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Athabasca Basin Development Celebrates 20 Years



Pictured (Left to right). Front row: Glen Strong, Points Athabasca; Allison Strong, Athabasca Basin Development; Chief Coreen Sayazie, Black Lake; Terri Daniels, Wollaston Lake, Vice Chief Joseph Tsannie, PAGC; Kristine McWilliam, ABD. 2nd row: Chief Kevin Mercredi, Fond du Lac; Anne Robillard, Hatchet Lake Economic Development; Kristy Jackson, ABD; Joan Strong, PAGC; Vice Chief Christopher Jobb, PAGC; Glenn Lafleur, Orano. Third row: Rosalie Tsannie-Burseeth, Claire Laroque, Chairperson of Camsell Portage; Daniel Powder, Mayor of Stony Rapids; Garrett Schmidt, Ya' thi Néné Lands and Resources. 4th row: Shauna Loewen, ABD; Danny Augier, Uranium City; Joyce Powder, Camsell Portage; Geoff Gay, ABD. 5th row: Alice Wong, Cameco; Terri-Lynn Beavereye; Black Lake Ventures; Tiffany Toutsaint, Fond du Lac Development; Chief Bart Tsannie; Hatchet Lake. Back row: Don Deranger, Deputy Minister Blair Wager, Ministry of Highways.

By Allison Strong

Athabasca Basin Development celebrated twenty years in business on November 29th, 2022.

Over 180 people travelled from far and wide to celebrate this significant milestone. Guests included Chiefs, Elders, leaders, board members, investment and sponsorship partners, and members from the Athabasca communities, including half of Camsell Portage.

In addition to opening and closing prayers and traditional drumming, the celebration featured a variety of speeches, including words from Alice Wong, Cameco's Senior Vice-President and Chief Corporate Officer, as well as Joe Hargrave, Member of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly for Prince Albert Carlton. The evening was in honour of all those that were involved in Athabasca Basin Development's twenty years of working with the communities and "building a future through investment."

Terri Daniels has been involved since the inception of Athabasca Basin Development and still sits on the board

as a Unit Holder Representative for Wollaston Lake. "Being involved in starting up that whole thing, what can I say – I think it's really great," says Terri. "It's gone beyond my expectations really about what we were thinking when we first started talking about these things. I'm really proud of the progress of everything, where we are today. The Athabasca, we had all kinds of ideas, and this company has gone so far ... doing all the things the Athabasca wished for."

Our planning committee chose 29 recipients to honour at the celebration. Beaded medallions with the Athabasca Basin Development logo were gifted to each of these recipients for their involvement in Athabasca Basin Development and its accomplishments throughout the years. A big thank you to Marie Tsessaze from Black Lake, and Delores Taylor from Fond du Lac, for creating such amazing beadwork on these medallions.

To all those who have contributed over the years, those who are new partners with us, and those who travelled a long distance to attend, thank you for joining our celebration and for your support!

Athabasca Basin Development is continuing to look for new opportunities for investments – both to strengthen its existing investments as well as outside of its existing industries. "There are lots of opportunities out there and we are continuing to seek solid investment opportunities. I would encourage business owners who are looking at succession planning to consider us as a potential fit and to contact us to discuss opportunities – there may be a fit either with Athabasca Basin Development or with one of our investments."

5Buds Cannabis Expands – Opens Three New Stores in La Ronge, Saskatoon, and Humboldt

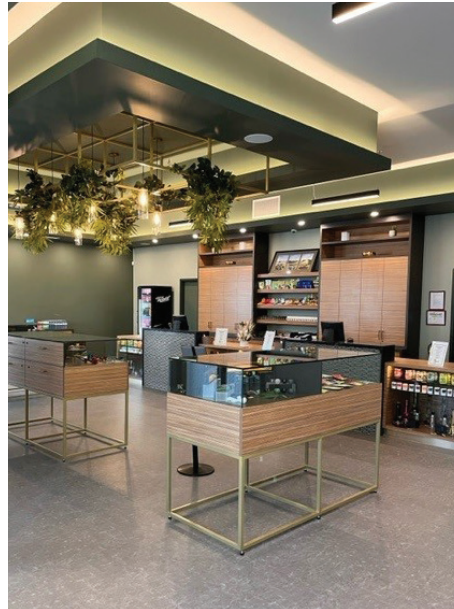
By Allison Strong

5Buds Cannabis has grown to include 8 stores across Saskatchewan.

This fall, 5Buds opened a location in the heart of downtown Saskatoon, at 212-20th St W. This location had been known as Kiara Cannabis since the early days of legalization. That was until August 2022, when Synergy Five Investments LP purchased the Kiara locations in Saskatoon and La Ronge and reopened them on September 2, 2022, under the banner of 5Buds Cannabis. This is 5Buds' first location in one of the major urban centers in Saskatchewan. "Many customers had not heard of 5Buds in Saskatoon prior to this, so it was exciting to educate the community on our brand," says Calvin Isackson, Managing Director of 5Buds. "The existing customers are especially happy to have both the Saskatoon and La Ronge locations re-opened in their communities."

In our La Ronge location there was still excitement, but many customers in the community were aware of the brand from our Prince Albert market, which in itself, is very exciting for the team to celebrate the far reach of the 5Buds Cannabis brand throughout the province," Calvin says. "The main benefit of these locations is that it broadens the exposure for the brand across the province by being in new communities - allowing customers to have the flexibility to shop at our other locations across the province as they travel."

The Humboldt location is a brand-new store located at 2416 Westwood Drive, in the new up and coming area of Humboldt. "We are excited to open our eighth store



5Buds in Humboldt is located at 2416 Westwood Drive.

and to serve the community of Humboldt," says Calvin. "We just opened a few weeks ago and we have already established strong relationships with a lot of people in this beautiful town. We've had positive feedback on our product selection, and everyone loves the design of the store, the privacy and the prices. We were pleasantly surprised to hear that many had seen our brand already, having shopped in our other locations."

The three new locations add to the existing 5Buds located in Prince Albert, Kindersley, North Battleford, Yorkton, and Warman. 5Buds is 100% Saskatchewan owned company, with Athabasca Basin Development, Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies, and Prince Albert Development Corp having ownership in it though Synergy Five Investments LP. www.5buds.ca



Calvin Isackson, Managing Director of 5Buds; Keilan Hendricks, Store Leader, 5Buds Humboldt, Josh Spacil, District Manager, 5Buds at the 5Buds Humboldt grand opening.

Tru North Holds Official Grand Opening; Becomes Saskatchewan's Yamaha Electric Bicycle Exclusive Dealer

While Tru North Yamaha, RV & Auto has been a part of Prince Albert for over twenty years, they recently moved into a new location to better serve their customers and held their official grand opening celebration on February 23.

"We're very excited to celebrate our new location, but our customers know we've been in PA for a long time," says Terry Skulmoski, General Manager for Tru North. "We've been able to grow because we strive to give our customers the best experience, every time. Through the years, we've grown into one of the largest Powersports recreation dealers in Saskatchewan. We have customers from all across Western Canada who have a relationship with us."

Tru North moved into its new location, just down the highway from its previous site, in the building that was once Peavy Mart. The new building is a 20,000-square-foot facility, making it the largest indoor recreation shopping facility in the province. "Our new location has a paved parking lot and a beautiful indoor space. Many times, people like to go shopping when it's raining or windy outside, and our location allows customers to have a comfortable shopping experience, no matter what the weather is doing."



Front row: From left to right: Matt Michaud, Business Development, Yamaha; His Worship Greg Dionne, Mayor of Prince Albert; Elder Marie Tsessaze, Black Lake; Anne Robillard, Board Chair for Athabasca Basin Development; Doug Bryshun, District Sales Manager, Yamaha. Back row: Terry Skulmoski, General Manager of Tru North; Jerry Paskiw, GM of PA Shopper.

To kick off the grand opening celebration, Tru North held a ribbon cutting and grand opening sale.

Tru North is one of only 33 certified Yamaha Elite Dealers across Canada. The company has held the highest distinction with Yamaha for many years. In addition to the grand opening, Tru North was recently named the exclusive dealer in Saskatchewan for Yamaha Electric Bicycles. "We are very excited that Yamaha chose us to offer electric bicycles to Saskatchewan. As an Elite Yamaha Dealer, we are committed to excellence, and we

have been recognized for our top-of-the-line showroom, professional staff, and customer satisfaction."

In 2014, Tru North expanded, adding a division that offers families modular housing. "After almost a decade of operating Tru North Homes, we are proud to have been the supplier of manufactured homes to hundreds of families across the prairie provinces," says Terry. "We specialize in turnkey housing options, lake houses, footprint homes, and even motel unit buildings. We look after the whole process, from designing to installation to financing – we make it as easy as possible for our customers to purchase a home."

Tru North is planning to be a citizen of Prince Albert many years into the future. "When Tru North started on our journey many years ago, our goal was to earn sales and service customers one at a time," says Terry. "We've stayed true to that, and over the years, we've developed strong, trusted relationships with so many fantastic people. The next decade is going to be very exciting in our industry, and with our new building and our new product line of electric bicycles, we are positioned well to provide the very best for our customers today and into the future."

www.trunorthprincealbert.ca
www.trunorthhomes.ca

Award-winning Author David Robertson Visits Three Athabasca Communities

Three of the Athabasca communities had their first-ever author tour at the schools in January.

David A Robertson is a well-known and award-winning Indigenous author and graphic novelist who has written over 25 books for little kids up to adults, including the middle-grade *Misewa Saga* series and the recently released *Theory of Crows*, both of which have made steady appearances on Canadian bestseller lists. A sought-after speaker who travels around the world, David is also the Editorial Director of a new imprint with Tundra books that will focus on publishing Indigenous writers and illustrators.

"We're very excited to partner with the Athabasca Denesuline Education Authority to bring David Robertson to talk to the kids about reading, writing, and illustrating," says Kristy Jackson, Director of Marketing & Communications at Athabasca Basin Development. "David is an accomplished author and we purchase many of his books each year for our Santa in the North program. We look for ways to give back to our shareholder communities, and this opportunity to help encourage literacy was a great fit for our program. Many thanks to Dave who was a real trooper – we packed his tour schedule pretty tight and even ended up driving eleven hours from Black Lake back to Prince Albert! It was a fantastic tour and quite an adventure."

Author visits can be more difficult for schools in remote northern communities to participate in. The tour was planned to take place over the space of four days, with Rise Air providing administrative support coordinating the schedule to make it work and the Athabasca Denesuline Education Authority coordinating on-the-ground travel, audio-visual, hotels and other details.

"The timing of this tour couldn't have been better. Each year on February 5, our schools honour and celebrate Thanadelthur, a Dene woman known as the Peacemaker who negotiated an important peace treaty in the 18th century," says Carol Mitchell, Elementary Literacy Coordinator for Athabasca Denesuline Education Authority. "David wrote a graphic novel about her story that we use in our classrooms, and many of the students are also familiar with his other works. This was a fantastic initiative to encourage literacy and writing in Athabasca schools, and it was exciting to see the kids connect with him. We're so thrilled to be able to partner with Athabasca Basin Development to provide an opportunity like this to our students."

David, who is a member of Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba, started his tour on January 23, first visiting the schools in Fond du Lac, then Hatchet Lake, then finally Black Lake. "I was really happy to get a chance to go present to Indigenous kids in isolated communities," says David. "I've wanted to be a writer since I was in the third grade, but when I was younger, there weren't very many books for kids by Indigenous people that featured Indigenous characters. I wanted to help change that because I think it's important that kids see themselves in stories, and tours like these are why I love doing what I do."



Mikaela, a middle-grade student in Wollaston Lake, shows author David Robertson her artwork after the presentation.

David spoke to three groups at each school, tailoring his presentation to different age ranges. Sometimes David read from picture books, and sometimes David talked to students about writing and illustrating. Each talk ended with a book giveaway prize draw that included a personalized autograph for the winning students.

"I was really blown away by the amazing artwork I saw in the schools," David said. "I see professional illustrator portfolios all the time, and so much of the artwork in the north that I saw was easily at that level. I think it's so important to increase Indigenous participation in the publishing industry to share our important stories and hopefully tours like this help by letting students know that there are careers like writing and illustrating that can be done from anywhere."



David presents at Father Gamache Memorial School in Fond du Lac.

Giving Back

“Building a future through investment” is accomplished by building a strong reputation, robust capacity, and wealth for the Athabasca communities while also giving back through donations and community distributions. The key to making all this possible is building wealth for the communities – without this foundation, the other benefits would not be possible. Here are a few recent examples of ways Athabasca Basin Development and its investments give back.



22 Years of Santa in the North

By Allison Strong

Rather than riding his usual sleigh, Santa visited the communities of Wollaston, Hatchet Lake, Stony Rapids, Black Lake, and Fond Du Lac on December 15 & 16, 2022 aboard a Rise Air flight.

During this magical time, Santa and his elves visited each school, making sure each of the 1,380 children in pre-K to grade 12 received a gift bag that included a gift, oranges, candy canes, and a book to enjoy.

The Santa in the North Program is a long-standing annual tradition, with this being the 22nd year Santa has visited the region by plane. On board with Santa were his helpers who joined the visit to the Athabasca Region, and together, they made it a special time for the kids before the holidays.

Rise Air administered the program and managed the logistics. “Santa in the North is a program which brings communities together. It’s been a tough time with the

pandemic and we’re so glad that we could return to an in-person format,” says Dan Gold, Director, Communications and Stakeholder Relations at Rise Air, who spearheaded the program this year. “From the funding partners and in-kind sponsors to the incredible team of Santa’s helpers, we cannot thank you enough for your kindness.”

Numerous sponsors came on board to help Santa make this special trip happen. Cameco, Orano, Northern Lights Community Development Corp, SSR Seabee Mining, Harold’s Family Foods, Snowbird Aviation Services, Imagine That Media YXE, Eagle Feather News, Real Canadian Superstore, Optek Solutions, and Hands-On Outreach & Development Centre all contributed to Santa’s efforts through financial and in-kind donations that helped provide all the gift bags with assorted toys and treats for the children.

With sponsorship from Points Athabasca, Athabasca Basin Security, Flyer Electric, Team Drilling, Points North, Long Lake Insurance, and help with sorting from the staff at Optek Solutions, Athabasca Basin Development provided sponsorship and managed the process regarding the books, providing each student in the Athabasca Region from daycare to Grade 12 a book or graphic novel.

With over 150 different titles by Indigenous authors, over 95% of the 1,380 books sent to the students were by Indigenous authors. “This was my first year involved in the program, and it was a wonderful experience to witness the excitement of the students in each grade, as they got to choose from the variety of books that incorporated Indigenous culture,” says Allison Strong, Marketing and Communications Intern at Athabasca Basin Development. “I am happy to see the growing number of books written by Indigenous authors and the unique ways the Indigenous culture adds to their stories. This lets the students see themselves as the main character in these books.”

“It’s important to include books by Indigenous authors,” said Ben Borne from Symmetry PR, who played Santa on the flight. “These kids need to see themselves reflected in the stories they read to know their own stories, their culture, and to know they belong in the stories told around the world.”

Athabasca Basin Development has been involved in the program for 11 years, with the book portion of the program starting in 2018.



Congratulations to Black Lake in the First Nations Firefighting National championships for coming in 2nd place. ABD, Points Athabasca and QM Points were sponsors for \$3000.



The Annual Athabasca Student Dinner has been running for many years, and we were excited to bring it back to an in-person event again in 2022. On December 15, we invited students and their families to an event to recognize the efforts and celebrate the achievements of the Athabasca communities who are studying in the south. Points Athabasca does a lot of the legwork to organize the event and Athabasca Basin Development is a major sponsor. “This year was our largest event ever, thanks to all the companies that generously donated and those that helped to make the evening a success.” says Glen Strong. Special thanks to our many sponsors for donating prizes: Rise Air, Points Athabasca, QM Points, Lonona, Points North Group of Companies, Long Lake Insurance, Flyer Electric, Team Drilling, Tru North, Arctic Beverages, Athabasca Basin Security, Saskatchewan Research Council, Orano, Cameco, Ya’thi Néné Lands and Resources, Graham Construction, Caribou Transport, Paradox, and Hands On Outreach &

Kleen All Expansion

By Harold Bonazew

Kleen All, a division of Arctic Beverages, is a Safety/ PPE, Commercial, Health and Industrial Company that has been supplying and servicing central and Northern Canada for over 25 years.

In order to continue providing strong support and service to a major customer partner, Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting (HBM&S), a new Branch for Kleen All recently opened in Snow Lake MB. “We felt it was pivotal to move to the town that HBM&S had focused all its mining operations,” says Harold Bonazew, General Manager with Arctic Beverages. “With this move, we

would be able to capitalize on being a local vendor and be better positioned to assist with safety, industrial and commercial requirements.” The company currently has an office and storage in town but is actively pursuing a larger building and storefront.

This is the first phase of the Kleen All expansion plan. The company has hired a local Snow Lake based sales rep who will also develop business in Northern Manitoba such as Thompson and surrounding areas.

There is also a plan to expand in the second quarter of this year with a Sales Rep position in Northern Saskatchewan, ideally in Prince Albert. “This would

give us reach into the northern-based Saskatchewan businesses,” says Harold. “We are actively recruiting and interviewing for positions in sales, warehouse and administration for central and Northern Saskatchewan.”

Arctic Beverages and Kleen All now have nine branches servicing and selling their product lines to over 44% of Canada.

Profile: Vincent Boneleye, IT Intern at Optek Solutions

Being close to his family and home community is important to Vincent Boneleye. His current job as an IT Intern with Optek Solutions helps make that happen.

"I grew up in Black Lake, and moved to Prince Albert where I lived for a while," said Vincent. "But I wanted to move back to Black Lake for my little boy. I wanted to get back to my roots, my cultural background. This is the place I grew up. It's a calm place; the serenity is nice."

Until last year, Vincent worked at the McLean Lake mine. Last fall, Vincent signed up to be a participant in the new Spark Mentorship Program. The program was designed by Optek Solutions in partnership with PAGC-Dene. Participants were given six months to complete an online course as a Google IT Support Analyst with the help of an experienced mentor.

"When we were designing the program, we felt strongly that the mentor was key in helping the students be successful," said Kevin Aebig, Optek Solutions CEO.

"It's not easy to complete an online program completely on your own; plus, a huge part of the IT industry is teamwork and making connections, and we designed this program to help students make that first connection with both an experienced mentor and an employer with a paid internship opportunity."

Vincent graduated from the program in four months. "I didn't take any shortcuts. It took me 4 months and I had a 6-month window," says Vincent. "They told me take your time, you have all the time you need. There was lots to do, but you had the time. As long as you're committed, you can do this."

Part of the program included a paid internship with Optek Solutions. So far, Vincent finds the work to be interesting. "I was amazed learning about how a computer functions," says Vincent. "Because it's the day-to-day life of what we do. When I was working my previous job, the computer was the go-to to organize, order, and work on daily activities. Now I know what's underneath."

Being a part of a team helps Vincent learn and provide strong customer service to the company's clients. "In a day, I collect phone calls if customers have issues with computers, if I'm able to assist them, I can do it remotely. If



Vincent Boneleye, Black Lake Saskatchewan Canada Treaty 8

the issue is beyond my expertise, I make a ticket and escalate to the next available IT person."

One unique aspect of this program and the work is that it can be done entirely from Vincent's home community. "I'm doing all this from Black Lake. Everything I'm doing is remote," says Vincent. "I actually like it. I get to be able to stay home and work and also be with my family. In my previous job, I was away one week in, one week out, in mining, and that was great, but I like being at home more. There was a perfect opportunity for me when the Spark Mentorship Program came along."

"We designed the Spark program specifically for people like Vincent, who live in remote communities and have an interest in IT," says Kevin. "As an employer, we are very interested in seeing this program succeed. There's a huge potential pool of employees in these communities, but the biggest challenge we have sometimes is with infrastructure. If there isn't the right internet in place, programs like this can't happen."

Vincent agrees that there's a lot of potential in the north. "My wife works in the school system and sees a lot of potential. Students nowadays are into technology, right? There's actually quite a few up north that are into that. I'm pretty sure there's a lot that have lots of knowledge and interest towards technology and I'm pretty sure they would be able to do this kind of career."

Vincent loves his home community and spending time with his family, and in his off time, he also likes to travel. "I like to go sightseeing. Travelling is my thing I like to do. I really like to go to PA and Saskatoon and visit family. Saskatoon is where I usually go – lots of things to do there. Paintball is one of my go-to's, but I'm spontaneous and will do whatever comes to mind."

"I would encourage anyone who's interested to check out a career in technology," said Vincent. "I would say being committed goes a long way."

www.optek.ca

Rise Air Making Significant Investment

Rise Air is investing in the long-term future of transportation in Northern Saskatchewan. The company is acquiring newer aircrafts that are more dependable, have more capacity, better performance, and can deliver a better service to customers. "We are not just buying a plane; the fleet plane is the biggest investment that Rise Air has made in its history," says Derek Nice, President and CEO of Rise Air. "This is our vote of confidence in the future of aviation in Northern Saskatchewan. It's also a statement by Rise Air that we are going to continue to be the airline of choice in the North."



Rise Air is delighted to share images of the first of our Twin Otter aircrafts to be upgraded and rebranded into their official colours.

IGK, one of Rise Air's DHC-6 Twin Otters has been through a major upgrade, including a new more comfortable, practical interior following a floor-to-ceiling refit. Externally IGK proudly wears the new Rise Air colours having been repainted in Chilliwack, BC. The Twin Otter can operate on wheels, floats and skis making this one of the most practical aircraft in the industry. From mine work, and schedule services, to caribou hunts to freight hauls, Twin Otters are excellent aircraft all-round.

The ATR 42-500 was selected as the right aircraft type to serve Saskatchewan's northern communities after an in-depth assessment of all the alternatives. "This aircraft is almost new, and is more modern than the planes in our current fleet. It has upgraded engines, it's faster and it can handle a larger payload, so it can carry more cargo and more passengers on the routes where demand is highest."



Rise Air's ATR 42-500

Rise Air's new flagship ATR 42-500, offers 40% more passenger and cargo capacity than the aircraft it replaces. Passengers will discover wider seats, more legroom, a wider aisle, and greater overhead bin space. The aircraft is faster and much quieter, thanks to an active cabin noise suppression system.

About Athabasca

Athabasca Basin Development is an investment company committed to building and investing in successful businesses. Investments include partial or complete ownership in construction, industrial security, electrical, diamond drilling, logistics, road maintenance, aviation and more. The company is owned by the seven communities in Northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca region.

Watch for our next newsletter Fall 2023.

If you would like to be included in our newsletter distribution, or you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please send your name and contact information to

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