

# ABORIGINAL BUSINESS: CELEBRATED IN ALBERTA

MARCH 2014



Aboriginal youth represent the fastest growing demographic in Canada, and the country is experiencing skills shortages in various sectors and regions. Given the proximity of many First Nations communities to large economic projects, there is a tremendous opportunity to address some of Canada's skills needs, while also improving the economic opportunities for Aboriginal youth and their communities.

In March 2013, the Minister of Finance unveiled the next phase of the Government of Canada's plan for jobs, growth and long-term prosperity, Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013. This plan proposed, among other things, a number of investments in education and skills training for Aboriginal peoples that included \$241 million over four years to improve the on-reserve Income Assistance Program with First Nations, to ensure that young recipients have the incentives to participate in the training necessary for them to gain employment.

In January 2014, the Government of Canada officially announced this investment towards skills training for nearly 4,000 First Nations youth (ages 18 to 24) across Canada – 1,500 in Alberta alone – as part of the first set of proposals approved under the improved

on-reserve Income Assistance Program.

The initiative will provide personalized supports to First Nations youth from 70 communities across the country as they secure the tools needed to find meaningful employment and reduce their reliance on income assistance. Activities will begin over the coming months across Canada, as First Nation communities and Tribal Councils lead the effort to ensure youth have access to a range of services and programs aimed at increasing their job prospects and supporting them as they move into the workforce, including basic life-skills training, skills training and career counseling.

As part of our ongoing support of Aboriginal employment and economic development opportunities, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is pleased to again be a sponsor of two Alberta Business Awards of Distinction: the Aboriginal Relations-Best Practice Award of Distinction, awarded to a mainstream company that is a leader in its corporate policies regarding Aboriginal relations and practices; and the Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction, awarded to an Aboriginal-owned business working to improve the lives of its employees and peoples. Read on to find out more about this year's bold and innovative finalists.

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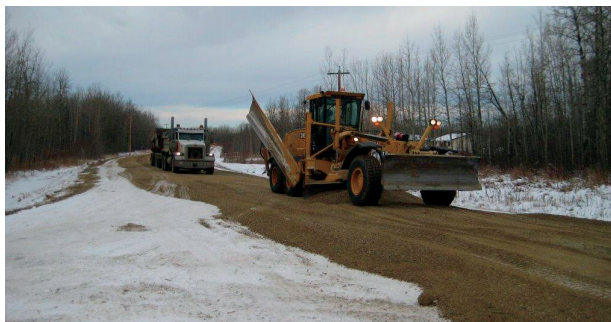
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## URBAN SYSTEMS LTD. Spirit in Service for Vibrant Communities

For Urban Systems, committing to effective Aboriginal relations is based on very simple yet critical components – working for the communities, partnering with them towards the fulfillment of goals and keeping their best interests in mind at all times in order to make the most positive impact.

Founded in 1975, Urban Systems is an interdisciplinary professional consulting firm that provides strategic planning, engineering, environmental science and urban design services to government, non-profits, private industry and Aboriginal communities throughout Western Canada. Over the years, the company has grown to over 400 employees working out of 12 offices, all the while maintaining a commitment to supporting communities that are safe, sustainable and prosperous.



Spreading gravel on road



Aboriginal Affairs and  
Northern Development Canada

Affaires autochtones et  
Développement du Nord Canada



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Canada

(Continued from page 1)

Urban Systems has been committed to facilitating Aboriginal economic development for more than 10 years in Alberta. Key projects include:

- Concept development, approval, design and construction of commercial parks at Chipewyan Prairie First Nation and Loon River First Nation.
- Working with Whitefish Lake First Nation (Atikameg) on the second phase of its District Energy System Feasibility Study.
- Serving Alexis Land Management Corp. (Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation) in the development of the Whitecourt reserve.

Working with Aboriginal communities in strengthening economic development has resulted in fruitful happenstance for the company, particularly in its relationship with Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation. From a meeting at the 2010 National Aboriginal Opportunities Conference, Urban Systems was asked to prepare a scope of work for detailing servicing and cost recovery scenarios for the Nation's Whitecourt reserve. The project enabled Urban Systems to get to know the Alexis, which led to other projects: road rehabilitation; a regional water system feasibility study (and limited community plan update); and helping the

community work towards a new multi-purpose recreation facility. For Urban Systems, what has been of most value in the undertaking and eventual completion of projects has been the people that were met and the time that was shared.

All in all, the company's mission statement – Spirit in Service for Vibrant Communities – refers to the heart and soul brought to every interaction. Philosophies of humility, generosity, independence and fun have been guiding the company's practice from inception. Clients value the company's local perspective, sustainable approach, professionalism and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The fact that Urban Systems has been serving many of its clients for 40 years is testament to its service-oriented approach.

Whether working on client projects or giving back to communities, Urban Systems takes great satisfaction from all its endeavours. This aim to create a balanced work environment has led Urban Systems to be consistently recognized as a Best Workplace in Canada since 2006.



## CALGARY FIRE DEPARTMENT

**Serving the community through excellence in fire prevention, education, protection and safety**

In order to reflect the community it serves, the Calgary Fire Department (CFD) developed an action plan to help attract a diverse applicant pool, which includes Aboriginal people.



Two volunteer firefighters from Alexander First Nation train at the Calgary Fire Department's Fire Training Academy

Fulfilling the CFD's action plan meant offering more than an employment opportunity, but would require building a holistic relationship with local Aboriginal communities. The CFD mantra became *build relationships first, recruitment will follow*. From this, the CFD's Aboriginal Inclusion Initiative was created. The initiative is comprised of fire training for Aboriginal volunteer fire departments, including training for firefighters, chief officers and emergency planning for community leaders. It also includes sharing fire prevention information with Aboriginal youth and a mentorship component that

assists interested candidates in becoming full-time firefighters.

The CFD, in conjunction with educational experts from Aboriginal communities, has created a youth-based safety program that links teachers, councillors and parents with CFD safety experts. With respect to training, the most important element the CFD has offered to Aboriginal volunteer fire departments is knowledge. The CFD has a state-of-the-art training facility that provides cross-train opportunities, tailored courses and online training. CFD training officers have also travelled throughout the province to teach onsite.

As a pilot project, the CFD has proposed a Train-the-Trainer concept to help deliver its messages. Trainers will be a combination of volunteer firefighters, teachers or councillors from each community. These representatives will be trained in the educational component to help deliver fire prevention and information to improve community safety in their local schools or with youth groups. (Incidentally, the establishment of a Métis Settlement Pilot Program based on the Aboriginal Inclusion Initiative is now being explored.)

Promising results were seen in fall 2013 when the CFD engaged in a pilot program with Alexander First Nation for education and training. The CFD delivered fire, accident and hazardous material safety to Grade 3 students. Community Elders were also on hand to remind the children that while fire has an important place in their culture, the danger it can pose must be respected.

Also in the fall of last year, members of the Alexander First Nation began professional firefighter training as a first step towards 1001 certification and a foundation for further training. Graduates will be qualified first responders and able to address emergency issues in their communities.

Through the CFD's Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan, Aboriginal leaders and members are empowered to support the health, safety and prosperity of their communities, and are poised to play an even larger

role in providing emergency preparedness and response in remote regions and natural resource corridors, to the benefit of all Albertans.



# SYNCRUDE CANADA LTD.

## Engaging Aboriginal communities

Syncrude is one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in Canada, directly employing around 470 Aboriginal people who represent about nine percent of its total workforce. Many more Aboriginal people are employed by companies who are contracted to provide goods and services to Syncrude's operations.

Syncrude Canada Ltd. has a longstanding relationship with the First Nations and Métis communities in the Wood Buffalo region of Alberta. Even before Syncrude began producing oil in 1978, it made a conscious decision to engage Aboriginal communities so they could share in the wealth produced by developing energy resources.

In an effort to nurture this engagement, Syncrude developed an Aboriginal Relations program that focuses on six key commitment areas: corporate leadership; employment; business development; education and training; community development; and the environment.

Syncrude reports on the progress made in these areas through its annual *Pathways* magazine, which remains the only comprehensive, stand-alone report on Aboriginal relations by a Canadian company. Every household in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo receives a copy of the magazine as part of Syncrude's commitment to provide a comprehensive report of its Aboriginal Relations program. The publication is also available at [www.syncrude.com](http://www.syncrude.com).

Since 1992, Syncrude has conducted more than \$2 billion in total business with Aboriginal-owned companies. Syncrude provides significant opportunity to Aboriginal-owned businesses in the Wood Buffalo region. In fact, if all other factors in a contract proposal are equal, preference is given to local Aboriginal businesses. The company also encourages contractors to employ Aboriginal people and subcontract work to Aboriginal businesses. All in all, Syncrude has invested more than \$9 million since 2001 in projects and initiatives targeting Aboriginal communities.

Syncrude regularly conducts tours of reclamation areas for representatives from local Aboriginal communities. As well, Syncrude works closely with Elders to ensure the re-establishment of native plant species that are of



Tabitha Quintal

traditional value. Species successfully being re-introduced include low-bush cranberry, blueberry and buffalo berry.

Syncrude is one of 12 companies in Canada, and the only oil sands operator, to be accredited at the Gold Level in the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) Program of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. PAR measures corporate performance in Aboriginal employment, business development, capacity development and community relations.

Ultimately, the vision to lead, the knowledge to succeed, the commitment to do better and the heart to win the race are cornerstones of what has guided the company in its over 35-year history. These values, combined with the goal to establish a culture that is based on high performance, taking measured risks, mutual respect and teamwork, fit perfectly with the company's commitment to maintain thriving and prosperous Aboriginal relationships.

**Syncrude**



# RED DEER COLLEGE

## Reaching out to Aboriginal communities

Sunchild First Nation, in partnership with Red Deer College (RDC), offered a pilot apprenticeship program in welding and carpentry to 12 high school students and 10 adult members at Sunchild First Nation School in 2012 and 2013. The training also included actual hands-on learning at the RDC campus to further explore trades training and to experience college life.



Sunchild group

"This project highlights a great partnership delivering training that equips Aboriginal students for the workforce," said Joel Ward, president and CEO of RDC. "And it also underscores our commitment to help high school students transition smoothly into post-secondary studies. There is a growing need for skilled trades throughout the region, so it's critical that we create opportunities to increase access to relevant training to meet industry demands."

This innovative approach helps to address some challenging barriers that exist, giving confidence and hope for a brighter future for Aboriginal people to obtain training and to access career opportunities in the trades. The First Nation leadership wants more for its members, and RDC is committed to providing educational opportunities. Recognizing that barriers do indeed exist, RDC understands the need to take training out to the communities.

"I've been passionate about increasing opportunity and access to education for Aboriginal youth for decades," said Nelson Daychief, former member of RDC's board of governors and former Chief of Sunchild First Nation, who was instrumental in making the pilot project a reality.

RDC is familiar with these types of partnerships with Aboriginal groups.

Some of the college's previous partnerships actually began with the Métis Nation of Alberta in 2008, and then with the Montana First Nation in 2010. Continuing Education continues to pursue new opportunities with other First Nations. Ermineskin Cree Nation, Samson Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe and O'Chiese First Nation have all approached RDC to establish similar partnerships.

The main goal is to encourage First Nation members to explore employment opportunities in the trades. Alberta has many trade jobs available and First Nation members have been an untapped source of labour.

"This pilot project is one way to help First Nations students and adults transition to college life and acquire skills that will help them secure good jobs," said Daychief. "I hope it's one of many partnerships between Sunchild and RDC."

RDC, having over 50 years of experience, remains committed to offering post-secondary education including full degrees, certificates, diplomas and skilled trades programs in over 75 different career and academic programs to over 7,500 students per year.



# CANADA NORTH CAMPS INC. (BIGSTONE – TANSI CAMP & CATERING LTD.)

## Promoting equitable and ethical 50/50 business partnerships with First Nations



Bigstone Cree Nation Chief Romeo Cardinal and Bigstone Cree Nation Executive Director Myles Auger

Part of CNC's operations includes open camps located throughout Alberta. CNC has maintained long-term professional relationships with numerous companies from industries such as oil and gas, construction and the Alberta government.

CNC believes its purpose is to help guests enjoy their home away from home. From generators for electricity to sewage treatment systems for waste, to phone and internet services to keep connected, CNC has it covered.

Being nominated for an Aboriginal Relations-Best Practice Award

Canada North Camps (CNC) is a family-owned camp and catering business that services Alberta's active resource development industry. Paul McCracken, his wife Shayne, and their three adult children, Tyler, Travis and Jaime, built the company from a few staff (in 1998) to the almost 400 they now employ, season dependent.

of Distinction means a great deal to the company as it has made a business commitment to help turn around the socio-economic conditions faced by many of Alberta's First Nations.

CNC engages in 50/50 business partnerships so First Nations benefit economically. Partnerships to date include Cold Lake First Nation, Heart Lake First Nation and Loon River First Nation. One of CNC's more recent partnerships has been with Bigstone Cree Nation in northern Alberta. Here, the company undertook to build its own camp training to employment program. In November 2013, the

first graduates of the Bigstone/Tansi Business Development Group successfully completed the camp training program.

The instruction was a true team effort that included a classroom instructor, a Bigstone Cree Nation member (for nation capacity building) and the involvement of Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy staff of Bigstone Cree Nation. Students received skills training specific to work found in camps and job shadowed with CNC's full-time camp staff. They were also taught the importance of understanding historic trauma and how addictions impact full-time employment opportunities, with further instruction on problem solving, healthy communication, healthy camp living and good work ethics.

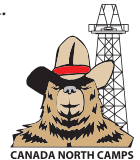
The partnership with Bigstone Cree Nation has also resulted in the construction and operation of Wooden House Camp located at Bigstone. Built for Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., the camp accommodates approximately 200 people and employs Nation members.

CNC is committed to maintaining the highest standard of ethics in the workplace. A company credo is that all individuals within the organization have the right to both safety and comfort in their work environment.

"They (McCracken family) have a deep compassion and commitment to working with First Nations," said Pat Makokis, vice-president, Tansi Business Development Group (the business arm of CNC in its partnership with Bigstone).

"As a Cree woman who resides on a large nation in Alberta, I see, first-hand, the commitment the McCracken family has made in the business partnership with Bigstone Cree Nation," she said.

"This is a family – not a corporation with shareholders expecting profits – and I find it absolutely amazing what CNC has committed to in its equitable, ethical, altruistic business partnership."



## CANADIAN NORTH

### Seriously northern

Canadian North is the largest fly-in, fly-out charter airline service for Alberta's energy sector, offering an innovative air terminal at Edmonton's International Airport. This venture led to significant growth in employment even during the recent economic downturn, demonstrating Canadian North's unique business model and leading-edge vision.

Canadian North and its founding companies (Canadian Airlines, Pacific Western Airlines, Transair, Nordair) have proudly served Canada's North with passenger and cargo services for more than 80 years. Broken down further, Canadian North is a diversified, Alberta-based airline owned by the NorTerra group of companies, which is a joint venture between the Inuvialuit Development Corporation on behalf of the Inuvialuit of the western Arctic and the Nunasi Corporation on behalf of the Inuit of the eastern Arctic.

Canadian North is dedicated to supporting, training and employing Aboriginal peoples in a wide variety of roles within the airline. Currently, 15 percent of the airline's more than 850 employees are identified as beneficiaries of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* in the western Arctic and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* in the eastern Arctic.

In the past three years, the airline has emerged from the recession as a leader. The administrative and head offices were moved from Yellowknife to Edmonton and Calgary which has benefitted the growth, competitiveness and prosperity of Alberta.

Canadian North believes in giving back to communities. This commitment has produced a sponsorship value of more than \$3,000,000 over the last two years, supporting a number of not-for-profit and community organizations. Additionally, Canadian North sponsors a number of youth and education programs including the Student Achievement Awards to Grade 12 students, as well as the Northern Youth Abroad program and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Within the North, the airline participates in Inuvialuit and Nunavut Day celebrations, festivities for the signing of both of its shareholder land claim agreements, holiday games, fishing derbies, music and arts festivities, and many additional events unique to the North. For the past 10 years, Canadian North has been involved with the Banff Centre through sponsorship of its Indigenous Leadership Program. The airline

is also partnered with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Nunasi Group of Companies in the North. A major sponsor, Canadian North is the official airline to the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, a major event that takes place every four years bringing Inuit peoples together from around the world.



*Canadian North aircraft*

Steve Hankirk, President of Canadian North, sums up the community involvement this way: "Communities are important to us. We believe in helping out where we can, the people we serve through our community investment and beneficiaries hiring programs."

The airline is a member of various chambers, including community chambers in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, the Edmonton and Calgary Chambers of Commerce and the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, employees volunteer their time to contribute to the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, Nunavut Tourism, and the Alianait Arts Festival in Iqaluit. New in 2013, Canadian North also became the official carrier of the Edmonton Eskimos and provides charter services to other sports teams.

Throughout its history, Canadian North has maintained its employment of beneficiaries, development in the communities that it touches and its core pillars of supporting education, health and the preservation of arts and culture. Through strong leadership and a clear understanding of the northern communities it serves, Canadian North is a true Alberta success story.





# A.P.E. MAINTENANCE LTD.

## Keeping production in motion

Despite getting its start during the economic downturn in 2008, A.P.E. Maintenance has grown to become a local success. What began as a home-based business now employs 15 full-time employees and operates out of the busiest industrial park in Fort McMurray.

A.P.E. Maintenance owners Lloyd and Melanie Antoine are originally from Fort Chipewyan but are affiliated with area First Nations – Lloyd, with the Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Melanie, with the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation – making the company 100 percent Aboriginal owned.

“Starting a business wasn’t an easy road travelled but through hard work and perseverance we believe in a small way we are helping with economic development,” said Lloyd Antoine.

“We have pride in believing that through the businesses and organizations we represent we are helping make this region a better place. The best part is that we are able to provide much needed services and support to our home community making it that much more fulfilling.”

The company’s motto of *keeping production in motion* falls right in line with its objectives to provide high quality service at competitive rates: quick, safe, reliable and timely turn around; apprenticeship training and employment; complete client satisfaction in work ethics, work performance and work quality.

A.P.E. Maintenance found its footing in the millwright industry before expanding to offer oilfield maintenance and construction, warehouse, labour and freight transport services to the residents of Fort Chipewyan and area. The transport side, which started as a complement to the millwright service, was quickly found to be useful in helping residents of isolated Fort Chipewyan receive much needed supplies through the winter months using an ice road. A.P.E. Maintenance was also the first company to offer ice road insurance to residents as a way of reassuring deliverance of cargo to their door.

Lloyd and Melanie have lived in Fort McMurray for many years, investing countless volunteer hours and supporting local athletes, students and organizations. In 2011, Melanie attended the Northern

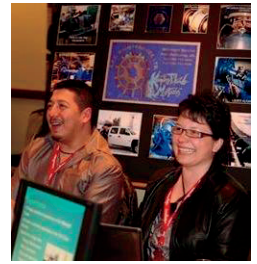
Lights Health Foundation Festival of Trees Gala, which inspired her to have A.P.E. Maintenance support the foundation the following year by sponsoring a tree. Over the course of eight months, A.P.E.

Maintenance created an Aboriginal-themed tree that was adorned with Aboriginal crafts made by residents of Fort Chipewyan. The tree and its decorations were meant to tell a story and highlight a history and culture of the community for all to see; it was subsequently donated to the Northern Lights Health Foundation Festival of Trees for live auction. The tree, of which all proceeds were donated to the foundation, was sold for \$15,500. The sale of the tree was successful not only for the amount it fetched, but also in that it created memories for some and cultural awareness for others.

Lloyd and Melanie remain very active with additional organizations. Lloyd is currently a director with the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association. This non-profit organization consists of Aboriginal businesses committed to creating and enhancing an environment that promotes businesses, jobs and training for the betterment of Aboriginals in the region.

Melanie is newly a director for the Northern Lights Health Foundation and is going on her second year volunteering for the Paul Martin Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program by mentoring students from the Father Mercredi High School in Fort McMurray. Both support the Fort Chipewyan Santa’s Anonymous by hosting an online telethon every year.

Whether occupied by business, volunteer or family life, Lloyd and Melanie Antoine have proven that hard work and determination can yield great results, and that it is never too late to pursue a long-held dream.



Lloyd and Melanie Antoine  
at the Northeastern Alberta  
Aboriginal Business  
Association Showcase



# ERIC AUGER & SONS CONTRACTING LTD.

## Continuing the legacy of Eric Auger

Although he is 75 years of age and retired from the business he began in 1978, his seven children who now run the company still refer to Eric Auger as “owner” and “head.”

Eric Auger & Sons is a First Nation-owned company. All seven children are members of Bigstone Cree Nation. Businesses include oilfield (Eric Auger & Sons Contracting Ltd.), Auger Construction Energy Services and Wabasca E&M Foods Ltd.

The company was founded by Eric Auger in 1978 as Auger Logging Ltd. The logging company expanded into construction in 1988; this is now the main operation of the company as the logging operation was shut down in 2006.



Winter road maintenance

After much discussion, the Auger family ventured into retail and purchased a local grocery store in 2007. The family felt that it only made sense to go into a business which would have a long future.

The businesses owned by the Auger family have provided employment for 35 years. In those years, they have trained and employed individuals in heavy equipment operation in oilfield construction, heavy and light duty equipment maintenance, logging, retail, cooking and housekeeping.

"Your background never mattered, all that mattered was that you were willing to work hard for your wage," said Gloria Auger-Yellowknee, office manager and one of seven directors of the company. She signs her correspondence "Proud to be The Logger's Daughter."

"I am amazed that this man (my father) started our logging business with just a power saw and has, for the last 35 years, provided employment to so many people. We are now employing the third generation of people from when he first started," said Auger-Yellowknee.

"I am very proud of my father's achievements. He started his business in a world full of prejudice, where because you were Métis you were not expected to amount to anything. He beat the odds. In my world he is a legend. He was a man with no education, yet he operated a very successful logging business that held no restriction of the blood that ran

through your veins. Men were judged on their ability to work and nothing else. While he was constantly judged, he would not give up and kept his business thriving. I feel that someone who has brought so much work to a community and whose company is now employing the third generation of individuals should be recognized for all of his hard work."

The company employs anywhere from 50 to 175 individuals, depending on the season.

Most employees come from the Wabasca area (including Bigstone Cree Nation, Whitefish Lake First Nation and Gift Lake Métis Settlement), but the company has also employed people from as far afield as British Columbia, Newfoundland and Maine.

As a local company, Eric Auger & Sons recognizes how important donations are to local fundraisers, clubs, schools and many other events. The company supports a variety of local groups and events and understands the importance of being an active member of the community it serves.

Thanks to the success of the company he founded, and the continued hard work and dedication of his seven children, the legacy of Eric Auger lives on.



# MUSKWACHEES AMBULANCE AUTHORITY LTD.

## Emergency Medical Services offered by Maskwacis for Maskwacis

Inspired by Cree values in order to better meet the needs of its members, the Samson Cree Nation established the Muskwachees Ambulance Authority (MAA) in 1982, which was incorporated only a few years later.

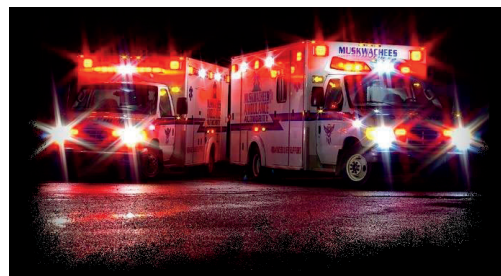
"I am very proud of our team and the *Kisteytowin* (respect) that all staff have for the Cree culture and the beautiful language," said General Manager Stew Schmidt.

MAA provides emergency medical services to not only the Maskwacis First Nations of Ermineskin, Louis Bull, Montana and Samson, but also the neighbouring communities of Westaskiwin and Ponoka.

MAA is a well-respected leader in the EMS health field, having grown over the years to include three dedicated Advanced Life Support (ALS) levels. MAA services over 5,500 missions yearly and is proud to provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"MAA is dedicated to saving lives and promoting health and wellness within Maskwacis," said Schmidt. "Our paramedic teams have made an indelible mark in the lives of many people within our community."

MAA is honoured to provide the Maskwacis community with excellent in- and out-patient care by valuing staff, patients and the community, maintaining and promoting the highest standards of the profession, supporting awareness and illness and accident prevention, treating patients at an ALS level through the continued search for and implementation of better technology, training and protocols and working collaboratively with colleagues in health care and emergency services. MAA was the first to have fetal heart monitors in its EMS ground



*Muskwachees Emergency Medical Services*

ambulances and the first in Alberta to have a power load stretcher system, which has decreased injuries to staff and the need for leave and/or claims.

Having a Cree culturally inspired approach has truly helped to ensure MAA's success in meeting the needs of the Maskwacis community. Through this strong understanding of the Cree culture, staff is able to help enlighten others with their Cree teachings, especially to those who are off reserve.

"We believe in providing the best care possible," said Schmidt. "And we are proud of our business and the positive success we have made within Maskwacis."





# FOUR WINDS & ASSOCIATES

## Helping to Empower Communities



Dan Martel

services help to provide awareness primarily on capacity building so the organizations will continue on a stronger path towards a brighter future.

“Four Winds believes Aboriginal people have the capability and knowledge to build up individuals and communities,” said Manager Leslie Treseder. “We provide practical tools, knowledge and hands-on expertise to assist communities to realize their goals and build a better future.”

Four Winds & Associates has a unique approach that incorporates traditional values into governance, organizational design and planning. The company provides ongoing, hands-on support to Aboriginal communities and organizations to develop and implement plans, strategies and initiatives to achieve their goals.

The medicine wheel teaches that all humans are affected by a variety of aspects found in each of the four directions: east, south, west, and north. The company name, Four Winds, can be interpreted as a reflection of the impact powerful air or wind from the four directions has on an entity. The

Located in Edmonton, the Aboriginal-owned company Four Winds & Associates was established in 1993. Staff provides consulting support to non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal communities and organizations, specializing in governance, organizational development and capacity building.

The main goal of Four Winds & Associates is to consult with organizations in order to equip them with practical tools needed to succeed. Through reaching out with the “Let’s Talk” approach, the company helps to empower the groups with knowledge. Its

impact can be felt immediately or it can be molded into a new entity over a period of time. Having a long-term affect and a powerful impact certainly holds true for this company.

“It is such a pleasure to hear back from organizations how we made a difference in their planning,” said Treseder. “Feedback like this encourages us to continue on our path to help others to succeed.”

Over the years Four Winds & Associates has proudly worked with many Aboriginal groups throughout Alberta including Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, Saddle Lake First Nation and Louis Bull Tribe, and has been involved in the community by volunteering at various activities, participating in cultural ceremonies and sponsoring events.

“Four Winds & Associates helped our Nation to develop our own strategy, which helped us to make better use of our resources,” said one First Nation member. “The knowledge they shared helped us to have a better understanding of systems that we need to go through in order to succeed.”

Four Winds & Associates continues to create learning environments that will result in practical solutions.



*Cando has been providing excellence in Aboriginal economic development for over 20 years. Cando is an organization with a national reputation that provides training and skills unique to building economic capacity in Aboriginal communities.*

*We are committed to not only being the leader in programs and services for economic development officers, but enhancing training opportunities for future economic development officers. Our vision continues to be to strengthen Aboriginal economies and that begins at all levels of training. Our vision is “To build capacity which strengthens Aboriginal economies by providing programs and services to Economic Development Officers.”*

*Once again, Cando has coordinated the nominations and finalists selection process for the two Alberta Business Awards of Distinction sponsored by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada: the Aboriginal Relations – Best Practice Award of Distinction and the Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction.*

*Cando would also like to personally congratulate all the nominees and the finalists. Your entrepreneurship and achievements make us very proud.*

Please address all letters, comments and requests to:

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