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Des Nedhe Signs Collaboration Agreement with Saskatchewan Based Team Drilling

Des Nedhe Development, the economic development arm of English River First Nation and Team Drilling LP have signed a collaboration and participation agreement for drilling work in the eastern area of the Athabasca Basin in northern Saskatchewan. The agreement covers the McArthur River project, the Wheeler River project, and potentially other projects in English River First Nation's traditional territory.

"We are excited to be partnering with a top drilling company who is also majority Indigenous-owned. Team Drilling has a 15-year history of working in the north and across Canada. They have been a strong employer for many Indigenous people over the years. We are excited to bring their expertise in drilling and their successful employee training program to our community," said Sean Willy, President & CEO of Des Nedhe Development.

Team Drilling provides surface, underground and specialty drilling services to mining companies in northern Saskatchewan and beyond. Athabasca Basin Development, an investment company owned by Black Lake First Nation, Hatchet Lake First Nation, Fond du Lac First Nation, Stony Rapids, Wollaston Lake, Uranium City, and Camsell Portage, holds 50% ownership in the company.

In addition to accessing work in the area, Team Drilling will provide employment and training opportunities to the community and employ local contractors wherever possible. Team Drilling's highly successful training program focuses heavily on safety and includes having a third person on the drill to observe and assist before moving into a more independent role.



Pictured (left to right). Back row: Glen Sigstad, Operations Manager at Team Drilling; Al Lamy, Operations Manager at Team Drilling; George Presseault, VP/Contract Manager for Team Drilling. Front row: Sean Willy, President & CEO of Des Nedhe Development; Robert Fleming, CEO of Team Drilling.

"We are excited to be partnering with a top drilling company who is also majority Indigenous-owned. Team Drilling has a 15-year history of working in the north and across Canada. They have been a strong employer for many Indigenous people over the years. We are excited to bring their expertise in drilling and their successful employee training program to our community."

Bob Fleming, CEO of Team Drilling, is looking forward to the new partnership with Des Nedhe and English River First Nation.

"Des Nedhe and English River First Nation are excellent partners for us. Des Nedhe is a well-known Indigenous company with a lot of experience, and a diverse basket of companies in areas like retail, construction, professional services, and recently they announced they were getting into the coffee industry. We look forward to working together with Des Nedhe to service clients in English River's traditional areas as we continue to provide services to our clients in the Athabasca region and throughout the country."

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."

Athabasca Summer Student, Candy Robillard



By Emma Blondeau

As summer has come to an end, we would like to reflect on these past four months with our summer student, Candy, who joined Flyer Electric through the Athabasca Basin Development Summer Student Program. Candy worked between our Birch Hills office and on site in Prince Albert. Candy brought her knowledge of three years of Indigenous Social Studies and her history and culture to the company. We were excited to have Candy share some of her knowledge about Indigenous history and culture for National Indigenous People's Day on June 21 during a lunch and learn with the company. Candy has been a valuable part of the team with the work she has been participating in and contributing to, and continues to expand her learning in the electrical trade.

"My advice to anyone who's looking into trades – just do it! If you're a hands-on, physical and constant learning type of person, then this job is for you! This has been one of the greatest jobs I have been in, and to be part of the work is even greater! I was given the opportunity to step into the field and see for myself what the electricians do. Not only do I feel like I am training, but the employees and everyone who is part of the company made me feel part of the team. I thank everyone who took the time out of their day to help me in this journey."

**– Candy Robillard, 2023 Summer Student
Flyer Electric**

First-of-its-kind Athabasca Economic Development Gathering

The four Athabasca economic entities worked together to put on a gathering at Dakota Dunes Hotel this spring.

On May 11, Athabasca leadership (Chief and council, and mayors of the municipalities), Prince Albert Grand Council leadership, MLA Jim Lemaigre, and the board and management teams from the four economic entities in the Athabasca region (Black Lake Ventures, Hatchet Lake Development, Fond du Lac Development and Athabasca Basin Development) attended a knowledge-sharing session about the different ways economic development is being done in the region.

Chief Clarence Louie attended as the keynote lunch speaker. He talked about the experiences at Osoyoos, a First Nation from BC that has achieved high levels of employment and has ownership in numerous successful businesses. Signed copies of his book, *Rez Rules*, were given away in a draw to a few lucky winners.

In addition to Chief Louie, Tiffany Toutsaint, Terri-Lynn Beavereye, Anne Robillard and Geoff Gay from each of the economic development entities spoke about their activities, and Dean Classen from Uranium City spoke about examples of economic activities from northern settlements. Vern Bachiu discussed three types of Indigenous Economic Development Models and Kim Biehm from Indigenous Services Canada talked about funding programs. Ed Benoanie from Hatchet Lake started the day with opening remarks, Chief Kevin Mercredi from Fond du Lac and Chief Bart Tsannie from Hatchet Lake provided closing remarks, and Mayor Daniel Powder of Stony Rapids provided the closing prayer.

"It was an excellent opportunity for everyone in the Athabasca to learn from each other," said Terri-Lynn Beavereye, Executive Director of Black Lake Ventures. "It was really valuable to have the PAGC and leadership and the other economic development boards together in a room. It's helpful to learn what everyone is up to. I learned a lot from the others and I learned a lot from

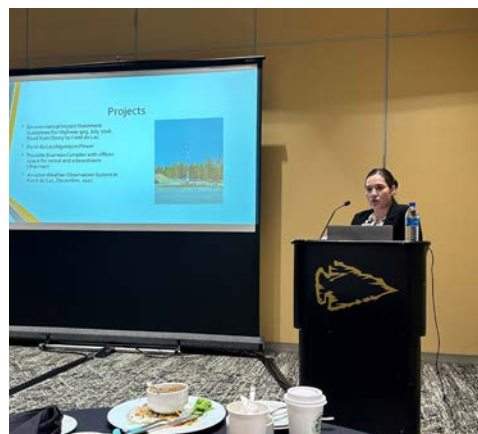
Chief Clarence Louie. I went home thinking I should put some of his sayings up on my wall! The whole event was very motivating."

Sixty-five attendees were present throughout the day. In the evening, there was a social and networking event for participants and others. Over 120 people attended the social event.

Event feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. We are grateful to Graham Construction, who sponsored the lunchtime speaker for the event and helped to make this important event happen.



Chief Clarence Louis from the Osoyoos Indian Band was the keynote speaker



Tiffany Toutsaint, Manager for Fond du Lac Development LP, speaks about economic development activities on the Fond du Lac First Nation.



Athabasca Summer Students, managers play traditional Dene hand games

On June 29, summer students from the Athabasca region and their managers had an opportunity to gather together for a team building event organized by one of the summer students, Allison Strong from Stony Rapids.

Elder John Toutsaint from Black Lake led the day with an opening prayer and gave opening remarks to the group. Participants introduced themselves and everyone learned a bit more about each other, the program, participating companies and employment opportunities. Sascha Sasbrink-Harkema, the CEO of Athabasca Basin Security, talked about her journey from summer student to CEO and gave advice to the group on how to take advantage of their summer job opportunity.

The day ended with John Toutsaint teaching everyone how to play traditional Dene hand games. The version the group learned was an introductory “beginner” version. “That was the most fun I’ve ever had at a workshop,” says Kristine McWilliam, Controller at Athabasca Basin Development. “The laughter and positive energy in the room – it was the best! Thank you to Elder John Toutsaint for sharing your knowledge and your patience as you taught us some of the basics of Dene hand games.”

“It was so great to gather all the Athabasca summer students together along with their managers for a day of networking,” says Rochelle Robillard, Athabasca Basin Development & Security’s Administration summer student. “I enjoyed all the learning today and getting to know everyone.”

The Athabasca Summer Student program began in 2021. All of Athabasca Basin Development’s investments are invited to participate. Interested companies submit summer job opportunities and Athabasca Basin Development’s staff is responsible for recruiting, matching interested candidates with opportunities that fit most closely with their goals, interests and experience. There are a wide variety of positions available each year, including IT, labourer, marketing, facilities, finance, admin, warehouse, and more. This year’s program employed nine students from the

Athabasca region in the south and five students in the north. Participating organizations included Athabasca Basin Security, Flyer Electric, Rise Air, Points Athabasca, Optek Solutions, Points North, and Black Lake Ventures. Some positions available at Rise Air, Team Drilling, Arctic Beverages, and Tru North were not filled because there were more positions available than applicants.

Special thank you to Prince Albert Grand Council – Dene, who has been a significant funding partner for the program since its inception.



Athabasca Basin Development honoured to accept the Indigenous Business of the Year award

Athabasca Basin Development was honoured to accept the Indigenous Business of the Year award at the Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce’s Samuel McLeod Business awards in April. Thank you to Richard Ahenakew and the Northern Lights Casino for sponsoring the award. And thanks to Patricia Cresswell Hughes and Hallee Peterson for putting on such an amazing and well-organized event.



Pictured (left to right): Don Deranger, Anne Robillard, ABD Board Chair, Kristy Jackson, Director of Marketing & Communications, ABD; Allison Strong, Marketing Summer Student at ABD; Shauna Loewen, Business Analyst at ABD.

Fundraiser raises over \$20,000 for PAGC Feed the Homeless Program

This summer, Points Athabasca and Athabasca Basin Development teamed together for a second time to run a fundraising event. On August 31, over 100 people from 25 organizations gathered together for an afternoon of golf or, for those who don't love the rain, an afternoon of fun at the Stoked Center. The event raised \$20,000 for the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC)–Urban's Feed the Homeless Program.

"We can't thank everyone enough for contributing to this fundraiser. This \$20,000 will help us feed many vulnerable people in the days to come," says Geoff Despains, Executive Director of PAGC-Urban. "There are many people without homes in Prince Albert that need support for various reasons. We want our building to be a safe place for them to come and get a lunch, some stew and Bannock or maybe a sandwich and a cup of coffee, and possibly work with our staff to address some of their needs."

PAGC Urban's office is located behind the Gateway Mall in Prince Albert in the Margo Fournier building. The staff run numerous programs, including training and employment services, mental health, driver training, recreation programs for youth, and more. PAGC previously had a van that would drive around and feed the homeless. "Unfortunately, our funding for the

Moose Van program has run out, and we had to make the difficult choice to let some of our wonderful staff go," says Geoff. "Our staff that run other program areas will take turns pitching in where they can. We have a great team of people who do everything they possibly can, but we can't keep up to the need with our current funding."

Many thanks to our event sponsors:

- Athabasca Basin Security , who came on board as our meal sponsor and donated funds for prizes
- Long Lake Insurance for sponsoring the Hole in One
- Caribou Transport, Graham Group, Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies, Lonona Contracting, Flyer Electric, and Cameco for being Fun sponsors
- SIGA, Optek Solutions, Zu.com, First Nations Insurance, Tru North, Symmetry Public Relations, Rise Air, Arctic Beverages and Points Athabasca for sponsoring holes.

And to the many others who participated by entering a team of participants – thank you!

Also, we can't have an event without the volunteers to make it happen. Glen Strong at Points Athabasca and



Our non-golfers had a great time at the Stoked Center! Thank you for all our sponsors for helping us have a great day for a great cause. Pictured (left to right): Trevor Glynn, Optek Solutions, Shauna Loewen, Athabasca Basin Development; Margaret Powder, Uranium City, Terri-Lynn Beavereye, Black Lake Ventures; Michelle Fehr, Rise Air; Krissy Mitchner, Points Athabasca; Jacy Estralshenen, Points Athabasca; Jamie Naldzil, Points Athabasca; Robert Gaida, Points Athabasca, Kristine McWilliam, ABD; Sean Jesse, Tru North.

Allison Strong, our former summer student who has now transitioned to a Communications Coordinator role with Optek Solutions – thank you both for leading the charge! Treena Fosseneuve, Kristine McWilliam, Shauna Loewen, Rochelle Robillard, Brent Neville, and Kevin Aebig – thanks for all your hard work in setting up, cleaning up and everything in between.

Want more information about PAGC-Urban's homeless program? Contact Geoff Despains at PAGC Urban at gdespins@pagc.sk.ca.



Pictured (left to right): Lyle Bouvier, CEO of Points Athabasca, Rosie Charles, Tech Services, PAGC; Geoff Despains, Executive Director for PAGC-Urban, Deanna McKay, Main office, PAGC; Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development. Missing: Jason Ahenakew, PAGC-Urban

Area Transportation Planning Committees tour Athabasca Basin Communities

On August 28 and 29, the Athabasca Basin Area Transportation Planning Committee (ATPC) hosted a tour of the Athabasca communities. Chairpersons and other guests were invited to Black Lake, Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac, and Wollaston Lake/Hatchet Lake to meet with leadership and community members and hear feedback on transportation in those communities.

The purpose of the tour was to highlight the challenges that the Athabasca residents face as far as transportation infrastructure. "I'd like to thank the Athabasca communities for being gracious hosts," says Glen Strong, Chairman of the Athabasca Basin ATPC. "The Athabasca communities have a lot of transportation needs and leadership and community members were very respectful as they expressed their concerns."

The 11 Saskatchewan ATPCs are the grassroots organizations that give feedback to the Ministry of Highways regarding transportation and infrastructure needs in their area. There are 11 of them throughout the province. The group takes turns hosting workshops and meetings in the various areas they represent, with

the last Athabasca Basin community tour taking place in 2018. The ATPCs began in 1998 and Strong has chaired the Athabasca Basin ATPC since its inception. Anne Robillard is the other Athabasca Basin ATPC committee member.

The ATPC has observed a number of projects occurring in the Athabasca region, such as continued funding on the Athabasca seasonal road, the Stony Rapids Airport Expansion, alternate access to Stony Rapids (used to go close to the river), the Fond du Lac airport expansion, and the Wollaston Lake road. "The Athabasca communities have all had local leadership and others asking for these projects, and those people have been instrumental in getting projects going in the region," says Strong.

On the 2023 trip, ATPCs heard about community concerns and suggestions for improving access to Fond du Lac, some improved signage in Stony Rapids, and dust control. They continue to look for improvements on the road between Stony Rapids and Black Lake as well as on the 905.

"I'd like to acknowledge Assistant Deputy Minister of Highways Ryan Cossitt, Executive Director Justin Hirtle, and Assistant Deputy Minister of Design and Construction Wayne Gienow for their participation in this tour," says Strong. "A lot of the questions were directed towards them, and it's not always easy to address comments on the spot like that. We greatly appreciated their frank and honest responses, and we look forward to working with them moving forward on future projects and improvements."

Athabasca Basin Development provides administrative support for and contributed \$14,000 towards this tour.

The ATPC has room for more members. If you're from the Athabasca Basin area and interested in participating, please contact:

Glen Strong
gstrong@pointsathabasca.ca



Pictured (left to right): Derek Nice, CEO of Rise Air; Bruce Filder, NNE TPC; Kristy Jackson, Athabasca Basin Development; Matt Smith, CEO of Sask Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation; Chief Bart Tsannie, Hatchet Lake First Nation; Alan Lindsay, Sask Highways Planner; Vice Chief Joseph Tsannie, PAGC; Kevin Lysak, Strategic Partnerships Initiative Lead, Lands Environment and Economic Dev, ISC; Assistant Deputy Minister Ryan Cossitt; MLA for Athabasca Jim Lemaigre; Glen Strong, Chair of AB ATPC; Lee Finishen, SC ATPC; Bill Owens, WCMGC-TSC; Duane Filson, SWTPC; Mervyn Kryzanowski, NEATPC; Dwayne Butterfield, Director of Operations, Points Athabasca; Gary Kayter, ECTPC; Assistant Deputy Minister of Design and Construction Wayne Gienow, Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development; Pam Schwann, CEO of Saskatchewan Mining Association; James Trober, SEPTC; Lyle Bouvier, CEO of Points Athabasca; George Tomporowski, NCTPC; Justin Hirtle, Executive Director of Northern Operations, Sask Highways; Gary Vidal, MP of Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River.

Premier visits Alumarine

Premier Scott Moe visited Alumarine on Friday, August 18, along with Saskatchewan Rivers Candidate for the Sask Party Eric Schmalz.

“Business is booming for Alumarine Boats Manufacturing, who are selling more than ever and creating jobs and opportunities for the people of Spruce Home and Prince Albert,” Premier Scott Moe said on Facebook. “Thank you for showing me around your top-notch facility and for giving this community an incredible business that you all can be very proud of.”

“We were honoured to have Premier Scott Moe and Eric Schmalz visit our facility,” says Ron Bonneau, GM of

Alumarine. “Our staff work hard to build a top-quality boat that is well known in the north for being the toughest boat around, and we were proud to show the Premier one of only a few boat manufacturers in Canada that is located right here in Prince Albert.”

Athabasca Basin Development has ownership in Alumarine, a boat manufacturer that originated in Manitoba in 1967 and was brought to Saskatchewan in 2019. The award-winning company employs 17 full-time staff at its Prince Albert plant and has grown to service 12 dealers across Canada.

www.alumarineboats.ca



Congratulations to April McIvor, winner of Alumarine’s art contest!



Pictured (left to right): Back row: -- Brandon Turner, Semere Weldu, Quan Ho, Sask Rivers Candidate Eric Schmalz, Premier Scott Moe, Russ Denischuk, Samsom Asgedom, Ron Bonneau. Front row: Michaelae Weldegersh, Isaiah Bear, Mengisteab Arey, Simone Buhr and Theoun Soung.



Northlands Beverages awarded PepsiCo Canada 2022 Canadian Bottler of the Year award

This spring, Northland Beverages was awarded the PepsiCo Canada 2022 Canadian Bottler of the Year and was nominated for the PepsiCo Donald M Kendall Award. The Donald M Kendall Bottler of the Year award was created in 1994. Named for PepsiCo's former Chairman and CEO to honour the very best of the best among independent Pepsi-Cola bottlers in the United States and Canada.

"This is the second time in three years one of our companies has received the Canadian Bottler of the Year and has been nominated for the Donald M Kendall award," says Sean Post, CEO of Arctic Beverages. "It's an incredible honor to be nominated alongside such a prestigious group, and congratulations to the winner, Pepsi-Cola of Worcester."

Arctic Beverages acquired Northlands in 2021. The acquisition helped the company expand their business to 44% of Canada's physical territory, and they now employ over 150 people.

To celebrate their recognition, Arctic Beverages commissioned beadwork artist Marie Tssessaze, a member of Northlands Denesuline First Nation in Lac Brochet who was born and raised in Black Lake. Marie created beaded medallions with the new Pepsi logo, and Arctic Beverages presented them to Chris Hannah from Northlands Beverages and members of the Pepsi Executive team. "It is absolutely beautiful," says Jason Lemaich, Regional Sales Director with PepsiCo Beverages Canada. "This gift means a great deal to me and I'll treasure it always."

Arctic Beverages is the only First Nations- owned Pepsi franchise in Canada. Since its formation, the company



has expanded to become a distributor of Frito Lay, Canada Bread, Jack Links, Nestle Ice Cream, Parmalat, Pepsi, and more. Arctic Beverages' territory covers more than 44% of Canada with customers throughout Manitoba, portions of Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and northern BC. Arctic has an in-depth knowledge of the northern Canadian market and the local

distribution infrastructure. ABD has 48.33% ownership in Arctic, and along with other owners Prince Albert Development Corporation and Paskwayak, represents 13 First Nations with the ownership in the company.

"A long time ago, when my grandma used to make me bead, it was because they were used in moccasins, gloves, mitts, jackets. We would make it as gifts...She used to tell me, when you're doing your beadwork, sewing, making hides, put your good thoughts into it. Because you're doing something for someone else, you want someone else to do good with it, respect what you do. That's our culture. I do things the cultural way."

- Marie Tssessaze



Northlands Beverages was nominated for the Donald M Kendall Award, which recognizes the best among independent Pepsi-Cola bottlers in the US and Canada. This year's awards ceremony was held on July 19 in Dallas, Texas where Pepsi-Cola of Worcester was announced as the winner.

Flyer Electric presents at SaskPower Indigenous Women in Trade event

This summer, Flyer Electric was part of the SaskPower event held to support Indigenous women in the trades. Danni (Electrical Journey person) and Alayna (Electrical Apprentice) both represented Flyer Electric at the event in sharing their stories about being in the trade. "We are grateful to have these women as part of our team, and proud they have chosen their career paths in the trade with Flyer!" says Terry Tessier, CEO of Flyer Electric.

Flyer Electric has been providing a wide range of industrial and commercial electrical services throughout the prairies since 1982. Whether it is green or brown field construction, maintenance, or anywhere in between, Flyer Electric has the proven track record of safety, quality, and integrity to execute with efficiency. Flyer Electric is a majority Indigenous-owned company with ABD having 68% ownership and Sakitawak Development Corporation and Management holding the remaining ownership.

www.flyerelectric.com



Giving Back

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

PAGC-Urban Back-to-school event

PAGC-urban recently ran a Back-to-School event. Backpacks with school supplies were given out and kids got free haircuts. “There are a lot of families that struggle with the expenses when their kids go back to school,” says Geoff Despina, Executive Director of PAGC-Urban. “We also held a BBQ and fed all the families who attended. We had about 250 families attend the event, with about 800 kids. That’s a lot of need in our community.” Athabasca Basin Development contributed \$2500 to this event.

Graduation Activities

ABD continued its support of graduation activities in the Athabasca communities. \$15,000 was provided for graduation events for Father Megret High School in Wollaston, Father Porte Memorial Dene School in Black Lake, and Father Gamache Memorial School in Fond du Lac. Funds allocated by the schools and are used for anything from meal costs, or gowns to gifts for students. Congratulations to all Athabasca graduates!

Connected North

ABD continued its ongoing support of Connected North, investing \$15,000 annually. Connected North is an immersive, digital education and mental health and wellness network that provides customized services and real-time experiences to schools and students in remote Indigenous communities. Using technology, Connected North leverages real-time, high-definition two-way video to make powerful connections for students. ABD has supported Connected North since its inception in the Athabasca region in Black Lake in 2016.



Saskatoon Police Chief Troy Cooper and Betty Nippi-Albright, MLA for Saskatoon Centre, served up pancakes at the 2022 SIGA Pancake Breakfast in support of White Buffalo Youth Lodge

White Buffalo Youth Lodge Pancake Breakfast

The White Buffalo Youth Lodge was established in 2000 as an inner-city urban leisure facility operated through a partnership between the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) and the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The Lodge is dedicated to improving the quality of life and health for children, youth, young adults and their families in the inner city through integrated, holistic support services.

The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) ran its fifth annual pancake breakfast in support of the White Buffalo Youth Lodge on September 14. Everyone was welcome to attend. ABD contributed \$1,000 in 2022 and \$1,000 in 2023.

Other Donations:

Stony Rapids held a family conference at the school in June. ABD provided \$1000 in prizes for the kids.

Fond du Lac residents had to evacuate in July due to forest fires. ABD, QM Points, and Points Athabasca donated \$3000 towards entertainment for youth.

ABD covered hotel costs for at-risk youth from Hatchet Lake to attend the Saskatoon Exhibition along with chaperones for approximately \$1000.

Black Lake and Camsell Portage held fishing derbies, and ABD purchased prizes from Tru North, who provided a significant discount. Additionally, QM Points and Points Athabasca also donated \$1,000 in prizes.



ABD supported Camsell Portage’s fishing derby this year (picture submitted by Joyce Powder)



Black Lake held a Bike-a-thon for suicide prevention and awareness in July

Black Lake held a Bike-A-Thon for Suicide Prevention and awareness this July. Chaperones rode with youth on a bike trek from Stony Rapids to Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta. The group cycled approximately nine hours per day for 30 days, riding through wind, sun and rain to reach their destination. The event was organized by community members and has taken place for four other years (with a hiatus due to Covid). ABD contributed \$4,000 towards this initiative.

Sascha Sasbrink-Harkema appointed to Wanuskewin Board of Directors

Athabasca Basin Security's CEO, Sascha Sasbrink-Harkema, has been appointed to the Wanuskewin board of directors. Her first meeting was in September.

The Wanuskewin Heritage Park attracts visitors from all around the world and is in the process of trying to earn a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. Located just north of Saskatoon, the non-profit park has deep ties to the land as visitors can walk the trails throughout the valley, explore a long-running archaeological site and, since 2019, observe bison herds in their natural prairie habitat.

"I am excited to join this passionate group of people who are so dedicated to preserving and celebrating Indigenous culture," said Sascha. "Darlene Brander and her team are doing such great work in the community,

and their efforts to bring back the bison and to achieve UNESCO Heritage status are beneficial for our whole community."

Sascha has been with Athabasca Basin Security since 2011 and has served as CEO since 2021. She has a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Saskatchewan and is a member of Sakimay First Nation. Athabasca Basin Security (ABS) has nearly 200 employees and serves clients in the mining and industrial sites across western Canada, as well as in the Athabasca region. A 20 plus year company, ABS has a long history of providing quality security services and a strong track record of success in employing Indigenous people, with many sites at over 90% Indigenous employment.



Allison Strong from Stony Rapids is a scholarship recipient as well as the ABD Marketing Summer student since 2021. Allison recently accepted a permanent position with Optek Solutions as the Communications Coordinator. We wish her the best of luck in her new role!

Scholarships

In addition to our annual Athabasca Student Dinner, support for community-led graduation activities, and the Athabasca summer student program, we also provide funding each year for scholarships.

Ya'thi Néné Land and Resource Office has offered scholarships for Athabasca students since 2017. \$65,000 in scholarships were awarded in 2023 to recipients. Cameco, Orano, Ya'thi Néné, and Athabasca Basin Development all contribute to the program, along with Flyer Electric supporting \$5,000 towards the Denise Bougie scholarship for trades students. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Shenelle Echodh, Cassidy Renie, Candy Robillard, Pacey Disain, Morgen Bigeye, Allison Strong, Brianda Robillard,

Dean Davidson, Linda Sayazie, Darlene Sandypoint, Terri-Anne Randhile, Clarissa Augier, Raylen Adam, Samantha Adam, Gessika Laliberte, Deborah Derocher, Timothy Fern Jr, Dausitie Fern, Brayden Lidguerre, Ryea Daniels, There Joseyounen, Antonia Sha'ouille, Marian Josie, Ilene Sha'ouille, Junior Angus Joseyounen, Darian Joseyounen (Gazandlare), Charles Dettaniba.

QM Points made \$42,000 in scholarships available to Athabasca students. This is the fourth year of the program. Congratulations to this year's recipients: Michelle Throassie, Jamie Pacquette, Cassidy Renie, Darlene Sandypoint, Christen Renie, Vanessa Renie, Ryea Daniels, Terri-Anne Randhile, Shenelle Echodh, Allison Strong, Timothy Fern, Gessika Laliberte.

Athabasca Fly-in Career Fair returns to in-person event

After a four-year absence due to Covid, this spring, the Athabasca Fly-in Career Fair returned to the Athabasca communities.

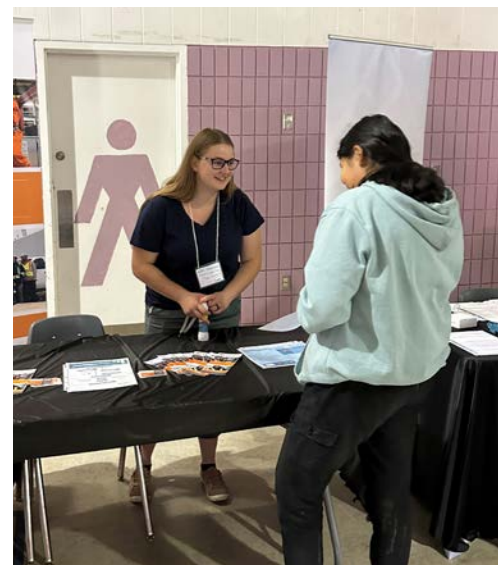
Keewatin Community Development Association hosted its annual event on May 30 to June 1. Students from grades 6-12 and teachers from schools in Black Lake, Hatchet Lake, and Fond du Lac attended, with adults from the community welcomed at the end of the day.

Numerous organizations attended, Organizations, including SaskPolytechnic, First Nations University of Canada, RCMP, Northlands College, Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resources, Athabasca Health Authority, Cameco and Orano also attended. Numerous ABD investments participated, including Athabasca Basin Security, Flyer Electric, Points Athabasca/QM Points, Team Drilling, and

Rise Air. There was interest from other organizations, and the planning committee may have to consider a larger plane next time to accommodate the requests.

Three Athabasca community members attended and gave presentations to students: Dene Robillard and Brianda Robillard talked about their experiences in University and Allison Strong talked about her journey as both a university student and aspiring musician, and finished her presentation with a song.

Athabasca Basin Development was proud to be a title sponsor and help KCDA organize the event. Points Athabasca/QM Points also contributed as a silver sponsor.



Emma Blondeau, HR at Flyer Electric, talks to a student from Black Lake about careers as an electrician.

My first Dene Culture Camp experience

By Kristy Jackson

This spring, I was lucky enough to be invited to a Dene culture camp.

I was at Black Lake to attend the first day of the Athabasca Fly-in Career at the end of May. I was supposed to be back in Saskatoon that evening. My flight was cancelled due to mechanical reasons, but this wasn't a big deal to me – I've always been of the opinion that if the plane is cancelled because of any issues at all, I'm happy that the airline puts safety first. Besides, spending an extra day up north (and out of the office) is always a treat.

Al, Sheila and Claire at Al's Place were kind enough to let me stay another night and kept me well fed, and Terri-Lynn Beavereye at Black Lake Ventures agreed to give me a tour of the new Ventures Complex. She also invited me to spend the day at her office and attend the local Dene Culture Camp with her at lunch.

I'm not what you'd call "outdoorsy." Having grown up near or in a city most of my life, I have no survival skills at all. If a zombie apocalypse ever came to Saskatchewan, I'd be their first victim. However, I said "yes" because I knew this was going to be an amazing experience.

Terri-Lynn drove me and her son Tristen (and her adorable black poodle), down the road from Black Lake towards Stony Rapids a little ways, then she turned right into what looked less like a road and more like twin trails in the trees. We drove for a few minutes through the forest, the beautiful short and skinny trees that are characteristic of the north were thick in this area, the moss growing like a green and white carpet overtop the fallen trees and rocks that sat on the sandy ground. We came to a clearing near a creek. I could see numerous tents set up, most with white canvas, but some with blue tarps. We were here.

The first thing I noticed after getting out of the truck was the delicious smell of meat cooking over a fire. We walked over to an area amongst the tents. There was a fire in a huge outdoor grill, and sitting on the grill was some caribou meat and a whole fish, eyeballs and all.



Linda Echodh fillets fish in under three minutes (I timed it).

"Would you like some fish?" Terri-Lynn asked.

I had never seen a fish cooked whole like that before. In my urban world, meat always came cut in neat and tidy pieces, ready to cook and wrapped in plastic, not resembling the animal when it was alive. While I couldn't help but notice the fish seemed to stare at me, the smell was amazing. My eager stomach growled.



Filleted fish are smoked for hours.

"Yes, that would be great!" I said.

We sat at a table in a big tent marked Kitchen, where we found plates and were offered some fry bread. Our fish arrived hot and steaming on a bed of tin foil. Terri-Lynn showed me how to pull the meat off the bones with a fork. We ate our frybread and most of the caught fish, and the taste was amazing – there's nothing like eating a wild fish that was freshly caught out of a northern Saskatchewan lake and put immediately on a hot grill. Some kids came by and pulled some meat off the fish too. A few of them recognized me from the career fair the day before and stopped by to say hi.

After I was stuffed full of fish, the caribou was served. There was no way I was going to resist that! After the horde of hungry kids took their portion, I got in line and took a small amount. It was so delicious – tender, cooked with onions and a bit of gravy, and a side of steamed veggies.

We took a tour of the camp. There were several structures where the frame was made of local trees that were cut down and covered in a blue tarp or canvas. Inside each structure was a different station. Most of them were carpeted with a soft bedding of pine boughs that were cut down from nearby trees. Some of the structures were for art and storytelling, but most were for preparing or smoking meat. In one tent, we watched Linda Echodh descale and fillet a fish in under three minutes. I was amazed at her skill. She cut neat little strips partially through the fish fillet, which was now shaped roughly like a butterfly. These fillets were placed in another station where they were hung overtop a fire and smoked for hours.

In another station, we watched Robert Cook use an axe to crack open a caribou bone to get at the marrow inside. The station smelled strongly like raw meat and there were bones, blood, meat, and hair in the tent. The traditional way of life in the north included lots of meat in the diet out of necessity – winters are long and cold there, and growing season was short for plants. Survival required you to get comfortable working with meat, starting from when the animal is first killed and all the many steps needed to get to where you can eat it. I understand it, but that didn't stop me from getting a little green watching it. I'm not used to being so up close with nature. I wondered if I could ever learn to do what the knowledge keepers here did so easily.



Robert Cook cracks open a caribou leg bone to get the marrow.

I mentioned to Terri-Lynn that I'd like to try marrow someday. A short time later, Tristen handed me a little piece of marrow on some fry bread – what a nice thing to do! But the marrow was clearly raw. I didn't realize marrow was eaten raw. My stomach was a bit uneasy as I looked from the piece of marrow up to the faces of the three people who were now watching me with smiles on their faces. Without thinking too much, I popped it in my mouth. Delicious! Kind of like sushi. I would happily eat it again anytime.

When it was time to go, I was reluctant to leave. There was a strong sense of community and a welcoming atmosphere here. The people I met were proud to show me their culture, show me their impressive skills, let me try the food. The kids were happy to be there in the beautiful outdoors, smelling the meat cooking, working on art projects, practicing their own skills, and learning about the land and the traditional ways of life. Attending the camp was an incredible experience for me and I could see how amazing it was for the kids. It was great for the grownups who were teaching their knowledge too; there were smiles everywhere you looked.

I'm so thrilled that people in Black Lake and Stony Rapids was willing to share this with me, and I want to say thank you to the community for all your hard work putting on these events for kids, and for letting me join you and learn a little something about the Dene way of life. I'll never look at those plastic-wrapped pieces of meat at the grocery store the same way again.

Lanigan becomes lucky 13

Submitted by Nancy Blake

On Jan 1, 2023 Long Lake Insurance purchased Lanigan Agencies in the community of Lanigan, SK, making this their 13th branch. The purchase ticked off all the boxes for Long Lake Insurance: local ownership, strong client base, solid reputation in the community and great staff. Long Lake Insurance is excited to be able to offer the Lanigan community access to new insurance markets and programs with competitive pricing. Lanigan staff now have new technology at their fingertips to allow them to easily access these markets as well as the assistance and knowledge of a team of more than 30 peers.

Offering peace of mind and security to our friends and neighbours is our mission and this new branch brings us even more friends and neighbours to serve. We are pleased to be part of this wonderful community. Established in 1996, Long Lake Insurance is a Saskatchewan and independently owned insurance brokerage that provides clients with quality products and services to meet any personal, business, and farm insurance needs. Long Lake offers commercial, personal, auto and life insurance in 13 communities across Saskatchewan.

www.longlakeinsurance.ca



Pictured (left to right): Shanon Bay, Meaghan Rommelaere, Cassidy Gebhard, Aspen Trochie, Caryn Stepp

Points Athabasca/QM Points Provides Mental Health Services for Employees

Submitted by Glen Strong

On August 14-17, 2023, Points Athabasca and QM Points engaged the services of Karlee Robillard, a Mental Health Therapist, along with Glen Strong, Community Relations Coordinator for Points Athabasca/QM Points, to travel to the different work sites occupied by the companies's employees and delivered information about the different services that are available in the field of mental health.

Presentations included topics such as suicide prevention, addictions issues, community resources and outreach. Karlee offers one on one sessions and is available for questions at any time, as she feels Mental Health is an urgent issue. Karlee's phone number is 306-290-5376.

Karlee and Glen travelled to Stony Rapids and met with employees of Lonona, as well as to the Gunnar site just outside of Uranium City, Cigar Lake Mine and the Wollaston Lake Road site, presenting to employees and

holding discussions on suicide prevention, depression and general mental health issues. There was also a meeting with the Athabasca Health Authority to discuss how Points Athabasca and AHA could complement each other in delivering Mental Health Services.

In conclusion, it was good to hear the positive feedback from the employees and the consensus regarding the excellent atmosphere they work in. "We are all like one big family," said Janet Holmgren, Radiation Safety Officer for QM Points. "We all look out for one another."



August 14th Mental Health Tour at the Gunnar site discussing mental health with QM Points employees.

Rise Air participates in Lac La Ronge Pride Parade and Festival

The Lac La Ronge Pride Parade & Festival happens in June every year to celebrate equality and human rights. Colleagues from Rise Air and Snowbird Aviation Services joined together to support 2SLGBTQIA+ community members through the event.

Thank you to everyone who came to say hello at our stand. To the organizers, volunteers and performers, thank you for this incredible event for all. It's wonderful to see so many people sharing positive posts from the event.

Pictured (left to right): Mara Pistachio, La Ronge and Tracy Young-McLean, VP of HR at Rise Air, hold Rise Air hearts that were handed out to attendees.



Congratulations to Team Drilling for being one of the winners of the 2022 Canadian Diamond Drillers Association Safety Awards

The winning companies achieved the lowest accident frequency or the highest reduction in accident frequency. According to the CDDA, these companies have exhibited a commitment to safety and standards in the diamond drilling industry.

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About Athabasca Basin Development

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 Spring 2024.

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