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magazine

Moving Indigenous Economies Forward

**National
Youth
Panel**

**Women in
Business
Panel**

**2022
Pre-Conference
Preview Issue**

**Economic
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Inside Connect:

Cover image:

Inside the Dakota Dunes Resort at Whitecap, Saskatchewan

Photo illustration by: Paul Macedo

Cando Connect Magazine is produced by Cando under the direction of Paul Macedo, Communications Officer.

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Save the Date



CANDO 5TH ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SUMMIT

August 8-11, 2022



CANDO 5TH ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SUMMIT



August 8-11, 2022

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For more information, please contact Danielle Lightning: danielle.lightning@edo.ca

www.edo.ca/youth/economic-development-youth-summit-2022

Conference Excitement Builds!

There is much anticipation and excitement for the 2022 Cando Conference to be held in May at Dakota Dunes Resort at Whitecap, Saskatchewan – and not just because it's the first time since October 2019! It's also a shift to a spring date on the events calendar – as a result there is also a Cando NIEEF Golf Tournament planned!

The **28th annual Cando National Conference and AGM** will be an in-person event to be hosted by the Whitecap Dakota First Nation at their new Dakota Dunes Hotel at Whitecap, Saskatchewan (south of Saskatoon) and has been scheduled for May 16-19, 2022.

Full pre-conference coverage begins on pages **6-7**. Read more on the host facility - Dakota Dunes Resort on pages **10-11** and the host community - Whitecap Dakota First Nation on pages **16-17**. There is also coverage of the National Youth Panel, the Women in Business Panel and the Economic Developer of the Year Awards!

For all the details on the 2022 Cando Conference please visit: www.edo.ca/conference/2022

Cando is proud to announce the eight (8) recipients of the **2022 CIBC-NIEEF Scholarships**. Read about their educational journeys and how the NIEEF scholarships will assist them to reach their career goals. For more please turn to pages **52-59**.

In addition, the student profiles of the four (4) recipients of the 2021 NIEEF Scholarships are on pages **62-65**.

The **First Nation – Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI)** has received confirmation of funding support from Indigenous Services Canada to continue with a CEDI Phase III (2021 – 2025). CEDI Phase III has now selected a new cohort of eight (8) First Nation-municipal partnerships from across Canada to participate in the program. For full coverage of CEDI Phase III, please turn to pages **66-68**.

For updated information, please visit: www.edo.ca/cedi/phase-3-intake

The **Links to Learning Webinar Series** will continue through the spring and summer. Cando will continue to deliver skills development opportunities for its members via this weekly series. The Links to Learning Series delivers content every Tuesday. In addition, a weekly Innovate BC Wednesday Webinar series will be delivered for the balance of 2021. These webinars continue to be free to Cando members, thanks to a generous support from CIBC & Innovate BC.

Please visit the www.edo.ca/links-to-learning for a full schedule of upcoming webinars.

Looking forward to seeing you in person at Whitecap Dakota!

CANDO 28TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE & AGM

May 16–19, 2022 | Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Saskatchewan



Save the Date!

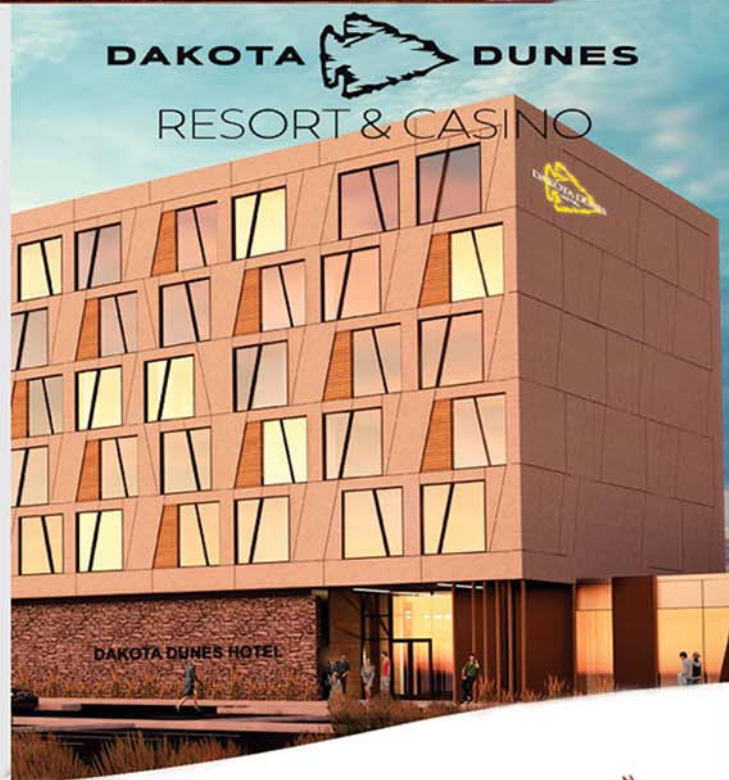
May 16–19, 2022

**Dakota Dunes Resort
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- Professional Development Workshop
- Economic Developer of the Year Awards
- Trade Show & Artisan Show & Sale
- Annual National Youth Panel
- Women in Business Panel
- Community Cultural Tour
- Keynote Presentations
- President's Reception, Dinner & Dance

Please visit the Cando website to register and for more information

www.edo.ca/conference



CANDO ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

CO-HOSTED BY CANDO & DAKOTA DUNES GOLF LINKS



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Monday, May 16th, 2022

Dakota Dunes Golf Links Whitecap Dakota, Sask

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Website: www.edo.ca/conference/2022

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28TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A National Platform Exclusively Focused on Excellence in Indigenous Economic Development

Cando is pleased to announce its 28th Annual National Conference to be held May 16-19, 2022 at the Dakota Dunes Resort, Whitecap Saskatchewan Theme: Economic Reconciliation - A call to Action

This year's conference will be co-hosted by Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

The Cando national conference is the only platform that focuses exclusively on topics and trends related to the advancement of Indigenous Economic Development in Canada. It is an important venue for economic developers and related stakeholders to come together, create new business contacts, share best practices, address obstacles and reveal existing trends in our dynamic economy. Topics and training opportunities, conference attendees will not only see the region's innovative energy, but leave with fresh strategies and tools to take their organizations and communities to the next level.



What Can I Expect from the Cando Conference?

- Pre-Conference Professional Development Workshop
- Cando Accredited Training
- Conference Icebreaker Reception
- Community Cultural Event
- Economic Developer of the Year Awards
- National Youth Panel
- Women in Business Panel
- Interactive workshops, keynote presentations & informative plenary sessions
- Trade Show & Artisan Show & Sale
- President's Reception, Dinner & Dance

Who attends the Cando Conference?

The Cando conference attracts hundreds of delegates from across the country from a broad cross section of the corporate sector, government institutions, Indigenous communities & development corporations, academics and young people interested in pursuing a career in the field of Indigenous Economic Development.

Specifically:

- Economic Development
- Program Managers, Band Administrators & Finance
- Indigenous business owners and consultants working with Indigenous communities
- Elected leaders and senior executives
- Academic leaders and students presenting and pursuing the latest research
- Senior Executives from Financial Institutions, the Mining and Energy Sector, Trust & Investment Firms, Law Firms, and many other corporate sector representatives

What are the Benefits of Attending?

Bolster Your Professional Network!

This is your chance to mingle with the best and brightest in your field. Check out the latest progress from industry innovators and engage with like-minded people and exchange ideas, and develop friendships with people from all over Canada.

Build Your Knowledge Base!

The conference is a hotbed of interesting seminars and workshops - attending some great presentations during the conference will allow you to learn about all of the new things that are developing in other regions of the country while expanding your current knowledge within a specific area of expertise.

Catch Up With Trends!

Attending the Cando conference is a great way to stay on the cutting edge. Learn about the most recent trends in Indigenous Economic Development and bring the leading best practices back home for the benefit of your community or organization.

Expand Your Resources!

The conference is full of people promoting new ideas, vendors selling new products and consultants teaching new methodologies. Take advantage of this opportunity to fill your toolbox with new techniques for greater success.

Get Inspired!

The Cando conference offers Canada's most most inspirational showcase of Indigenous youth role models, and economic developers. With so many successful members of your industry present, chances are good that you could bump into your next mentor or role model at the Cando conference.

Don't miss this excellent opportunity to learn more about Indigenous community economic development & speak with the people directly involved in improving the economic viability of Canada's Indigenous communities!

To learn more about the upcoming conference or to register, please visit our web site at:

www.edo.ca/conference/2022

e-mail Svitlana Konoval at: skonoval@edo.ca

or call the Cando Office: 1-800-463-9300 or 780-990-0303



The Dakota Dunes Resort will be hosting this year's Cando Conference.

Photos: Courtesy Dakota Dunes Resort.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Writer

It seems only fitting one of the country's top Indigenous economic development conferences will be staged at one of the premier Indigenous resorts in Canada.

The 2022 Cando Conference is scheduled to be held May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Cando is the national organization that promotes Indigenous economic development across Canada.

This year will mark the 28th annual Cando Conference. The majority of those conferences have been held in person. But because of the pandemic, the last in-person conference was held in October of 2019 in Gatineau, Que.

Cando organized a virtual conference in October of 2020.

Cando officials were hoping to hold the 2021 event this past fall at the Dakota Dunes Resort. But because of the ongoing pandemic, that event was push back until this May, in the hopes a full in-person conference experience can be had.

The Dakota Dunes Resort, which opened in October of 2020, has been earning rave reviews from its visitors.

"We really try to make sure that everyone in our hotel leaves with a sense of awe and is treated with an unforgettable authentic Indigenous experience," said Alex Fleischhacker, Dakota Dunes Resort's area director for sales and marketing.

The seven-story facility offers 155 guest rooms. All rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows.

“They have a beautiful view of the Dakota Dunes Golf Links course and you get to see the sprawling hills of the dunes,” Fleischhacker said. “Or you get the river valley view. If you look, you can actually see the South Saskatchewan River valley from your room.”

All guest rooms feature a stunning headdress image of Whitecap Dakota First Nation Chief Darcy Bear, who was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2020.

The Dakota Dunes Resort is billed as an ideal location to stage conferences or meetings. The facility can also be enjoyed by those wishing to visit the adjacent casino, which opened in 2007, three years after the First Nation’s golf course started welcoming visitors.

Guests have also been flocking to the Dakota Dunes Resort to take part in one of its Indigenous adventures, including Dakota culture and history, or simply to have a relaxing getaway.

“I don’t think there is a resort experience that you can go to presently in Saskatchewan which will give you the same experience,” Fleischhacker said. “You kind of get to pick your path a little bit. I think there’s something there for everybody.”

Elements key to Indigenous spirituality are prevalent throughout the Dakota Dunes Resort.

“When you walk into our doors, you’ll see that a lot of those elements throughout the hotel,” Fleischhacker said. “So, we have a lot of earth, a lot of fire, a lot of air. And they all kind of meet together in our hotel.”

Fleischhacker added resort officials were keen to have guests feel welcome immediately.

“When you walk through the lobby, there’s lots of windows with lots of great natural light,” she said. “We have our

fireplaces in the lobby to make that warm and cozy feeling. And then you’re going to see lots of natural types of elements throughout the hotel.”

Some of the symbolic elements are prevalent throughout the facility. For example, angular designs, which represent tipis, are a common sight.

“We walk through the corridor and there’s river rock to symbolize Whitecap Dakota First Nation building their First Nation alongside the river valley,” Fleischhacker added.

The resort also features a suspended, handcrafted canoe that was shipped in from Montreal.

“It’s a beautiful centerpiece to a hallway,” Fleischhacker said.

As for dining experiences, the Dakota Dunes Resort includes its own restaurant, the Moose Woods Home Fire Grill.

“We really try to have that farm to table feel,” Fleischhacker said. “There’s a lot of local producers that we source from. We go to the farmers produce every weekend and get fresh produce. And we source local venison, local beef, local bison, lots of different local foods are sourced here.”

Darrell Balkwill, the CEO of Whitecap Development Corporation, the First Nation’s economic arm, said the resort was the latest part of a 20-year master development plan.

Balkwill said that master plan was developed a decade ago, in 2012.

“We continue to try to pick off some of these projects, one by one,” said Balkwill, who first joined the Whitecap Dakota First Nation to serve as its director of economic development in 2003.

Future facilities that are being planned include a thermal spa and an arena featuring two ice pads.



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A photograph of two people, likely farmers, leaning on a metal fence. The person on the left is a man with long hair, wearing a black beanie and a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The person on the right is a woman wearing a brown leather baseball cap and a blue denim jacket. They are both looking off to the right with thoughtful expressions. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a farm or field.

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Whitecap Dakota First Nation continuing business expansion

By Sam Laskaris, Cando Writer

The Dakota Dunes Resort is just one of the ventures of the Whitecap Development Corporation, the economic arm of Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Photo: Dakota Dunes Resort

Officials with the Whitecap Dakota First Nation are certainly not resting on their laurels.

Representatives from the First Nation, based in Saskatchewan, are constantly working to better and further develop several initiatives which will provide numerous benefits to its members.

Back in the spring of 2004, Whitecap Dakota was thrust into the spotlight when it opened its spectacular Dakota Dunes Golf Links course to the public.

The course earned rave reviews from its inception and continues to do so.

In fact, one of the sport's most respected magazines, Golf Digest, selected Dakota Dunes as the best new Canadian course for 2005. That accomplishment signified the first time any course in Saskatchewan had been recognized with any sort of award from Golf Digest.

The course continues to be included on various lists which compile the top golf facilities across the country.

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation has also been applauded in various circles for its casino which opened in 2007 as well as its Dakota Dunes Resort, which opened its doors to the public in the fall of 2020.

Darrell Balkwill is currently serving as the chief executive officer of the Whitecap Development Corporation, which is the economic arm of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Balkwill said several new initiatives are being planned for the First Nation.

"There was a tourism master plan developed back in 2012," Balkwill said.

That plan included various initiatives Whitecap Dakota officials were hoping would come to fruition during the next 20 years.

"We continue to try to pick off some of these projects, one by one," Balkwill said.

The Dakota Dunes resort, a seven-story facility which includes 155 guest rooms, was one of the ventures in the First Nation's master plan.

Balkwill added Whitecap Dakota representatives have now turned their attention to constructing a thermal spa, patterned after Scandinavian spas, on its lands.

"We are in the design phase right now," Balkwill said. "And then we will start construction in 2023."

Balkwill is hoping the First Nation's spa will be completed and ready to start welcoming visitors by some point in 2024 or the following year.

"It's a fairly large investment," Balkwill said, estimating it will cost about \$40 million to build the spa. "There is nothing really like it in Saskatchewan."

Balkwill added Quebec currently has several thermal spas. But they are rare in western Canada.

"There are a couple in B.C., one in Alberta and one in Manitoba," he said.

Balkwill said an arena, featuring two ice pads, is also being planned by the Whitecap Development Corporation.

"It can also double as a larger entertainment centre," Balkwill said of the rink, which could potentially see construction begin as early as 2024.

The facility would include seating for 1,500-2,000 spectators, which would allow First Nation reps to host some even larger concerts than it currently is able to.

Other future plans include adding retail opportunities on the First Nation as well as a residential development, which would feature approximately 300 units, including condos, townhouses and single-family homes.

Balkwill said corporation officials are constantly focused on having profitable and sustainable developments.

"We're trying to create revenue streams," he said. "And we're trying to create employment opportunities for our community members."

Balkwill added Whitecap Dakota has become a regional employer because the First Nation, which has about 600 members, does not have enough residents to fill all of the positions required at its current ventures.

Balkwill praised the First Nation's leadership team, led by Chief Darcy Bear. He has served as the Whitecap Dakota chief since 1993.

"He's very driven," Balkwill said. "Once he gets the mandate from the community, we try to be fairly aggressive with our projects and developments."

Besides having its own businesses, including its golf course, casino and resort, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation is also a partner in several other ventures.

For example, the Whitecap Development Corporation owns 50 per cent of Whitecap Commercial Real Estate. The other half of this venture is owned by those in construction, engineering and electrical sectors within Saskatchewan.

The Whitecap corporation also has a division called Whitecap Industrial Services, providing assets to resource, oil and gas, utilities and pipeline sectors. The First Nation has various partners involved in this venture.

The Whitecap Dakota is also one of the seven First Nations which comprise the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). As a result, it has been part of various STC partnership initiatives, including real estate holdings.



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EDC-Cando Member Survey: What we learned and what comes next

By Todd Evans

Last fall, Export Development Canada (EDC) surveyed Cando members to learn more about business activities and challenges in their communities. We're grateful for everyone who responded. EDC uses your feedback to develop products and services that meet the needs of Indigenous businesses.

I've summarized four important findings below. I'm also pleased to announce that EDC will host a workshop during the **28th Annual Cando National Conference**, May 16 to 19, 2022, to go in-depth on strategies for Indigenous businesses to overcome challenges and get started with exporting.

1. Small business is a big deal

Our survey captured a trend that Paul Macedo, Cando's director of communications, sees in many communities: "A growing number of Indigenous people, especially youth, are becoming entrepreneurs. Especially in rural areas, young people are creating businesses and employing themselves."

I'm excited by this development. Entrepreneurship creates new economic opportunities for the entire community. Once these businesses become sustainable, they'll generate self-determined prosperity for future generations. Indigenous entrepreneurs are also role models, who contribute to their communities by mentoring others and sharing knowledge.

Given the rise of entrepreneurship, it's not surprising that most Indigenous-owned companies in Canada are small- to medium-sized enterprises. The highest proportion of businesses in our survey had annual sales under \$100,000.

Managing the transition from start-up to sustainable business can be tough, but with the right support and knowledge, there's lots of opportunity to grow. This post has some tips for getting started:

<https://www.edc.ca/en/blog/exporting-checklist-for-indigenous-entrepreneurs.html>



Todd Evans, National Lead - Indigenous Exporters, Export Development Canada

2. Skilled workers are scarce

When asked about challenges to growth, the top response was "hiring the right people." Finding qualified employees is a problem for businesses everywhere, as COVID-19 has impacted workers' availability and priorities. The challenge is especially tough for Indigenous businesses in rural communities.

There's no simple solution to the hiring crunch, but I'd urge you not to overlook good people, who may lack the skills you need now, but are eager to learn. Cando recommends these organizations for help with training and upskilling your employees:

Okimaw Community and HR Solutions:

<https://okimaw.co>

Spirit Omega:

<https://www.spiritomega.com>

3. Social media drives sales

"Word of mouth" is an important sales channel for Indigenous businesses, showing the importance of community ties. But more entrepreneurs are using social media to broaden their reach, connect with other Indigenous entrepreneurs, and find customers.

Social media is a great way to market your Indigenous brand beyond Canada's

borders. Combine it with an e-commerce platform, and you're on your way to building an export business. If you create a MyEDC account, you can watch our webinar to learn more about brand building:

<https://www.edc.ca/en/events/webinar/set-your-indigenous-business-apart.html>

4. Cash (flow) is still king

Working capital is the lifeblood of any business. Our survey found that Indigenous entrepreneurs continue to face unfair barriers when seeking business financing. EDC is working with our partners to explore new ways for Indigenous businesses to access capital more easily. For now, the **EDC Export Guarantee Program** may provide your business with pathways to working capital.

<https://www.edc.ca/en/solutions/working-capital/export-guarantee-program.html>

Let's connect

Join me in person on **Thursday, May 19, 2022, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.** at the 2022 Cando National Conference for EDC's workshop on preparing your business to export. Our panelists will provide practical tips on growing a start-up into a sustainable, international business. I hope you will join us.

If you can't attend, I encourage you to reach out and connect with EDC. We want you to succeed, and there's an entire ecosystem of support available as you grow your business. Working with us gives you the opportunity to build relationships with our global network of partners and trade advisors, as well as other Indigenous businesses, associations, and financial institutions. So, let's talk.

For more information on how we can support your exporting journey, call a trade advisor at 1-800-229-0575, or visit [edc.ca/indigenous-business](https://www.edc.ca/indigenous-business).



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Youth panelist successfully juggles work, school and athletic careers



Josh Montana - 23-year-old member of George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Josh Montana certainly has a lot on his plate.

For starters, the 23-year-old member of George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, is working towards a Business degree at the University of Regina.

He's also devoting a good chunk of his life to Wichetowak Limnos Consulting Services. He was recently named a vice-president of the company and is one of its three senior managers.

Montana is also an elite athlete. A centerfielder, he's the only Indigenous player named to the Canadian men's fastball squad that will participate at its world championships this October in Argentina.

Montana is also one of the six individuals that have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference.

This four-day event, which is scheduled for May 16-19, will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

"It means a lot," Montana said of his inclusion on the national panel, which features Indigenous role models from across Canada aged 29 and under. "It's been kind of a big year for me."

Montana said being part of the Cando panel is rather meaningful for him.

"It really is important for me because nobody really sees the behind-the-scenes work I do," he said.

Montana's responsibilities with his company are rather extensive. He supervises all employees and oversees the day-to-day operations of the

environmental firm, that primarily works in the oil, gas and potash industries in western and central Canada.

Montana's work weeks are rather hectic.

"I can range from 40-60 hours per week," he said.

His duties also include engaging with government officials, businesses, communities and cities about Indigenous inclusion and procurement.

Though his work prevents him from being a full-time university student, Montana for now continues to take one class per semester.

And he plans on finishing his degree requirements, hopefully within the next couple of years.

"My parents and my support system have made it a point that education is important," he said. "So yes, I do plan to finish my degree."

Before beginning his University of Regina studies, Montana had attended Canada College in California on an athletic scholarship. He spent two and a half years at the school earning an associate commerce degree.

He then returned home and started working towards his university degree.

When necessary, Montana is able to maintain his commitment with the national fastball program.

"It's been kind of a whirlwind," he said. "But I can work from anywhere I am."

At times, Montana said he wakes up in the wee hours of the morning to train or for work responsibilities.

And he doesn't mind having his go-go-go lifestyle.

Continued on page 28.

Brown's goal of becoming national youth panelist to become reality

Mackenzie Brown can cross off an item on her bucket list.

Brown, a member of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Alberta, vividly recalls attending the 2018 Cando Conference and being in awe of those who were on the National Youth Panel at the time.

"This has been a goal of mine to be on that youth panel since then," Brown said.

Mission accomplished.

Brown, 26, is one of six individuals that has been selected to the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference, scheduled for May 16-19. This four-day event will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

"I'm super, super excited," Brown said of her participation at the upcoming conference.

The National Youth Panel features Indigenous role models from across Canada, who are 29 and under.

Brown will certainly have no shortage of topics to possibly discuss about her various careers.

For example, she owns her own art business, creating and selling her Indigenous acrylic art. Brown also creates beadwork, leatherwork and multi-media work through her business.

Brown also joins her mother Matricia Bauer to form a singing and drumming group called Warrior Women. The duo has travelled extensively throughout Alberta teaching Indigenous culture.

Brown and her mother have also performed in a pair of American cities, New York City and San Diego. And in 2020 they were part of the Canadian

contingent that performed in Ivory Coast, at Africa's largest performing arts festival.

Brown has been a member of Warrior Women since her early teens. The group has been performing since 2010.

Brown, who lives in Calgary, is also the director of industry development for Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA). Her responsibilities include creating and leading site tours, workshops and mentoring to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders to advance Indigenous tourism efforts.

Brown has been with ITA since June of 2020. She had also worked in Indigenous tourism prior to that.

For starters she was an Indigenous tourism development intern with the Alberta government. She then joined Edmonton Tourism where she served as its Indigenous tourism development specialist.

Brown said her accomplishments in recent years can in part be traced back to listening to youth panelists at the 2018 Cando Conference, which was held in Enoch, Alta.

"It inspired me to get where I am now," she said.

Brown's duties with the ITA include reaching out to various Indigenous communities throughout the province to assist with the development of tourism strategies and economic development plans.

"It means a lot to me for sure," Brown said of the fact she is able to assist others in Indigenous communities.



Mackenzie Brown is a member of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Alberta.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Continued on page 28.

Youth panelist admirably juggling academics, jobs and volunteer work



Nathan Crow is 29 and a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Nathan Crow has managed to dramatically turn his life around.

Crow was battling substance abuse issues back in 2019 and checked into an Edmonton-area treatment centre. Following the completion of a six-week program, Crow asked whether he could stay an additional two weeks, a request which was granted.

Fast forward to today and Crow, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, has been sober and drug free for more than three years - April 10, 2019 to be exact.

Crow, 29, is also excelling in school and is frequently praised for his advocacy and volunteer work. He's currently enrolled in the Indigenous Governance and Business Management program at the University of Lethbridge.

And he's also one of six individuals that have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference, which is scheduled for May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort on the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

"It means so much to me," Crow said of his inclusion on the panel, featuring Indigenous youth role models from across the country aged 29 and under. "I'll be able to network and communicate with Indigenous leaders from across the country."

Crow doesn't shy away from discussing his past addictions.

"I believe that part of my life could and should be told," he said.

Crow had graduated high school back in 2011. He decided to return to school in 2019, the same year he completed his treatment program.

"I told myself I would put 100 per cent effort into (school)," said Crow, who had spent the majority of his time between school engagements working for a powerline company in remote communities across Alberta.

And Crow has kept his word to himself, about focusing on his academics, making the Dean's Honours list each semester of his program. And he's been able to maintain his impressive grades while juggling several other commitments.

Crow is a student mentor with the university's enrolment services. Plus, he holds an elected paid position to serve as the Indigenous student representative with the school's student union council.

Up until this past December Crow had also been working as a student assistant at the university library. But he took a break from this gig as he took on the role as Cando's national student director in December.

And a couple of months before that he became a student advisory committee member with Community Futures Treaty Seven, requiring his attendance at meetings between students and Elders.

Due to all his commitments, Crow is now planning to finish his four-year university program in either four and a half or five years.

"I feel it's going to be worth it in the end," he said of the fact his various duties and responsibilities mean it will take him just a bit longer to fulfil all the requirements to graduate.

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Cando Connect

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Métis STEM student eyeing career in optometry

Shayna Uhryn already finds herself in a position where she stands out.

The 23-year-old Métis woman from Saskatoon is in her fourth and final year of studies as she has been pursuing her Anatomy and Cell Biology degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

“It’s very male populated,” Uhryn said of her program. “And to have an Indigenous person in STEM is rare to begin with.”

Though she is not 100 per cent certain, Uhryn said there is a chance she is the only Indigenous student in her program.

Uhryn is also joining another select group. She is one of six Indigenous individuals from across Canada that have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year’s Cando Conference.

The four-day conference will be staged May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

“It’s kind of amazing to be able to hear from all these amazing people,” Uhryn said. “And to be named as one of them is pretty exciting.”

Uhryn said she is looking forward to discussing some of her local accomplishments on a national scale.

One of the things she’s most proud of is that she is a co-founder of the Indigenous Health and Wellness Group that was launched at her university in 2020.

She’s a facilitator of the group, which typically attracts about 25 members each semester.

“This group we created is part of the peer health groups at the University of Saskatchewan,” Uhryn said.

The group is entirely run and administered by students.

“Our focus this year has been to increase Indigenous awareness on campus,” Uhryn said, adding another goal is to make Indigenous students feel more supported while at the school.

Uhryn, a former distance runner and cross-country competitor, is also pleased with a sporting initiative that she has been involved with during the past two years.

She’s travelled to various Indigenous communities throughout Saskatchewan to help teach younger athletes some of the nuances of track and field disciplines.

If she’s able to, Uhryn said she would welcome the opportunity to continue working with this program in 2022.

Uhryn is expected to graduate from her current university program in late April. But she’s not quite sure what her immediate future holds.

“My long-term goal is to go into optometry,” she said.

She is hoping to apply and be accepted into the optometry program offered by Ontario’s University of Waterloo, starting in September of 2023. Waterloo is the only English-speaking university in Canada that offers an optometry program.

Uhryn though has not decided what she will do during the coming academic year.

“I might take a year off school,” she said. “Or I could go back and do a one-year Master’s program (in Anatomy and Cell Biology).”



Shayna Uhryn is a 23-year-old Métis from Saskatoon.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Continued on page 28.

Published author named to National Youth Panel



Shayla Raine is 22 and a member of the Louis Bull Tribe in Alberta.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Indications are Shayla Raine has a rather bright future.

And one can credit her perseverance for wanting to further her education and work towards her goals after she became pregnant and a single mother at age 15.

“Having a daughter very young was a driving force for me,” said Raine, a member of the Louis Bull Tribe, a First Nations band in Alberta.

Raine, who is now 22 and a second-year student in Kelowna, B.C., at the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia, was keen to complete her high school education after giving birth to her daughter Ayla, who is now seven.

“I had a lot of help,” Raine said. “I had a very supportive family.”

Raine, who is studying health and exercise science at university, is now considered a role model.

In fact, she’s one of six individuals that have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year’s Cando Conference. The four-day event will be staged May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Raine believes one of the reasons she was chosen for the panel was because earlier this year she independently published a children’s book titled *The Way Creator Sees You*.

The book is a long, free verse poem about Kihew, a Plains Cree boy that is struggling to accept his Indigenous features.

Raine wrote, published and marketed the book by herself. She’s also one of the book’s illustrators.

Raine is thrilled she was named to the National Youth Panel.

“I’m very humbled,” she said. “It’s really exciting too.”

Raine added she’s somewhat surprised to be recognized as an Indigenous youth leader now.

“I just published my book in January,” she said. “I feel like I’m just starting my journey.”

Cando’s National Youth Panel includes Indigenous individuals who are considered role models and are aged 29 and under.

After completing her high school studies, Raine attended an Alberta college for a year. She then spent a year in the Canadian Armed Forces before deciding to move to British Columbia and commence her university career.

She’s also got several other projects in the works now.

Raine has finished writing a novel, which has been submitted to a publishing company. And she’s also working on a documentary, with her partner Ryan Oliverius, titled *Decolonizing Wellness*.

Oliverius, a councillor with the Okanagan Indian Band, was a member of Cando’s National Youth Panel in 2019.

Decolonizing Wellness includes a holistic view of wellness and features interviews with various Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

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Cando Connect

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Métis panelist fulfilling dream of working in the film industry

Nolan McAllister is fulfilling his childhood dream.

McAllister, a member of the Métis Nation British Columbia, is the director and cinematographer for his own Kamloops-based company called Orenda Films.

McAllister, who launched his company in 2012, is also one of six individuals who have been named to Cando's National Youth Panel.

The panelists will share their stories at this year's Cando Conference, scheduled for May 16-19. The conference will be staged at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located in Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

"I think it's definitely exciting and a unique opportunity and experience for sure," McAllister said.

The six Indigenous individuals named to the panel, which are from various locations across the country, are considered young role models. They're all aged 29 and under.

"I want to tell a story about perseverance and not taking no for an answer," McAllister, who is 29, said about his presentation at the upcoming conference.

McAllister has known what he's wanted to do with his life – sort of – since a very young age.

"Basically, since I was eight years old I wanted to be in the film industry," he said.

McAllister eventually convinced his parents to let him take acting lessons. And after researching various information about casting agencies, McAllister did eventually find somebody to represent him.

Though he did have an agent, McAllister quickly realized how challenging the acting world can be. That's because he didn't have much success landing work.

But he recalled that when he was about 13 years old he did land one acting project, to be in a commercial for BC Parks.

But that role didn't pan out as he hoped it would. As it turned out, McAllister's segment in the commercial was edited out so nobody got to see him in action.

Though his acting career never took off, McAllister still wanted to be involved in the industry.

"I realized I loved film production and storytelling," he said.

Early on in his career, McAllister landed varying roles with several movies filmed in British Columbia, including Power Rangers, Fifty Shades of Grey and Step Up All In.

Later on, he launched his film/photography production company. Initially his company was called Alpha-Omega Productions. He later renamed it Orenda Films.

McAllister's business has been rather successful in recent years. And he's now at a point where he would like to pick and choose the work that he accepts.

He especially enjoys working with Indigenous clients.

Among those he has produced Indigenous content for are the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations.

Continued on page 28.



Nolan McAllister is 29 and a member of Métis Nation British Columbia.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Josh Montana

“I like to have structure and organization in my life,” he said.

Montana is also very comfortable working for his current company. He’d like to remain with the firm and continue moving up the corporate ladder.

“It’s really important for me because it’s an Indigenous-owned consulting firm,” he said. “I believe in this and I’m fully invested.”

Mackenzie Brown

Brown is also keen to maintain all of her current chosen paths. She plans to continue her Indigenous tourism work, continue performing with Warrior Women and also growing her art business.

“I believe there is importance in having balance,” Brown said of her various roles.

Nathan Crow

Crow has also accepted a spring/summer internship position with Meyers Norris Penny, an accounting, tax services and business consultancy firm. He’ll spend his time shifting between the company’s Calgary and Lethbridge offices.

Shayn Uhryn

Uhryn added she might also explore the possibility of taking a one-year Master’s business program, since she is keen to be in charge of her own optometry office in the future.

Shayla Raine

Once she has completed her current university program, Raine is planning to take an 18-month education course that UBC offers. She is hoping to eventually become a physical education teacher.

“It’s subject to change though,” she said of her career aspirations.

As for her more immediate future, Raine is preparing for her appearance on the National Youth Panel.

“I’m hoping that the stories I’ll be sharing will inspire (conference attendees) to not give up on their goals,” she said.

Nolan McAllister

“I’m thinking I want to do less corporate work and more tourism work,” McAllister said. “I like the emotional aspect of it.”

McAllister also loves the fact he gets to share details about the lives and stories of Indigenous peoples.

“And I like the fact we can metaphorically walk a day in their life,” he said.



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Indigenous entrepreneur now running two successful companies



Heather Black, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, who is running not one but two successful businesses now.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

The life of being an entrepreneur hasn't always been easy or successful for Heather Black.

But things are certainly looking rosy these days for Black, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, who is running not one but two successful businesses now.

Black is also one of four Indigenous people who have been named to the Women In Business panel for the 2022 Cando Conference.

This year's event will be staged May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located in Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Black, who lives in Calgary, is the founder and owner of Creative Spirit Solutions. She launched the business, which includes boot camps and entrepreneurial skills development workshops in 2015.

Other roles that Black fulfils with Creative Spirit Solutions is that she's also a community engagement consultant, curriculum developer, business plan writer and network and communications specialist.

Black also owns and operates Buffalo Stone Woman, a business she launched in the summer of 2020. She leads hiking tours in the Alberta district of Kananaskis.

"The life and seeds of entrepreneurship was planted in 2002, by attending the youth entrepreneur camp hosted by Community Futures Treaty Seven (CFT7)" she said.

Formerly known as the Treaty Seven Economic Development Corporation, the CFT7 assists its members towards

their goals of achieving economic success.

Black credits the CFT7 for her early entrepreneurship days.

"As a youth comes a world of insecurities and lack of confidence," she said. "Having tools, resources and a sense of belonging, confidence grew by having built and amazing relationship with having an entrepreneur family."

Yet Black discovered success is not always guaranteed.

She first started Creative Spirit Solution back in 2002 as an interior decorating and furniture broker business. The company lasted for five years but Black was unable to turn it into a financially stable one.

She relaunched Creative Spirit Solution after deciding to take the company in a new direction.

"Opportunity has come by always being ready, available, the ability to adapt to change, and the willingness to customize programs and services to what the community wants and needs," Black said.

Black's business boot camps provide others with financial, social media and business plan strategies.

Many of her clients are in Treaty 7, located in the southern portions of Alberta. During the pandemic, however, Black has expanded her company and offered boot camps to those in British Columbia and Ontario as well.

While many businesses have suffered greatly during the pandemic, Black was able to take one of her loves and start up a second company.

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Indigenous business owner anticipating national Cando Conference

Melissa Hardy-Giles is looking forward to an upcoming conference for a number of reasons.

Hardy-Giles, a member of Red Rock Indian Band in northern Ontario, is one of four individuals who have been selected for the Women In Business panel at this year's Cando Conference.

The event, which will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort in Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan, is scheduled for May 16-19.

Hardy-Giles owns ORIGIN, a business that offers various forms of innovative technology to various clients.

"I'm always more than honoured to share our story," Hardy-Giles said of her participation at the May conference. "And it's one of the first in-person events since the pandemic. I'm excited for it."

Hardy-Giles launched ORIGIN in 2009.

"It's been awesome," she said of her company's successes. "We connect people to purpose using virtual reality."

Hardy-Giles' company created ImmersiveLink, a virtual reality platform.

One of the components of the platform is titled the Career section, allowing individuals to view the ins and outs of various types of professions.

For the most part individuals can view segments, between three to five minutes each, on various trades.

"It's for anybody," Hardy-Giles said. "But we're in over 1,000 schools in Ontario alone."

She added the ImmersiveLink platform has been used at about 180 First Nations over the years.

Hardy-Giles also said that ImmersiveLink can be utilized as a recruiting tool for various industries.

Another component of ImmersiveLink is that it offers individuals the opportunity to receive Indigenous culture awareness and diversity training in a VR platform.

"We work with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers across Canada to share their stories," Hardy-Giles said.

With ImmersiveLink students can be in a classroom but through virtual reality be transported to various locations – for example, an underground mine – to get a glimpse of work being performed there.

These real-life experiences can undoubtedly inspire some to pursue career choices they might not have had any other information on.

ORIGIN has received numerous awards during the past few years.

And Hardy-Giles is looking forward to discussing details of her business at the Cando Conference.

"I'm just hoping that everyone learns something," she said. "And I always try to motivate people."

Hardy-Giles is also pumped to hear the stories of not only the other Women In Business panelists but also others who will be making presentations at the annual conference.

"I'm also there to learn from other people," she said. "I think it's very important to hear other stories as well."

Hardy-Giles is also thrilled to be on the Women In Business panel as she believes it's vital to support other females in the corporate world.



Hardy-Giles, a member of Red Rock Indian Band in northern Ontario, owns ORIGIN, a business that offers various forms of innovative technology to various clients.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

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Indigenous esthetician enjoys proving people wrong with her career choice



Krystle Pelletier, who lives in Whitehorse and is a member of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in Yukon, owns and operates her business called New Leaf Esthetics.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Krystle Pelletier can consider herself fortunate her business has actually improved since the pandemic started.

Pelletier, who lives in Whitehorse and is a member of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in Yukon, is an esthetician who owns and operates her business called New Leaf Esthetics.

She's been the sole proprietor of her company for about five years now.

"But I've only had my own space since COVID started," Pelletier said.

Pelletier is also one of the four individuals who have been named to the Women In Business panel which will be held at the 2022 Cando Conference.

This year's event, which is scheduled for May 16-19, will be staged at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

"I feel very blessed and very honoured," Pelletier said of her inclusion on the panel. "It makes me feel recognized for my success."

Pelletier said her business has been able to survive and prosper during the pandemic because she has been able to build a strong relationship with her clients.

"Also, I have services few people offer," she said. "And they like the quality of my services."

Pelletier said one of her most popular services is body sugaring, which is a hair removal procedure.

"It's environmentally friendly and made from sugar, water and lemon," Pelletier said.

The service is basically just what its moniker implies.

"Instead of using (hair removal) strips, you use a ball of sugar," Pelletier said.

Body sugaring is also a good chunk of her business these days.

"I'm so busy with sugaring," Pelletier said. "It's labour intensive. It takes anywhere from 15 minutes to two and a half to three hours."

Pelletier said another reason why she has enjoyed success in recent years is because she was able to bring in Babor, a skin care line product from Germany. Babor is a popular brand that is not widely available in Yukon.

"And then I brought in some Canadian made products," she added.

Pelletier began her career when she took a 15-week esthetics course offered by Yukon College.

The program focused on theory and practical hands-on skills of esthetic treatments including manicures, pedicures, facials, tinting and waxing.

Pelletier graduated the program at the top of her class.

She also earned additional training at the Calgary Esthetic Institute. She was trained in threading, microblading, eyelash and eyebrow extensions at this Alberta facility.

Pelletier is thrilled that she is the one who can offer services and improve the appearance of others, thus making positive changes in their lives.

And she loves the fact that she has become an esthetician who is able to make a decent living.

"I like proving people wrong," she said, adding she had been told being an esthetician would not prove to be a successful career choice.

Continued on page 34.

2022 WOMEN IN BUSINESS PANEL

Rachel Smith juggles large family life and thriving business

Rachel Smith has faced her share of challenges in life.

But despite those challenging times, during both her youth and adulthood, she has managed to persevere. And the 39-year-old member of Zagime Anishinabek First Nation in Saskatchewan now owns a thriving business.

Smith is the owner and operator of Bannock Express in Saskatoon. Her restaurant offers both take-out and catering options.

Smith is also one of our individuals that have been named to Cando's Women In Business panel for 2022. The panelists will share their stories at this year's Cando Conference, which is scheduled for May 16-19.

This four-day event will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

"To be able to get my story out there on a national scale is really great," Smith said. "And I'm looking forward to getting my story out there for people looking to start a new business."

Smith's early life was not an easy one.

"I came from group homes and foster homes," she said. "And I was made a permanent ward of the government when I was 13."

Smith started her bannock making business in 2016. In the beginning she was simply selling her products via garage sales and online sales.

And then two years ago she decided to open up a restaurant. Yes, during a pandemic. But yes, business has been on an upswing since it was launched.

"It's been doing great," Smith said. "And we just moved to a new location."

Smith has been able to continue moving forward with her business even though her life greatly changed in the past year.

She was already a mother of five. And then when her sister suddenly died a year ago, Smith ended up adopting four of her children and is now a mother of nine.

Almost instantly doubling the size of her family while continuing to work on her prospering business undoubtedly requires some great balancing.

"I have a really supportive husband," Smith said. "And a really supportive family as well."

Two of Smith's teenage children work some shifts at Bannock Express.

Smith also gives back to her community. She has created a Donation Wall at Bannock Express.

Customers have an opportunity to donate a meal to others who might not be able to afford one.

And then individuals can come into the restaurant, take a 'donated' meal off the wall and have some free food. Sometimes as many as about 100 free meals are provided to customers each month.

Bannock Express' success has Smith thinking of bigger and better things now.

"We're looking to franchise our business," she said. "We're looking to grow and that's where we want to go."

Smith said Regina and Calgary are the two cities she has thought of for possible Bannock Express franchises.



Rachel Smith is a member of Zagime Anishinabek First Nation and the owner and operator of Bannock Express in Saskatoon.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

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edo.ca

Heather Black

“My spirit of entrepreneurship led me to taking my hobby of hiking to officially launch a tour guide company,” she said of her Buffalo Stone Woman business.

With this company Black prepares and presents tour presentations. She also provides travel itineraries as well as route plans for tours.

After a failed earlier attempt, Black is obviously thrilled her life as an entrepreneur is now a successful one.

“It has been a blessing to celebrate in silence by doing the happy dance,” she said.

Rachel Smith

But in all likelihood there won't be any new openings in other locations in 2022.

“It's more so next year we're looking at,” she said.

Melissa Hardy-Giles

“There are enough barriers out there for women without having to fight amongst each other,” she said. “Together we are strong.”

Hardy-Giles, who is 49, had started three other businesses before she launched ORIGIN.

She graduated from Thunder Bay's Confederation College in both its executive office administration and human resource management programs.

Krystle Pelletier

Pelletier is also looking to telling her story at the Cando Conference.

“I like inspiring people to follow their dreams because it was quite the dream for me,” she said.

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Veteran in economic development in running for national award



Alberta Derocher is currently the general manager of the Flying Dust Holding Corporation, the company that oversees all of the economic development for the First Nation.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

FINALIST INDIVIDUAL EDO

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Albert Derocher has spent the majority of his working career improving the fortunes of his Flying Dust First Nation.

It was way back in 1981 that Derocher first started working as a summer student for his First Nation, based in Saskatchewan.

Derocher is currently the general manager of the Flying Dust Holding Corporation, the company that oversees all of the economic development for the First Nation.

Derocher has also been selected as one of the two finalists for Cando's Economic Development Officer (EDO) of the Year award.

The winner will be announced at the 2022 Cando Conference, which is scheduled for May 16-19 at the Dakota Dunes Resort located at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

"It means a lot," Derocher said of the fact he is in the running for the accolade. "It means I'm being recognized for a lot of the work I've done and for the advocacy I've done for First Nations issues."

Derocher said plenty of others could have just as easily been recognized for their efforts.

"There's a lot of good folks out there who are working very hard as well," he said.

Derocher, who along with his wife helped raise 10 children (seven girls and three boys), is proud of the fact he's been able to work for so long for his First Nation.

"I love my community," he said. "We all work very hard. We're a growing progressive community."

Flying Dust has about 600 members who are living on reserve. The First Nation's various businesses employ 230 people with about 90 per cent of those being Flying Dust members.

But none of the Derocher children, aged 26 to 36, are living at home now or working for the First Nation.

"They're all out doing their own thing," he said, adding his children were all encouraged to become independent outside of their community and then if they so choose to can return to their First Nation.

Derocher has had numerous noteworthy accomplishments during his work career with his First Nation.

One of his proudest highlights was the creation of the Riverside Market Garden, a venture that started off with two employees but now features five full-time workers and 20 seasonal workers.

Derocher said there are increased planting efforts this year to better help feed some community members.

"We've been told there will be a real food shortage," he said.

Derocher can also boast about another initiative, the Flying Dust Power Corp., which is expected to be operational and producing power for the community by late 2023.

"It's been 10 years in the making," he said. "It's been a long road."

Derocher was also an instrumental figure in the \$2.5 million additions to the First Nation's arena that are reaching completion. Besides facility upgrades, the renovations included an expansion of a retail store selling sporting goods.

2022 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Manager at Piikani Nation vying for national economic developer award

Katrina Shade is one of the driving forces behind the Piikani Resource Development Limited (PRDL).

Shade, who has been the manager of the Alberta-based PRDL since 2015, has been one of the main reasons the corporation has had numerous successful projects in recent years.

Thus, it's little surprise that Shade is also in the running for a prestigious award.

She's one of two finalists for the Economic Development Officer (EDO) of the Year Award from Cando, the national organization that promotes economic development in Indigenous communities.

The winner of this year's EDO award will be announced at the Cando Conference, which is scheduled for May 16-19. The four-day event will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort on the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Shade has been doing her share of valuable work for the PRDL since becoming the corporation's manager.

For example, she worked alongside Piikani's chief and council to launch a retail electricity business, allowing the First Nation to provide electrical billing to its members.

Piikani Nation is one of just two First Nations in Alberta that provides this service to its members, through their rural electrification association. And Piikani Nation was the first First Nation in the province to achieve this distinction.

Other Shade accomplishments include launching a sand and gravel pit

in Piikani as well as having solar panels installed for the Piikani Nation School, which has resulted in a savings of about \$20,000 per year.

Shade also assisted with the local ranch expansion plan, which include agricultural and irrigation upgrades as well as the increasing the cattle herd.

Other ventures that the PRDL and Shade have been involved with are those including security services, electrical, tree clearing, EMS, construction and the local radio station.

Piikani Nation Radio, launched in 2020, is broadcast on 106.3 FM out of Brocket, a settlement in southern Alberta.

Other PRDL communications initiatives include an app as well as a local newspaper, Piikani Tsi Nii Ka Sin.

With the PRDL Shade continues her work of exploring other business development opportunities that can benefit Piikani Nation members, who are living both on and off the First Nation.

Since the Piikani Nation is known for and rich in its wind, sun and water resources, Shade is frequently on the lookout for renewable energy projects that could potentially be beneficial to its members.

To this end, a main focus for the corporation now is a wind farm project on the Piikani Nation.

Shade and the PRDL are also working with various others to try and develop partnerships with companies to leverage economic opportunities for members of the First Nation.



Katrina Shade is one of the driving forces behind the Piikani Resource Development Limited (PRDL).

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

FINALIST INDIVIDUAL EDO

**This award proudly sponsored by:
Whitecap Development Corp.
and Huu-ay-aht First Nations**

2022 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

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Saskatchewan-based council a finalist for national award



Forestry is MLTC's main industry

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

FINALIST COMMUNITY

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ESS Compass Group

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) has long been considered a model body.

The Saskatchewan-based council, comprised of nine First Nations in the province, has received what is perhaps some long overdue recognition.

The MLTC is one of two finalists for the Community of the Year award, which will be presented at this year's Cando Conference.

The four-day event, scheduled for May 16-19, will be staged at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located at Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

"It's a pretty novel thing for MLTC," said Tina Rasmussen, who is the MLTC's chief business officer. "They've been in business for 40 years. They've been studied a lot. And there have been a lot of economic development reports on how it creates business. But I don't know if they've ever received an award for it."

The other finalist in the Community of the Year category is the Nelson Lake Development Corporation in Manitoba, the economic arm of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.

The nine First Nations that comprise the MLTC are Birch Narrows Dene Nation, Buffalo River Dene Nation, Canoe Lake Cree First Nation, Clearwater River Dene Nation, English River First Nation, Flying Dust First Nation, Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation, Ministikwan Lake Cree Nation and Waterhen Lake First Nation.

Rasmussen said the intention of the tribal council is to assist ventures that will be beneficial to all parties.

"We make sure we're not getting in their way of creating opportunities," she said. "We're not here to create a large conglomerate for the tribal council to

administer. We're here to do what's best for the nine communities."

To that end, the MLTC launched a corporation a decade ago, in 2012, called the Meadow Lake Tribal Council Industrial Investments.

This corporation was started to produce viable economic development through growth and business investment.

The corporation currently maintains four wholly-owned companies; NorSask Forest Products, NorthWind Forest Products, MLTC Bioenergy Centre and the MLTC Solar Farm.

Rasmussen said if one of the First Nations is interested in a particular project on its own, the MLTC steers clear of a similar venture.

"Most of the stuff that comes to the tribal council is supportive of the communities collectively," she said.

Rasmussen is thrilled that the MLTC is viewed as a leader in the Indigenous community.

"I guess it means the MLTC is a good example for other First Nations looking to create opportunities," she said.

Though the MLTC's largest industry is forestry, it is involved in other initiatives as well.

For example, the MLTC Bioenergy Centre is the first of its kind energy biomass project in the province.

The centre combines environmental improvement with thermal efficiency, which will boost the economic fortunes of the nine First Nation which are part of the MLTC.

Another project is the MLTC Solar Farm, which is expected to be completed late this summer.

This venture is considered the first step towards the tribal council's goal of engaging with larger renewable energy projects in the province.

2022 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

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Community frequently provides advice on those seeking to emulate their model

It seems like it's at least once a week that David Kobliski will receive a phone call seeking some advice.

Kobliski has served as the executive director for the Nelson House Development Corporation, the economic arm for Nisichawayasihk First Nation in Manitoba, for the past 25 years.

"A lot of First Nations look at our community as a model," Kobliski said. "We do have a model that works. And others can do it on a smaller scale or on a bigger scale."

Kobliski said he doesn't mind fielding calls from others who are looking to improve fortunes in their communities.

"The satisfaction I get is seeing a First Nation generating their own sole-source revenue and reinvesting into their own community," he said.

Thanks in large part to Kobliski's efforts, the work Nelson House Development Corporation has done has earned some recognition.

His First Nation is one of the two finalists for Cando's Community of the Year award.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskatchewan is the other finalist.

The winning community will be announced at the Cando Conference, scheduled for May 16-19. The event will be staged at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Kobliski, who is 60, said it seems his past quarter century of work has gone by rather quickly.

"I was kind of reflecting and looking back," he said. "Twenty-five years really flew by."

The first business Nisichawayasihk First Nation owned was a gas bar. It allowed the First Nation to keep revenue in its own community.

Several other businesses that the First Nation now owns have followed suit. They include grocery stores, a hotel and a high-speed internet company.

Kobliski said one business is not any more noteworthy than the others.

"All of them stick out because all of them are still around and they're all still successful," he said.

The Nelson House Development Corporation is also involved in a major joint venture. It has a partnership with Manitoba Hydro and owns 32 per cent of a hydroelectric dam project.

"All the rest of them are owned by the First Nation," Kobliski said of other business interests.

Kobliski said he has been preaching about the importance of owning businesses to officials in his First Nation for a very long time.

"I've always said to our leadership in order to be self-sufficient and self-governing you have to generate your own revenue," he said.

It's the same advice he doles out to others who call his First Nation looking for some guidance.

"I do try to assist other First Nations with what we've done here," he said.

Kobliski said he is planning to retire from his executive director role, probably within the next year.

But he does plan to continue working. In fact, he believes he will start up his own consulting business.

"I will be providing the path to other First Nations and showing them what the benefits are," Kobliski said.



David Kobliski executive director for the Nelson House Development Corporation, the economic arm for Nisichawayasihk First Nation in Manitoba.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

FINALIST COMMUNITY

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Walker puts music career on hold to operate home construction business



Leslie Walker, a member of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Yukon, has focused his attention on Walker Home Construction, his Whitehorse-based business.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

FINALIST PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS

**This award proudly sponsored by:
Acosys Consulting Services Inc.**

Leslie Walker had a promising music career that was put on a hold.

But Walker, a member of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Yukon, doesn't seem to mind as he's managed to find plenty of success in another career.

Back in 2011 Walker was a member of Common Knowledge, which was named as the best band at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards.

But for a good chunk of the past decade Walker has concentrated on Walker Home Construction, his Whitehorse-based business that specializes in residential and commercial construction services and products.

In fact, his business has garnered attention to the point it is one of two finalists being recognized by Cando for this year's Individual Private Sector Business award.

The winner will be selected at this year's Cando Conference, scheduled for May 16-19. The conference will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Walker added other associations have also recently been recognizing his company.

"It's a little overwhelming to get these opportunities," he said. "This is the vision I always wanted to work towards. It's happened 10 times faster than I thought it would."

Walker was always rather handy. He had been hired to do various jobs in the past, even when he was doubling as a musician.

"I took a risk and then I started my company," he said.

In the early days of his business, Walker said he was known as 'The Trailer

Guy'. He would go around and fix mobile homes in trailer parks.

And then he started working on home additions, while also building fences and decks. He then started taking on larger projects, building homes and commercial businesses.

Walker doesn't have an exact total of how many houses he's worked on since launching his company in 2009. But it is in the hundreds.

Also, his company now has more than 30 employees. And about 70 per cent of those workers have First Nations ancestry.

Their jobs range from being apprentices to lead hands to site supervisors. Whenever possible Walker Home Construction also enjoys dealing with subcontractors who are First Nations owned and operated.

Walker said he's seen other workplaces that have a strictly businesslike approach. But that's not something he's in favour of.

When they're at work he wants his employees to be happy, laughing and having a good time.

"We're trying to create a life for ourselves and our families," he said.

Though his musical career is on hold for now, Walker is hoping it is something he can eventually return to.

"I picked up the guitar and wrote a song the other day," he said. "I'm never going to put it down."

Walker added he's hoping his company becomes even more successful so that he will have the opportunity to do other things – like get back and devote more time to his music.

"But right now, my main focus is this company," he said.

2022 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

TIPI Group vying to capture national Cando award

There's no shortage of boosters who are cheering on the TIPI Group of Companies in its bid to win a prestigious national award.

"Our company has 60 First Nation communities that are part of our ownership," said Nathan Ballantyne, who has served as the CEO of the TIPI Group of Companies for the past 12 years. "We act on their behalf in terms of economic development."

The TIPI Group of Companies is also one of two finalists for Cando's 2022 Individual Private Sector Business award.

The winner will be announced at this year's Cando Conference, scheduled for May 16-19. This event will be held at the Dakota Dunes Resort, located at Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.

The Individual Private Sector Business award is one of three that will be presented at the conference.

The Economic Development Officer of the Year will also be chosen at the conference. And so too will the winning nominee in the Community of the Year category.

"With such a large ownership group sometimes it's hard to let them know what's going on," Ballantyne said.

But those First Nations, which make up the ownership group, are well aware the company is a finalist for the Cando award.

"They're obviously very excited," Ballantyne said.

The TIPI Group of Companies was launched more than 20 years ago and includes various services which are offered to those in more than 300 Indigenous communities in British

Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

Its entities include insurance brokerages, a third-party administrator that creates and manages a benefits platform titled the TIPI Care Plan and an organizational and human resources consultancy company.

The mission for the TIPI Group of Companies is to engage organizations and communities in order to manage risks and protect their economic well-being and health via customized services and products.

Since it was launched the TIPI Group of Companies has certainly experienced its share of growth over the years.

"We started off with six employees," Ballantyne said of the company. "And we're going to break the 100 employees (mark) this summer."

Ballantyne added the TIPI Group of Companies has a large percentage of Indigenous employees.

"About 50 per cent of them are Indigenous," he said.

Ballantyne believes the TIPI Group of Companies is a success story which is applauded in First Nations across the country.

"Communities deal with so many other issues like suicide, drugs and gangs," he said. "Their world is so different than ours."

Ballantyne added officials with the TIPI Group of Companies are not simply resting on their laurels. That's because they are currently working on the details of another major acquisition, expected to be announced by late May.

"It's a good-sized deal and will create some more new jobs," he said.



Nathan Ballantyne has served as the CEO of the TIPI Group of Companies for the past 12 years.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

FINALIST PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS

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The Trade Commissioner Service

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) works with exporters in Canada to help them sell their products and services abroad and grow through international trade. Businesses that work with the TCS get access to its free services and funding and support programs, international opportunities, and its network of over 1,000 Trade Commissioners in more than 160 cities across Canada and around the world.

On average, compared to non-clients, companies that use TCS services:

- › export to 24.8% more countries;
- › export 11.2% more product varieties; and
- › earn 19.8% more value.

TCS NETWORK

Trade Commissioners in TCS regional offices across Canada are available to provide advice to help develop export plans and begin international expansion. This could include working with your business to decide on a target market, collect market and industry information and improve your international business strategy. Each regional office in Canada also has dedicated Diversity Champions, who can provide specific support to business owners from diverse backgrounds, including advising on relevant upcoming events and initiatives.

Trade Commissioners based abroad can provide advice and industry contacts to help with market entry. They can also provide an overview of the competitive landscape and practical advice on navigating business practices, share knowledge about potential opportunities, and identify upcoming events such as conferences and trade shows.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The TCS also offers funding and support programs to help businesses and organizations pursue new opportunities abroad, connect with foreign partners, and attract foreign investment.

These include:

- › **CanExport** programs that provide funding for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovators, associations and communities.
- › **Canadian Technology Accelerators** (CTAs) that help companies that have an existing technology or product find opportunities and expand into key foreign technology hubs. Companies are advised to consult the CTA website for a comprehensive list of upcoming programs.
- › the **Canadian International Innovation Program**, which helps companies pursue international research and development projects with a foreign partner.

- › **Trade missions and events** that are advertised online, including initiatives specific to Indigenous companies. A number of initiatives and resources are also promoted in the TCS's official magazine, **CanadExport**, which you can subscribe to today to learn about the latest trade news, insights, events, and opportunities.

Visit the TCS website at tradecommissioner.gc.ca for more information, and find additional resources for Indigenous businesses on the TCS's **Indigenous Business Export Support** webpage.

Le Service des délégués commerciaux

Le Service des délégués commerciaux (SDC) du Canada travaille avec les exportateurs canadiens pour les aider à vendre leurs produits ou leurs services à l'étranger et à développer leur entreprise grâce au commerce international. Les entreprises qui travaillent avec le SDC ont accès à ses services gratuits et à ses programmes de financement et d'appui au commerce international, à des débouchés à l'étranger et à son réseau de plus de 1 000 délégués commerciaux dans plus de 160 villes au Canada et dans le monde.

En moyenne, par rapport aux entreprises qui ne sont pas clientes du SDC, les entreprises qui utilisent les services du SDC :

- › exportent vers davantage de pays (24,8 %);
- › exportent une plus grande variété de produits (11,2 %);
- › gagnent plus de valeur (19,8 %).

RÉSEAU DU SDC

Les délégués commerciaux des bureaux régionaux du SDC à travers le Canada sont là pour vous fournir des conseils afin de vous aider à établir des plans d'exportation et à commencer vos activités à l'échelle internationale. Ils peuvent notamment travailler avec votre entreprise pour déterminer un marché cible, recueillir des renseignements sur le marché et l'industrie et améliorer votre stratégie commerciale internationale. Chaque bureau régional du Canada dispose également de champions de la

diversité, qui peuvent apporter un appui sur mesure aux propriétaires d'entreprises d'origines diverses, notamment en les conseillant sur les activités et les initiatives pertinentes à venir.

Les délégués commerciaux à l'étranger peuvent vous fournir des conseils et des contacts dans l'industrie pour faciliter votre entrée sur le marché. Ils peuvent également vous donner un aperçu du paysage concurrentiel et prodiguer des conseils utiles sur les pratiques commerciales, vous faire part d'occasions éventuelles et vous indiquer les événements à venir, comme les conférences et les salons professionnels.

FINANCEMENT ET APPUI AU COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL

Le SDC propose également des programmes de financement et d'appui au commerce international pour aider les entreprises et les organisations à trouver de nouveaux débouchés à l'étranger, à nouer des liens avec des partenaires étrangers et à attirer des investissements étrangers.

Ces programmes comprennent :

- › Les programmes **CanExport** qui offrent un financement aux petites et moyennes entreprises, aux innovateurs, aux associations et aux communautés.
- › Les **Accélérateurs technologiques canadiens** (ATC) qui aident les entreprises disposant d'une technologie ou d'un produit existant à trouver des débouchés et à développer leurs activités au sein de grands

centres technologiques étrangers. Il est conseillé aux entreprises de consulter le site Web des ATC pour obtenir une liste complète des programmes à venir.

- › Le **Programme canadien de l'innovation à l'international**, qui aide les entreprises à trouver des projets de recherche et développement internationaux avec un partenaire étranger.
- › Les **missions commerciales et les événements** annoncés en ligne, y compris les initiatives réservées aux entreprises autochtones. Un certain nombre d'initiatives et de ressources sont également promues dans la revue officielle du SDC, **CanadExport**, à laquelle vous pouvez vous abonner dès aujourd'hui pour connaître les dernières nouvelles, tendances, activités et occasions commerciales.

Consultez le site Web du SDC à deleguescommerciaux.gc.ca pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements. Vous trouverez des ressources pour les entreprises autochtones sur la page Web du SDC consacrée au **soutien à l'exportation des entreprises autochtones**.

Indigenous communities benefitting from CESO's funding application support program

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

Accessing funding programs has provided numerous challenges for Indigenous communities over the years.

But thanks to the Funding Application Support Program, created recently by the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), the application process for First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities has become considerably easier.

Thanks to funding from Indigenous Services Canada, CESO has been able to support numerous communities with their grant applications free of charge.

CESO also created a team of Advisors to assist clients with their funding application processes, from start to finish, if necessary. The support program was put in place for the 2021-22 fiscal year, a time which was significant as many Indigenous communities were applying for various pandemic relief grants from provincial and federal governments.

"Initially when we started we had eight advisors," said Eiliyah Deewan, CESO's Community Relations Officer of Indigenous services. "And right now, we have a total of 12 advisors."

CESO, a leading development organization focused on strengthening economic and social well-being not only in Canada but globally as well, had been providing grant application assistance in the past as well.

Deewan said the free support program will continue for the foreseeable future.

"Initially we started it for a year," she said. "But it will now be a rolling program."

Deewan said applying for funding can be a time-consuming task.

"It's definitely a time issue," she said of those who do reach out for assistance with their applications. "Most of the time a band or First Nation or an Indigenous corporation, they don't have somebody dedicated to doing this only. They do it in addition to their day job."



Eiliyah Deewan, CESO's Community Relations Officer of Indigenous Services



Maureen Caisse, the president and CEO of Neyaskweyahk Group of Companies Inc.

With plenty of information being requested, Deewan added at times funding applications can indeed be confusing.

"There are a lot of requirements and maybe it is not quite straightforward," she said.

One of CESO's clients who has sought assistance through the support program is the Neyaskweyahk Group of Companies Inc., the corporate division of Ermineskin Cree Nation in Alberta.

Maureen Caisse, the president and CEO of the Neyaskweyahk group, speaks extremely highly of the support program.

"The program has been very helpful for us," she said. "We've reached out to CESO a number of times and each time we've had great results."

Caisse said her group has approached CESO for assistance for several projects.

"The first time we reached out was when COVID started in 2020 and grants started rolling out," Caisse said. "We were limited in our staff. We manage 12 companies and our finance department was extremely busy with regular financial responsibilities."

"Not all of them were funding requests," Caisse said of the times CESO was approached for assistance. "Some of them were other requests such as organizational reviews."

The Neyaskweyahk group had previously applied for funding through the federal Indigenous Community Business Fund as well as the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation.

Caisse said CESO assistance was requested to assist with those grant applications.

"It wasn't that we didn't know how to do it," she said. "They were all new grant opportunities. And we had limited staff. My finance staff had many other projects on the go."

Having a CESO Advisor take the lead proved to be extremely beneficial.

"It was pretty much a matter of taking the time to look into it and crossing all the

'T's and dotting all of the 'i's," Caisse said.

CESO can work with First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities including Indigenous government and government offices, First Nation collectives e.g. tribal and band councils, Community FN/band-owned enterprises and other Indigenous-led organizations such as nonprofits and trusts. Please contact Cora Bunn at CESO directly for more information or to request support with your funding application. Cora can be reached by email at cbunn@cesosaco.com, or by phone at 416-304-9314.



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“

After my CESO mentorship, I put together funding proposals, which came back with successful results.

Marissa Mercurio, CESO Client

CESO works with Indigenous communities in Canada to build capacity and foster economic growth.

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Learn more at ceso-saco.com/canada



CESO gratefully acknowledges financial support from Indigenous Services Canada.

Co-operatives First organizes new webinar series

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Writer

Officials with Co-operatives First have come up with a new way to further their mission.

The Saskatoon-based organization promotes and supports business development in rural and Indigenous communities, primarily throughout the four western Canadian provinces.

One of the latest ways Co-operatives First officials plan to get their message out is via the Regional Synergies Webinar Series.

Throughout this series those who tune in for the free online webinars will hear about business and community leaders that have forged regional partnerships.

Co-operatives First hosted the first event in this series on Dec. 8. That event featured representatives from the South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP).

“The group we had was super engaged,” said Heather Hallgrimson, who is Co-operatives First’s business development lead. “People had such great questions that they were asking.”

In fact, Hallgrimson said organizers had to scrap the prepared questions they had for the hosts since webinar participants had plenty of their own asks.

SIPP is an alliance of more than 70 public and private sector partners in Greater Victoria. Partners include nine First Nations, 11 local governments, three post-secondary schools, nine industry associations and non-profits and more than 30 employers.

SIPP representatives who spoke at December’s webinar were Elysia Glover and Kear Porttris. Glover is SIPP’s manager of strategic partnerships while Porttris is a SIPP board director and the director of Indigenous relations from QM Environmental.

Co-operatives First’s webinar series will continue to explore rural and Indigenous partnerships throughout western Canada.

Continues on page 32.



Trista Pewapisconias, the Indigenous Engagement Lead for Co-operatives First.



Heather Hallgrimson, Co-operatives First's business development lead.

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 co-operatives first

Co-operatives First organizes webinar series

Continued from page 30.

The goal will be to learn how members of communities and their neighbours join forces to share resources and knowledge. The plan of these partnerships is to have an entire region benefit as opposed to just one community.

Hallgrimson is teaming up with her colleague, Trista Pewapisconias, who is Co-operatives First's Indigenous relations lead, to organize the webinar series.

"It went really well," Pewapisconias said of December's webinar. "And we want this to be an ongoing conversation. We just want to promote both Indigenous and municipal partnerships."

Despite its moniker, Pewapisconias, a member of Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan, said discussions in the series do not have to be focused on co-ops.

"They don't have to be a co-op model, just a partnership within your region," she said.

Pewapisconias said Co-operatives First officials are still trying to finalize dates and speakers for upcoming events in the series.

She added the next event will in all likelihood be at some point in March. And then the plan is to stage one another event later on in 2022.

"The need for these webinars came about based upon feedback from groups we had dealt with," Pewapisconias said.

She added since she focuses her work on Indigenous groups and Hallgrimson's efforts concentrate on non-Indigenous organizations, it made sense to merge the two.

"We just said let's create a space so that other people can come and talk together," Pewapisconias said.

A couple of dozen participants took part in December's webinar. Besides municipal representatives, also attending were individuals in various economic development positions.

Following presentations from the two SIPP reps, the inaugural webinar in the series allowed for discussions in various breakout rooms.

"We were able to group people together based on where they're at (with their partnership ventures)," Pewapisconias said. "It was really positive being able to create those breakout sessions. We had a lot of positive feedback."

NIEEF | National Indigenous Economic Education Fund

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) Scholarships

NIEEF is Cando's charitable organization, which grants annual scholarships to Indigenous students studying in a field related to economic development.

To be eligible, students must be attending or currently enrolled in a program at a post-secondary institution, and must be a Cando student member.

Preference will be given to students enrolled in one of Cando's Accredited Institutions.

This year, NIEEF will be granting four scholarships each worth \$2,000.

The deadline to apply for a 2022 NIEEF Scholarship is October 31, 2022.

Info.: www.edo.ca/youth/nieef-scholarships

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Inspiring Success

Brandi Delaine returns to post-secondary studies following pause



Brandi Delaine, who is Métis, once again finds herself in school pursuing her university degree.

(The CIBC-NIEEF Scholarship) helped me tremendously. It meant I didn't have to look for a full-time job while going to school.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

A decade after beginning her post-secondary career, Brandi Delaine once again finds herself in school pursuing her university degree.

Delaine, who is Métis, had commenced business administration classes at the University of Winnipeg back in 2011.

But after one year of studies, Delaine did not have the financial needs necessary to continue with her program.

"I didn't qualify for funding or student aid," she said.

As a result, Delaine entered the workforce. Up until 2017 she was employed working with special needs adults.

But an incident in which she was run over by a truck that year forced her into a lengthy rehabilitation process.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when trying to determine what exactly she wanted to do with her life, Delaine made the decision to return to school.

Since she was in a position to afford to do so, she started taking business administration classes again in January of 2021. And she is now scheduled to graduate from her three-year program in April of 2023.

Besides enjoying her return to school, Delaine is also ecstatic that she is one of the eight recent recipients of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

The CIBC and the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, Cando's charitable organization, teamed up to provide the scholarship program from 2019 through 2022. A total of \$44,000 in scholarship money is available each year through this initiative.

Delaine received a \$5,000 scholarship.

"That helped me tremendously," she said. "It meant I didn't have to look for a full-time job while going to school."

Delaine does currently have a casual job, however, working eight hours per week, at a Winnipeg warming shelter. She works with homeless people, connecting them with various resources they can take advantage of.

Recipients of the Indigenous Scholarship Program are eligible to receive funding over multiple years. Five of the recent recipients had also received the scholarship a year ago.

Delaine though is a first-time recipient. Not only speaking for herself, but the 28-year-old said all scholarships received by post-secondary students are beneficial.

"It means you can focus on your education and ensuring you can put your best effort forth," she said.

Though she still has more than a year remaining before she earns her university degree, Delaine knows what she wants to do upon her graduation.

Ideally, she wants to help one of her friends, Dr. Samantha Bray, who is a veterinarian, open her own clinic.

"I would run more of the business side of things," Delaine said. "I want to do all the behind-the-scenes work. That's my biggest aspiration."

Like Delaine, Bray is also Indigenous as she's a member of Stellat'en First Nation in British Columbia.

Delaine said the duo would ideally like to open a veterinary in Winnipeg that would cater to Indigenous people and their pets.

"That's the goal I have right now," Delaine said.

2022 CIBC - NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

Indigenous finance student garners scholarship for second consecutive year

For the second straight year Kineisha Eagle Bear received a significant financial boost to assist her while she pursues her university degree.

Eagle Bear, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, is in her final year of finance studies at the University of Lethbridge.

The 26-year-old single mother, who has a six-year-old daughter named Nova, had originally hoped that she would graduate from the university in December of 2021.

“Because of the pandemic, they didn’t offer as many classes,” she said of her school. “Some classes weren’t offered in the summer. So, the requirements I needed by December didn’t pan out.”

Eagle Bear is now hoping to complete all of her degree requirements on time this April. But another obstacle arose for her in February.

That’s because University of Lethbridge faculty went on strike on Feb. 10 since they have been without a collective agreement for almost 600 days.

“We got cut off from all of our teachers,” Eagle Bear said. “There’s not much I can do at the moment.”

She’s obviously hoping for a quick resolution.

“There’s no classes whatsoever,” she added. “They’re trying to settle things so it doesn’t affect (students).”

One thing that Eagle Bear was thrilled about, however, during this school year was the fact she found out she was once again a recipient of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

Cando’s charitable organization, the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, and the CIBC joined forces to provide the scholarship for four years, from 2019 through 2022.

The program has eight recipients each year share a total of \$44,000 in scholarship money. Winners receive between \$2,000 to \$10,000.

For the second straight year Eagle was one of the two \$10,000 recipients.

“I was pretty shocked and I was happy about it,” Eagle Bear said of the fact she was a scholarship winner once again.

Eagle Bear is fortunate that her First Nation does cover a substantial amount of her educational expenses, paying for her tuition and all of her required textbooks.

Money received through the Indigenous Scholarship Program, however, was a welcome boost.

“I used it to cover living expenses of course,” she said. “And I put a little bit into savings.”

Now that she’s close to obtaining her university degree, Eagle Bear is already seeking out possible job opportunities.

“I’m currently looking to see what’s out there for entry-level positions,” Eagle Bear said in mid-February.

Eagle Bear’s post-secondary career started when she enrolled in a First Nations transition program offered through the University of Lethbridge. In order to be accepted into the university’s accounting program she first needed to upgrade some of her courses.

Eagle Bear, however, withdrew from that program following a challenging pregnancy.

Once she decided to return to school she enrolled in Lethbridge College’s business program where she earned a diploma after two years.

And now, with a couple more years of further studies, she’s on the verge of obtaining her university degree.



Kineisha Eagle Bear received a significant financial boost to assist her while she pursues her university degree, for a second year.

I was pretty shocked and I was happy about (receiving the CIBC-NIEEF scholarship). I used it to cover living expenses of course...and I put a little bit into savings.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

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Scholarship recipient recommends students apply for all opportunities —



Joshua Peepeetch is a member of Zagime Anishinabek First Nation.

I recommend every single student apply for (scholarships), especially if you're low income.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Joshua Peepeetch has some advice he'd like to pass on to fellow post-secondary students. Especially Indigenous ones.

When it comes to scholarship opportunities, Peepeetch, a member of Zagime Anishinabek First Nation in Saskatchewan, is recommending to apply whenever possible.

"I recommend every single student apply for them, especially if you're low income," said Peepeetch, a 26-year-old who is a third-year business administration student at the University of Regina.

Peepeetch heeded his own advice and applied for the Indigenous Scholarship Program. He ended up being one of eight recent scholarship recipients.

The Indigenous Scholarship Program is a joint venture between the CIBC and the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, the charitable organization of Cando.

The four-year program launched in 2019 and continues until 2022. A total of \$44,000 is available each year, which will be divided up between scholarship recipients.

Winners will be awarded between \$2,000 to \$10,000 each. Peepeetch was one of the \$2,000 recipients.

He welcomed the amount with open arms.

"It helped a lot," Peepeetch said of his portion of the scholarship program. "I was struggling a bit. I took out student loans. And I was kind of drowning in debt."

Peepeetch credited an Indigenous counsellor at the University of Regina for convincing him to apply for various scholarships.

Peepeetch said that is advice that is often not followed by many he knows.

"I have a lot of friends that don't apply for them," he said. "They forget about them. Or they just don't do it."

Peepeetch, however, added it's worthwhile to apply for scholarships as he is proof students can indeed benefit from them.

"It helps with bills and it helps relieve some of the pressure," he said.

For the first year and a half of his post-secondary career, Peepeetch attended in-person classes at the University of Regina.

Though he's still a student at the school, for the past year and a half he's been living in Vancouver and taking all of his courses remotely.

"I want to go back to campus," he said. "But I'm not sure if I should transfer to a university here (in B.C.)."

Peepeetch, who aspires to work in some business role in the music industry, said he will wait until the end of his current semester and the conclusion of the 2021-22 academic year before deciding where he should continue his schooling.

He said he could potentially transfer to Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Burnaby, a city in B.C. that is adjacent to Vancouver. But he would only do so if he was permitted to have the university credits he's already earned thus far go towards the requirements of earning a degree from SFU.

Peepeetch has been able to continue with his education this school year even though he's also been working a part-time job, sometimes putting in full-time hours (as many as 35 per week).

"You've got to have a balance," he said of how he juggles work and school. "It's just a matter of managing your time. At the end of the day, I get it done."

2022 CIBC - NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

Janine Gladue on verge of obtaining a major educational achievement

She's almost there.

Janine Gladue, a 32-year-old member of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Alberta, is close to finishing off all the requirements necessary to earn her university degree.

Gladue is in her final year of studies of the four-year business management program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). She's expected to graduate in May of this year.

"It's a pretty big deal," said Gladue, one of seven children that her mother had. "I'll be the first one in my family to get a university degree."

And for the second year in a row, Gladue is part of another prestigious group. She's one of eight recipients of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

The program is a joint initiative between the CIBC and the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, which is Cando's charitable organization.

The Indigenous Scholarship Program is a four-year venture, which was launched in 2019 and continues until 2022.

Each year Indigenous post-secondary students from across Canada are invited to apply for the scholarship money. A total of \$44,000 is awarded each year.

Eight recipients split a share of the funding available, being awarded scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

For the second straight year, the amount that Gladue was awarded was \$5,000.

"I was shocked and felt overwhelmed by the generosity I received," she said.

The fact she will soon be a university graduate proves just how far Gladue has come in recent years.

She had dropped out of high school when she was 16. At the time she was in Grade 10.

After she left school Gladue worked in the food industry and also held down other jobs such as providing childcare and doing manual labour.

But she was looking for a change. And that change involved upgrading her education by returning to the classroom.

"That was a goal to go back and finish high school," she said.

After completing the requirements to earn her high school equivalency program, Gladue was then able to seek admittance into NAIT's business administration program.

Gladue lives in the municipality of Spathnow. But she didn't have to move to Edmonton, about 260 kilometres away, in order to attend NAIT.

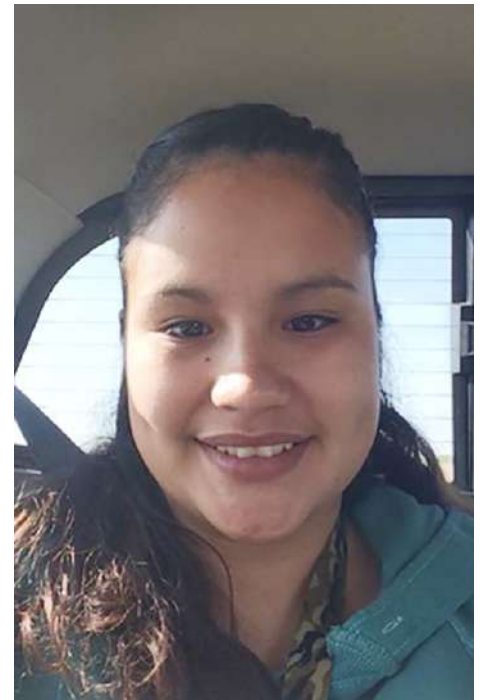
That's because her NAIT business administration program was offered through the Portage College campus in Cold Lake, which is located about an hour's drive from her home.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, there were moments when Gladue was taking her courses remotely.

"I prefer in-person classes because I don't spend much time online interacting with people and I struggle with picking up on social cues that are often missed in online classes," she said. "I found that I misunderstood people and certain situations. It's easier to understand my classmates when we are face to face. There's more personal interaction and I can be easily distracted at home."

Gladue is planning to continue being a student after earning her university degree this year.

"I'm interested in pursuing my education further by obtaining a diploma in Business Administration Accounting," she said.



Janine Gladue, a member of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Alberta, selected as a CIBC NIEEF scholarship recipient for a second year.

I'm interested in pursuing my education further by obtaining a diploma in Business Administration Accounting

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

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Aspiring executive director returns to college to further education

A desire to secure some more lucrative jobs led to Deanna Cunningham becoming a student again.

Cunningham, a 34-year-old Metis woman, had graduated from her high school studies in High Prairie, Alta., when she was 18.

She was able to find some steady employment over the years.

"I've done a lot of administrative work," she said. "But I felt I was getting passed up for jobs because I didn't have that diploma."

In order to try and secure herself a better future and have an opportunity to land better positions, Cunningham opted to return to school.

She's now a first-year student in the business administration program at NorQuest College in Edmonton, the Alberta capital which she has called home now for the past 14 years.

Besides taking pride in furthering her education now, Cunningham can also beam over the fact she is one of the eight recent recipients of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

The National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, Cando's charitable organization, teamed up with CIBC to provide the scholarship program for four years, from 2019 through 2022.

A total of \$44,000 in scholarship money is available each year. Eight post-secondary students are scholarship recipients each year, being awarded funds ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Cunningham was one of two \$10,000 recipients this year.

"It helps out so much," she said. "If I didn't have any scholarships, I wouldn't be able to attend."

Cunningham has already put the money that she received to good use.

"I paid off my tuition and I paid off my daughter's braces," she said.

Cunningham, who estimates her first-semester tuition and textbooks cost about \$7,000, has a

16-year-old daughter. Plus, she also helped raise her younger brother, who is now 20.

Cunningham found out a couple of weeks before December that she was a scholarship recipient.

"I was really shocked when I opened my email," she said. "I thought I could really use this right now. It was really helpful. It was awesome."

Before being accepted into NorQuest's business administration program, Cunningham first had to complete a Pathway to Business course at the college, since she didn't have all the necessary requirements from her high school credits.

Cunningham's current program last two years. But she's already made up her mind that she wants to further her schooling after that as well.

She is keen to obtain a Bachelor's degree in business administration and human resources from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, also located in Edmonton.

Cunningham had worked as a trust examination officer for the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) last summer.

She's also hoping she can work for the CRA this coming summer. If she does indeed land a CRA job again this year, she would prefer to work in one of the agency's other departments.

As for a long-term goal, once she completes all of her education, she's hoping to secure an executive director position with an Indigenous non-profit organization.

I was really shocked when I opened my email. I thought I could really use this right now. It was really helpful. It was awesome.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

2022 CIBC - NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

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Quintin Helm a repeat recipient of the Indigenous Scholarship Program

Though he's now in his second year of post-secondary studies, Quintin Helm has only really been experiencing the full university life for the first time during the 2021-22 academic year.

Helm, a 19-year-old member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, is a finance student at the University of Calgary.

But during his first year of university studies, Helm remained in his hometown of Okotoks, located about 50 kilometres south of Calgary.

That's because Helm's courses were only offered online, instead of in-person, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

His second year of university life has been much more enjoyable now that he has moved to Calgary for his studies.

"Being in person has helped me have a social life," Helm said.

The teen is living in a rented apartment with his girlfriend, who is a student at Mount Royal University, also located in Calgary.

One thing, however, that is the same for Helm is that he's a repeat recipient of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

Cando's charitable organization, the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, and the CIBC joined forces to launch this program.

From 2019 through 2022, a total of \$44,000 each year is available to Indigenous post-secondary students across Canada.

There are eight recipients of the scholarship each year and they are awarded funds ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Helm was awarded \$2,000 for the second consecutive year.

"I didn't know it was renewable," Helm said of the scholarship program.

He did, however, have to apply again in order to be considered as a potential recipient a second time.

And once again, when he discovered he indeed was a repeat scholarship recipient, he welcomed the funds he received.

"Moving out helped me to look at expenses in a whole new light," he said. "I have bills to pay now."

Helm added the majority of post-secondary students would like to receive some scholarship funds to be put towards their education.

"It's always nice," he said. "There's less to worry about when you have 5-6 courses each semester and are trying to cope."

Helm added now that he does have additional expenses since he's no longer living at home, he is seeking for a way to earn some additional money.

"I'm looking for a part-time job, just for supplemental income," he said.

Though he's not even halfway through the requirements needed to obtain his finance degree, Helm, who is now also minoring in math, has a future goal in mind as well.

"Right after I get my Bachelor's degree, I think I'm going to get my MBA," he said.

And then after that, he'd obviously be looking to put his degree to good use.

"I'm not opposed to moving internationally," he said. "But I wouldn't be opposed to staying in Calgary either."



Quintin Helm, a 19-year-old member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, is a finance student at the University of Calgary.

Right after I get my Bachelor's degree, I think I'm going to get my MBA. I'm not opposed to moving internationally.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Karen MacDonald is proving it's never too late to further one's education



Karen MacDonald is a member of Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan.

I missed the opportunity to do it earlier in my career. A lot of people encouraged me but I had this self-doubt.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

It's never too late to fulfill one's wishes.

Just ask Karen MacDonald.

Though she is 57, MacDonald was in recent months finishing up her requirements to obtain her Master's degree in business administration from the University of Calgary.

MacDonald, a member of Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan, believes it's better late than never to return to school in order to further one's education.

And it's not as if she didn't want to do it before now.

"I missed the opportunity to do it earlier in my career," MacDonald said. "A lot of people encouraged me but I had this self-doubt."

MacDonald decided there was no point in waiting any longer and made the decision to return to school. And not just to help herself.

"What I want to do is assist other Indigenous students achieve their business goals," she said.

Besides being a student herself the past couple of years again, MacDonald is also a member of the university's staff. She's the manager of the Writing Symbols Lodge, the school's Indigenous student centre.

The centre provides both academic and cultural support to Indigenous students. And it works with other groups throughout the University of Calgary campus to provide information, advice, cultural activities, Indigenous student access programs and training.

Before becoming the manager of the centre in early 2020, MacDonald had spent five months working as its

Indigenous student access program coordinator. And before that she had worked eight months as the centre's Indigenous relations training program assistant.

And for the second year in a row MacDonald was also recently announced as one of the eight winners of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

This four-year program is an initiative between the CIBC and the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, Cando's charitable organization.

From 2019 through 2022, the Indigenous Scholarship Program provided a total of \$44,000 to worthy recipients across the country.

Winners were awarded between \$2,000 to \$10,000 each.

MacDonald was one of the four scholarship winners that was awarded \$5,000 in each of the past two years.

Receiving some financial assistance towards her educational pursuits was obviously welcomed as it is no secret post-secondary expenses quickly add up.

"The tuition is just sky high," MacDonald said. "Every dollar helps."

MacDonald had earned her first university degree back in the late 1980s. She obtained her Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

Along with her husband she raised two children.

Juggling a family life and her work was already hectic enough. And then throwing in all the school responsibilities while working towards another degree took the juggling act to a whole other level.

"It's very tough," MacDonald said of performing all of her duties.

And undoubtedly, it's always a bonus when other recognize efforts and are willing to assist others financially in their academic pursuits.

2021 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

Wyatt Draycott on verge of completing college course following career change

Now more than ever Wyatt Draycott is feeling content with a major life decision he made.

Draycott, who lives in Cold Lake, Alta., had spent 20 years working as an industrial surveyor. He was even in charge of his own company during the last five years in that field.

But Draycott, a 47-year-old member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, gave up his career in February of 2020 in order to return to school.

Draycott is now in the final months of being a student in the two-year Natural Resources Technology Program, offered at Portage College in Lac La Biche.

The school is about a 90-minute drive from his home. He's spent a good chunk of his second year living in a dorm at the school and returning home on weekends.

"I'm comfortable with what I'm doing," Draycott said. "I've gained a lot of knowledge."

Draycott is also grateful that for the second straight year he's a recipient of the Indigenous Scholarship Program.

This initiative was launched after officials from the CIBC and the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund, Cando's charitable organization, teamed up to provide the scholarship program.

For four years, from 2019 until 2022, the program is offering a total of \$44,000 each year to eight scholarship winners. They will share between \$2,000 to \$10,000 each.

Draycott's share for the second straight year was \$5,000.

As was the case when he first found out he was a scholarship recipient, Draycott was equally amazed to be told he would benefit once again.

"I never win anything," he said.

Though he left his surveying career behind in early 2020, Draycott had been thinking of doing so for a number of years before that.

Since he had dropped out of school when he was 14 and in Grade 10, he had to first earn his high school equivalency diploma before he was able to apply to college. That process took him a couple of years.

Draycott had been making a six-figure salary from his previous career working as a surveyor.

But he was not happy with the work he was doing.

"I'm happier now," he said. "A change is just as good as a rest."

And now that he is almost finished his college program, Draycott has started to think about what type of work he'll be able to land.

Last summer he had worked in the Alberta village of Marwayne. He was the supervisor of wellsite decommissioning and eventual reclamation project.

Draycott might explore the possibilities of returning to that company.

But ideally, he would love to gain employment working as a bear technician with the government agency Alberta Parks.

He'd love to work outdoors in this position, tracking bear movements and interacting with the public to keep them safe and aware of bears' presence.

"I really hope to get a call back on that job," Draycott said.



Wyatt Draycott, a 47-year-old member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, gave up his career in 2020 in order to return to school.

I'm comfortable with what I'm doing. I've gained a lot of knowledge.

By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor

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Kelly Fiddler considering teaching option after obtaining Master's degree



Kelly Fiddler has gathered plenty of work experience during the past couple of decades.

I wanted to push myself to learn new things. I always had an interest in going back (to school). But I also always wanted to have some work experience, too.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Kelly Fiddler has gathered plenty of work experience during the past couple of decades.

Yet Fiddler, a member of Waterhen Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan, continues to improve himself.

The 45-year-old is currently working part-time as the executive director for the Muskoday Economic Development Authority, the business arm of the Muskoday First Nation.

Fiddler is also enrolled in the Masters in Business Administration program offered through Cape Breton University. He's able to take his classes, however, through the Warman campus of Great Plains College in Warman, Sask.

"I wanted to push myself to learn new things," Fiddler said, explaining his desire to pursue his Master's degree in his 40s. "I always had an interest in going back (to school). But I also always wanted to have some work experience, too."

He had previously earned an Arts & Science degree as well as his Bachelor of Commerce degree through the University of Saskatchewan.

Fiddler recently found out he'd be getting some financial assistance in pursuit of his Master's degree.

That's because he's one of four recipients this year of National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) scholarships.

These awards are made possible through a charitable foundation via Cando.

The NIEEF scholarship winners receive \$2,000 each.

"It means a lot to me because I feel obviously education is pretty expensive," he said. "So, I'm thankful for that support."

Fiddler said he will accumulate about \$32,000 in expenses while he pursues his

Master's degree. He's expected to graduate from his two-year program in the fall of 2022.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of Fiddler's classes have been online.

"It's a lot easier for me (learning from home) because I have a disability," said Fiddler, who has mobility issues and uses a scooter.

Fiddler began experiencing muscle degeneration in his 30s and has been diagnosed with Kennedy's disease, a rare neuromuscular disorder.

Fiddler is hoping his higher education will lead to something else.

"I'll be looking to get full-time employment," he said. "I've been doing some consulting part-time. But that's feast or famine."

Fiddler had various jobs during the past couple of decades. About half of those were working with the provincial government while the other half were with various Indigenous organizations.

One of his positions was serving as the band manager for his own First Nation for two years.

Teaching is another option he might explore in the future.

"I realize I have a lot to share in terms of Indigenous economic development," he said adding he possibly might look at becoming a professor. "We have so many opportunities and we need to mentor our youth to get into economic development."

Fiddler is no stranger to Cando. He's worked with the organization over the years and has helped run numerous events.

Recently he received his Cando certification, becoming a Professional Aboriginal Economic Developer.

2021 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

Delilah Mah felt timing was finally ideal to pursue Master's degree

Now that she's well established in her work career, Delilah Mah figured the timing was right for her to pursue another educational goal.

Mah, a 45-year-old member of Keeseekoosie First Nation in Saskatchewan, is expecting to earn her Master of Business Administration in Community Economic Development in August of 2022.

Mah's program is offered through Cape Breton University. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she's taking her classes online through the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Edmonton.

Mah is also one of four recipients this year of National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) scholarships.

Funding for the scholarships is made available through a foundation, which is the charitable organization of Cando.

All of the NIEEF scholarships winners received \$2,000 each.

"I find it kind of funny," Mah said. "I feel like it's a full circle moment of life."

That's because Mah used to work for Cando, from 2003 to 2013. She held various positions over the years after starting off as a summer student receptionist. Her duties later on included serving as a conference assistant and being Cando's education and research manager.

Mah, who lives in Edmonton, had earned her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Alberta in 2008.

But at the time, and for several years afterwards, she was not considering continuing on with her education.

"Taking a Master's program wasn't on my mind," she said. "Now I felt I had the pieces in place to do it."

Besides being a student again, Mah is also operating a pair of businesses.

She launched Mah Art & Photography in 2016. And then the following year she started an agency called BravHer Consulting.

For the art component of her first business, Mah creates authentic Indigenous art products. She launched the photography side of the company in part because of her desire to capture the beauty of Indigenous women through photography.

In addition to her photography, she's now also working with professional makeup artists and also doing customized backdrops for various events.

Meanwhile, services offered through BravHer Consulting include program development, event planning, business plans as well as branding services and board development services.

Mah has praise for those who provide financial assistance through various scholarships to those who are studying at post-secondary levels.

"It just gives that incentive for students to apply for that kind of help and to be recognized for the work that goes into being a student," she said.

Mah added she's pleased her former employer is among those that do provide financial help via scholarships.

"It's reassuring Cando is out there on a national level being mindful and supportive," she said.

Mah has also been involved in her share of volunteer efforts over the years.

In 2019 she founded the Indigenous Women's Business Panel. The purpose of this group was to have meetings where Indigenous women entrepreneurs could meet in a space to bring themselves closer together, by sharing stories and practices.



Delilah Mah, a 45-year-old member of Keeseekoosie First Nation in Saskatchewan, is expecting to earn her Master of Business Administration.

It's reassuring Cando is out there on a national level being mindful and supportive.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

2021 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

March/April 2022

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Katherine Rempel aspires to teach Indigenous Studies at university level



Katherine Rempel is hoping to eventually become a professor.

I want to teach in the field of Indigenous studies at the university level. I think I would enjoy spending my time sharing my knowledge with other students.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

Katherine Rempel is hoping to eventually become a professor.

“I want to teach in the field of Indigenous studies at the university level,” said Rempel, a 34-year-old Metis woman who lives in Winnipeg. “I think I would enjoy spending my time sharing my knowledge with other students.”

For now, Rempel is content with being a first-year student in the Masters of Development Practice (MDP) in Indigenous Development at the University of Winnipeg.

Rempel is also one of the four recipients this year of the National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) scholarships. The winners received \$2,000 each.

The scholarships are made available through Cando.

Rempel was thrilled to be one of this year’s scholarship winners.

“It actually meant being able to concentrate on my studies and being able to put groceries on the table,” said Rempel, who is also a single mother of a six-year-old daughter.

Rempel, who began her current program in August, said she was seeking various odd jobs she could do at the university to help pay some of her bills when she received word of her scholarship.

Rempel’s young child is one of the main reasons she decided to further her education. The highest level of education she had previously completed was high school.

“I realized I needed to get more education to provide for her,” she said.

For starters, Rempel enrolled at Winnipeg’s Red River College. She graduated with a diploma in Community

Economic Development from the college’s School of Indigenous Education in 2020.

Rempel not only graduated with honours but she also captured the gold medal for academic excellence and the Lieutenant Governor’s award.

Though an undergrad degree is usually required to pursue a Master’s degree, Rempel was accepted into her current MDP by completing a qualifying year of graduate courses through the University of Winnipeg.

Rempel was keen to enroll in her current program in order to boost her understanding of sustainable development as well as gender and human rights, not only from an international but also Indigenous approach.

Rempel admits it is challenging being a single mother while also pursuing her university education.

“It’s tough but I’ve built a support network for myself,” she said, adding she receives help when needed from family members and friends.

Rempel added university officials have also been extremely supportive. As proof she mentions the fact when she was unable to secure babysitting at the start of the school year, she was allowed to bring her daughter to the university and have her sit with her during her classes.

Rempel is also involved as a volunteer in various community initiatives.

For example, she is the chair of the River Heights/Fort Rouge Parent-Child Coalition, a group she has been involved with since 2016.

The coalition consists of community members dedicated to seeking funding for organizations and groups that assist those in their early years of development.

2021 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIPS

Nathan Crow hoping for career as Indigenous relations manager in O&G

Though he was making a decent living, Nathan Crow decided it was time for a change.

The 29-year-old Blackfoot, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, now finds himself back in school furthering his education.

Crow is a second-year student in the Indigenous Governance and Business Management program at the University of Lethbridge.

He's also one of the four National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) scholarship winners this year.

NIEEF funding is provided through a charitable foundation set up by Cando, the national organization that promotes economic development in Indigenous communities throughout Canada.

The four NIEEF scholarship winners received \$2,000 each.

"It helps with lightening my financial load," Crow said of the money he received through the scholarship. "I'm going to be using it for living expenses for this semester and next semester."

While Crow was officially one of the four NIEEF scholarship recipients this year, he was presented with the Plains Midstream Canada award as he was the winning Alberta-based applicant.

Crow had been in the workforce for almost a decade before he decided to continue his education.

From 2012-18 he worked for a powerline company, which took him away from his Lethbridge home to various remote communities in the province.

"It was really good money because I was a foreman for the company," he said. "But it was a feast or famine lifestyle."

Crow said there would be periods when he would be laid off work for 3-4 months at a time.

That convinced him to try to eventually find an alternate career with steadier, year-round employment.

While he did enjoy his work with the powerline company, Crow also felt he should seek a job that he'll be able to do for a long time.

"I know my mind will take me a lot further than my body will," he said.

Since he had graduated high school in 2011, Crow decided he needed to ease back into the lifestyle of a student.

That's why in September of 2019 he enrolled in the First Nations transition program offered through the University of Lethbridge. He completed a pair of semesters in this program before starting his current course work.

This past summer Crow worked as an intern in the Indigenous field sector for a Calgary-based oil and gas company.

He now aspires to do similar work on a full-time basis.

"Currently my plan is to be an Indigenous relations manager for the oil and gas industry," he said.

Crow is excelling in his current school program. He's been on the Dean's Honours list each semester.

He's been able to maintain his high marks even though he is currently working three part-time jobs at the school.

Crow is a student assistant at the university library and also a student mentor with enrolment services.

He was also recently elected to the paid position of being the Indigenous student representative with the university's student union council.



Nathan Crow, is a 29-year-old Blackfoot, and a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta.

I know my mind will take me a lot further than my body will.

**By Sam Laskaris
Cando Contributor**

CEDI Phase III Update: Partnership Selection



CEDI Phase II Graduating Partnership: Yellowknives Dene First Nation and City of Yellowknife participate in a rounddance in 2020.

On behalf of Cando and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities we would like to thank all First Nation-municipal applicants to CEDI Phase III. With “resources to support only eight First Nation-municipal partnerships, the CEDI program was overwhelmed with twenty-eight joint applications from 34 First Nations (including 1 Tribal Administration) and 34 local governments (including municipalities, counties, and regional districts) from across Canada. We continue to work hard to identify sufficient funding mechanisms to meet this overwhelming demand for support from First Nation-municipal partnerships.

We have selected 8 diverse First Nation-municipal partnerships from across the country to participate in CEDI Phase III, including 2 in British Columbia, 1 in Alberta, 1 in Saskatchewan, 1 in Manitoba, 1 in Ontario, 1 in Quebec and 1 in New Brunswick.

Rather than sharing the community names of the selected partnerships, we respect that each partnership will make their own shared announcement when it best suits their communities. We expect to make this announcement at the Cando Conference in May.

CEDI Tools and Resources for First Nation – Municipal Partnerships

There are many ways to advance your First Nation-municipal partnership outside of the CEDI program, including the tools and resources that we have listed below:

Stronger Together Toolkit:

The Stronger Together approach and toolkit was developed in collaboration with First Nation and municipal partners to establish positive and respectful ways of working together on long-term joint community economic development plans and initiatives. This comprehensive toolkit includes tools and resources that can be accessed by a facilitator who is supporting your partnership, or, perhaps your elected officials and staff may find it helpful to see examples of past CEDI partnerships outlined in the toolkit. Feel free to reach out to the CEDI team with any questions about the Stronger Together toolkit.

CEDI Knowledge Products and Tools

Informed by several past CEDI partnerships, we have created several knowledge products and tools to support with First Nation-municipal partnership learning and collaboration. The following knowledge products and tools are available for download through the following hyperlinks.

www.edo.ca/cedi

Tool: Creating a Joint Working Group for First Nation – Municipal Partnerships

Creating a consistent meeting structure to explore relationship development and to collaborate on joint community economic development priorities has proven to be a best practice for First Nations and municipalities. This tool provides guidance for creating an effective joint Working Group and includes three associated template documents to support in the implementation. Find the templates: <https://www.edo.ca/downloads/cedi-joint-working-group-en.pdf>

Tool: First Nation – Municipal Land Use Planning Tool

Collaborative First Nation-Municipal land use planning is about working together to create a seamless and sustainable strategy for managing human use of the local landscape. This tool provides an overview of how to develop a sustainable land use plan through sharing and cooperation, mutual respect for and recognition of Indigenous and municipal rights and obligations, and mutual responsibilities to each other, the land, and future generations. Find it at: <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/cedi/first-nation-municipal-land-use-planning-tool>

Knowledge Product: First Nation and Municipal Economic Development Organizations

First Nations and municipalities across Canada are mandated to attract, retain, and expand new and existing businesses. This guide explains the different types of economic development structures commonly used by First Nations and municipalities, and shares tips on how your First Nation or municipality can collaborate across these structures on exciting new economic development initiatives. Find it at: <https://www.edo.ca/downloads/cedi-guide-for-collaboration.pdf>

Knowledge Product: Economic Recovery and Resilience: A Guide for First Nation – Municipal Collaboration

Across borders and jurisdictions, natural disasters and economic impacts of COVID-19 have thrust emergency preparedness and economic recovery onto government radars. This document explores the unique jurisdictions and different relationships and responsibilities that First Nations and municipalities have to their membership or citizens, while identifying areas to be stronger together since both often lack the fiscal and human capacity for effective preparedness, response, and recovery.

CEDI created this guide with the intention to support First Nations and municipalities to collaborate on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters of any kind. It establishes a framework, bolstered by best practices, for communities who want to begin or strengthen emergency management partnerships. <https://www.edo.ca/downloads/cedi-guide-economic-recovery.pdf>

Financial Resources for First Nation-Municipal Collaboration

CEDI has created a list of financial resources available for First Nations and municipalities involved in community economic development. We encourage you to identify funding to source a facilitator who could use the Stronger Together process to support your partnership development. Find it at: <https://www.edo.ca/cedi/financial-resources-table>

CEDI has also created a list of COVID-19 specific financial resources and economic relief measures available for businesses, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This list is here: <https://www.edo.ca/cedi/financial-resources-table/financial-resources-covid-19>

As well, be sure to stay connected with the CEDI program to learn about upcoming learning or intake opportunities and new tools and resources to support your partnership. You can do this in several ways.

Cando and FCM Newsletters: sign up for our organizational newsletters , for the FCM newsletter please subscribe here: <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/sign-up-fcm-connect>

For the Cando newsletter, please subscribe here: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Cando-Newsletter.html>

Facebook Community of Practice: Search ‘First Nation – Municipal Collaboration Network’ on Facebook to join the CEDI Facebook Group.

The group provides a platform where organizations and individuals interested in collaborative First Nation-municipal community economic development can share successes, challenges, experiences and best practices, ask questions, share tools and resources, and build their networks to promote strong intergovernmental and cross-cultural relationships. We invite you to join the group and introduce yourself, your organization, and how you have been involved in community economic development.

Economic Recovery and Resilience: A Guide for First Nation-Municipal Collaboration

Disasters have increased in frequency and intensity in recent years. Across borders and jurisdictions, natural disasters and economic impacts of COVID-19 have thrust emergency preparedness and economic recovery onto government radars. First Nation and municipal governments have unique jurisdictions and different relationships and responsibilities to their membership or citizens; although, similarly they often lack the fiscal and human capacity for effective preparedness, response, and recovery.

The First Nation – Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) has created this guide with the intention to support First Nations and municipalities to collaborate

on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters of any kind. It establishes a framework, bolstered by best practices, for communities who want to begin or strengthen emergency management partnerships.

Our sincere gratitude to the peer reviewers, case study communities and subject-matter experts (please find these individuals listed on p. 15 of the Guide) who generously shared their knowledge and experiences with us. A special thank you to our contract writer, Josh Regnier.

Find this Guide here: <http://www.edo.ca/downloads/cedi-guide-economic-recovery.pdf>



Economic Recovery and Resilience: A Guide for First Nation-Municipal Collaboration

This guide is a framework for elected officials and staff of First Nations and municipalities who want to enhance their emergency preparedness and economic resilience. Use it alongside *Stronger Together: A Toolkit for First Nations-Municipal Community Economic Development Partnerships* and other resources listed at the end of this guide.

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FOR FULL DETAILS VISIT: [EDO.CA/YOUTH/YOUTH-COACHING](https://edo.ca/youth/youth-coaching)

Top 5 Benefits of An Accelerator Program



Did you know that startups graduating from accelerator programs have a 23% higher survival rate than their counterparts? Mentoring and coaching are foundational to accelerator programs. Entrepreneurs benefit from ‘been there-done that’ expertise which translates into success.

It doesn’t matter what stage your startup is at, whether you’re searching for product-market-fit, launching your product or landing your first customer, we’re willing to bet you’d love to reach your goals as soon as possible. And that’s exactly what an accelerator program helps you do: fast-track progress.

In this article, we’ll cover the top 5 benefits of accelerator programs:

1. Speed up your progress
2. Grow your network
3. Gain clout and investor attention
4. Decreased costs and exclusive perks
5. Avoid costly mistakes

Accelerator Types

Accelerator programs can be fixed-term, cohort-based programs that support early-stage, growth-driven companies through education, mentorship, and financing. But not all accelerator programs are the same. There are three main types of accelerator programs:

- **Open Innovation Programs** invite startups to set up shop at a large corporation. Through this partnership, startups receive financial resources and guidance.

- **External Corporate Accelerator Programs** partner companies with third-party accelerators for the purpose of getting funding. Integration opportunities and collaboration are generally provided in return.

- **Innovation Outposts** are a dedicated physical office staffed by innovation professionals. Their primary job is to do market analysis and identify new trends, and based on this research, they create innovation programs.

At Innovate BC, our accelerator program falls into the external corporate accelerator programs.

And good news – you can access the program from anywhere in BC. Our program—the Venture Acceleration Program—is delivered throughout the province of BC by delivery partners in different regions. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, keep reading to uncover the top 5 ways joining an accelerator program will benefit your startup.

Learn more about the Venture Accelerator Program:
<https://www.innovatebc.ca/programs/mentorship/>

Continued on page 22.



Get Funding. Connect with Experts. Launch Your Idea.

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We are proud sponsors of CANDO and their initiatives.

Visit innovatebc.ca to learn more.

innovate BC

Benefits of An Accelerator Program

Continued from page 20.

Benefit #1: Speed up your progress

You'll have an expert work with you on your business plan, prototyping, marketing, etc. to set you up for success.

Since you've got a coach guiding you through the process of starting and growing your business, you're cutting out the time it would take to learn these things on your own. Not to mention the cost associated with countless phases of trial and error. You'll learn where and how to best allocate resources and have your business turning a profit much sooner than if you were to go it alone.

Benefit #2: Grow your network

Accelerator programs are hot spots for up-and-coming tech companies. By being a part of one you'll also be part of a community of entrepreneurs and founders. Entrepreneurs need to find partners, customers, employees and other players to help them build their businesses. Getting the chance to talk to peers who have faced similar challenges and learn how they overcame them is crucial to success. According to Co-Founder and CEO of Techstars, David Brown, companies emerge from accelerator programs and do truly amazing things when their founders have been able to leverage the value of the associated network.

Benefit #3: Gain clout and investor attention

Investors are drawn to accelerators in the hopes of discovering the next, big innovation. And many attend the demo days. This is where you showcase your company for an audience. From the investor's point of view, they're more

likely to see a return on their investment when a startup has benefited from the expertise of someone who has successfully launched their own company. A recent article from the Harvard Business Review cited a comparison between graduates of top accelerators with similar startups who instead raised angel funding. What they found was that the accelerator graduates were more likely to receive their next round of financing significantly sooner.

Benefit #4: Decreased costs and exclusive perks

Did you know that a lot of accelerators include office space as part of their program? If you need a workspace but don't have the funds to rent an office, this is an excellent benefit of accelerator programs. This will often look like a coworking space with boardrooms available for booking. But there are also private offices and labs available at some of these tech and innovation hubs. This is one example of how you can decrease overhead costs. You can also access services the accelerator offers at volume rates and access equipment or hardware by sharing instead of buying.

Also, many large service providers partner with accelerators to help them offer programs that are tailored for small businesses. We're talking about programs like Microsoft for Business and HubSpot for Entrepreneurs. Program participants are given access to their suite of software, business and marketing tools at a significantly discounted rate.

Benefit #5: Avoid costly mistakes

We've come full circle, and it bears repeating, the foundational component

of accelerators is 'been there – done that' experience. There's a reason why startups who graduate from accelerator programs have a 23% higher survival rate than their counterparts.

The ability to lean on resources that have been through it before to gives you:

1. Line of sight
2. A safe space to talk about what keeps you up at night
3. An outlet to clear up mental space and reduce anxieties
4. Time and energy saved by not having to grind through problems on your own

But most of all, working with an expert helps you avoid costly mistakes. Imagine reducing the amount of trial and error while starting your business or launching your new product. That's a significant cost savings. Instead, you'll get advice from someone who can tell you how to do it right from the get-go. Don't forget about the revenue you'll gain by being able to get to market sooner.

What's Next?

Did you know that there's a network of tech accelerators in BC? The BC Acceleration Network offers all of the above benefits to your tech startup and can be accessed from almost anywhere in the province.

Innovate BC oversees the BC Acceleration Network and the delivery of the accelerator program. We want to ensure all entrepreneurs and innovators across the province have access to this resource so together we can continue to grow strong businesses and a prominent BC innovation economy.

Learn more about the BC Acceleration Network and apply today: <https://www.innovatebc.ca/programs/mentorship/>

building brighter futures

Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards



CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to a first-year Indigenous student who is studying in a four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development.

CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to Indigenous students who are studying in a two-year diploma program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED.

CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to an Indigenous student who is studying in any year of a two-year diploma or four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED. This student will receive the CANDO funds and the matched funds and the successful candidate will only be eligible for this specific award once.



Program of Study: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development
Level of Study: Entering first year of a four-year degree program

Two Awards: \$10,000 per year for up to 4 years per student

Program of Study: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED

Level of Study: Two-year or four-year program.

Four Awards: \$5,000 per year for up to 2 years per student

Program of Study: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED

Level of Study: Any year of a two-year or four-year program.

One Award: \$4,000 for one year

Application Deadlines: February 1
August 1
November 1

AUGUST 1

indspirefunding.ca/cando