

2005 BUSINESS/COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER LONG PLAIN FIRST NATION, MB



This year's winner for the Business/Community Economic Developer of the Year Award was the Long Plain First Nation from Manitoba. This community is led by Chief Dennis Meeches who has worked in politics since 1988. During the last 20 years the community has undergone many changes. It has worked to lower the unemployment rate, as well as try and provide a stable economic base from which the community can operate.

The community has established businesses such as the Arrowhead Development Corporation, gaming

halls, gas bar, commercial leasing and most recently two young entrepreneurs opened a store that sells tobacco for ceremonial purposes.

The Long Plain First Nation took an aggressive community driven approach when they ventured forth into economic development. They made their governance transparent and open. They worked with the community to move forward rather than stagnate. According to Chief Meeches, Long Plain "need[ed] an open and transparent government" and their "biggest challenge [was] to move towards...a new standard of transparency." This strategy has "done wonders for the community, it actually brought the community closer together." Their strategy has been successful for the community and when asked about what the nomination meant to them, Chief Meeches said, "It has to be, for Long Plain, probably one of the greatest honors to be nominated by...peers across the country. That wasn't our goal, our goal was to provide our people at Long Plain a sound government, good governance, provide employment opportunities, training opportunities [and] to empower them with information that they are entitled to." They have achieved this and so much more. Congratulations Long Plain First Nation on being the 2005 Community/Business Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner!