

# The Aboriginal BUSINESS REPORT

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BUSINESS RISES  
TO MARKET  
CHALLENGES

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**NORTHERN PROGRESS:  
THE NUNAVUT STORY**

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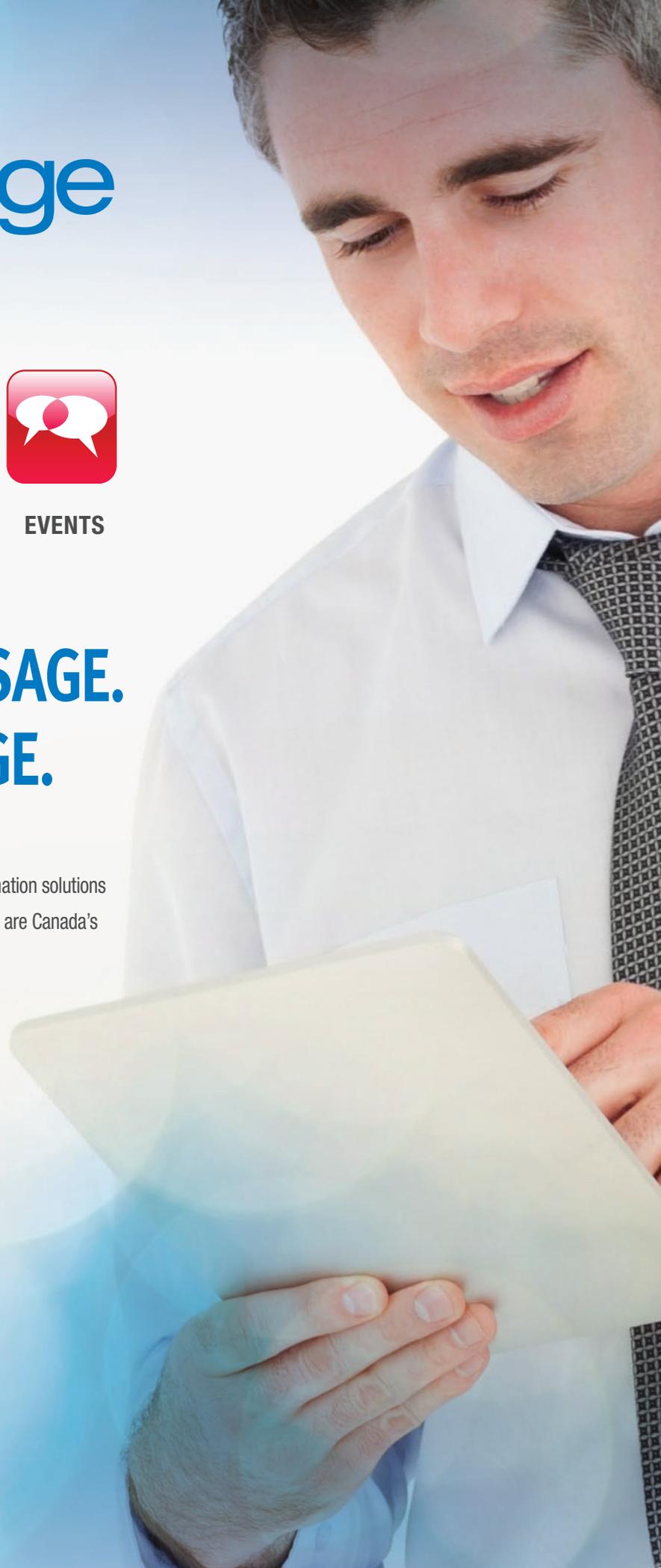
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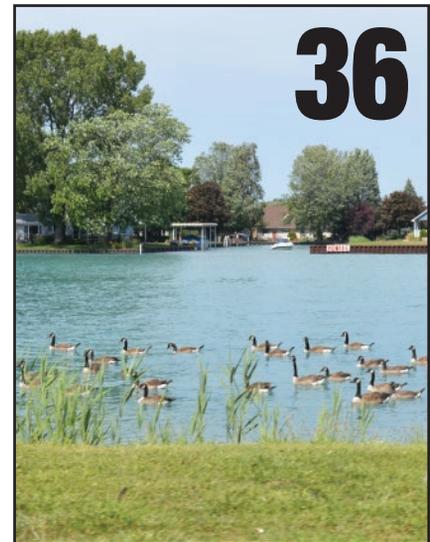
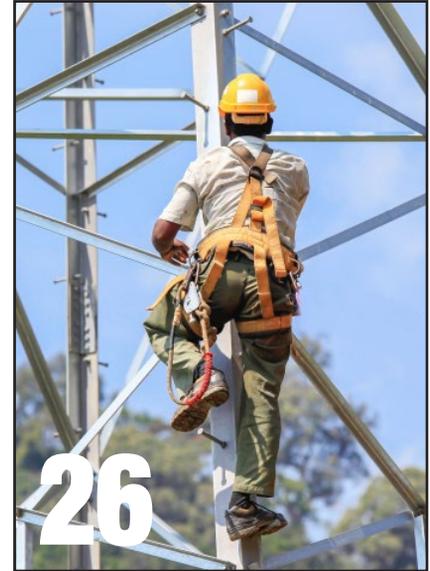
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# Contents



## Features

### **12 THE NUNAVUT STORY**

Nunavut's collective approach to building economic and business opportunities

By the Honourable Peter Taptuna, Premier of Nunavut

### **16 NUNAVUT: ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT**

Promising future ahead for Canada's northernmost territory

By Matthew Bradford

### **22 MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION**

Aboriginal mentorship programs prepare young entrepreneurs for success

By Matthew Bradford

### **26 BUILDING BEST PRACTICES**

Canadian utilities tap into CCAB's PAR program to forge relations with First Nations

By Tom Venetis

### **30 BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS**

Aboriginal business leaders draw on traditions to develop partnerships

By Max Skudra

### **34 PATH TO PROGRESS**

First Nations communities set up corporate models that prioritize engagement

By Max Skudra

### **36 COLLISION COURSE**

Henry Ford, Walpole Island, and the impact of the automobile

By Paul-Emile McNab

## Departments

**9 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**40 CCAB SNAPSHOT**

**44 UPCOMING EVENTS**

**46 PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES DIRECTORY**

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J.P. GLADU  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

**W**e at CCAB are very proud of the second edition of the *Aboriginal Business Report* aptly titled "Aboriginal Business — Scaling New Heights." And what better way than to highlight such a bold headline to celebrate the great business accomplishments of our people? This includes this year's recipient of the CCAB Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) award: the Penticton Indian Band Development Corporation.

From the Skaha Hills quarter-billion-dollar exclusive community development, to the building of literal bridges, to the economic opportunity next door in the City of Penticton – the Penticton Indian Band Economic Development Corporation embodies the excitement that AEDC development is fueling across the country through new opportunity and partnerships.

We have the opportunity to embrace some of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Report that focus on economic development. The report called for "meaningful consultation" and "equitable access to jobs, training and education opportunities in the corporate sector." Our AEDCs are strong drivers of Aboriginal economies as well as the non-Aboriginal economy. When corporate Canada contributes to building vital partnerships with Aboriginal business, they are in fact building reconciliation.

We see the business lens as a direct means of empowering our communities and businesses by providing opportunities to direct source contracting. When we get more training in front of our people, we strengthen our demographic. This is truly an asset that the entire country must recognize and it must meaningfully apply the resources needed in order to realize the full potential of Aboriginal business.

Aboriginal business is on the march from coast to coast to coast, as witnessed by the innovation and strength of the business sector in Nunavut. It is supported by a government commitment to identify new markets and promote natural advantages.

On the heels of National Aboriginal Day, CCAB hosted a roundtable on AEDCs joined by the Ontario Minister for Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer, as well as prominent members of the Canadian business community. The minister announced the launch of a new procurement program in tandem with the official launch of CCAB's *Community and Commerce Ontario* report.

What made the event unique is that CCAB research has been instrumental in informing government programming that reflects realities on the ground in Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal businesses. It is a true example of the potential for reconciliation when

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

government listens to Aboriginal peoples directly. CCAB's research ensures Aboriginal businesses have their own statistics reflecting their needs and concerns, powering decisions that affect their lives.

The research is based on interviews with the CEOs and presidents of AEDCs across the province. This important research seeks to understand what makes these AEDCs function, what they need to grow, and what hurdles need to be overcome to reach success.

We all have a responsibility to contribute to the positive conversation around empowering Aboriginal people through business. This highlights the need to not only rely on CCAB Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) companies, but to go beyond to ensure all companies understand the importance of building relationships with Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

The entire supply chain, from the primary producers to all goods and service providers, should be considering PAR. Our PAR companies should think about giving extra points on the 'scorecard' to other PAR companies in their supply chain, as well as to our Certified Aboriginal Business (CAB) companies to amplify the importance of Aboriginal relations across the country in all sectors. With everything else being equal, companies that also tow the line through their Aboriginal procurement policies should benefit with contract opportunities ahead of those who don't. As Aboriginal business continues to grow, so too do the demands and complexities we need to address on the road to continued success.

Aboriginal business is scaling new heights in ways that mainstream Canadians are unaware of. CCAB is committed to not only being a bridge to new partnerships but to

highlighting Aboriginal business accomplishment. I encourage you to attend our Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation Conference taking place November 26 in Saskatoon. This conference will break boundaries and provide your company with an opportunity to network and promote engagement between corporate Canada and Aboriginal EDCs. For more information, check out our website at [ccab.com](http://ccab.com).

Our continued business success is as evident as the cover of this month's *Aboriginal Business Report*, featuring the proud faces of Aboriginal business at its best.



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# NORTHERN PROGRESS: THE NUNAVUT STORY

BY THE HONOURABLE PETER TAPTUNA, PREMIER OF NUNAVUT

NUNAVUT'S COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING ITS ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



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When I was asked to contribute to the *Aboriginal Business Report*, I wanted to paint a picture of the realities of Nunavut and showcase our people and their impact on our economic future.

In November 2013, we embarked on Nunavut's fourth assembly. We are a young and growing territory, and today I serve as its third premier. It's a humbling task and I am grateful for the trust and confidence our people have placed in my leadership, and the leadership of all my colleagues through our distinctive consensus government.

The undertaking of bringing Nunavut on a level playing field in terms of economic and social wellbeing to that of other jurisdictions in Canada is complex. This complexity often gets lost in images of our majestic landscape. There is an undeniable beauty and a harsh reality that most Canadians gather from the occasional feature story that can never quite capture our full perspective.

Our population is comparable to a small town in southern Canada. However, it is spread across 25 communities that cover one-fifth of the country. In a small town you can build a hospital, schools and infrastructure to service all 30,000 people. In Nunavut you need at least 25 of each to provide equal service. When we look back at the time of division from the Northwest Territories, we inherited aging infrastructure, and as a result, everything we do today — from increasing social structures, communications to physical infrastructure — comes at a greater expense.

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Nonetheless, there has been real growth across Nunavut in the last 16 years. We are very proud as Inuit and as Canadians. It is a remarkable story how we became Nunavut. It's one of our biggest achievements as a people. It started in 1953 with the first petition to create Nunavut, which came from my hometown of Kugluktuk. We lobbied Canada about increased mineral and prospecting activity taking place on our land for which we had no recognized rights as Inuit. At the time, it was not customary for Inuit to speak up. But of those 30 original signatures on that first petition, I'm proud to say my father, Alex Taptuna, is there among them.

As a collective, we successfully negotiated the right to self-government. Nunavut enjoys a thriving arts community that is rich in tradition. Our artists are recognized internationally for their ability to masterfully carve soapstone, write music and direct award-winning films. We have a number of successful entrepreneurs, lawyers, nurses, and even a veterinarian and young folk studying medicine. It has also inspired and nourished Inuit activists who have championed causes from sealing to climate change.

Some of our most notable people include Tanya Tagaq, a singer who won Canada's Polaris Prize, and Jordan Tootoo, an NHL hockey player. There are many more individuals that equally contribute to our land. What all these folks have in common is that they are all proud Inuit with their culture rooted here in Nunavut.

Our youth are our future and we need that future to include the best possible supports for success, which ultimately support our economy. It is challenging when the cost of food is high and parents are rightly uneasy with our current education system. We've since made changes to standardize the curriculum across the territory and incorporate more culturally relevant information. There is nothing wrong with learning about Canada's first

prime ministers, but we want to ensure our youth know about their own leaders too – the people that helped make Nunavut a reality. We are also looking long-term at the possibilities of a Nunavut university, so we can offer more post-secondary education at home.

Of note is that we're on the edge of economic growth and becoming a treasure chest for investors – despite

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## REGIONAL PROFILE

the fact that not long ago, we had little economic activity. This is important, because Nunavut holds some of the wealthiest high-grade metal deposits in Canada; we are teeming with gold and other metals. In our short history, we've moved from zero to an emerging economy where we now contribute over \$300 million into southern jurisdictions just through our resource sector. This means we are going to see an explosion in job opportunities in the near future.

We need to balance growth with the connection to our land to protect our most fragile ecosystems. We aren't going to stop moving forward, and we need to continue positioning our people to harness opportunities.

We have survived for thousands of years in the harshest environment and have gone through industrialization in a 40-year period, where the rest of the industrialized world has had 200 years to adjust.

## CHALLENGES

Today, we face a housing crisis and estimates put our need at over 3,500 units. Our federal colleagues understand our infrastructure deficit. Homes are overcrowded and it is common to see upwards of 10 people living in a two-bedroom structure. Most homes are serviced by trucked water with water tanks that couldn't possibly sustain the demand of residents.

Overcrowding leads to stress amongst families and creates optimal conditions for things like community-borne illnesses and tuberculosis to flourish. There are stresses that come with lack of employment, high cost of living, the inability to afford food, and alcohol abuse. We experience the highest suicide rate in Canada. Each life lost has a profound impact on everyone in our communities.

The southern parts of Canada benefit from supports such as shelters, food banks, recreational centres, movie/ arts centres, and even community transportation systems. Yes, we have some of these supports in our communities, but not nearly to the degree accessible in southern Canada.

The obvious question one may ask is, "How are we going to fix things?"



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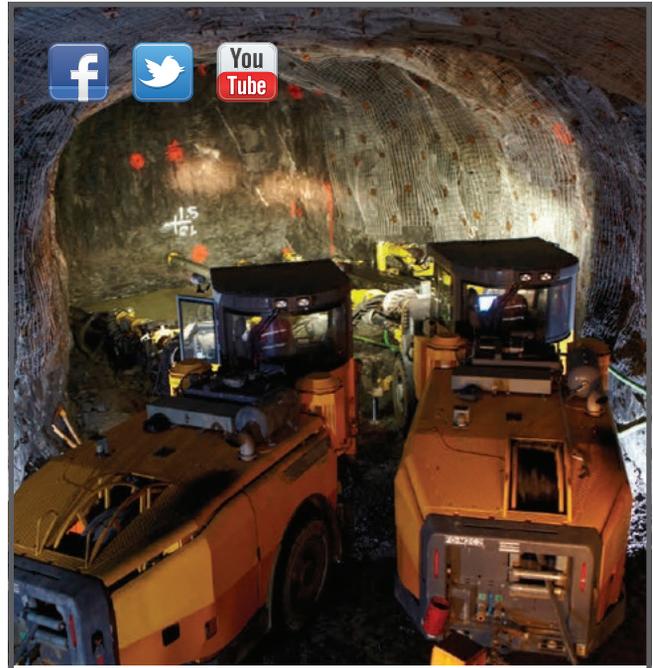


The answer is not as simple as the question. We have the opportunity to make a real impact if we stick to an achievable mandate that doesn't spread us too thin. The way moving forward is to work together. It requires the support and collaboration of municipalities to do their part, federal partners to continue to aid in key investments, and cooperation with Inuit organizations, industry, and with those who elected us to represent them.

There are many Nunavummiut who are leaders in their community, and economically we are growing. Our resource sector is beginning to exceed other provinces. And, we recognize that with growth, we need to make sure our communities are ready through education and community wellness. We want our people to benefit and participate in our achievements and future opportunities.

The outcome of our communities is in the hands of our collective leadership, and communities, the private sector, government and non-government organizations must represent that leadership. Change is fostered by partnership. ■

Photos courtesy of the Government of Nunavut



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## FAST FACTS

**Name meaning:** Inuktitut for "our land"

**Became a territory on:** April 1, 1999

**Premier:** Peter Taptuna

**Population:** 36,886 (as of April 1, 2015)

**Size:** 2,038,722 km<sup>2</sup> (1,877,787 km<sup>2</sup> land / 160,935 km<sup>2</sup> water)

**Proportion of Canada:** 20.4%

**Capital:** Iqaluit

**Official languages:** Inuit (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), English, French

**Main industries:** Mining, resource development, fishing and hunting, arts and crafts, tourism

Sources: *The Conference Board of Canada's Territorial Outlook, July 2015 and the Government of Nunavut*



# NUNAVUT: ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

BY MATTHEW BRADFORD

PROMISING FUTURE AHEAD FOR CANADA'S NORTHERNMOST TERRITORY



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**EARTH MATTERS**

**N**unavut's 2015 economic forecast looks promising, with numerous projects under development. According to analysts, the territory's real gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 3.8 per cent in 2015, outpacing Canada's 1.5 per cent predicted growth and surpassing that of other provinces and territories. This follows Nunavut's real GDP growth of 6.2 per cent in 2014 and 11.5 per cent in 2013, compared to Canada's growth of 2.4 per cent and 2.1 per cent, respectively.

"Our forecast is quite positive for Nunavut this year as we are expecting real GDP growth that is much stronger for Canada as a whole," says Marie-Christine Bernard, associate director, provincial forecast with the Conference Board of Canada.

The territory's mining sector continues to fuel its growth. It represents the largest private sector contributor to Nunavut's GDP at 17.1 per cent, and mining output is expected to increase by 7.2 per cent in 2015. This performance is owed in part to activity at the region's Meadowbank mine, which reached record output in 2014; and the May River mine, which produced its first load of iron ore in September 2014.

Potential expansions to Meadowbank and Mary River also look likely to bolster sector activity, as will the operations of the new Meliadine mine near Rankin Inlet in 2020. Meanwhile, mining exploration is predicted to rise to \$174.3 million in 2015, representing a 21 per cent increase over 2014.



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## REGIONAL PROFILE

Nunavut's construction sector is also pulling its weight. In addition to the aforementioned mining projects, the sector is being driven by large-scale developments such as the \$143-million Canadian High Arctic Research Station, currently in construction and due to open in 2017; a \$300-million upgrade to the Iqaluit international airport (due 2017); and a new \$40-million aquatic centre in the City of Iqaluit. Thanks to the federal government's decision to raise the territory's borrowing limit from \$400 million to \$650 million in the 2015 budget, other infrastructure projects are also anticipated.

"Construction has been enjoying exceptional growth since 2012 and the near-term outlook remains positive," says Bernard, noting that while public investments are currently high, construction activity will slow down next year as many of these projects reach completion.

Elsewhere, the territory's fisheries sector continues to thrive. In 2014 alone, fisheries harvested \$92 million in revenue and the industry grew by 16 per cent. The sector is expected to increase by another 14 per cent in 2015. It will benefit from \$7.2 million in total investments from the Government of Nunavut's Department of Environment and other agencies



Photos courtesy of the Government of Nunavut

towards multiple fisheries science and research projects.

Further growth is anticipated in 2015 for Nunavut's services sector (0.9 per cent growth); transportation and warehousing (11.8 per cent); professional, scientific, and technical services (5 per cent); and education and health (2.9 per cent).

Naturally, this activity is influencing Nunavut's labour market. And while employment was down in 2014 by 400 jobs, 105 will be created in 2015 and 200 more in 2016. This will stabilize

the unemployment rate at 12.4 per cent over the next two years.

"With strong prospects for new mine development, labour markets will benefit greatly from the new construction activity and continued exploration of the mineral resources," reports the Conference Board of Canada's 2015 *Territorial Outlook* study.

Combined, Nunavut is expected to post a budget surplus of approximately \$23 million in 2015-16. It will mark the seventh consecutive surplus for the territory. ■



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# MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION

BY MATTHEW BRADFORD

## ABORIGINAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS PRIME YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

**T**he strength of tomorrow's Aboriginal business community relies on the success of today's entrepreneurs. And achieving that success means providing future leaders with the knowledge, skills and advice they need to thrive in today's challenging business climate.

"Aboriginal-owned businesses across Canada are growing, and mentorship for Aboriginal entrepreneurs can be the critical piece that helps them develop internal capacity, and plan for long-term sustainability," says Joseph Bastien, senior manager, programs at CCAB.

That guidance is needed now more than ever as opportunities open up for small business owners across Canada. According to Wendy Harris, CEO and president of the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), arming young business people with the right skills is all the more critical today.

"Many communities have the opportunity to engage in large



economic opportunities, so it's key that (young people) have the skills and ability to plug into the activities related to those projects around them – such as supply chain or transportation, for instance," says Harris.

CESO, a not-for-profit organization, provides economic development

expertise and business advisory services to Aboriginal communities through senior- and executive-level "volunteer advisors." With a population boom now happening among Aboriginal communities, Harris says the time is ripe to help young, talented entrepreneurs become drivers for growth and prosperity within their respective communities. "With economic power comes choice and the ability to chart one's future, so we need to be preparing young people to engage effectively in the economy," she notes.

### MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Nurturing young entrepreneurs is a responsibility that falls on many. For its part, CCAB leverages the wisdom and experience of its membership to help budding business people, and it does this through its Aboriginal Business Mentorship Program.

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Developed in 2008, the program connects senior executives from industries throughout Canada with small business owners in Aboriginal communities who have moved beyond the start-up phase and are poised for critical growth. "We've been doing this program for more than seven years, and we're proud to say we've seen some notable successes," reports Bastien.

CCAB's mentors play a critical role in that success. Among them are David Abbott and Alicia Dubois, two of the program's newest recruits helping enterprising Aboriginals navigate the ups and downs of business development.

For Dubois, assuming a mentorship role came naturally. As national director of Aboriginal financial services at Scotiabank, Dubois herself benefited from informal mentorships throughout her own career. As such, she recognizes the need for similar programs for Aboriginal youth who

don't necessarily have access to the same corporate connections.

"Aboriginal entrepreneurs do not have the benefit of a large organizational structure that affords them the opportunity to engage in such organic, natural mentorship relationships," explains Dubois. "For this reason, it is particularly important for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to have access to mentors they can relate to professionally, personally, and culturally.... I hope to provide to others the same support, encouragement and network growth that my mentors afforded me."

For his part, Abbott recognizes the program's importance as it relates to the Aboriginal community and his own experience. Sharing knowledge across generations, he suggests, is part of the Aboriginal genetic makeup. "Historically, Aboriginal people have always shared knowledge from one generation to the next; it's in our DNA," he says. "For me, I have always

enjoyed the coaching aspect, and working with people who are always willing to meet you halfway and learn more."

#### CONCERTED EFFORT

Organizations like CESO and Futurpreneur Canada are just as active in contributing to the development of up-and-coming Aboriginal businesses. CESO, for example, has been working within Aboriginal communities for nearly 50 years.

The organization draws its strength from a volunteer roster of highly experienced professionals from the private and public sectors. CESO volunteer advisors act as mentors, sharing the wealth of knowledge they've accumulated over their careers with the next generation. "It's important to connect our volunteer advisors with young businesses to help scale them up and build their capacity so that they are able to meet their own business goals going forward," says Harris.

CESO employs a holistic and collaborative approach to Aboriginal entrepreneur mentorship. Its volunteer advisors work closely with clients, taking the time to fully understand their priorities, needs and goals, and together they create a plan of assignments that guide future work. "We take a mentorship and advisory approach that is different from pure consulting, and one that is truly based on sharing and transferring knowledge and skills," explains Harris. "We know this framework lends to long-term sustainability as it ensures



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## MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

our clients build their own skills to meet their business objectives without creating dependencies.”

This approach characterizes Futurpreneur Canada’s mentorship philosophy as well. Yet where CCAB caters to businesses that have been in operation for multiple years, Futurpreneur Canada targets start-up companies taking their first steps into the business world and often encountering challenges that

can prove overwhelming without additional guidance to help them through.

### CRITICAL SUPPORT

According to Futurpreneur Canada CEO Julia Deans, mentors are a critical asset in this early stage — not just to help business newcomers overcome typical start-up stumbling blocks, but also to give them the emotional support to carry on despite these stresses.

“Mentorship is as much around building their skills and networks as it is around building the emotional side and developing the confidence to carry on and pick yourself up when things go wrong and take a hard look at why things went wrong,” says Deans. “Before someone takes the plunge, (young business people) need a big amount of confidence boosting as well as skills boosting. They often don’t know what they don’t know, so a mentor can help them fill in those gaps.”

Like CCAB and CESO, Futurpreneur Canada works closely with Aboriginal community leaders to ensure these mentor partnerships are supported and fostered at all levels. It’s not always an easy sell, yet Deans says cultural attitudes are shifting, opening more doors for youth leadership. “People who worry about power now coming more from money than knowledge are seeing the benefits of having more young people staying and building businesses in their communities,” she notes.

Beyond the need for community support, the success of Aboriginal mentorship relies on continued investments from Canadian leaders in a position to invest in these initiatives and support Aboriginal business. While many Canadian companies are taking up the challenge, Bastien says there’s always room for more support: “We need corporate Canada to indicate their participation as mentors in the program and to promote the development of Aboriginal businesses in Canada.”

Mentors like Abbott agree that Canada’s corporate leaders have a greater role to play in the long-term success of these programs, especially those with the size and influence to bring other partners on board. “The challenge is to get major companies engaged in this process and utilize the resources and expertise that they have to build these relationships with younger people in the Aboriginal community,” explains Abbott.

In the meantime, organizations like CCAB, CESO and Futurpreneur Canada are making a significant difference to the future of Aboriginal entrepreneurs. And they’re well poised to do so for years to come. ■

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# BUILDING **BEST** PRACTICES

BY TOM VENETIS

## CANADIAN UTILITIES TAP INTO CCAB'S PAR PROGRAM TO FORGE PROGRESSIVE RELATIONS WITH FIRST NATIONS

Canadian companies are quickly learning that deepening relations with First Nations can be a winning business proposition. Utility companies, in particular, are increasingly involving First Nation communities in their projects and providing more business opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and workers.

Many of them are making this happen through CCAB's highly successful Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program. Launched in 2001, PAR is an online management and reporting program that has supported progressive improvement in Aboriginal relations at numerous organizations across the country.

Participating companies are provided with a framework to track and measure performance around Aboriginal relations, and a certification component ranks their corporate performance at a bronze, silver or gold level. There is third party verification of each company's assessment, based



on four key performance areas: employment, business development, community investment, and community engagement.

Bruce Power, a nuclear generating company that produces more than 20 per cent of Ontario's electricity, is

one Canadian utility that's used PAR to strengthen its Aboriginal relations. It first achieved Silver certification in 2012, and last year was among 12 companies in Canada to be awarded with Gold certification. PAR, says a company executive, provided the utility with the guidance it needed.



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"The (2012) review provided a structured report that highlighted both our areas of strength and weakness in Aboriginal relations," explains Mike Briggs, manager, First Nations and Métis relations, corporate affairs, at Bruce Power. "We learned (that) there were areas of Aboriginal business development that would benefit from a more concerted focus."

The utility set out to improve these areas, which it did – thanks in large part to information provided in the review. "This provided a 'road map' to improvement," notes Briggs, "so by 2014 we felt we had made significant

progress and chose to undergo a second review, which resulted in us achieving Gold level distinction."

PAR identified key areas of growth in business development with the supply chain. It helped the utility determine if its suppliers were fully or partially Aboriginal-owned, and for those that weren't, it spurred the utility to promote PAR principles. "Some specialized industries, like our own, do not have a lot of Aboriginal-owned suppliers that can readily meet our needs; however, we do not see that as an obstacle (because) we try to instill the same principles of

the CCAB PAR program in suppliers who do business with us: Do they promote the principles of the CCAB within their own companies? Are they aware of CCAB and what it is trying to accomplish? Do they hire Aboriginal peoples and have policies in place to support that kind of action?"

**REFINING THEIR APPROACH**

At the other end of the country, BC Hydro has also actively participated in the PAR program. The utility signed on in 2008, and was awarded with Silver certification the following year. Today, it is well on its way to Gold. The PAR program, says Rebecca Clapperton,

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## LAUNCHED IN 2001, PAR IS AN ONLINE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING PROGRAM THAT HAS SUPPORTED PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT IN ABORIGINAL RELATIONS AT NUMEROUS ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

law and Aboriginal relations with BC Hydro, helped the utility refine its approach in forging relations with First Nations groups.

"In committing to PAR Gold certification, we launched a company-wide plan to reach that status which meant focusing on areas to invest attention and teamwork," says Clapperton. "That meant embedding Aboriginal relations into BC Hydro's decision-making structure; maintaining Aboriginal hiring goals and strengthening our (Aboriginal) retention and advancement goals; sustaining Aboriginal contracts and procurement levels; and refining reporting structures to better communicate success."

In the last fiscal year alone BC Hydro engaged with 189 First Nations and Tribal Councils on consultations involving 83 capital projects, and in the 2014 calendar year it procured \$130 million in goods and services from Aboriginal vendors.

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is yet another Canadian utility reaping the benefits of the PAR program. A relatively new participant, the utility is in the process of having its application reviewed for certification. "What I (found) attractive about the PAR program is that it forces you to look at yourself," says Ted Gruetzner, vice president corporate communications and relations with Ontario Power Generation.

Projects that went into the utility's application include work with Lac Seul First Nation on the Lac Seul/Obishkokaang Wassiganikewigaming Generating Station in the Moose River Basin – a development partnership with First Nations where both parties share in revenue and risk. Another is work with the Moose Cree First Nation on the Lower Mattagami River project in the Moose River Basin, where OPG worked with First Nation businesses to involve Aboriginal apprentices.

The utility's work on the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station refurbishment project also involves First Nations. The project will create some 3,000 positions for qualified trades people, of which 20 per cent will be apprentices. OPG will actively reach out to First Nations communities to open those positions to Aboriginals.

The utility also sought input from the First Nation community on other matters tied to the project. "We had 20 First Nation groups attend a seminar where we walked through the project and where we listened to what they had to say," says Gruetzner. "We were told that we were not doing testing on plants that were important to First Nations. From them, we got a list of plants to test."

The upshot? Working at bettering their relations with First Nations has been a winning proposition for utility companies across Canada. And CCAB's PAR program has helped make that possible and paved the way. ■



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# THE POWER OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

BY MAX SKUDRA

ABORIGINAL BUSINESS LEADERS DRAW ON LONG-HELD TRADITIONS TO DEVELOP BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS



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**R**elationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses are often studied as if they were something new. While the rise of communications technology and global markets has certainly raised the stakes of these partnerships, what makes strong business relationships has not.

Current research undertaken by CCAB suggests that Aboriginal business leaders in Ontario approach business relationships today in a manner that has proven to result in strong relationships in the past. To better understand what strong Aboriginal business relationships look like, what can history teach us?

Growth and expansion remain the primary purposes of any business relationship, and Ontario's First Nations have a long history of sustainable market engagement. Today we might call it 'capacity-building' but people and nations have

partnered with each other for centuries to do and acquire things they could not do themselves. Indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes sold fish and game, exchanged furs and traded snowshoes and other goods for items of European manufacture like kettles, cloth and "pork, flour, potatoes or clothing," as outlined in Charlotte Gray's "Sisters in the Wilderness."

Conversely, provisioned and guided on his journey across Upper Canada, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, along with settlers and other officials, relied extensively on Indigenous peoples and their knowledge of the land and resources to survive. In the 1840s and 1850s, Aamjiwnaang (Chippewas of Sarnia First Nation) Chief Joseph Wawanosh partnered with individuals from Saugeen First Nation to develop a commercial fishery. In Sarnia, Wawanosh purchased barrels, salt and fishing nets which he sent to Saugeen and which returned to him full of whitefish. In an era of

intense economic control and oversight, selling their catch to neighbouring storekeepers allowed both communities a measure of self-sufficiency and independence. In all of these instances, a focus on mutual benefit and equal exchange guided relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Communication, both written and verbal, remains a vital part of any relationship. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, diplomatic and trade relations between Great Lakes Nations and the British were represented by an agreement known as the Covenant Chain of Friendship. Council meetings between Aboriginal leaders, traders and officials all began with mutual declarations of goodwill cemented by exchanges of gifts and wampum. Wampum belts or strings containing Aboriginal understandings of agreements complemented the written versions of documents produced by Europeans. Before entering into new discussions, communities frequently “read” the contents of wampum records to officials to remind them of what both parties agreed to in the past. Discussions commenced to reevaluate these agreements, thereby renewing the relationship until the next gathering. Frequent face-to-face meetings and open, honest communication prevented misunderstandings from tarnishing the relationship.

**RAPPORT & RESPECT**

Long-term business relationships extend beyond contractual agreements and are guided by reputation, rapport and respect. Treaties, while they are contractual in the sense that they are binding on both parties, were not originally intended to be static, and do not contain all aspects of a relationship. During negotiations for one of the first treaties in Upper Canada after the War of 1812, Anishinaabeg leaders in southwestern Ontario requested payment in money and clothing, a blacksmith and a farming instructor for a term of 50 years, with the intent of achieving self-sufficiency. Though discussions continued over



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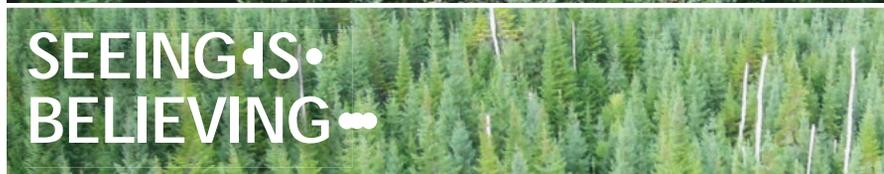
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## BUSINESS RELATIONS

a period of nine years, the final treaty did not contain these terms. Because trust and confidence were ultimately broken, future relationships were jeopardized.

Trust and respect are paramount in any relationship Aboriginal businesses may have with governments, corporations or other stakeholders. Ultimately, individuals are the face of the organizations they represent. Respect and trust are not automatic but earned over time as parties work together and gain confidence in one another.

While there were always unscrupulous individuals around, Anishinaabeg leaders in southwestern Ontario, the majority of whom did not speak English, avoided them by forming mutually beneficial partnerships with each other and with trusted

individuals to access and acquire specialized skills. These individuals took the time to write and translate documents on their behalf; they respected Aboriginal cultural differences and championed their efforts to others without asking for anything in return. Historically these relationships have been social and sometimes familial. Canada's Metis community is a testament to the roles that personality and affability play in creating lasting relationships.

Equal partnerships between people who trust and respect each other and who remain committed to dialogue build strong relationships. History tells us that Aboriginal entrepreneurs have successfully employed similar strategies for more than two hundred years. Despite a history of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the youngest, fastest growing segment

of Canadian society continues to reside in Aboriginal communities reserved by their ancestors in the 19th century.

Many businesses are already working together, but partnerships are a two-way street and they require work to maintain them. Relationships with governments remain a particular concern for Aboriginal business owners who they feel could do more to champion and facilitate business partnerships before resorting to legislation and regulation.

As CCAB president and CEO Jean Paul Gladu writes, opportunities for growth will only occur "when we respectfully come to terms with our past differences, our current challenges and mutually embrace future opportunities." ■

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# A NEW PATH TO PROGRESS

BY MAX SKUDRA

## FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES SET UP CORPORATE MODELS THAT PRIORITIZE ENGAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT

There is a growing recognition in the Canadian private sector that Aboriginal peoples, communities and businesses represent a tremendous opportunity to propel growth. First Nations, Inuit and Metis are re-awakening their interest and ability to engage with the wider business community, achieving better economic outcomes through their own initiative and on their own terms.

To take advantage of partnerships, Aboriginal communities are setting up corporate models that prioritize community engagement and investment. These businesses are able to leverage corporate partnerships, drive business development and encourage Aboriginal success through skill development.

The four pillars of the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program at the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) – employment, community investment, business development and community engagement – are designed to act as a verifier, ensuring that corporations are engaging Aboriginal peoples and communities in a responsible and honest way. These principles are not only important for non-Aboriginal companies, but are often at the heart of success between Aboriginal companies and communities.

A pioneer in this new path to progress is FHQ Development based out of Regina, Saskatchewan. FHQ is an Aboriginal economic development corporation (AEDC), owned by 12 regional First Nations communities.

AEDCs like FHQ are created to embody Aboriginal community aspirations in the private sector. They are structured to both respect their heritage and operate dynamically in the corporate sector.

To this end, FHQ has a mission statement that is consistent with modern best practices in business management and at the same time reflects treaty principles. This merging of traditional and contemporary thinking has helped shape a core set of principles that allow FHQ Development to survive, and thrive in the modern market place. The four guiding principles are: First Nation equity ownership; partnership and collaboration, relationship building; sustainable, long-term, diversified investments that lead to wealth creation; and corporate differentiation – proud and vibrant First Nation business. These principles guide the FHQ, ensuring that it represents the principles of its shareholder First Nations.

### SENSE OF PARTNERSHIP

CCAB has been conducting leading research on AEDCs for the last five years. We have found that across the country these community-owned corporations have been successfully conducting business guided by principles similar to those mentioned above. They have been reinvigorating a sense of partnership between Canadian business and First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities that has been neglected for far too long. From energy to tech, mining and industry to hospitality, tourism and even the production of energy drinks, AEDCs

are proving that integrating ethical principles and community values is not a deterrent to business success.

Our research shows that the recent trend towards AEDCs is not temporary, but actually gaining momentum. CCAB recognizes this by hosting a conference dedicated to these unique and powerful vehicles for economic growth. The conference will address the importance of both economic fundamentals and community engagement, the two priorities that support business success. By implementing these traditional ideas, AEDCs are able to rally community members, band and council, and staff. This alignment brings all of the important stakeholders to the table, ensuring truly representative corporate entities.

Alignment is critical, as AEDCs are community owned. A major factor contributing to the success of AEDCs is ensuring that community and political leadership are behind major projects and corporate direction. By entrenching traditional beliefs in corporate structure, AEDCs create trust with their members. This trust makes balancing independent business operations and Band and Council oversight a constructive conversation.

FHQ Development has succeeded in structuring itself around principles that resonate with its ultimate shareholders, the communities it represents. This has created a firm ground from which to conduct business with confidence. ■



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## Enhanced Service Delivery Project

Enhanced Service Delivery (ESD) is an employable-readiness project working with individuals in the 18-24 age range. The individual receives skills and training, support in addressing any challenges and is given all necessary support.

The “Circle of Care” model and adoption of a multidisciplinary approach focuses on and places the individual at the centre. The project staff works in a coordinated and systematic manner with other program stakeholders- Social Services, Employment & Training, Education, Health, and Chief and Council.

Highly successful, the ESD currently works with two communities, Long Plain First Nation and Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation. Our clients have been successful in becoming either employment-ready and/or employable in the workplace.

The project is funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Affairs Development Canada.

**Contact Information:**

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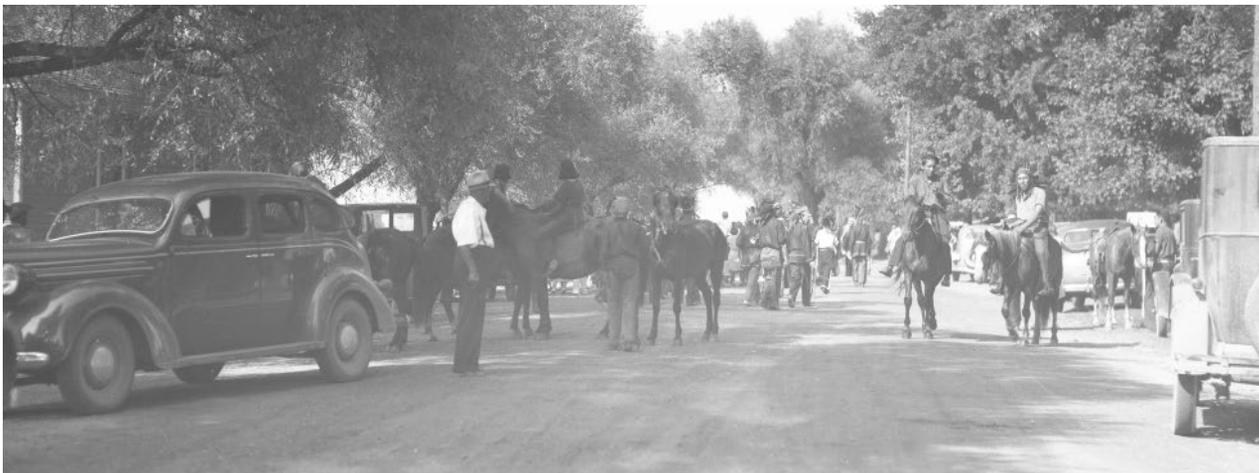
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# COLLISION COURSE

BY PAUL-EMILE MCNAB

HENRY FORD, WALPOLE ISLAND, AND THE IMPACT OF THE AUTOMOBILE



The arrival of Henry Ford and his famous automobile to Walpole Island in the early 20th century marked a new era in transportation. Photograph appears courtesy of the Lambton Heritage Museum, Grand Bend

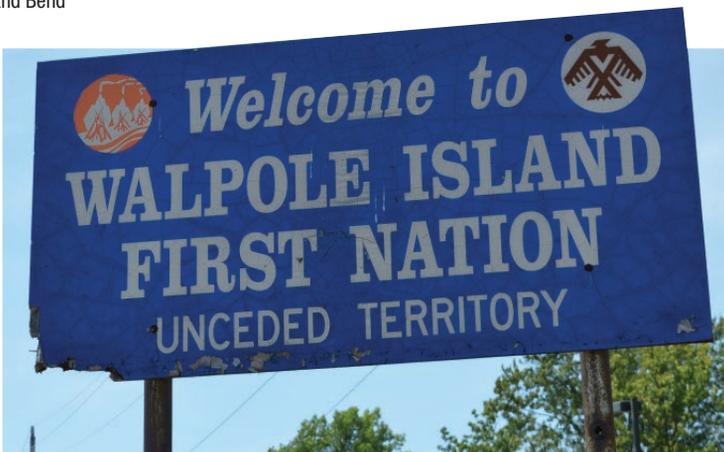
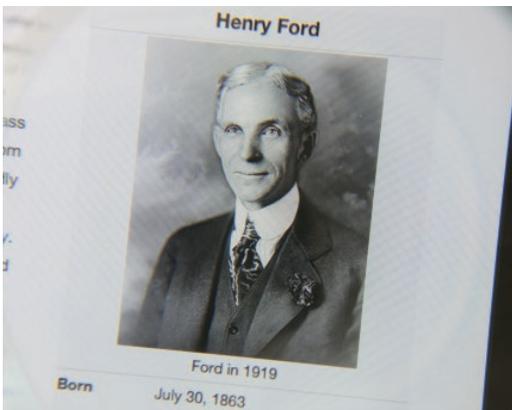


Photo courtesy of Tourism Sarnia-Lambton



“As long as the sun shines, grass grows, and the rivers flow”

**WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE**

ASK US WHY

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B.A., U.S.T.C., M.ED.  
Treaty Commissioner  
james.wilson@trcm.ca

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The Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN) has seen many visitors pass through its Bkejwanong territory over the thousands of years of its history. No one, however, was more significant than Henry Ford, from nearby Dearborn, Michigan. The famed American industrialist and founder of the Ford Motor company visited the island.

Ford’s appearance sparked the arrival of his famous automobile, and the road construction that accompanied it. Both had significant repercussions on the island’s First Nations community.

It was Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River that first brought Ford to Walpole Island. The two connect the land and water and have always been a transportation system for the traditional Ojibwe across both modern day Ontario and Michigan. During the summer months, Ford would travel along the St. Clair River to moor his yacht alongside Walpole Island. Nestled at the mouth of Lake St. Clair, the island was being transformed into a small tourist area at the time.

As explained by Dr. Dean M. Jacobs: "In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American capitalist, Henry Ford, was on an early spring expedition up the St. Clair River through our waters. He misjudged the weather and water conditions and his yacht became entrapped in the ice off our Island. His boat was going to be crushed and he and his companions may have suffered an ill fate had we not rescued him from the ice and (taken) him to safety in our homes. Henry Ford never forgot our kindness. He came back and visited the Front Church along the river, the church founded by the Reverend Andrew Jamieson."

#### A NEW ERA

The introduction of the automobile, and more specifically the emergence of Ford's Model T in October of 1908 up to 1927, ushered in a new era. The Model T was the first automobile either driven or owned, and archival photos show it was present on Walpole Island as early as 1909.

Summer tourists from nearby towns in both Ontario and Michigan had begun to travel and visit Walpole Island, which was turning into a beautiful destination for spring and summer cottagers. However, the members of the Walpole Island community did not own an automobile or operate any of the new mechanical farm equipment (tractors) that had revolutionized modern farming practices during this period of industrialization.

Ford's presence changed that and brought the first Aboriginal car owner to the island, as well as tractors and other farm equipment for use in commercial agricultural activities. He authorized the delivery of farming equipment to the Island, and the business partnership between him and a certain Reverend Simpson Brigham included Ford giving Brigham a new Sedan.

With the introduction of both the automobile and tractor to Walpole Island, agricultural activity and transportation started taking shape. Tourists began flocking to the Island in their new Model T cars designed by Henry Ford and made by the newly established Ford Motor Company.

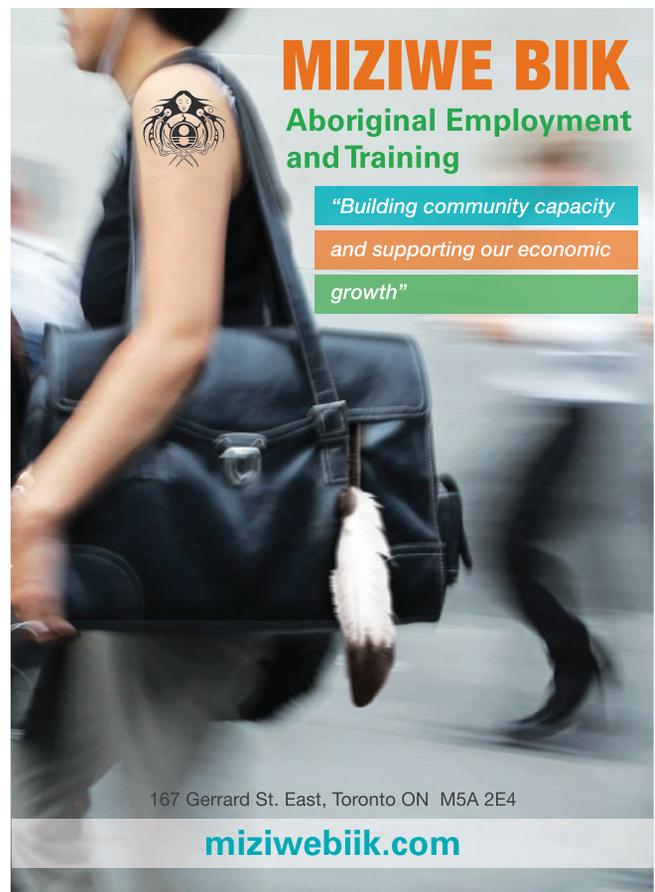
The transition to modernization, however, was not solely linked to Henry Ford, or the automobile. WIFN had already started a transition to modernity, thanks to the oil boom at Oil Springs, Ontario in 1858. It then continued with the

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explosion of Ford's Model T in 1908 and his subsequent presence and interests on Walpole Island for the first half of the 20th century.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the Indian Agent put the men of the island to work on the roads and then paid them using their trust fund accounts. Their neighbours, doing the same relief work on roads, were paid by the federal government directly through a special relief fund set up in 1932.

**TRADITIONAL RIGHT OF WAYS**

This nascent transition to roads and the automobile on WIFN came about thanks to a combination of indigenous knowledge and science. It marked the intersection of technology, modernization and colonialism, which coincided with the construction of roads and the advent of the automobile in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The development of roads was primarily for the benefit of the governments of Canada and Ontario, which sought to build them for the summer cottagers as cars made their appearance in the area. This conflicted with the traditional rights of ways on the island — from traditional waterways that were travelled by canoe to pathways that were travelled by foot and by horseback on WIFN-Indian ponies.

The traditional rights of ways on the WIFN before the turn of the 20th century consisted mainly of Indian trails — little roads or paths known in Ojibwa as Miikaans that intersected and connected to canoe routes along



Walpole Island in the early part of 20th century and today. Photos courtesy of Lambton Heritage Museum (top) and Tourism Sarnia-Lambton (bottom)



the waterways. These were the main rights of ways to, on and from the Bkejwanong Territory. These rights of ways were environmentally sound and sustainable using the logic and practices of indigenous knowledge of rights of ways, including roads, bridges and waterways.

Indigenous knowledge and the rights of ways have been inextricably linked

to the community of Walpole Island. In fact, roads and their associated uses are still an ongoing issue at Walpole to this day, since the lands for the rights of ways through reserves or other territories were originally taken without any payment or compensation. The citizens of WIFN use cars, trucks and bicycles, but the Miikaans remain intact. ■

**ALAIR**



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17TH ANNUAL

TORONTO GALA

Photography provided by John Pallié



Ange Valentini, Office of Councillor Adam Vaughan; Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Toronto City Councillor



Ron Jamieson, former Co-Chair, CCAB Board, honoured for his 30 years of commitment



Erin Meehan awards Kendal Netmaker with the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneur of the Year award founded by ESS, a member of Compass Group



Rachelle Danielle Rose Thomas; Kendal Netmaker, (Neechie Gear); Vanessa Kayseas

**O**n February 3, CCAB welcomed over 400 guests to the Fairmont Royal York hotel as CCAB celebrated our two award winners of the night.

Mel E. Benson, president, Mel E. Benson Management Services Inc., was inducted into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame (ABHF). The ABHF recognizes Aboriginal people whose business leadership and commitment to community have made a substantive contribution to the economic and social well-being of Aboriginal people and communities.

Also presented was the National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year award, exclusively sponsored by ESS, a member of Compass Group Canada. This year's award went to Kendal Netmaker, CEO and founder of Neechie Gear. The award recognizes an up-and-coming Aboriginal entrepreneur under the age of 35.

Thank you to lead sponsor **IBM Canada**, supporting sponsors **Bruce Power** and **TD Bank**, sponsors **Cameco Corporation** and the **Ontario Power Generation** and coat check sponsor **CN**.



JP Gladu, CCAB; Chuck Strahl, Manning Centre for Building Democracy; Lisa Charleyboy, Urban Native Magazine; Wayne Garnons-Williams, Garwill Law Professional Corp; Robert McPhee, The Castlemain Group; Miles Richardson, National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development

**O**n March 12, CCAB welcomed guests to the Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver for a panel discussion on The William Case. Guest moderator Lisa Charleyboy hosted panelists Wayne Garnons-Williams (Garwill Law Professional Corporation), Robert McPhee (The Castlemain Group), Miles Richardson (National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development) and Chuck Strahl (Manning Centre for Building Democracy) in a rousing conversation on this highly topical subject.

Thank you to lead sponsor **CN**, and sponsor **National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development**.



# VANCOUVER HOT TOPIC SERIES

Photography provided Vision Event Photography



ANNUAL

# CALGARY GALA

Photography provided by Candace Ward



Tim Raybould, Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jean Paul Gladu, Lesley Gabriel, Hal Eagletail, Chief Jonathan Kruger, Barry Telford, Erwin Joosten, Joe Dion, Clayton Norris

CAB welcomed over 300 guests to the Westin Calgary hotel on May 14 to celebrate the achievements of the Pentiction Indian Band Development Corporation – winners of the 2nd Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation Award, sponsored by Sodexo Canada.

Thank you to lead sponsor **Sodexo** and supporting sponsor **CP**.



ABOVE RIGHT: Paulette Facca, Creative Touch Interiors; Chief Jonathan Kruger, Pentiction Indian Band Development Corporation; JP Gladu, CCAB



RIGHT: Miles Richardson, NCIED; Darrin Mah, NCIED; Joe Dion, Frog Lake Energy Resources



Councillor Joseph Pierre, April Gabriel, Councillor Dolly Kruger, Chief Jonathan Kruger, Councillor Inez Pierre, Lesley Gabriel, Councillor Kevin Gabriel



Christoffer Benson, Andrew Loosley, Clayton Norris, Mel E. Benson



Amanda Sanregret, TransAlta Corporation; Amber Goulard, TransAlta Corporation



On June 18, CCAB hosted a business luncheon titled *Trades Perspective: A look at the road ahead to bolster Aboriginal participation*. Keynote speaker Christopher Smillie, Senior Advisor, Government Relations and Public Affairs, Canada's Building Trades Union, discussed engaging Aboriginal communities to participate in the trades and fill the projected job openings; recruitment, hiring and training of Aboriginal peoples looking to enter the construction workforce; and retention plans within the trades sector.

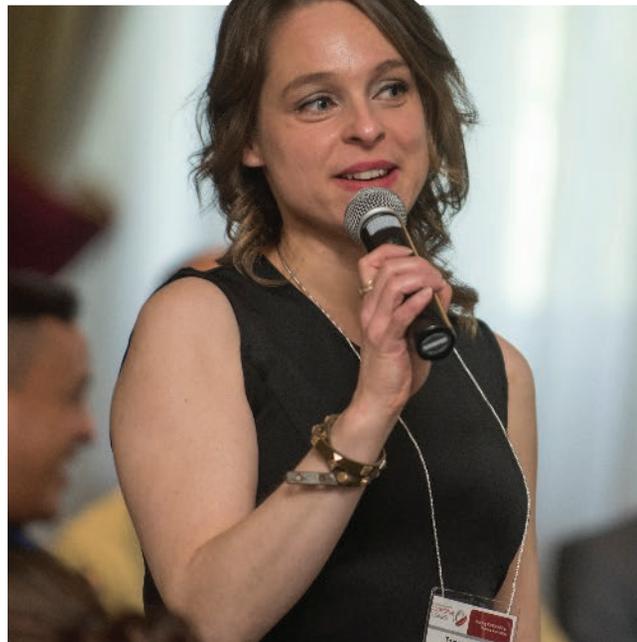
Thank you to lead sponsor **ATCO Structures & Logistics** and sponsor **CN**.

LEFT: Danielle Hartley, ATCO Structures & Logistics  
BELOW LEFT: JP Gladu, CCAB; Christopher Smillie, Keynote Speaker; Danielle Hartley, ATCO Structures & Logistics  
BELOW RIGHT: David Paul, Aboriginal Resource Consultants



RIGHT: Tammy Brewer, Eastern College

BELOW: Mark Taylor, Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI)



HALIFAX  
**ABORIGINAL BUSINESS LUNCHEON**  
Photography provided by Brinton Photography



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## GALAS, LUNCHEONS & HOT TOPIC SERIES

### ABORIGINAL BUSINESS LUNCHEON

The Evolving Face of Aboriginal Business

September 10, 2015 | 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Valhalla Inn | Thunder Bay, ON

CCAB will be hosting an Aboriginal Business Luncheon in Thunder Bay featuring keynote speakers Nicole Bourque-Bouchier, Chief Executive Officer, and David Bouchier, President, Bouchier Group. Aboriginal business will continue to play an integral role in Canada, particularly in the evolving resource sector. Understanding Aboriginal leaders' business challenges and successes will help ease preconceived notions. Thank you to our Lead Sponsor **ATCO Structures & Logistics**.



**13TH ANNUAL VANCOUVER GALA**  
September 24, 2015 | 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Fairmont Waterfront | Vancouver, BC

CCAB will be hosting the 13th Annual Vancouver Gala celebrating and recognizing Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) certified companies as well as the recipient of the Award of Excellence in Aboriginal Relations.

Thank you to our Lead sponsor **Scotiabank**, Supporting sponsors **Synchrude** and **Teck**, and Contributor **Kinder Morgan Canada**

**TORONTO HOT TOPIC SERIES**  
The Role of Colleges and Universities in Increasing  
Aboriginal Labour Market Participation

October 22, 2015 | 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
Sheraton Centre Hotel | Toronto, ON

Business and economic development education are increasingly important to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people in terms of establishing independent sources of income and control over traditional territories. Business skills and knowledge are also important in protecting and growing resources available through impact benefit agreements (IBA) or revenue sharing arrangements with governments and/or industry. Universities in Canada are directly contributing to labour market readiness.

**FORT MCMURRAY KEYNOTE PRESENTATION  
AND NETWORKING RECEPTION**

Aboriginal Partnerships Matter

November 19, 2015 | 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sawridge Inn & Conference Centre | Fort McMurray, AB

There is a growing opportunity for Canada to rethink the current relationship model and approach with Aboriginal communities. Creating strong business relationships is a progressive way towards reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples as partners in building a new economic reality.

Thank you to our Lead Sponsor **ATCO Structures & Logistics**.

**ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION CONFERENCE**

November 26, 2015

TCU Place – Saskatoon Arts & Convention Centre  
Saskatoon, SK

CCAB will be hosting an Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation Conference in Saskatoon, SK. The event will be an opportunity to network and promote engagement between corporate Canada and Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations (AEDCs). AEDCs represent the emergence of a new economic powerhouse on the Canadian business landscape.

Like any strong business entity, AEDCs continue to explore growth opportunities within their traditional lands and communities, as well as Canadian business across the street, province, country and world. AEDCs provide a new avenue for Aboriginal and Canadian business development in the 21st century. The conference will break boundaries and provide your company with an opportunity to network and promote engagement between corporate Canada and AEDCs.

TO REGISTER FOR UPCOMING EVENTS PLEASE GO TO [CCAB.COM/EVENTS](http://CCAB.COM/EVENTS)  
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Alair-MHA Enterprises Ltd. .... 38 <a href="http://www.alair-mhaent.ca">www.alair-mhaent.ca</a>	Hatch Ltd. .... 19 <a href="http://www.hatch.ca">www.hatch.ca</a>	Redpath Mining Contractors and Engineers ..... 15 <a href="http://www.redpathmining.com">www.redpathmining.com</a>
Alex MacIntyre & Associates Ltd. .... 32 <a href="http://www.MacintyreMining.com">www.MacintyreMining.com</a>	Haztech ..... 28 <a href="http://www.haztech.com">www.haztech.com</a>	Reliance Occupational Health Services Inc. .... 45 <a href="http://www.relianceOHS.com">www.relianceOHS.com</a>
ATCO Sustainable Communities Inc. .... 27 <a href="http://www.atcosc.com">www.atcosc.com</a>	IMI Brokerage Company..... 22 <a href="http://www.imibrokerage.com">www.imibrokerage.com</a>	Resolute Forest Products..... 31 <a href="http://www.resoluteforestproducts.com">www.resoluteforestproducts.com</a>
Athabasca Basin Security LP ..... 33 <a href="http://www.athabascabasin.ca">www.athabascabasin.ca</a>	International Metal Manufacturing Inc. ... 32 <a href="http://www.albertarigmats.com">www.albertarigmats.com</a>	River Cree Resort & Casino ..... 11 <a href="http://www.rivercreeeresort.com">www.rivercreeeresort.com</a>
Axl Industrial Services Ltd. .... 17 <a href="http://www.axlindustrialservices.ca">www.axlindustrialservices.ca</a>	Just Knock Consulting Ltd. .... 46 <a href="http://www.justknockconsulting.com">www.justknockconsulting.com</a>	Rodgers Investment Consulting ..... 23 <a href="http://www.riconsulting.ca">www.riconsulting.ca</a>
B.C. Hydro..... 14 <a href="http://www.bchydro.com">www.bchydro.com</a>	Labrynth Consulting Ltd. .... 20 <a href="http://www.labrynthconsulting.com">www.labrynthconsulting.com</a>	Safewatch Group ..... 20 <a href="http://www.safewatchgroup.ca">www.safewatchgroup.ca</a>
B.C. Oil & Gas Commission ..... 12 <a href="http://www.bcogc.ca">www.bcogc.ca</a>	Marwest Group ..... 30 <a href="http://www.marwestutility.com">www.marwestutility.com</a>	Scotiabank..... 8 <a href="http://www.scotiabank.com">www.scotiabank.com</a>
Bruce Power ..... 24 <a href="http://www.brucepower.com">www.brucepower.com</a>	Membertou Corporate Division..... 29 <a href="http://www.membertoucorporate.com">www.membertoucorporate.com</a>	Seven Lakes Oilfield Services ..... 18 <a href="http://www.sevenlakesoilfield.com">www.sevenlakesoilfield.com</a>
Cameco Corporation ..... 35 <a href="http://www.cameco.com">www.cameco.com</a>	Miziwe Biik ..... 37 <a href="http://www.miziwebiik.com">www.miziwebiik.com</a>	Solare Distributors Inc. .... 20 <a href="http://www.solaredistributors.com">www.solaredistributors.com</a>
Cushman & Wakefield Edmonton..... 17 <a href="http://www.cwedm.com">www.cwedm.com</a>	MNP LLP ..... 25 <a href="http://www.mnp.ca">www.mnp.ca</a>	Spill-Chek Environmental Products & Services Corp. .... 20 <a href="http://www.spill-chek.com">www.spill-chek.com</a>
Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council..... 35 <a href="http://www.dotc.mb.ca">www.dotc.mb.ca</a>	Nuna Logistics Limited ..... 5 <a href="http://www.nunalogistics.com">www.nunalogistics.com</a>	Supermetal Structures Inc. .... 3 <a href="http://www.supermetal.com">www.supermetal.com</a>
DMC Mining Services-Canada ..... 10 <a href="http://www.dmcmining.com">www.dmcmining.com</a>	Osgoode Professional Development.. 5 & 33 <a href="http://www.osgoodepd.ca">www.osgoodepd.ca</a>	Sustainable Forest Initiative Inc. .... 39 <a href="http://www.sfiprogram.org">www.sfiprogram.org</a>
Enbridge Inc. .... 6 <a href="http://www.enbridge.com">www.enbridge.com</a>	Port Metro Vancouver..... 26 <a href="http://www.portmetrovancouver.com">www.portmetrovancouver.com</a>	Syncrude ..... 21 <a href="http://www.syncrude.ca">www.syncrude.ca</a>
Fort McKay Alcor ..... 37 <a href="http://www.fortmckayalcor.ca">www.fortmckayalcor.ca</a>	Purdy Crawford Chair ..... 46 <a href="http://www.cbu.ca/crawford">www.cbu.ca/crawford</a>	Tervita..... 16 <a href="http://www.tervita.com">www.tervita.com</a>
Go West Development Ltd. .... 19 <a href="http://www.gowestdevelopment.ca">www.gowestdevelopment.ca</a>	Quanta Services ..... Inside Front Cover <a href="http://www.quantaservices.com">www.quantaservices.com</a>	Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba..... 36 <a href="http://www.trcm.ca">www.trcm.ca</a>
Goldcorp Canada Ltd. .... 25 <a href="http://www.goldcorp.com">www.goldcorp.com</a>	RBC Royal Bank..... Inside Back Cover <a href="http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/aboriginal">www.rbcroyalbank.com/aboriginal</a>	Union Gas..... 24 <a href="http://www.uniongas.com">www.uniongas.com</a>
		Villages Equity Corporation..... 20 <a href="http://www.kitigan.com">www.kitigan.com</a>
		West Wind Aviation ..... 29 <a href="http://www.flywwa.ca">www.flywwa.ca</a>
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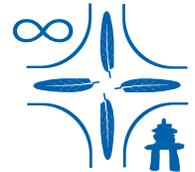

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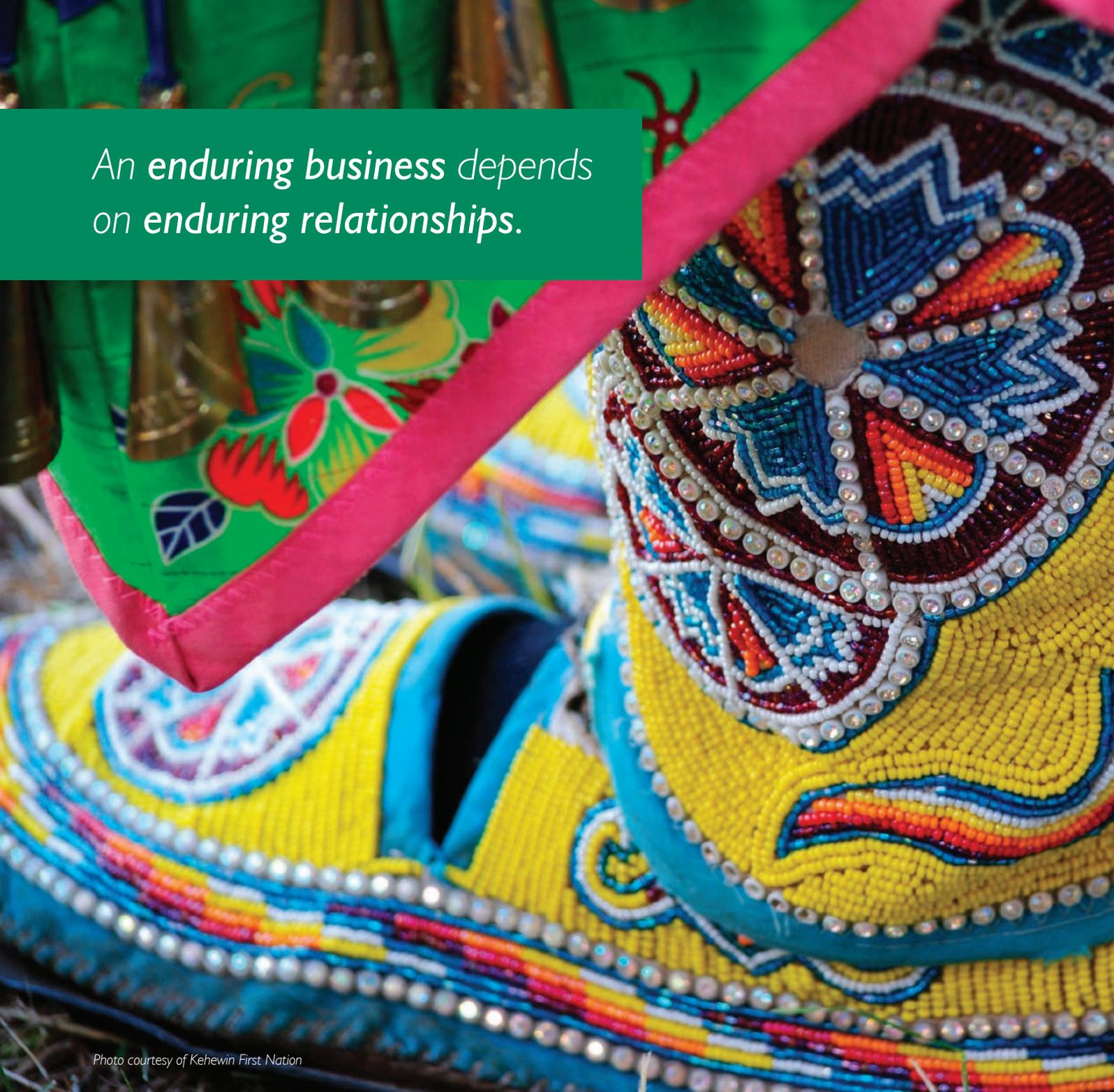
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