Building a Future Through Investment

explorer

Fall 2026

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Jordin Tootoo Shares a Message of Hope with Athabasca Communities



Winners of the prize draw in Uranium City

Former NHL player Jordin Tootoo visited northern Saskatchewan in September, sharing his story of perseverance, healing and hope with youth and families across the Athabasca Basin. Raised in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Tootoo became the first Inuk to play in the National Hockey League in 2003. Over 13 seasons, he played 723 games for four NHL teams. His success showed Indigenous youth that big dreams are possible, even when growing up in a small, remote community.

During his visits to Black Lake/Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac, Wollaston Lake/Hatchet Lake and Uranium City, Tootoo spoke about much more than hockey. He shared his experiences with personal loss, addiction and recovery, and the importance of staying connected to family, culture and the land. "We, as Indigenous people, need to share our experiences and stories so we can heal together," he told the crowd.

Tootoo encouraged young people to find their own "tundra," a place or activity that helps them feel grounded. Whether reading, beading, or spending time on the land, he emphasized the importance of finding peace and strength in everyday life. He also urged youth to keep learning, pursue their goals, and support one another through difficult times. His message was especially meaningful because it came from someone who understands life in the North.

During the community visit to Black Lake Denesųłiné First Nation, Chief Coreen Sayazie spoke about the connection among northern peoples, whether from Nunavut or northern Saskatchewan, and their shared experiences. "The caribou that migrate to our community come from your community. We are all connected," she told Tootoo, thanking him for sharing his story.

The Jordin Tootoo Athabasca Tour was organized by Athabasca Basin Development (ABD) in partnership with Cameco Corporation, Rise Air, local schools through the Athabasca Denesųłiné Education Authority and the Northern Lights School Division, and community organizations. Through its community investment program, ABD works with partners to bring educational, cultural and wellness opportunities to the seven Athabasca Basin ownership communities. With support from many local volunteers in each community, the tour provided another opportunity for young people to meet an Indigenous role model, ask questions and hear firsthand about overcoming challenges.

For Tootoo, sharing his experiences is about helping others find their own path. "I am grateful to share my experience and journey and, hopefully, help one person think a little differently." His visit offered a simple reminder that success is measured not only by achievements but also by the care we show others, the challenges we overcome, and the strength we find in our communities.

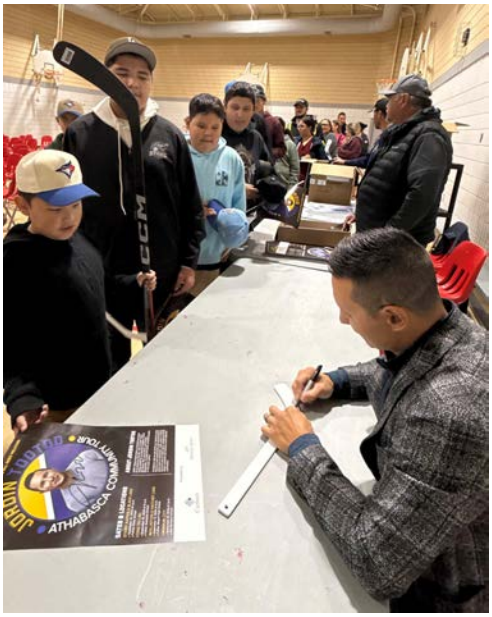
Athabasca Basin Development is continuing to look for new opportunities for investments – both to strengthen its existing investments as well as outside of its existing industries. "There are lots of opportunities out there and we are continuing to seek solid investment opportunities. I would encourage 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 BASIN DEVELOPMENT

Former NHL Player Jordin Tootoo Visits Northern Saskatchewan Communities



Most of Camsell Portage took the boat ride to Uranium City to see Jordin Tootoo



Jordin Tootoo signs autographs for fans at Father Gamache School in Fond du Lac

Huge thank you to Cameco for co-sponsoring the 2026 Jordin Tootoo Athabasca Tour!



The gym was packed for the Jordin Tootoo visit to Wollaston Lake



Jordin Tootoo visits an elementary class in Black Lake



Students from Stony Rapids were bussed to join the crowd in Black Lake. Thank you to Father Porte Dene Memorial School for providing the bus service!

Rise Air Expands Fleet to Better Serve Northern Saskatchewan

For many people in northern Saskatchewan, air travel connects families, transports students to educational institutions, patients to healthcare, and workers to job sites, while delivering essential goods to communities with limited road access. Rise Air, a company jointly owned by Athabasca Basin Development (ABD) and Prince Albert Development Corporation, is investing in newer aircraft to strengthen those connections.



Rise Air's new ATR 72 600 can carry 68 passengers and is designed to operate on short and gravel runways

In 2026, Rise Air welcomed three new ATR 72-600 aircraft, the first of their kind in Canada and we upgraded our scheduled service fleet to the ATR 42-500, significantly increasing cargo capacity and seat availability. A fourth aircraft is now on order, with delivery expected by the end of 2026 and service planned for early 2027. These aircraft are part of a fleet renewal program that has seen more than $160 million in investment over the past four years.

Each ATR 72-600 can carry 68 passengers and is designed to operate on short and gravel runways, making it well suited to regional transportation and to northern Saskatchewan's often challenging conditions. For passengers, the aircraft offers a quieter, more comfortable cabin, improved heating and cooling, more legroom, and larger overhead storage. New technology also helps pilots operate safely and efficiently. But the benefits go beyond the aircraft themselves.

"Introducing the ATR 72-600 is about delivering modern, safe, and reliable air transportation to remote work sites and infrastructure projects vital to Saskatchewan's economy. These operations support employment and GDP growth across the province, particularly in the north," says Rise Air President and CEO Derek Nice.

The fourth aircraft will provide additional capacity for workforce transportation, charter flights and other services. It is also expected to create more skilled jobs for pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and other aviation professionals.

Alongside the new ATR 72-600 aircraft, Rise Air is upgrading its smaller ATR 42 fleet to carry more cargo while continuing to transport passengers. This is especially important for remote communities that rely on air service for groceries, supplies and other essential shipments, particularly when winter roads are unavailable. The newer aircraft are also more fuel-efficient, reducing emissions and supporting dependable service across the North. For Dan Gold, Rise Air's Director of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations, the investment is about looking ahead. "We are investing in the future of Rise Air… in creating opportunities," he says.

The fleet renewal has been made possible by the work of Rise Air employees and by partnerships with customers, aircraft manufacturers and other organizations. While new aircraft are an important step forward, their greatest value will be measured by how well they serve people: helping northern residents stay connected, supporting employment and making it easier to move people and goods across Saskatchewan.

Tru North Expands with Arctic Cat

By Deht'anuhzeh Noey

For communities across Saskatchewan, winter is a way of life. Whether it's travelling between communities on the ice road, heading out on the land, or enjoying time outdoors with family, reliable equipment is essential. That's what makes Tru North's newest addition, Arctic Cat, a perfect fit.

Tru North Recreation Superstore recognized a shift in the powersports industry and TruNorth was looking for an additional winter product that customers could rely on.

"We knew we needed a strong addition to continue serving our customers in the winter months," says Tru North's Heather Coates. "When the opportunity came to become an Arctic Cat dealer, it felt like the right fit alongside the dependable products we already offer."

In its first winter carrying Arctic Cat machines, Tru North has seen strong demand across multiple areas of the business. From unit sales to financing, as well as increased activity in parts and service, the addition has created growth across the board. In particular, the popularity of two-stroke sleds has driven consistent demand for maintenance items like belts and oils, further strengthening its service departments.



In regions like the Athabasca Basin, snowmobiles are not just recreational – they are practical tools used for hunting, transportation, and day-to-day life. Known for their reliability and range, Arctic Cat machines offer something for everyone, from youth riders starting on smaller models to experienced riders seeking power and performance.

Beyond winter, Tru North continues to support customers year-round. Their lineup also includes ATVs and side-by-side vehicles, helping people stay equipped through every season – on the trails to get wood, wild chicken hunting, and everywhere in between. This all-season approach ensures customers across Saskatchewan have access to the tools they need, no matter the ever-changing conditions.

The addition of Arctic Cat is about continuing to meet the evolving needs of the people and communities Tru North serves. With trusted products, knowledgeable staff, and a commitment to reliability, Tru North is well-positioned to support Saskatchewan residents through every season ahead.

Dreaming Big: Brianda Robillard Represents Black Lake on a National Stage

When Brianda Robillard first saw an ad for Miss Indigenous Canada 2026 on Facebook, she scrolled past it. But when the deadline was extended, something kept drawing her back. “Maybe this is my calling. Maybe I should apply,” she remembers thinking. With her 30th birthday approaching, Brianda decided she did not want to wonder what might have happened if she had tried. That decision led the Black Lake Denesųłiné First Nation member to the national stage, where she proudly represented her community and northern Saskatchewan.

Preparing for the competition involved much more than stepping onto a stage. Brianda completed leadership training, wrote a personal essay, compiled a community scrapbook, completed interviews, and delivered a cultural presentation. She also had to become comfortable sharing her story. Along the way, she discovered greater confidence in herself and in the power of her voice. Brianda carried her community and family with her throughout the experience. She shared how being a descendant of the late Chief Louie Chicken, who served Black Lake for 24 years with purpose and compassion, has influenced her. Following in her great-great-grandfather’s footsteps, she wanted young people back home to see what is possible when adversity and life’s challenges don’t define you, no matter how horrendous they might have been. “I turned my pain into purpose. Healing is possible, growth is possible, and success is possible no matter where you come from,” says Brianda.

Brianda’s journey is also connected to Athabasca Basin Development. As a former ABD Summer Student Accountant, Brianda developed skills in communication, professionalism, and relationship-building. She also discovered an interest in personal development after colleague Kristine McWilliam introduced her to Atomic Habits by James Clear. “While I learned accounting software, reporting, and plenty of scanning along the way,” Brianda jokes, “the biggest lessons went well beyond numbers.” She learned the value of maintaining relationships and of having people around you who encourage you, share knowledge, and genuinely want to see you succeed.

Today, the friendly and energetic mom is exploring motivational speaking, trauma-informed support, and leadership development. As if that wasn’t enough, she is also starting her entrepreneurial journey as a freelance photographer and aspires to launch a business in her home community. Yet her modelling career is not over, as she is looking forward to modelling at New York Fashion Week in 2027. She hopes her journey inspires others, including her son, young people, and women, to believe in themselves and dream a little bigger. After all, Brianda still describes herself simply as “that little Rez girl from Black Lake Denesųłiné First Nation who dreamed big.” The difference, she says, is that she no longer lets fear dictate what is possible.



Brianda Robillard is a member of Black Lake and a former ABD summer student

Points Athabasca Supports Kidney Care at St. Paul’s Hospital


Lyle Bouvier, CEO of Points Athabasca and Lecina Hicke, St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation CEO

For people living in Saskatchewan’s Far North, accessing specialized healthcare often means travelling long distances away from home and family. Points Athabasca is helping make that experience a little easier through a $150,000 donation to St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation’s By Your Side Kidney Care Campaign.

Points Athabasca is majority-owned by ABD, which represents seven Athabasca Basin communities. The company provides construction and industrial services, with a focus on creating employment, developing skills, and building opportunities for northern residents. “The journey toward reconciliation begins with economic opportunity,” says Lyle Bouvier, President and CEO of Points Athabasca. “When someone is employed, they have income to support their family. That’s true economic reconciliation.”

That same commitment to supporting people and communities guided the decision to contribute to St. Paul’s Hospital. For residents of communities such as Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac and Black Lake, travelling to Saskatoon for medical care can mean a journey of more than 1,000 kilometres. Many northern residents rely on St. Paul’s Hospital for specialized services, including kidney care. “This hospital serves a large Indigenous population, especially from the North,” says Bouvier. “Because it’s important to that population, it’s important to us.”

The By Your Side Kidney Care Campaign offers supports that can make hospital visits less stressful for patients and families. One example is the Patient Porter Program, which helps people find their way through the hospital. “For people coming from the North into a busy place like Saskatoon, having someone guide them through the hospital is a huge value-add,” he says.

Bouvier also welcomed the campaign’s focus on culturally meaningful spaces, including the new Indigenous Healing Centre, Kikâwînaw wîki (Our Mother’s Home). “Having a culturally significant, quiet space is important; hospitals don’t always have that,” he says.

At Points Athabasca, supporting the hospital is another way to contribute to the well-being of northern families, alongside the employment and business opportunities the company helps create. Bouvier believes everyone can play a part in supporting others, in whatever way they can. “I think it’s important that all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, help others where we can,” he says. “That might be volunteering or donating if you’re able. … Giving back is important.”

Through this donation, Points Athabasca is helping to support care that benefits people from the Athabasca Basin, Saskatoon and communities across Saskatchewan.

Welcome New Board Members!

We are pleased to welcome our two newest Board members to Athabasca Basin Development. Their knowledge, experience, and commitment to northern Saskatchewan communities will be valuable additions to our Board as we continue to create opportunities and build long-term prosperity for our unit holders and communities.

We look forward to working together and benefiting from their perspectives and leadership in the years ahead.



Daniel Powder, Mayor of Stony Rapids, rejoins the Athabasca Basin Development Board. Daniel previously served on the ABD board from 2014 to 2017



Duane Larocque, Mayor of Uranium City, joined the Athabasca Basin Development Board. Duane is a first-time ABD board member. Welcome Duane!

Thank You To Previous Board Members



Dean Classen served for over 20 years on the Athabasca Basin Development Board.



Merv McDonald served as Stony Reps appointee for 8 years.

Athabasca Basin Development extends its sincere appreciation to Dean Classen and Merv McDonald for their many years of dedicated service on our Board of Directors.

Dean was involved on the ABD board since its inception, helping guide the organization through decades of growth and change, while Merv has served as the Stony Rapids appointee since 2017. Their leadership, commitment to northern communities, and thoughtful contributions have helped strengthen ABD and create lasting benefits for our communities.

On behalf of the Board, staff, and unit holders, we thank Dean and Merv for their service and wish them all the best!

Two Athabasca Basin Security Employees Celebrate 20 Years

This year, Athabasca Basin Security (ABS) is proud to recognize two dedicated employees who are celebrating **20 years of service**. Their commitment, professionalism, and contributions have helped shape the company and support its continued success over the past two decades. We thank them for their loyalty, hard work, and the positive impact they have made on their colleagues, clients, and communities, and we congratulate them on this remarkable milestone.



Congratulations to Jean (Joseph) Tsannie from Wollaston Lake (pictured right), who started at Athabasca Basin Security on April 4, 2006. Jean holds a janitorial position at the McLean Lake mine. Rod Genest, ABS Director of Operations (left) presents Jean with his long service award.



Congratulations to Kendra Vedress for celebrating 20 years with ABS! Kendra started with the company on July 5, 2006 and works at the head office as Payroll Specialist/Administrator.

Points Athabasca Awards Were Presented At Graduation

By Glen Strong

This year, Points Athabasca created awards for the top three students in the following classes:

Information Processing 10
Information Processing 20
Career and Workplace 20
Career and Workplace 30
Hair Styling & Esthetics 10/20
Commercial Cooking 10
Photography 10
Photography 10 (semester one)
Photography 10 (semester two)
Sewing & Textile 20
Hairstyle & Esthetics 10 (semester two)
Food Studies 30 (semester one)
Food Studies 30
Food Studies 20
Information Processing 10 (semester one)
Carpentry 10 (semester one)
Carpentry 20 (semester one)
Carpentry 30 (semester one)
Electrical (semester two)
Welding (semester two)
Automotive (semester two)

John MacDonald of Points Athabasca attended the graduations in the communities of Fond du Lac, Black Lake and Hatchet Lake, awarding $16,200. John reported that the experience was very positive and that he valued the chance to encourage graduates to consider the trades.



Congratulations to the graduates at Father Porte Memorial School in Black Lake!



Congratulations to the graduates at Father Gamache School in Fond du Lac!



Congratulations to the graduates from Father Megret High School in Wollaston Lake!

Athabasca Scholarships Support the Next Generation of Northern Leaders



Jenna Powder from Camsell Portage is a multi-year scholarship winner for the Denise Bougie Memorial Scholarship. She is in her third year of study in the Automotive Service Technician program.

Athabasca Basin Development is proud to congratulate the recipients of the 2026 Athabasca Scholarships and the Denise Bougie Memorial Scholarship.

This year, a total of $70,000 was awarded to 30 northern students pursuing post-secondary education and training opportunities. The program provided 26 full-time scholarships of $2,500 and four part-time scholarships of $1,250, helping students take the next step toward achieving their educational and career goals.

The scholarship program is made possible through the partnership and support of Athabasca Basin Development, Cameco, Orano, Ya' thi Néné Lands and Resources, and Flyer Electric, organizations that share a commitment to investing in the future of northern Saskatchewan. Their continued contributions help ensure students have access to opportunities that can open doors to rewarding careers and lifelong success.

The program also includes the Denise Bougie Memorial Scholarship, sponsored by Flyer Electric, which honours the legacy of Denise Bougie and her belief in the importance of education, personal growth, and supporting northern residents as they pursue their dreams.

"Education remains one of the most important investments we can make in our communities," says Geoff Gay, CEO of Athabasca Basin Development. "We are proud to support students as they pursue their studies and develop the skills, knowledge, and leadership that will help shape the future of the North."

Athabasca Basin Development extends its congratulations to all scholarship recipients and wishes them continued success in the year ahead. Their dedication and achievements are a source of pride for their families, communities, and the entire Athabasca region.

Robbin Hanson, Fond du Lac - Social Work, 4th year

Sascha Lidguerre, Fond du Lac - Social Work, 3rd year

Courtney Bougie, Uranium City - Education, 2nd year

Anne St. Pierre, Hatchet Lake - Education, 4th year

Vernelle Toutsaint, Black Lake - Social Work, 3rd year

Marcus Mercredi, Fond du Lac - Power Engineering, 2nd year

Rita Laurent, Fond du Lac - Social Work, 3rd year

Matty Mercredi, Fond du Lac - Electrician, 1st year

Amanda Josie, Hatchet Lake - Administration, 3rd year

Tamara Benoanie, Hatchet Lake - Nursing, 3rd year

Elden Sayazie, Black Lake - Education, 3rd year

Sheldon Echodh, Black Lake - Master's Education

Simona Fern, Black Lake - Master's Education

Darlene Fern, Black Lake - Master's Education

Jenna Powder, Camsell Portage - Automotive Service Technician, 3rd year

Kendra Tsannie, Hatchet Lake - Education, 4th year

Jennifer Sha'Oulle, Hatchet Lake - Education, 4th year

Kenneth McDonald, Black Lake - Administration, 3rd year

Raylen Adam, Fond du Lac - Education, 4th year

Anna ShaOulle, Hatchet Lake - Resource Management, 2nd year

Angel Besskkaystare, Hatchet Lake - Education, 2nd year

Marian Josie, Hatchet Lake - Business Administration, 4th year

Bronwyn Hansen, Hatchet Lake - Education, 4th year

Jackie Valois, Hatchet Lake - Medicine, 3rd year

Bernadette Besskkayster, Hatchet Lake - Education, 4th year

Hannah Kkailther, Hatchet Lake - Master's Education

Julie Toutsaint, Black Lake - Social Work, 3rd year

Nicole Bouvier, Black Lake - Social Work, 3rd year

Jennae Toutsaint, Black Lake - Education, 3rd year

Raquel Laurent, Fond du Lac - Social Work, 2nd year

5Buds Opens New Saskatoon Location, Reaches 12,000 Loyalty Members



5Buds opened its 8th Street location in Saskatoon in June

5Buds Cannabis is continuing its Saskatchewan growth with the opening of its 12th store, a new location in Saskatoon, at 2600 8th St E.

The new store strengthens 5Buds' presence in one of the province's largest markets and reflects the company's commitment to providing customers with exceptional service, competitive pricing, and a wide selection of cannabis products. As one of Saskatchewan's largest independent cannabis retailers, 5Buds has expanded steadily across the province while remaining proudly Saskatchewan-owned and Indigenous-owned.

"We are excited to be back in Saskatoon and to continue growing the 5Buds brand," says Calvin Isackson, Managing Director of 5Buds. "Every new location allows us to serve more customers, create local jobs, and generate benefits for our owners and communities."

The Saskatoon opening comes during a period of strong momentum for the company. Earlier this year, 5Buds launched its new High 5 Rewards loyalty program, which has already attracted more than 12,000 members. The program rewards customers for shopping with 5Buds and has quickly become one of the company's most successful customer engagement initiatives.

Owned through a partnership of Indigenous investment organizations Athabasca Basin Development, Prince Albert Development Corporation and Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies, 5Buds continues to build on a model that combines business success with community impact. The new Saskatoon location will provide customers with access to an extensive range of legal cannabis products in a welcoming and knowledgeable retail environment.

"Seeing more than 12,000 customers sign up for High 5 Rewards so quickly tells us we're building strong relationships with our customers across Saskatchewan," says Isackson. "That support gives us confidence as we continue to invest in new communities and new opportunities."

As the company looks ahead, 5Buds remains focused on strategic growth, customer loyalty, and creating opportunities throughout Saskatchewan.

New Wollaston Lake Terminal Opens

Community members, leaders, and partners gathered on September 22 to celebrate the grand opening of Rise Air's new terminal in Wollaston Lake, marking a major investment in northern transportation infrastructure and the future of air service in the region.

The new terminal represents a $1 million investment by Rise Air and is believed to be the most modern airline terminal facility in northern Canada. The building was transported to Wollaston Lake via the winter road and assembled in the community, providing a modern and comfortable space for passengers, staff, and visitors.

The project is part of a broader commitment by Rise Air to strengthen service in northern Saskatchewan. In recent years, the airline has introduced ATR 42 aircraft, doubling passenger capacity, significantly increasing cargo space, and improving flight schedules to better meet the needs of northern residents.

"At Rise Air, we are committed to providing safe, reliable service that meets the needs of northern communities," says Rise Air CEO Derek Nice. "This terminal is another step in our long-term commitment to Wollaston Lake and the North. We want to continue investing in the people and communities we serve."

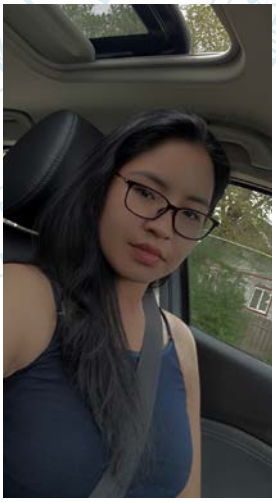
The new facility was welcomed by community leaders, who highlighted the important role transportation plays in supporting economic development, health care access, education, and family connections.

"This is a significant improvement for our community," says Chief Bart Tsannie. "Reliable transportation is essential for our residents, and this new terminal reflects the growth and importance of Wollaston Lake. Investments like this make travel safer, more comfortable, and more dependable for our people, while helping connect our community to opportunities across the province."

The grand opening celebrated not only a new building, but a shared commitment to ensuring northern Saskatchewan residents have access to modern, dependable transportation services. As Rise Air continues to invest in aircraft, infrastructure, and customer service, the Wollaston Lake terminal stands as another example of the airline's commitment to serving the North for generations to come.



Artist Profile: Jenny Gunn, Stony Rapids



By Jenny Gunn

I was born in Uranium City and raised in Black Lake, Saskatchewan, where strong roots, rich culture, and creativity shaped much of who I am today. As a member of the Black Lake First Nation, I carry the legacy of my late great-grandfather, Louie Chicken, who faithfully served as Chief for 24 years.

I believe my "artistic hands" came from my late father, Frank Gunn of Patuanak, Saskatchewan, well known for his artwork, talent, and creative spark. His influence helped shape the passion for art I carry in both hand and heart.

From sketches of Indigenous clothing and paintings to cakes designed with flair, I have always loved to create with care. Through colour and design, detail and light, I believe art can make the world feel warm and bright. Whether in clothing, canvas, cake, or page, creativity has remained a joyful part of my life at every stage and age.





We are Social! Follow us.

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 2027.

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 **newsletter@athabascabasin.ca**

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