lee Ahenakew

# Post-secondary education boosts employment prospects

Statistics Canada has announced that by 2017, the Aboriginal labor force in Western Canada will comprise 3.4 per cent of the working-age population overall. Aboriginal persons 15 and older are projected to number close to one million, making them an important pool of workers in a time of anticipated labor shortages.

The study entitled *The Aboriginal Labour Force in Western Canada 2001-2005*, published in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, said Aboriginal (off-reserve) employment grew 23 per cent between 2001 and 2005, compared with only 11 per cent for non-Aboriginal people. But while the unemployment rate gap narrowed during that period, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people remained at 2.5 times that of the non-Aboriginal labor force.

The gains made by Aboriginal workers came in the three largest occupational sectors: sales and service, business, finance and administration, and trades, transport and equipment operators.

The study showed that post-secondary education helps to eliminate the employment gap. Aboriginal people who held a university degree had an employment rate of 84 per cent in 2005, surpassing the rate of 77 per cent among the non-Aboriginal population. The impact of a post-secondary education had the greatest impact for Aboriginal women, who had an employment rate of 85 per cent, compared to 74 per cent for non-Aboriginal women.

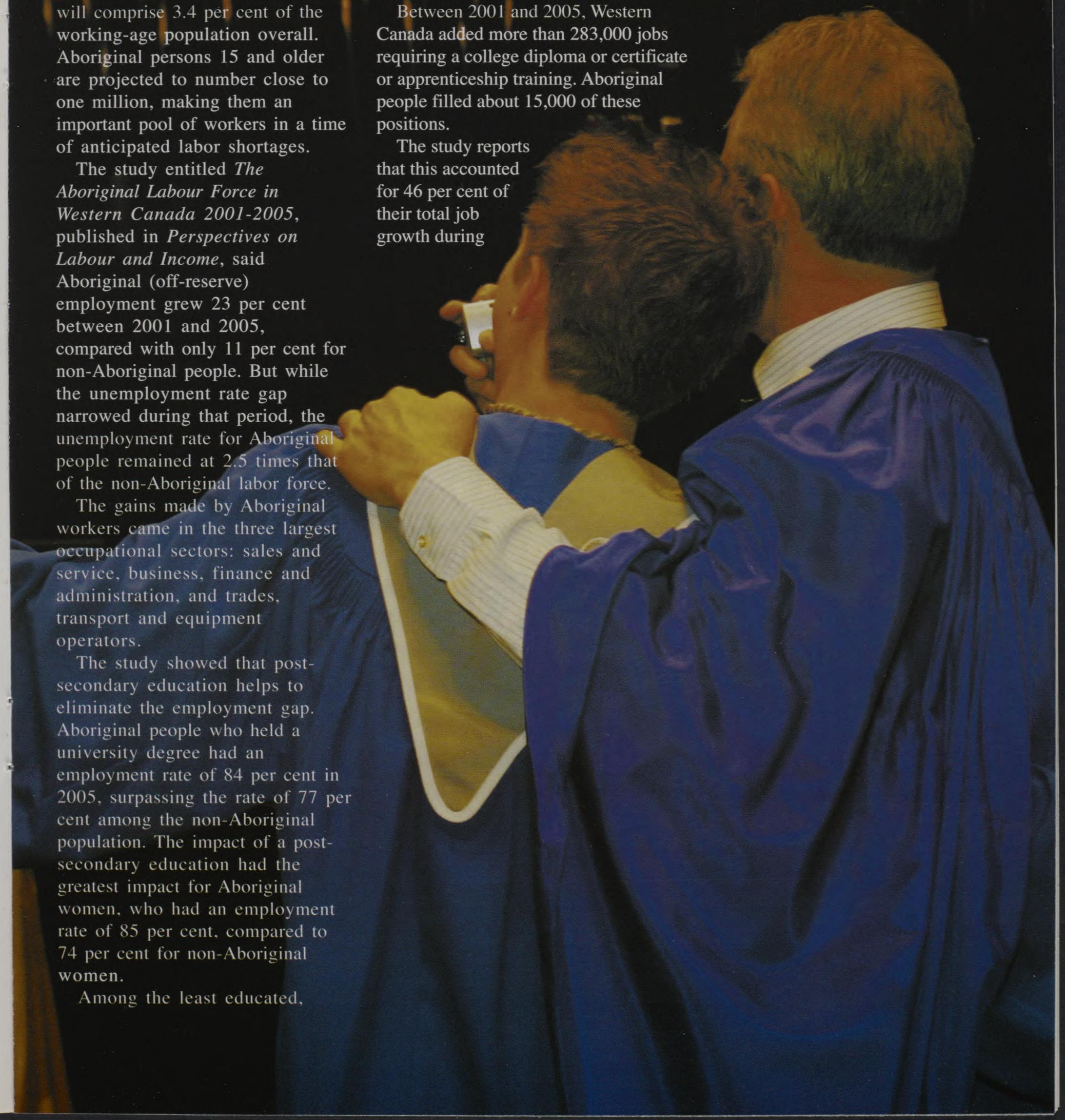
Among the least educated,

those with no high school diploma, employment rates were low for both populations.

Between 2001 and 2005, Western Canada added more than 283,000 jobs requiring a college diploma or certificate or apprenticeship training. Aboriginal people filled about 15,000 of these positions.

The study reports that this accounted for 46 per cent of their total job growth during

these years, and it suggests that Aboriginal workers are starting to fill the need for high-demand skills.





Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) 2007 Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame laureates (left to right) Victor Buffalo, Harry Cook and Garfield Flowers.



Peter Young representing Sodexo (left) receives the company's PAR Award from Albert Diamond, chair of the PAR jury.



Dianne McCullagh with Canada Post (left) and Marc Guay with Frito Lay Pepsico



Gary Norton with CESO (left) and Tom Morrison with CIBC.



Heidi Crann with EDS (left) is presented with the company's PAR Award by Albert Diamond.



Jack Blacksmith with Creeco (left) and Elijah Harper.

## Circle for 2015 National Gala Dinner

Feb. 13, 2007 — Toronto



Harry Cook (left) with Ron Jamieson (centre) and former prime minister Paul Martin.



Irene Lightning, Samson Management (left) with Virginia McKenzie, Northern Ont. Native Tourism Assoc.



Hall of Fame laureates (left to right) Victor Buffalo, Harry Cook and Garfield Flowers being introduced by Jocelyne Soulodre, CEO and president of CCAB.

# Businesses reach out to Aboriginal community

For more than two decades, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) has been working to promote the full participation of Aboriginal people within the Canadian economy. One of the ways the non-profit organization is working to achieve that goal is through its Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program.

Established by the CCAB in 2001, PAR provides businesses with a means of measuring their efforts to develop good relations with the Aboriginal community and helps them set goals for further building those relationships.

The program looks at a company's efforts in four areas—employment, business development, individual capacity development and community relations.

While the main reason companies join PAR is because of the yardstick it provides, involvement in the program has the added bonus of sending a message to the public that a company is committed to having good relations with the Aboriginal community. One of the ways this message is delivered is through the PAR hallmark, a logo that can be used on corporate communications to indicate a company is involved in PAR and at what level of achievement they have reached.

As the list of companies involved in PAR demonstrates, the program can accommodate businesses of any size and from any business sector. Current PAR membership includes non-profit organizations and Crown corporations, businesses in the hospitality, finance, natural resource, communications and information technology sectors, a post-secondary institute, a law firm and a human resources consulting firm.

**Established by the CCAB in 2001, PAR provides businesses with a means of measuring their efforts to develop good relations with the Aboriginal community and helps them set goals for further building those relationships.**

New companies joining the PAR program enter at the commitment level. Then, once they've completed an assessment process, they are placed at either the bronze, silver or gold

achievement level, depending on the results of the assessment.

The assessment helps the company identify which areas of their Aboriginal relations program are working well and which require more attention. Once a company has implemented needed improvements they can repeat the assessment process in an attempt to re-certify at a higher achievement level.

Even after a company has achieved gold standing the tools PAR provides can be used to ensure the company stays on track in its Aboriginal relations efforts. A number of the companies sitting at the gold achievement level have gone through the assessment process again to verify that their Aboriginal relations programs remain on target and have re-certified at gold.

Sodexo Canada, the largest provider of food and facility management services in North America, has recently become only the second company in the PAR program to re-certify at gold for the second time. Sodexo has been involved with PAR since 2001. The company achieved gold standing in 2003, re-certified at gold in 2005 at gold, then re-certified at the gold level again this year.

continued on page 21...

## Help us to honour Aboriginal business leaders

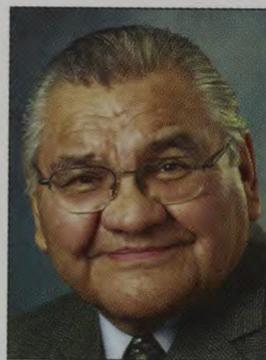
Their success is a beacon, lighting the way for a new generation of young Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Every year, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business welcomes new laureates into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

Please send in your nomination by September 1st for the inspirational individuals who will join the Hall of Fame at our Circle for 2015 National Gala Dinner in February, 2008.

They will be in excellent company, joining our most recent laureates: Chief Victor Buffalo from Hobbema, AB, Harry Cook from Lac La Ronge, SK, and Garfield Flowers from Hopedale, NL. Watch their video profiles at [www.ccab.com/abhf](http://www.ccab.com/abhf).

If you know an Aboriginal business leader who deserves to be recognized, let us know. Download a nomination form at [www.ccab.com/abhf](http://www.ccab.com/abhf), or call us at 1-866-566-3229.

### ABORIGINAL BUSINESS HALL OF FAME 2007 LAUREATES



Chief Victor  
Buffalo

Hobbema, AB



Harry  
Cook

Lac La Ronge, SK



Garfield  
Flowers

Hopedale, NL

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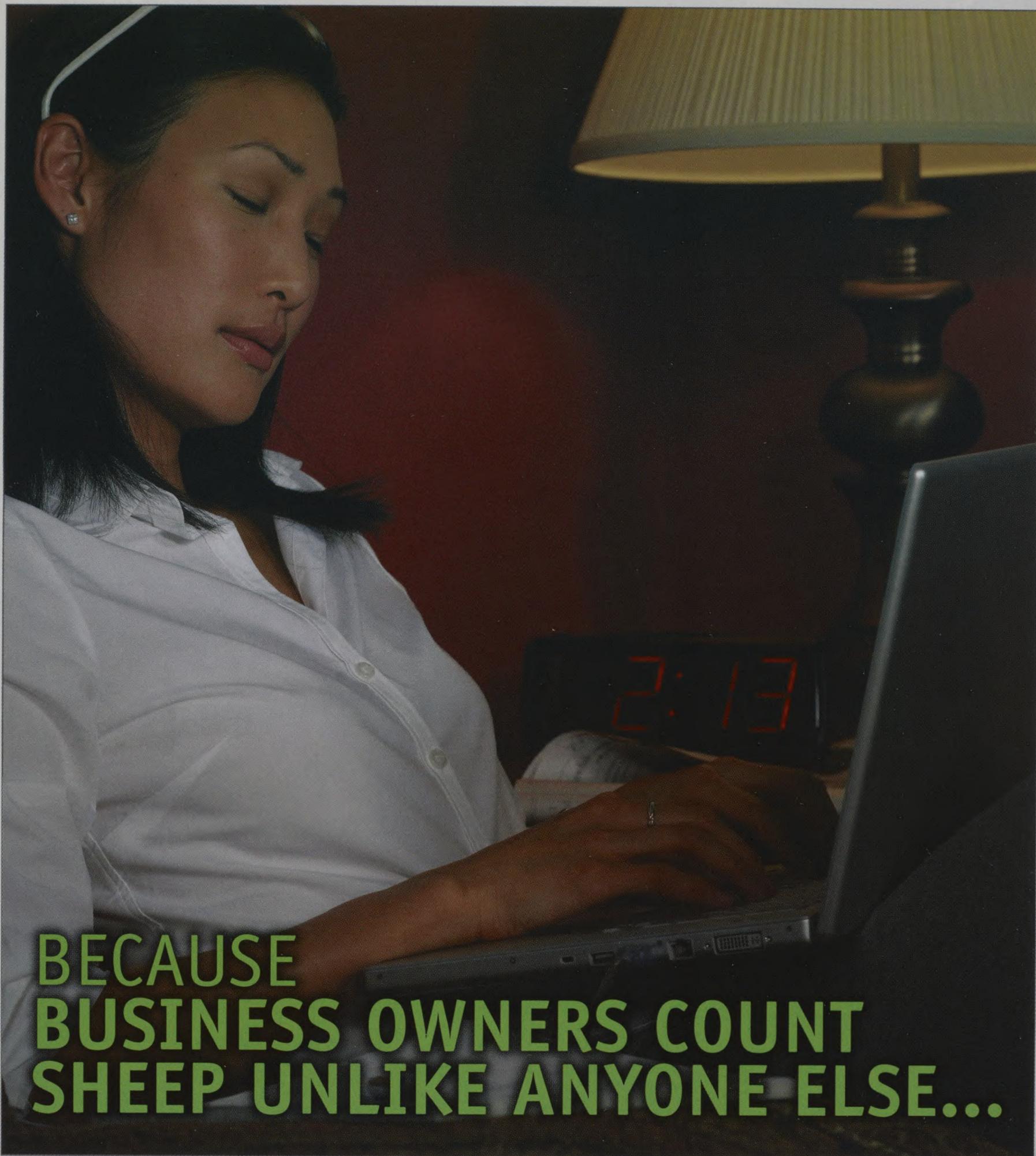
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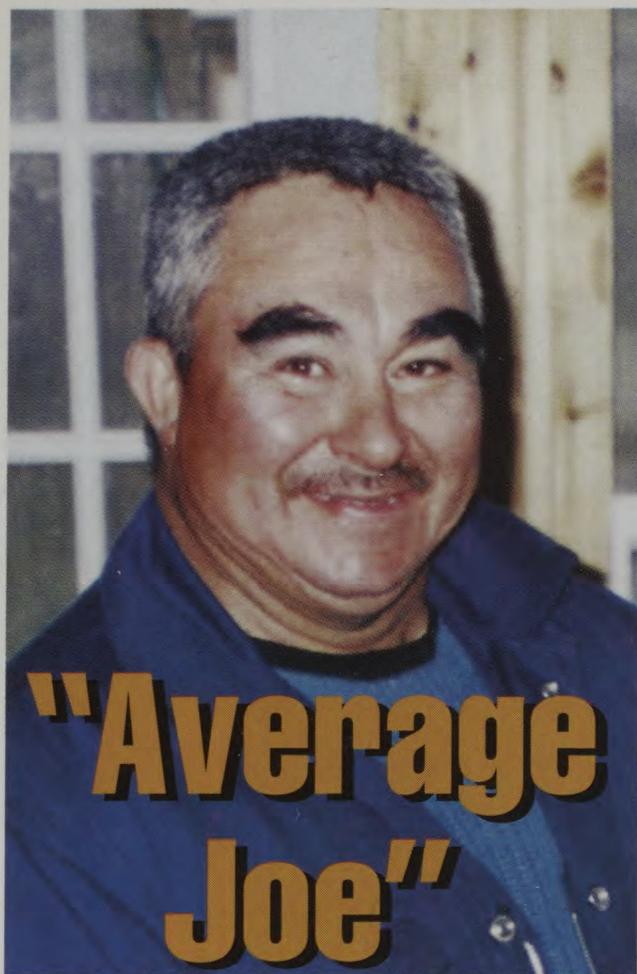
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# "Average Joe"

# Inducted



**O**ver the past four decades, Garfield Flowers has started, owned and operated a variety of successful businesses in the tiny town of Hopedale, Labrador.

An Inuit businessman originally from Sango Bay, Flowers now lives on the coast of Labrador, is the president of Northland Enterprises.

He describes himself as just an "average Joe." But this average Joe was just bestowed with a huge honor, having been inducted into the Canadian Council For Aboriginal Business (CCAB) Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

"I'm just trying to make a living and I'm hoping that other people will follow," said Flowers.

In 1969, he started his own confectionary store, but this was only a side job because running a local weather station was a time consuming affair. Flowers had put in a bid on a contract to run the local weather station. This involved calling in observations every hour to Goose Bay and he happily did this for 14 years. During that time he also began a road construction venture as another side job.

In 1982, as the weather contract was coming to an end, Flowers purchased a building from the now-abandoned radar station and turned it into a general store. He began operations in the fall of 1983 and it is still a thriving business.

While operating all of his businesses, Flowers served as a Hopedale councillor and mayor for 27 years.

He set up Northland Enterprises as a holding company for his activities. He stands to be the biggest landlord in town. The local post office is in one of his buildings.

Thanks to Flowers, approximately 600 residents have phone service because he convinced the phone company to bring service to Hopedale in 1966. At one time he employed

34 local people, which in a small town is comparable to a couple thousand jobs in a big city.

"You can make your own work if you really try," said Flowers, who recognizes opportunity when he sees it.

"There's people here who are crying for wood because it's really cold; it's 30 below. A lot of people are running around trying to buy wood and trying to keep warm, but all of this could've been a different story if they would've got their wood in the summer time when it was warm. They could be right now bringing in wood for themselves and even selling it to their neighbors and making money."

At age 66 and after a quadruple bypass in 2003, Flowers admits that he has slowed down a bit, but he isn't ready to retire.

"I don't intend to retire because my health is a bit alright," he said, despite having to manage diabetes and arthritis. And during the phone interview with *Windspeaker Business Quarterly* at the beginning of February he admitted to suffering from the flu.

"I'm hoping that I will be better to make that trip," he said of the ceremony in Toronto where he would be presented as a Hall of Fame inductee.

"I got to pick up that award and I'm certainly looking forward to it."

The honor, presented Feb. 13, paid tribute to outstanding business leaders who are leading the way into the future, and who serve as role models for young people thinking about a career in business.

He joined Chief Victor Buffalo of Hobbema and Harry Cook of Lac La Ronge who were also honored for their lifetime contribution to Aboriginal business in Canada, the third group of laureates to be named to the CCAB's Hall of Fame.

*By Laura Stevens*



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# Alberta chief honored for Nation's success

**H**aving the right people—educated people, who are allowed to do their jobs and move beyond political interference—is what Samson Cree Nation Chief Victor Buffalo believes is responsible for the success of the First Nations south of Edmonton, and his success as a businessman.

Buffalo was recently named one of three laureates inducted into the Canadian Council

for Aboriginal Business Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame. Buffalo was “honored and surprised” to be included with inductees Harry Cook, former chief of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Garfield Flowers, president of Northland Enterprises of Hopedale, Nfld. But the recognition, Buffalo insisted, isn't all for him.

“I'm not a businessman. I'm a politician and I'm a chief,” Buffalo said. “I feel that I've been at the right place at the right time. And I've made sure that the people in there are the right people.”

Buffalo has been a member of the Samson Cree band council for 15 years, including serving for the past 12 years as chief. His last group of 12 councillors, which includes a combination of business people, university graduates and Elders, has made his job as chief, “to make sure everybody does their work,” easier.

But success of the Samson Cree Nation goes beyond having

the right people. It's also been about the leadership provided by Buffalo, marked by his tenacity and forward thinking.

In February 2005, the Samson Cree Nation began managing its own oil and gas revenue through a trust fund called Kisoniyaminaw (Our Money). The fund was the culmination of Buffalo's 16-year legal battle with the federal government, making the Samson Cree the first Native nation to control its own resource revenue.

Buffalo has put together a highly-qualified group of five people, including lawyer and former Conservative MP Willie Littlechild, to manage the fund, which saw a return this year of 13 per cent. Had it remained federally controlled, said Buffalo, it would only have a garnered a four per cent return. The fund has climbed from \$343 million to \$390 million. Revenue will be used to provide essential services to the Samson Cree people.

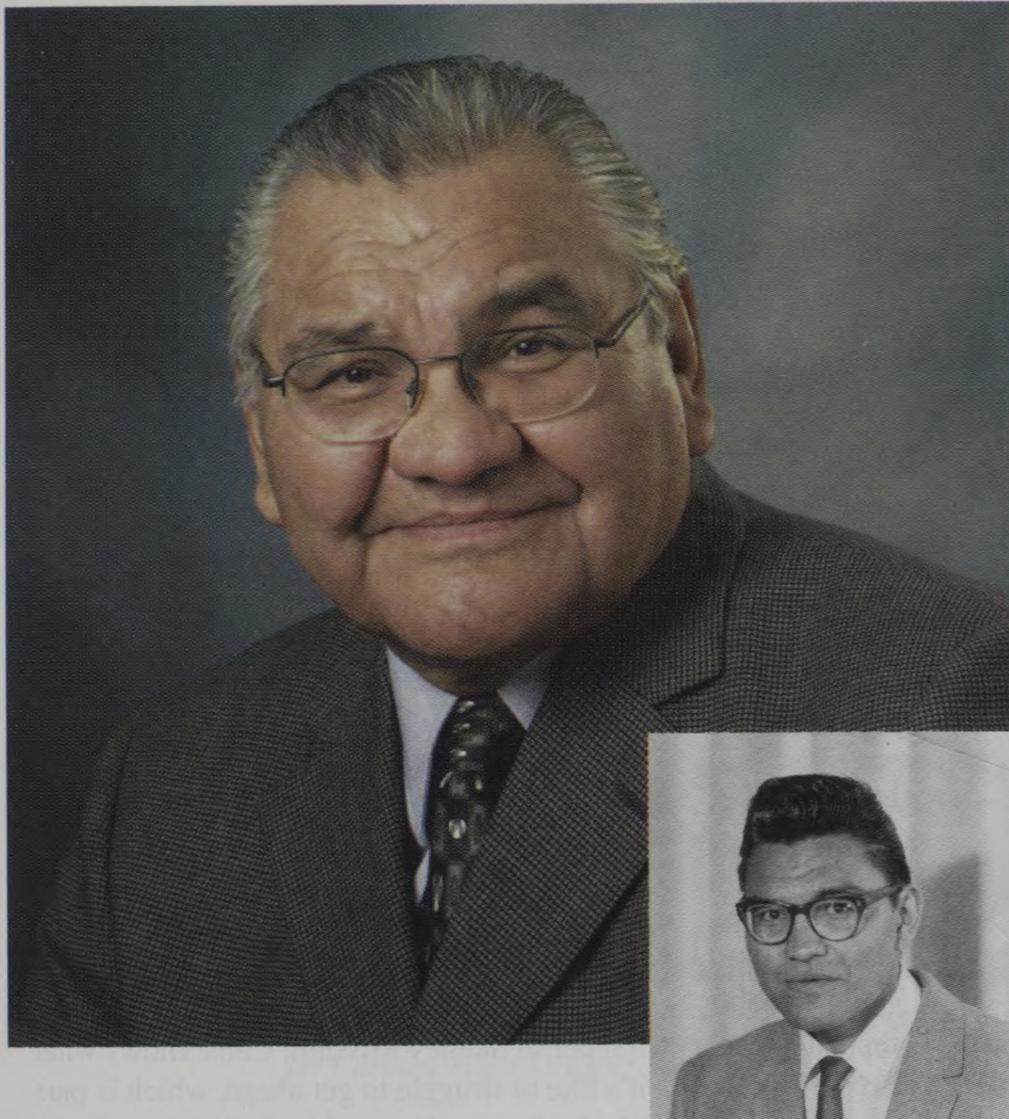
“Revenue Canada will be chomping at the bit to get at (the fund),” said Buffalo. “But we'll sit down and strategize on how we can prevent an attack on the fund that rightfully belongs to the general members here.”

While Kisoniyaminaw is the largest trust fund controlled by the Samson Cree, it is not the only trust fund.

Buffalo was instrumental in establishing the Samson Education Trust Fund in 1980.

“We found out that our people were way behind in education,” recalled Buffalo as to the reasons why the fund was set up. Drop out rates were high and the school system needed upgrading.

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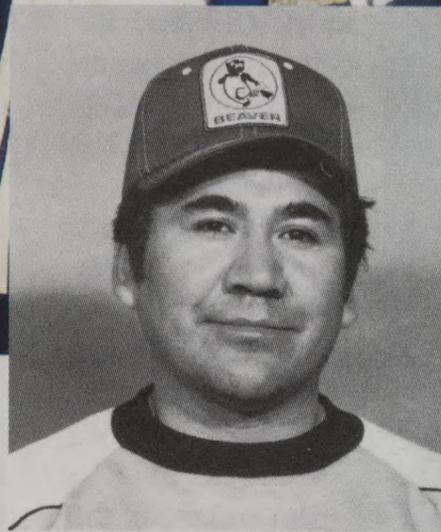
**Congratulations to laureate Mr. Victor S. Buffalo  
on his induction into the  
Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame**



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**Savanna Energy Services Corp. and its subsidiary Western Lakota Energy Services Inc.  
are very proud of their Director Mr. Victor S. Buffalo  
and his deserving honor of distinction in Aboriginal Business**

# Harry Cook: Putting family first



After one term on council, Cook was elected as the band's chief, a position he would hold for 18 years until he voluntarily stepped down

in 2005. Assuming that mantle also put Cook back into the business world. As chief he was also president of the band's economic development arm, Kitsaki Development Corporation (now known as Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership). Kitsaki had begun to make a name for itself through its trucking business, Northern Resource Trucking, but it wasn't until Cook took over that the company truly began its exponential growth.

By the time Cook retired, Kitsaki owned or managed 14 companies, working in areas as diverse as catering, tourism (including a golf course and a hotel), insurance, environmental monitoring and food production (processed meat, wild rice and mushrooms). In addition, local businesses—grocery stores, gas outlets, even a furniture store—had opened up in the band's six communities, allowing band members to work on reserve and promoting economic development on a smaller scale.

"Living in Regina for 13 years really opened

my eyes to how it is that you can compete commercially," Cook said. "Being a politician, it's very important that you keep in mind the welfare of the people that you're responsible for. Today, we (as a band) have a lot of jobs that we have created, both for band members and non-Native and Métis (people). Northerners need opportunities of that type where they live."

Proud as he is of his induction into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame, Cook also knows that he doesn't deserve all the credit for his success.

"The people placed a lot of trust in me over the years," he said. "I also surrounded myself with very capable people over the years, to make sure that whatever I did, we had the capacity to undertake the challenges, solve problems and go forward."

Amongst those trusted individuals is Al Solheim, Kitsaki's director of finance, who has been with the company for 20 years. Solheim describes his former boss as extremely hard-working, and always consistent in his dedication both to his staff and the band membership, no matter what challenges they might face.

"Business can be very cyclical, and any successful business goes through some very difficult times," Solheim said. "He doesn't avoid problems. He takes the attitude that things are going to work out some time in the future, and he'll be a part of that (solution). Harry doesn't give up."

Coming from humble beginnings as a trapper in Stanley Mission, Cook knows what it's like to struggle to get ahead, which is part of why he is so invested in the band's job creation strategies, Solheim said. "He's been through that himself. And at the same time he comes with a lot of credibility when he tells his band members 'If you want to get ahead, you've got to work hard, show up to work early and do your job. And after you've put in your eight hours of hard work, go home and spend time with your family.' He can say that to anyone, because that's what he's done his whole life."

As the chief of one of Saskatchewan's largest First Nations, Cook often rubbed shoulders both with high-ranking government officials and with industry leaders, even more so after he joined the board of uranium giant Cameco in 1992. And this gave him opportunities to both form business partnerships and get support for the band's ventures.

Success in business, said Cook "takes a lot

continued on page 21...

**H**ad Harry Cook been more focused on his career ambitions than on his family, he might never have been inducted into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

In 1978, Cook was a journeyman welder, recently made foreman at a large manufacturing plant in Regina. He was happily married with two small daughters, and despite his professional success, what he and wife Rose wanted most was to go home, back to the northern bush where they grew up.

The family relocated to Brabant Lake to care for Rose's aging parents, and not long after, Cook faced another choice: to continue working as a welder, either by starting his own business (a risk that might not pay off) or by taking a job at a uranium mine (which meant leaving his family), or re-locating the family to La Ronge where there was a job available as the Lac La Ronge Indian Band's housing coordinator. Thinking that La Ronge would be the better choice for his daughters' schooling, Cook took the band job, which set him on a path toward band politics and community development from which he never looked back.

continued from page 20...

of connections, because it's not enough for you to provide services. You've got to know where your supplies are coming from and what it is that your clients like about whatever product you supply and deliver. That's how you win contracts, by performance."

Although his focus is always on the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, especially the creation of new employment opportunities, Cook also sees value both in expanding Kitsaki's geographic boundaries and in, quite literally, sharing the wealth. The band has promoted its food products internationally, winning a Canada Export Award for their efforts, and its environmental services company, CanNorth, recently helped birth a sister company in Panama. Several of Kitsaki's companies are joint ventures with other First Nations, including Northern Resource Trucking and Dakota Dunes. Cook and his successor, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, are frequently in demand as conference speakers, sharing the secrets to Kitsaki's success.

"First Nations people in Canada have always had a sharing attitude," said Cook. Besides, such an approach fits well into his worldview.

"I believe in God, I pray every day. I've been married for 39 years and if you have a strong background like that, you're very committed. You're able to go out and help others."

Even today, two years after Cook's retirement, "he's always promoting (Kitsaki)," said Solheim. "He wants to see things go well with the band membership. That's his friends, his family, his whole life."

At the same time "he's always seen beyond the band, beyond Kitsaki. If there's another northerner he can give a hand to, he'll do that," Solheim said. "He's a very generous guy."

*By Carmen Pauls Orthner.*

continued from page 15...

Also re-certifying at gold is BMO Financial Group, which joined the PAR program in 2004 and attained a gold standing that same year.

Rounding out the list is Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., which joined PAR in 2004 and achieved gold standing for the first time in 2005.

Other companies that have achieved a gold standing in the PAR program are Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries, which has been a PAR member since 2001 and certified at gold in 2006; Xerox Canada, one of the companies that got involved in the PAR pilot project prior to the official launch of the program and that also attained a gold standing in 2006; uranium mining giant Cameco Corporation, which joined PAR in 2001, certified at gold in 2002 and re-certified at gold in 2005; and Winnipeg's Place Louis Riel All-Suite Hotel, which joined in 2003 and achieved a gold standing that same year.

The past year has also seen some movement among PAR members, with two companies completing the assessment process and progressing to a higher level of achievement.

SaskTel is the provincial Crown corporation providing communications services to the people of Saskatchewan. The organization joined the PAR ranks in 2005 and has recently completed its first assessment, placing at the silver achievement level.

Other companies sitting at the silver level of achievement include Aboriginal-owned and operated information technology company Donna Cona, another of the companies involved in the PAR pilot project and which certified at silver in 2001; Scotiabank, which joined PAR in 2002 and achieved silver in 2005; Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, the provincial Crown corporation that manages

gaming across Manitoba, which joined PAR in 2003 and attained a silver standing in 2006; the operations division of Canada Post, which joined the program in 2003 and moved up to silver in 2006; and Western Lakota Energy Services Ltd., which became a PAR member in 2004 and certified at silver in 2006.

Also moving up in the PAR ranks this year is EDS, a global technology services company that provides its clients with information technology and business process services. EDS has been involved in PAR since 2005. After completing its first round of assessment through the program, the company has achieved a bronze standing.

Other companies that have achieved a bronze standing in PAR include IBM Canada, which joined the program in 2006 and achieved bronze standing that same year; Pitblado Barristers and Solicitors, a law firm based in Winnipeg that joined in 2003 and achieved bronze standing in 2006; the World Wildlife Fund, which joined PAR in 2004 and achieved bronze in 2006; and Nasittuq Corporation, a joint venture company responsible for operating the North Warning System, which has been involved in PAR since 2004 and certified at bronze in 2005.

Companies that have joined PAR but haven't yet completed an assessment sit at the program's commitment level. The list of commitment level organizations includes the Delta Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon and Red River College in Winnipeg, which joined the PAR program in 2006; Global Television and the Aboriginal-owned human resources consulting firm Higgins International, which joined PAR in 2005; and Radisson Hotel Winnipeg Downtown, which has been a PAR member since 2004.

*By Cheryl Petten*



## WE CAN EMPOWER LEADERS

IBM is proud to have achieved the first level of recognition for its commitment to Progressive Aboriginal Relations. In an on demand world, individual differences, skills, and backgrounds aren't just important, they're invaluable. IBM is working with profit and non-profit organizations to improve opportunity for Aboriginal people to reach their potential and participate more fully in the Canadian economy. To find out more about IBM's commitment to diversity, visit [ibm.com/diversity](http://ibm.com/diversity).

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# BMO relates to Aboriginal goals

**B**MO Bank of Montreal's proven ability to build mutually beneficial, sustainable relationships with Aboriginal communities, businesses and individuals from across Canada has once again earned it a gold level Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) award from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB). BMO first achieved gold in 2004.

The Aboriginal Banking Unit at BMO was created in October 1992 to contribute to the economic self-sufficiency of Aboriginal peoples across Canada. BMO designs and delivers a range of financial products and services and believes this process will result in the best possible foundation for financial growth, success and prosperity.

Clint Davis, the national director of Aboriginal banking at BMO, is an Inuk from Nunatsiavut, Labrador. He told *Windspeaker Business Quarterly* this is a market of opportunity, a solid market with a great track record.

"BMO is idealistic; we want to assist a community to achieve its financial dreams and impact social environments."

In its assessment of a project, BMO asks itself if that project would result in a viable, feasible business. "They know they are moving in the right direction when a project fulfills the four pillars of PAR: employment, individual capacity development, business development and community relations."

BMO's Aboriginal branch network consists of 11 full service branches and four community banking outlets, which provide basic financial products and services to communities where no banking facilities exist. There is also an in-store branch on Innu territory.

The Aboriginal branches are staffed primarily by members of the community. In some branches,

banking services are provided in the traditional languages of the people being served.

Regarding the need for Aboriginal employees, Davis said the Canadian workforce is aging and by 2015 there will be a critical labor shortage.

"We will only see new growth in new Canadians and Aboriginals," he said. When asked about BMO's criteria for staffing, Davis replied "Do they have the interest? And are they willing to develop the skills?"

Co-operative, community-based initiatives are being undertaken to overcome employment barriers, particularly to improve the job readiness of Aboriginal peoples.

With an eye to the future, BMO invests in Aboriginal youth today, partially via the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY), which provides scholarships.

"Aboriginal employees are a valuable talent pool and we especially want to invest in Aboriginal youth and see improvements in their education," said Davis. He said the reality for some youth who pursue post-secondary education is that they are usually the first in their extended family to get a degree. Many do not have a mentor, guide or parent to help them.

BMO's employee services are, perhaps, unique. Aboriginal sharing circles are used regularly by their employees at all levels of the company to enhance networking and provide opportunities for talking about what's happening in the banking environment. Their staff of more than 30,000 employees across Canada also has access to a lending directive. This document helps staff better understand how to do commercial banking in Aboriginal communities.

Throughout Canada, BMO provides financing to qualified First Nations—without government

guarantees—for projects that have included construction of a hydro-electric generating station, a gymnasium, schools, police stations, sewer, water and housing infrastructure, an irrigation and saw-mill project and natural gas infrastructure.

Because a major concern for all First Nation communities is the provision of adequate, affordable housing on-reserve, BMO, with the approval of a number of First Nations, designed innovative alternative means for the delivery of housing loans on-reserve that do not involve government guarantees. The BMO On-Reserve Housing Loan Program allows qualified members of a qualified First Nation to own their home through access to housing loans for the construction or purchase of owner-occupied, single family dwellings or to finance major renovations to existing homes. Twenty-one First Nations have accessed this program to date.

The BMO On-Reserve Home Renovation Loan Program gives eligible borrowers the opportunity to renovate homes to increase energy efficiency and to create a healthier environment. Members who may have difficulty with credit history may access financing that is secured by the First Nation for minor renovations. Five such programs have been implemented with BMO.

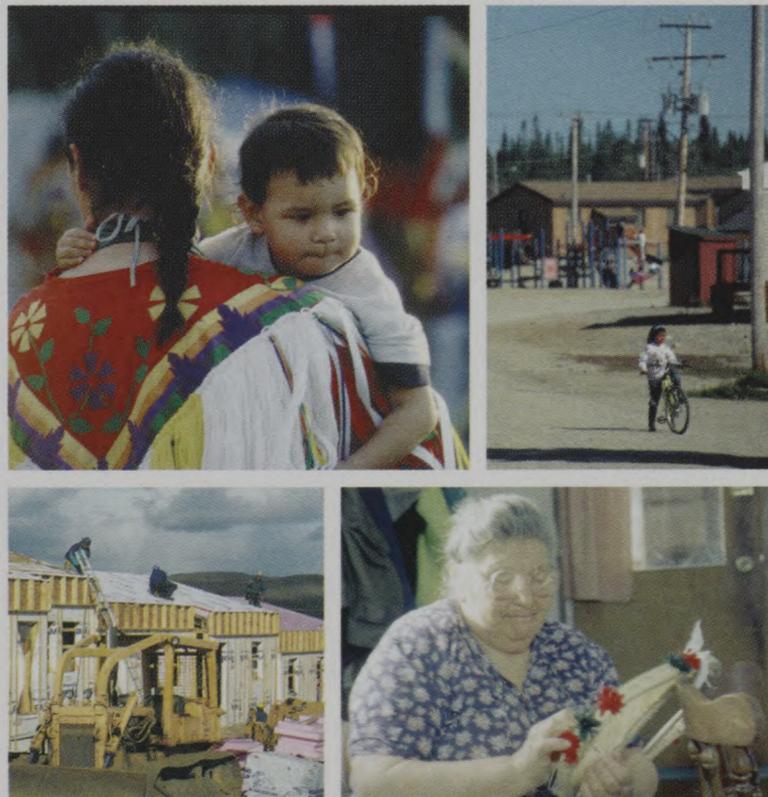
Davis has high praise for his predecessor, Ron Jamieson, who initiated business relations between BMO and Aboriginal communities 15 years ago.

"Ron played a ground-breaking role across corporate Canada when he saw opportunities and built this business. As a result, for us the door isn't shut all the time," said Davis. "Jamieson was a trail blazer who set the tone for the rest of us to follow."

With a \$1 billion relationship with Aboriginal peoples, BMO is well on its way.

*By Catherine McLaughlin*

BMO Financial Group is a strong supporter of CCAB and the initiatives of the PAR Program.



CCAB has honoured BMO Financial Group with a gold level PAR award for working to build mutually beneficial, sustainable relationships with Aboriginal communities, business and individuals throughout Canada.



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# Canada Post delivering on commitment

For years Canada Post has been working hard to develop and enhance its relationship with the Aboriginal community. The Crown corporation has created unique hiring initiatives and has joined capacity building programs, all of which are geared toward seeking out Aboriginal candidates to embark on careers with Canada Post.

In the October 2006 issue of *Maclean's* magazine, Mediagroup named Canada Post as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2007. The recognition came thanks to the commitment Canada Post has demonstrated to engaging more Aboriginal people, and in particular for the corporation's work with the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC), which assists organizations wanting to increase their Aboriginal hiring by compiling an inventory of qualified Aboriginal candidates.

More than 1,500 applications were submitted to Mediagroup from employers all over Canada hoping to gain a spot in *Maclean's* Top 100, so it was a great honor for Canada Post to have been both invited to apply for a spot and to have won recognition.

Canada Post has participated in many Aboriginal initiatives including the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business' Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program. The corporation holds a silver achievement level in the program, designed to help businesses measure the success of their efforts to build positive relationships with the Aboriginal community. Since joining PAR in 2003, Canada Post has increased its number of Aboriginal employees from 1.3 per cent to 1.7 per cent, said Nicole Goodfellow, General Manager, Human Resources Excellence for Canada Post.

Back in 1999, representatives from Canada Post travelled to six reserves in Western Ontario, hoping to encourage Aboriginal people to begin careers with the corporation. "These trips have been a tremendous help in the development of our recruitment strategies and have helped us understand the challenges and obstacles facing the Aboriginal community in job searching," Goodfellow said.

On its Web site, AHRDCC commends Canada Post's efforts and its dedication to hiring more Aboriginal people, stating: "Big companies already recruit at the top universities. Why not at the reserves, with their undiscovered labor pools?"

In addition to hiring more Aboriginal employees, another goal Canada Post set for itself back in 2003 was to create more business development relationships with Aboriginal contractors and suppliers. Goodfellow said Canada Post has been able to achieve this goal.

"We have at the present time a robust relationship with our Aboriginal contractors and suppliers in certain areas, and PAR is enabling us to look at other areas that Aboriginal suppliers can be a part of," she said.

Since 2004, Canada Post has also offered an Aboriginal Education Incentive Award to Aboriginal students who have returned to school after a long absence. Three awards are granted annually including two \$1,000 scholarships for those who have returned to and have successfully completed one year of high school, and one \$1,000 scholarship for a student who has returned to and successfully completed post-secondary education, including vocational and trade skills training.

"Building any type of relationship takes

time and investment. Relationship building with a community takes an understanding of the relationship from both sides. There is an investment then from both sides for it to succeed. I would recommend to other companies to take the time to build a relationship with the Aboriginal community because you meet people and organizations that can help you by sharing their experiences and knowledge," Goodfellow said.

"Canada Post is continuously looking at ways to improve their relationship with the Aboriginal community and our new objective is to build on our success."

by Donna McCorrister-Beyer



Nicole Goodfellow, General Manager, Human Performance Excellence, Canada Post

Canada Post is a proud supporter of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business "Progressive Aboriginal Relations" (PAR) program.



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English: [www.canadapost.ca/Aboriginal](http://www.canadapost.ca/Aboriginal)  
French: [www.postescanada.ca/Autochtones](http://www.postescanada.ca/Autochtones)



From anywhere... to anyone

# EDS Canada moves up the PAR ranks

**E**DS Canada has only been involved in the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program since December 2005, but the company has already made great strides in its efforts to build stronger relationships with the Aboriginal community. Those efforts have recently earned EDS Canada a bronze standing in the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) initiative.

EDS Canada is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the EDS Corporation, a global information technology services company that has been meeting the IT needs of clients in manufacturing, financial services, health care, communications, energy, transportation, government and consumer and retail industries for more than 40 years. Through its work in the PAR program, the company is working to ensure Aboriginal individuals and businesses have a role to play in ongoing provision of those services.

While some companies may claim they are working to include more Aboriginal people in their business operations because it's "the right thing to do," EDS Canada's efforts are motivated less by altruism and more by good business sense.

"For us, it's not just a corporate social responsibility thing," said Heidi Crann, an executive sponsor of diversity programs for EDS Canada. "This is a real cornerstone and key success factor for us as an organization to help us build our business."

Having business ties with the Aboriginal community gives EDS Canada a leg up when it comes time to bid on government contracts, Crann explained.

"Government represents a huge portion of our market in Canada, and being able to pursue and

deliver on government programs is important. And we certainly recognize the increased focus on Aboriginal business components of government business. And so we want to be positioned to win our fair share of that business."

And, given the anticipated growth of Canada's Aboriginal population, building good relationships with the Aboriginal community is also good for business because it helps the company prepare for the future.

"We recognize and understand the population trends in place and the fact that Aboriginals will represent one in five of the future talent pool. And so we need to have a better understanding of the community and how we can reach out to them and get them interested," Crann said.

One way EDS Canada is working to reach out to that future workforce is by launching a bursary program in partnership with the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF), providing funding to Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary studies in the area of information technology.

"And so we're really pleased that we were able to implement that program and work with NAAF," Crann said.

The company also plans to begin work this year to make its workplaces more inviting for Aboriginal employees by instituting a training program for EDS Canada employees and leaders designed to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture.

But EDS Canada isn't just preparing to tap into a potential future Aboriginal labor market. The company also recognizes that the growing population, coupled with an increasing number of Aboriginal people going into business for themselves, means building bridges with

Aboriginal companies is also a good idea.

"From understanding and dealing with Aboriginal suppliers, we recognize that they're making up an increasingly larger portion of the supplier market in Canada as well. And so we do need to ensure that we're reaching out and getting access to the best suppliers in Canada, so we wanted to grow our relationship on that side as well," Crann said.

"We are a large procurer of services and supplies and so we've spent quite a bit of time this past year really looking at and analyzing our current spend and where our suppliers are and who they are."

The company has joined the Canadian Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) and has attended CAMSC-sponsored events to try to increase interest among Aboriginal companies that could become potential suppliers to EDS Canada.

"And we're putting in programs so that we can make some of the Aboriginal suppliers more aware of EDS and what we're looking to procure and become more familiar with our practices and policies. And so we've really done some good outreach on that side," Crann said.

"We've joined CAMSC and we've joined CCAB. And our partnership with NAAF is a recent one. We've also been working with a number of other external Aboriginal consulting agencies and other national level government agencies such as the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada and so forth, just to increase our involvement and awareness," Crann said. "I look forward to opportunities where we can continue to have those relationships and discussions."

*By Cheryl Petten*



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so you can deliver on yours**

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Services de technologie. Solutions d'entreprise**



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# Scotiabank continues to give back to community

There are a number of reasons why building good relations with the Aboriginal community is a priority for Scotiabank. One of them is that it simply makes good business sense.

“First of all, there’s a lot of business opportunity. And as First Nations are growing financially and their needs are becoming a lot more diverse, the bank is recognizing that there’s a lot of areas where we can have business partnerships,” said Michele Baptiste, Scotiabank’s national manager of Aboriginal relations.

“And they’re really starting to see that, as opposed to it being a siloed approach, that an inclusive approach is important. So we’re looking at community involvement, donations, sponsorships, employment, business, all being an important part of what the bank does.”

Scotiabank has been involved in the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program since 2002 and was certified at the silver achievement level in 2005. The program, created by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), helps organizations measure their progress in efforts to develop good relations with the Aboriginal community.

One of the newest initiatives being undertaken by Scotiabank in its efforts to make the pursuit of good Aboriginal relations a priority across the organization is the creation of a national strategy based on the four areas assessed in the PAR program—employment, business development, individual capacity development and community relations.

“What I’m planning on is that each area of the bank would have goals and objectives based on the four key areas of the PAR program,” Baptiste explained.

Although the project is only in the earliest of stages, Baptiste anticipates that once it is completed it will help to ensure progressive Aboriginal relations are “a lot more ingrained into the fabric of the bank.”

In the area of community relations, Scotiabank is continuing to give back to the Aboriginal community in a number of ways.

Scotiabank is sponsor of the MBA bridging program offered by the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), a five-day program that introduces potential Aboriginal candidates to the MBA program offered by the university and provides them with enhanced Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

preparation and with networking opportunities.

Thanks to Scotiabank, all participants in the bridging program will be fully sponsored. The first session of the bridging program is scheduled for May. Scotiabank has also established a \$10,000 scholarship, awarded to an Aboriginal graduate student accepted in the U of S MBA program.

Scotiabank is also helping Aboriginal youth attain post-secondary education through involvement in the CCAB’s Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth.

Scotiabank is sponsor of Futures in Business, providing scholarships of \$2,500 to Aboriginal students enrolled in business-related university or college studies.

Many of the projects Scotiabank sponsors are national in scope, while others, like the retreat for at-risk young Aboriginal women the bank sponsored in the London, Ont. area, are local, community-based initiatives, Baptiste said.

Scotiabank also works to create good Aboriginal relations by providing Aboriginal businesses with the financial services they need to be successful.

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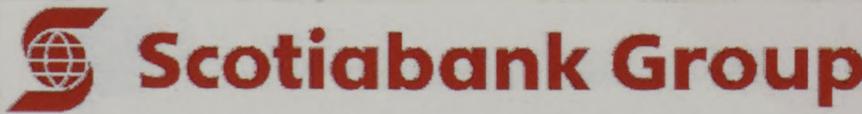
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 **PAR**  
Progressive Aboriginal Relations Program

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Mark Clayards, director of First Nations banking in Scotiabank's global transaction banking division, said it's been his experience that when working with Aboriginal clients creating a relationship is an important part of the process.

"I think the Aboriginal businesses and chief and councils, they definitely respect the relationship much more than in the general business world. So once you're providing a service the relationship means something. In the world of, for example, dealing with municipalities in Canada, the relationship, at the end of the day when they tender their business every five years, the relationship doesn't really hold lot of value. It comes down to price—who's going to provide the most for the least—and they're going to go with that supplier. I think that businesses with good business experience tend not to be a slave to the last dollar. My experience is that I see the same mindset when dealing with Aboriginal business, that they truly value the relationship. So you don't have to have the absolutely best price. They know that they're getting what they pay for and they want quality so that quality comes at some degree of cost."

The way Scotiabank does business—by consulting with the client on their specific banking needs—helps the financial institution to build those relationships with their Aboriginal clients, Clayards said.

"We're not trying to simply peddle the flavor of the week product; we're trying to truly bring a solution that fits what the customer is trying to accomplish and to be in the same sort of mind-space as the client. To understand what they're doing, where they're going, what their objectives are and then match all of the different solutions that we might be able to bring, narrow it down to what truly is the best solution for the given situation. So it just provides greater value. It typically means more questions, more answers,

more understanding of the client's situation ... When I'm working with different agencies in the Aboriginal business world, that's how I and my team will try and approach it."

Clayards believes it's important for Scotiabank to make a conscious effort to reach out to Aboriginal businesses and support them with banking services that meet their specific needs.

"We believe that it's a market that has been under-served in the past. And we believe that all of the banks can do a better job in servicing the First Nations' business requirements, ourselves included, and we're working towards

that end. I think there's going to be some tremendous growth in that market space over the next 10, 20, 30 years. And so from a business standpoint, from our standpoint, it's a growing market. An expanding market with a lifetime like that is a place that we would want to be focusing some attention," he said.

"I think that we've seen good, steady growth in our ability to do business with companies in the sector. My objective is to make sure that we continue that growth and, hopefully, accelerate the pace as time goes along."

*By Cheryl Petten*



**University of Saskatchewan master of business administration (MBA) candidate Monica Goulet made history on Nov. 27 when she became the first recipient of the Scotiabank Aboriginal Business Education Award. The award is part of the new Scotiabank MBA bridging program at the University of Saskatchewan, a five-day program that helps prepare potential Aboriginal students for enrollment in the university's MBA program. Pictured (left to right) are Dr. Grant Isacc, Dean of the U of S College of Commerce; Elder Stan Cuthand; Monica Goulet; and Janice Church, Scotiabank district manager for Saskatchewan and Manitoba.**



Silver Level Achievement



Proud to have achieved the Silver Level standing in the Progressive Aboriginal Relations program for the second year in a row.



# Good Aboriginal relations just part of good business

**S**odexo Canada has been involved in Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) since the early days of the program, but building relationships with Aboriginal communities has been part of the way the company does business since long before it got involved in the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) initiative.

“Sodexo has been working with the communities for over 20 years, even before PAR was PAR ...so it’s in our DNA,” said Peter Young, vice-president of Sodexo Canada’s Remote Sites division.

The largest provider of food and facilities management services in North America, Sodexo offers up a wide variety of services, ranging from food services to plant maintenance, to an equally diverse client base.

The Remote Sites division, the component of the company where the tenets of good Aboriginal relations are most deeply entrenched, handles contracts in three main areas, providing services to resource-based clients in the mining, hydro-electric, oil and gas or forestry sectors; to hospitals; and to educational and training facilities.

There are four pillars that support Sodexo’s



**Representatives of Sodexo and one of the company’s Aboriginal partners, Metco, shake hands to seal the deal on an agreement to extend their business relationship.**

efforts to ensure Aboriginal communities are reaping benefits from work Sodexo does within their territories, Young said. Those pillars coincide with the four areas assessed in PAR—employment, business development, individual capacity development and community relations.

“So basically the objective is to work with

the community and develop that business opportunity for the community where there are potential projects which will benefit the community,” he said.

In each of its partnerships with Aboriginal communities, Sodexo first established the relationship with the community and then worked to secure the contract alongside their new business partner.

“The key is to work with our partner so that we can run a business that benefits the community. And that’s what is very important for us, that there are financial benefits that are returned to the community from that business.”

Ensuring people from the community have opportunities for employment within projects is also a priority for Sodexo, and Young is understandably proud of the company’s success in this area.

“We can boast as an organization that a minimum of 55 per cent of our employees on most projects are Aboriginal, and we have some projects that we have 100 per cent, which is unheard of,” he said. “And when I say 100 per cent, it includes the management, not just hourly-wage employees.”

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## Our Corporate Values

As a global leader in food and facilities management services our employees and clients are at the center of all our actions; through our people, we are collectively reaching success. We constantly aim at improving the tools and training programs for our employees, always with the objective of providing the best and safest working environments. We offer various individual and collective recognition awards and programs to celebrate each contribution in living our corporate values which consist of **Service Spirit, Team Spirit and Spirit of Progress.**

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Making every day a better day



# Workforce goals just step in the right direction

**S**askTel is leading the way provincially and nationally in terms of recruiting Aboriginal employees and implementing business practices that take Aboriginal people into consideration.

So says Michelle Englot of corporate affairs at the Saskatchewan Crown corporation that delivers phone, Internet and cable service to the province.

Englot makes that declaration based on a program with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB).

CCAB measures such success through its Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program. PAR aims to increase Aboriginal participation in the economy, and the programs gives participating businesses a "benchmark" to compare themselves to in terms of Aboriginal relations.

That's why SaskTel joined in 2004.

"At the time, [PAR] was just getting off the ground in Western Canada," said Englot, so SaskTel didn't have a lot of businesses in the province to compare itself to. According to CCAB's Web site, there are two other Saskatchewan businesses participating: Cameco Corporation and the Delta Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon. There are 25 businesses participating in Canada.

PAR measures Aboriginal relations in four areas: employment, which includes numbers, but also the type of employment and opportunities for advancement; business development, including the nature of contracts and supplier relations; individual capacity development, which measures what kind of access people

have to training and education; and community relations, such as community involvement and partnerships.

There are four levels of commitment in the PAR program: commitment, bronze, silver and gold, based on the extent the business achieves solid Aboriginal relations. When companies join, they begin with a "statement of intent," and then work towards meeting objectives measured by the four criteria of PAR.

"SaskTel recognizes that the Aboriginal population is a growing workforce," explained Englot, so the company has an Aboriginal workforce strategy. "We want it representative of the Aboriginal population of the province."

Of SaskTel's 3,800 employees, presently almost eight per cent identify as Aboriginal. Englot said that by the end of this year, the company wants that number to be 9.4 per cent, which is about 357 employees.

Englot said young people are the target. For example, in the summer of 2005, 28 of the 101 SaskTel summer students were Aboriginal. SaskTel also operates a mentoring program with three schools: Nutana Collegiate, Scott Collegiate and Miller Comprehensive high school.

Englot said the idea is to encourage Aboriginal youth to stay in school so that they will go on to higher education in the fields in which SaskTel requires employees. SaskTel, which targets schools with higher diversity so it can target Aboriginal young people, also has a job-shadowing program for students.

SaskTel partners with the community in other ways as well. The company works with

community groups to encourage youth to volunteer, and in exchange, they get tickets to an event.

One such group is the North Central Family Centre (NCFC) in Regina. The NCFC offers around 50 programs that target a variety of areas—anything from education, job placement and counseling to parenting skills and sports and recreation, all for free—to everyone living in Regina's inner city.

In one case when NCFC partnered with SaskTel, kids cleaned up an area and painted a fence. In exchange, they were given tickets to a Saskatchewan Roughriders game.

SaskTel's community involvement play a big part in helping the corporation reach its PAR goals. The company is also working on the business side of things.

"Not only is the Aboriginal population our potential workforce," said Englot, "but also our customers."

SaskTel has an entire sales team dedicated to serving Aboriginal customers. There is a call centre in Saskatoon that employs people who speak Cree and Dene to better serve the customers who speak those languages.

Englot said SaskTel is also working on getting Aboriginal suppliers.

For the Aboriginal employees already working at SaskTel, there is the SaskTel Aboriginal Employee Network (SAEN). Englot said SAEN gives those employees a voice and a venue to discuss the issues important to them and their communities.

But such initiatives aren't just targeted at the Aboriginal segment of SaskTel's workforce. SaskTel has a "lunch and learn" program that everyone is invited to take part in. As an example, a sweatlodge ceremony was held at one lunch, so that everyone could learn about that traditional Aboriginal practice.

Through all of these initiatives, SaskTel has achieved silver status with CCAB's PAR program. But SaskTel isn't stopping there.

"The Aboriginal population will continue to grow, and we intend to be representative of the province's Aboriginal population," explained Englot, "so we intend to grow our Aboriginal workforce."

And that's why it's important for SaskTel to target young people. Statistics Canada projects that within just 10 years, a quarter of Saskatchewan's children will be Aboriginal, and tapping into that group will be key to filling a labor shortage and replacing workers in an aging population.

By Darla Read

**The SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence are part of SaskTel's ongoing commitment to actively encourage Aboriginal youth to stay in school so they can go on to higher education in the fields in which the corporation requires employees. This photo is from the 2005 awards gala.**



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Sodexo also strives to ensure that local businesses have opportunities to benefit from the projects by subcontracting work out to them, Peter Young said.

"As an example, we would subcontract transportation for employees. Laundry services could be another example."

Training is another important part of Sodexo's efforts to build capacity within the Aboriginal communities with which it partners. That training begins before the contract begins in order to prepare employees for the work ahead, and continues throughout the life of the project. All this training gives workers the tools they need to climb the Sodexo corporate ladder or to find employment outside of the company. It's not unusual for a Sodexo employee to eventually be hired by the client on a project, Young said.

"And even they can leave us to go back to the community and start their own business. And I've seen that, where they've gone and they've opened a restaurant."

In the area of community relations, the fourth pillar of Sodexo's approach to good Aboriginal relations, the company regularly supports community projects benefiting youth and dealing with promotion of heritage, Young said. The support can range from providing support for a gifted young athlete, to providing financial assistance for construction of a heritage centre.

By supporting Aboriginal youth in these ways, and through other initiatives, such as involvement in CCAB's Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth program—the company sponsors the Sodexo Future Star scholarship and bursary program for Aboriginal high school, college and university students—Sodexo is helping these young people to prepare for the employment opportunities that will come their way.

By helping to train the workforce of the future, Sodexo is also assisting itself by helping to create the workforce the company

requires. Such initiatives will go a long way toward ensuring Young can achieve one of his goals.

"I want to get more people into the management ranks," he said. "I want every project where we have a partnership to have Aboriginal managers."

Linda Langlais is with Piekukami Inuatsh Development, the economic development arm of the Council of the Montagnais of Lac-Saint-Jean in Quebec, just one of the 15 Aboriginal organizations from across the country that Sodexo has partnered with. Langlais shared her comments about the relationship that has formed between her organization and the company in Sodexo's most recent PAR application submission.

"Not only does Sodexo respond to our needs, they continuously strive to anticipate them as well. This helps us prepare for any challenges we might encounter. Simply put, they are everything a partner should be. They have earned our complete trust. Sodexo truly values client satisfaction and their actions speak volumes about their commitment to us," Langlais said.

Sodexo joined the PAR program in 2001 and attained gold status, the highest level of achievement in the program, in 2003. This year Sodexo reached another milestone with PAR, becoming just the second company to re-certify twice at the gold achievement level.

But recognition through programs like PAR is not the reason Sodexo has made developing positive and mutually-beneficial relationships with Aboriginal communities an integral part of the way it does business.

"It makes sense for us to work with the communities which are in the vicinity of the projects. It's on their land. They have the rights to those contracts. And the people who live there have the right to work on those contracts," Young said. "That's our belief. And that's why we do it. It's as simple as that."

*By Cheryl Petten*



**Training is another important part of Sodexo's efforts to build capacity within the Aboriginal communities with which it partners. That training begins before the contract starts and continues throughout the life of the project.**

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Today, the Samson Cree Nation boasts many university graduates and has at least three doctorate graduates.

In 1981, Peace Hills Trust (PHT) was created. At that point in time, said Victor Buffalo, who was put in charge of the project initially, First Nations people were having difficulty getting financing from traditional banking institutions.

"It was to assist First Nations, and I think we have accomplished that," said Buffalo. PHT not only gave financial assistance to the Samson Cree people, but also to businesses from other First Nations. The PHT Kelowna branch is doing well commercially, providing services to non-Aboriginals.

"We're starting to do that in Alberta. We're getting into mainstream lending."

Another trust fund is on the horizon. Council is in the process of establishing a socio-economic trust.

"We need to deal with economic development because our unemployment rate is so high," explained Buffalo. The fund will be used to address housing issues, as well as provide loans to members. Funding for the socio-economic trust fund will come from companies that are generating profits, such as Peace Hills Trust, the Samson malls in Lake Louise and Hobbema, and Peace Hills General Insurance.

"Companies were set up a long time ago because we knew oil and gas would run out at some point in time so we had to seek alternative means of generating wealth."

Education is the key to the Samson Cree's success and to Buffalo's own success. The education of band councillors is very important.

"We need to educate our council members coming in. We've got to educate them and enhance their knowledge.

"We need to have qualified people running our programs." Outside managers can be brought in, but Buffalo said they won't retire in Hobbema on reserve and after two or three years they'll move on.

"We have to get our own people trained. Getting the right people in place and having them do the work, that's my philosophy."

At this point, Buffalo doesn't expect to seek another term as chief, but he hadn't expected to run last time either.

"But I've been here too long. I want to do something else."

How would he like to be remembered?

"That I did my work," he said.

*By Shari Narine*

# Syncrude is a leader in Aboriginal employment initiatives

The Wood Buffalo region in northeastern Alberta enjoys a large complement of Aboriginal people in its general population. Syncrude Canada, the world's largest producer of crude oil, recognized early in its existence that making a meaningful commitment to sharing with the Aboriginal population the opportunities present by virtue of the company's presence in the region was necessary.

Based in Fort McMurray, Syncrude established an action plan in 1974, before the company began production, for Native training and counselling, setting targets for Aboriginal recruitment, as well as cultural awareness courses for supervisors.

Support and counselling services for Aboriginal employees were also initiated. The company recognized that oil sands development would drastically change the character of the region and the impact of the oil sands on the traditional way of life.

Alain Moore is spokesperson for Syncrude and said that from the beginning, it was important for local people to take part in the opportunities that the development of the Athabasca Oil Sands would bring to the area. The company not only hired Aboriginal people, but also actually helped launch a number of successful Aboriginal enterprises with the idea that they would become competitive in the marketplace, and they have.

"We've found that the Aboriginal employees and companies with whom we work have proven to be world-class business leaders. At

the end of the day, they provide quality services that are on par or better than other competitors in the industry," he said.

And Syncrude's commitment shows little signs of lessening. In 1992, the company made a promise to do at least \$30 million a year in business with Aboriginal-owned firms, and volumes have continuously exceeded that target, with 2006 seeing a total of \$1 billion.

Through its Aboriginal development program, the company focuses on six key commitment areas: corporate leadership, employment, business and community development, education and training, and the environment. It is one of only eight companies in Canada, and the only oil sands company, to be accredited at the gold level in the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) Program of the Canadian Council For Aboriginal Business, which measures corporate performance in First Nations, Inuit and Métis employment, business development, capacity development and community relations.

"Syncrude employees need to be highly skilled, so we do have educational minimum requirements, and we are active in the Alberta apprenticeship program, recruiting those who are looking for a trade, whether it's welding, electricians or numerous others," Moore said. "We have an Aboriginal recruitment officer who visits the schools and urges the youth to finish high school to ensure a promising future, whether it's with Syncrude or not."

Neighbouring Aboriginal communities include Janvier, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay,

Anzac and Conklin. Building strong connections with the people living there has been a priority for the company, with event sponsorship, educational support, and business and economic development being realized.

This support includes the awarding of 14 scholarships

towards post-secondary education of \$2,000 each.

"Eligible students are in engineering and information technologies, but also in business, nursing and office administration," he said. "Since 1989, we have awarded \$290,000 to 152 students and the number continues to grow each year."

Syncrude also encourages non-Aboriginal suppliers to employ Aboriginal people and sub-contract work to Aboriginal companies. What's more, when awarding a contract, preference is given to a local Aboriginal firm when all other factors are equal. Syncrude is a founder and active member of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association, which promotes the development of First Nations and Métis companies in the region, and its membership has grown exponentially since it was established in 1993.

Aboriginal employees at Syncrude total more than 10 per cent of the workforce, which brings the number to more than 400, said Moore. Since 1979, an employment program for residents of Fort Chipewyan has existed. It flies workers into Fort McMurray for their work shifts, houses them in Syncrude-owned accommodations, and then flies them back home for days off.

The company also respects and accommodates the cultural needs of Aboriginal employees when it comes to work schedules, providing compassionate leave when family members are ill, and allowing for seasonal work opportunities when people want to work their trap lines in the winter.

"Our attrition rate for Aboriginal employees is actually lower than for other employees, and that's a huge business value. We are hiring locally so they have a strong network of family and friends close by and are happy to consider long-term employment with us," he said.

Syncrude has received huge benefit from its employment of Indigenous people, concluded Moore.

"As a responsible operator, encouraging the tremendous human resources talent that the Aboriginal communities have provided for us has been advantageous. They have proved that they are capable and skilled and ready to take part in economic development. They are valued and appreciated employees."

*By Heather Andrews Miller*



# Where promising futures come naturally.

Nature has provided for generation upon generation in Alberta's Wood Buffalo region. Since Syncrude's operation began we've believed in the importance of working with our Aboriginal neighbours to create promising futures. We do this through partnerships that emphasize dialogue and an abiding respect for traditions. Together we continue to create new opportunities for many. That's why we've been industry leaders from the beginning—building strong relationships with people and innovating in all areas of oil sands development. Go to [syncrude.com](http://syncrude.com) to find out how.



**Syncrude**  
Securing Canada's Energy Future

The Syncrude Project is a joint venture operated by Syncrude Canada Ltd. and owned by Canadian Oil Sands Limited, ConocoPhillips Oilsands Partnership II, Imperial Oil Resources, Mocal Energy Limited, Murphy Oil Company Ltd., Nexen Oil Sands Partnership, and Petro-Canada Oil and Gas.



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