



Office of the Treaty Commissioner

NEWSLETTER

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) is mandated to advance the Treaty goal of establishing good relations among all people of Saskatchewan. The OTC continues to work with First Nations, provincial school systems, the business community and other educational institutions and the rest of Saskatchewan to raise the awareness and understanding of Treaties in Saskatchewan.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Also available on our website: www.otc.ca

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Upcoming and New Events!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

September 24, 2015 – Aboriginal Business Summit at Dakota Dunes Casino. For registration to www.picatic.com/abforum

October 15, 2015 – Indigenous Economic Partnership Summit in Lloydminster. Visit www.ieps.ca

November 17, 2015 – First Nations Community Energy Forum at Saskatoon Travelodge. Visit www.fnpa.ca and www.sfnedn.com

November 17-18, 2015 - Mawe Wicîhitowin: "Learning from one another to build community": OTC will lead discussions on Treaty and Reconciliation. Register: <http://www.unitedwaysaskatoon.ca/mawe-wicîhitowin-conference/>

November 30 and December 1, 2015 – Treaty Table Meeting

December 3, 2015 - Reconciliation: Changing the Narrative and Inspiring Innovation: In partnership with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. Find out more: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/conf/default.aspx>

August, 2016 – World Indigenous Business Forum. Visit www.wibf.ca

Did you know the City of Saskatoon declared this the Year of Reconciliation?

More about this on page 8...Read on!



The Changing Face of Community Education Conference April 29, 30 & May 1, 2015 - University of Regina.

Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond gave a thought provoking key note address to a delegation of Saskatchewan educators and support personnel at the annual Saskatchewan Association for Community Education conference on May 1, 2015 at the University of Regina. His address was filled with passion as he spoke to his extensive experience and knowledge for building strong communities. It was made clear as he spoke about the provinces connection to acknowledging the importance of Treaties, sustaining relationships and building for the future. We celebrate our Canadian history of 100 years ago but now we need a new benchmark to refer to. He reiterated that the key to moving forward was "reconciliation". The Reconciliation between Canada's peoples was integral in our history. The successful First Nation leaders of today, young, middle aged, and the elders must encourage others to follow and build a stronger Canada for themselves and for all.



Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond
Picture Courtesy: Joanna Landry

OTC Congratulates the 2015 Spruce River Folkfest

The Spruce River Folkfest is a cultural event organized annually by a partnership, which includes the Young Chippewayan First Nation, Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan and the Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, to create awareness of landless bands within Saskatchewan and in particular, the history surrounding the Young Chippewayan First Nation.

In 1897 Stony Knoll Indian Reserve land was set aside in Treaty 6 for the Young Chippewayan Band. It was later taken away and opened up for settlement. Today the relationship exists between the Young Chippewayan people, St John's Lutheran Church, the Mennonite Church of Laird and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC's relationship with Indigenous communities has evolved over the years and is focussed on: "how to do that kind of work effectively and reflectively," –Ray Funk. A true inspiration for reconciliation!



Young Chippewayan Chief George Kingfisher and Ray Funk, raising the Treaty 6 flag at the home of the Spruce River Folk Festival.

Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation Treaty Day

Pictured right: Mrs Violet Airey - 87 year-old receiving Treaty \$5 Annuity payment, with INAC rep, Sandra Ahenakew, Chief Larry Ahenakew and RCMP Officers.



Shad Valley - Summer Enrichment Program

On July 20, Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond presented a two hour lecture and seminar at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park focusing on Treaty issues in Saskatchewan and Canada. This was presented to a group of 48 high achieving high school students from all over Canada participating in the University of Saskatchewan's SHAD program. SHAD is a live-in summer enrichment program that takes place at the University for the month of July and focuses on entrepreneurship and engineering. University of Saskatchewan's program is one of 12 which occur at universities all over Canada. The students participating in the program have demonstrated high levels of academic, creative, and social achievement. George presented the case and the basis for Treaty negotiations starting from the 1700s through to today. It was a very good lecture, presenting a compelling argument. The students responded very well to the lecture, and I believe enjoyed it very much. This is demonstrated by many questions and discussion at the end of the lecture. – submitted by Shad Valley



Shad Valley Students
Picture Courtesy: Rick Retzlaff

Former Treaty Commissioner Bill McKnight was one of the recipients of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit for the 2014 – 2015 year. Her Honour the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, S.O.M., S.V.M., Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan and Chancellor of the Order, awarded nine deserving recipients of this prestigious award on May 13th, 2015. Congratulations Bill!



Nova Scotia Learns from OTC

The Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commissioner had the pleasure of sharing the Saskatchewan experience with the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey from Membertou, Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia group came to visit the OTC in hopes of gaining information that would assist them in creating an Office of the Treaty Commissioner in their territory. Rob Norris shared the ways in which the OTC and the Province have been able to work together on many projects starting with the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement in 1992 through to the Treaty Curriculum renewal project and Teaching Treaties in the Classroom.



Rob Norris and Jaime Battiste, Treaty Education Lead, Mi'kmaw Nation



Harry Lafond, Executive Director

University of Saskatchewan and OTC Remember the First Nation and Metis Soldiers

June 19, 2015 – Veterans and University representatives gathered in front of the Peter McKinnon Building at the University of Saskatchewan at mid morning to smoke the pipe with Elder and Veteran Edward Baldhead (One Arrow First Nation). Lyndon Linklater was the official pipe helper for the ceremony.

Everyone enjoyed lunch during which there was a steady buzz of visiting, interjected by bursts of laughter as the veterans reminisced of humorous times. Treaty Commissioner Lafond invited the participants to the Circle. For the next two hours, Lyndon Linklater and Harry Lafond from OTC provided historical, cultural, current and community storylines related to the lives of the First Nations and Metis First World War soldiers. This provided the impetus for the Veterans to speak to their stories. Their stories related the impact of war trauma, heroism, government betrayal, community reconciliation and personal journeys. The audience was treated to genuine sharing and left feeling that these stories were too long hidden behind the barriers of colonist thinking. These are Canadian stories and need to be aired to all generations.



Treaty Day is for All

July 3, 2015 – The morning promised the Treaty people sunshine as they gathered under the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Arbour. This was going to be a special gathering and Elder A.J. Felix from Sturgeon Lake First Nation pronounced it loudly and clearly to the vendors, visitors and special dignitaries.

In the background, a very ordinary orange school bus creaked to a stop and a very unusual retinue of guests began to spill out into the parking lot. The excitement was palpable. Once the gifts from OTC were distributed to all 50 guests, the drum and A.J.'s voice beckoned the Newcomers into the Circle of the Arbour.

This was Muskeg Lake and OTC's time to welcome these new Canadians to Treaty 6 Territory and to welcome them as new Treaty citizens. Under A.J.'s direction, the Muskeg Lake and Saskatoon Tribal Council leaders formally welcomed the people who came from Japan, Korea, Ghana and many other corners of the world. Then the whole community joined together with the New Treaty Canadians in a Round Dance. Once the formal part of the program was completed, the peoples mingled and shared food together.





Jennifer Heimbecker, Director of Speakers Bureau

OTC Partners with Dance Saskatchewan

The OTC partnered with Dance Saskatchewan to bring the Silent Survivors traditional dance performance to Saskatoon. The show was held for throughout July and August and brought hundreds of people both local and from across the province. Evaluations of the show were offered to audience members who took the opportunity to share their thoughts on this thought-provoking and beautiful work of art meant to engage a dialogue of reconciliation in Saskatchewan. Enjoy the comments!

Thought-provoking and gives a vivid image of our history and the shared journey our community is currently on.

A compelling telling of our shared history – told without shame and in a manner that can touch us all and move us to a shared future. Bravo!

Thank you, thank you. I brought my granddaughter and we both enjoyed it tremendously. Neither one of us was in residential school but we felt the peace, the drama, and the trauma and then the joy of thanks for the round dance at the end. Congratulations to Lorin Gardypie and cast on their production. Bravo OTC & Dance Saskatchewan. Culture is so important.

An amazing & moving performance & a very powerful way of telling a story we all need to understand & feel! The emotional ups and downs, the colour, creativity and community & then their resurgence, all made a huge impact. The performance touched all our hearts. Thank you all for sharing your gifts and your journeys.

Thanks for the show, I don't have this show in my country (France) and I learn so much.



Performer Lawrence Roy
Photo Courtesy Dance SK



Artistic Director Lorin Gardypie
Photo Courtesy Dance SK

OTC and Corrections and Policing form a Strategic Alliance

In June, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner signed a strategic alliance with Corrections and Policing, which is part of the Ministry of Justice. The strategic alliance will mean the two work together to promote and encourage cultural and spiritual education, treaty rights and responsibilities, and reconciliation and healing among the people of Saskatchewan. The OTC and Corrections and Policing share the vision that all people in Saskatchewan will live in harmony based on a sound knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions particularly as they relate to the Treaty relationship.

OTC recognizes the value and supports the efforts of Corrections and Policing to provide culturally responsive services and create a positive learning environment which enhances and promotes cultural inclusion. Corrections and Policing recognizes the benefit of the neutrality of the OTC, therefore a commitment will be made to work together in promoting cultural education within the Corrections and Policing facilities in Saskatchewan.

“Today’s signing ceremony represents a significant milestone” Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing Christine Tell said. “It’s an honour to partner with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner on a shared vision that recognizes the importance of cultural traditions in our province.”

Treaty Commissioner George Lafond comments “We’ve had an excellent partnership for the past two years and we look forward to working together to promote reconciliation by educating on the importance of culture and spirituality as significant components to the healing process.”



Associate Deputy Minister, Dennis Cooley; Faye Ozmun Director, First Nations and Metis Services and Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond



The Concept of Pimâcihisowin

The concept of pimâcihisowin (making one's own living) has been a part of the First Nations DNA for time immemorial. Long before the first settlers arrived First Nations people were not only hunters, fishers and gatherers. They were also skilled traders. Before the fur trade engulfed this nation, before Canada was born, First Nations people were trading for goods from coast to coast, north, south, east and west. Ancient cities such as Cahokia in present day St Louis, Missouri, provides plenty of evidence that the early First Nations peoples were not only rural, agricultural and nomadic but also urban dwellers and avid traders.

Closer to home here, Wanuskewin Heritage Park and museums such as the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec, are full of artifacts that dispel the myth that the early First Nations people were primitive and did not really contribute any goods to mankind. On the contrary, before European arrival, Indigenous peoples were practicing R & D and came up with the canoe, snow shoe, goggles, a variety of spears and fishing tools to name a few. They had cooking pots, furs and tools for preparing clothing and created ingenious engineering methods. These skills and items came in quite handy when contact was made with the early fur traders in the 1600s. For about two hundred years First Nations became allies with the French and British. Then the fur trade crashed and First Nations were left in limbo.

When the numbered treaty negotiations developed the First Nations leaders ensured that the Crown would guarantee the right for assistance to adapt to the new way. That new way on the prairies was agriculture in the late 1800s. Most First Nations did not become self-sufficient as intended during the treaty negotiations. To this day, many First Nations struggle with barriers such as the Indian Act, ineffective governance and planning, a lack of skilled human resources and access to financial capital in order to rebuild their communities as once envisioned at treaty negotiations.

We are witnessing turmoil within the inter-connected global economy. The demand for commodities is volatile and the risks associated with the ever changing global economy is really making it challenging for many First Nations to adapt, respond, make profits and thrive.

As we attempt to reconcile the past for a better future, First Nations communities have some very interesting challenging questions. Will more First Nations benefit from extractive resource development? What happens when the global demand for our commodities weaken further? What types of skills will be required when technology replaces many jobs filled by humans today? What new products can First Nations companies innovate that will be in global demand versus just for the local or native market? How do we balance industrial development goals with environmental preservation goals? How do we get more First Nations to grow their own food as part of their local food security strategy? Will First Nations be able to respond quickly enough and capitalize on the new wave of opportunities or be left further behind as indicated in the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board Progress Report 2015?



Emory Laliberte presents a gift to the Commissioner of Manitoba, James Wilson

OTC Congratulates our Sister Province, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba

The TRCM celebrated 'A Decade of Bringing Manitoban's Together'; an Open House event was held on May 5, 2015 to honour the Ten Year Anniversary of the TRCM, the Treaties and the Treaty relationship.





Brenda Ahenakew, Director of Education



Members of the OTC Treaty Curriculum Renewal Team

Back row: Darryl Isbister, Saskatoon Public School Division; Sandy Pinay-Schindler, Prairie Valley School Division; Joanna Landry, Regina Catholic School Division; Julius Park, Northern Lights School Division; Cort Dogniez, Education Consultant and Gary Mirasty, Northwest School Division

Middle row: Tracy Bloomquist, Sask Rivers School Division; Terry Craig, Northwest School Division; Michelle Sanderson, Living Sky School Division; Sherron Burns, Living Sky School Division and Brenda Ahenakew, OTC Director of Education Programs

Front row: Dr Helen Horsman; Leah McDonald, Education Consultant; Elder Gladys Wapass-Greyeyes and Susan Beaudin, Curriculum Writer.

Each summer the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner team up to offer a 4-day Teaching Treaties Workshop. In early August, 23 teachers elevated their status to Treaty Catalyst Teachers - Congratulations!!



Susan Beaudin, OTC Curriculum Writer, Cort Dogniez, Treaty Catalyst trainer and Elder Gladys Wapass-Greyeyes.

REZ CROSS...AN EXAMPLE OF COMING TOGETHER by John Lagimodiere

Because of the extended crisis situation this year's wildfires produced, a number of agencies, organizations and volunteers rose to the challenge of assisting evacuees both during and after the evacuations.

One such organization is the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation which set up the Rez-Cross shelter in July.

The Beardy's band shelter was run out of the local rink and provided food, clothing and accommodation to as many as 500 people from La Ronge, Grandmother's Bay and Hall Lake over the course of the evacuations.

The shelter, which also provided a number of traditional and recreational activities, was completely community financed with the help of some corporate donations.

"We like to say it was Indians helping Indians," band councillor Kevin Seesequasis says. "It doesn't get better than the Indian way so the mentality and philosophy we approached everything that we did – whether it was cooking, cultural programming, recreational activities or the type of care First Nations people know how to give."

Seesequasis adds knowing the evacuees were already under a high level of stress being separated from their communities and families, at Rez-Cross they tried to provide a more unstructured environment than might be found in some of the other shelters.

Shelter residents were more or less allowed to eat, sleep, wake up and come and go as they pleased.

"That's what we were able to provide. That understanding that people need to come and go as they pleased. These are adults we were primarily dealing with and people don't want to be restricted, especially coming through that much trauma. They don't need more rigidity; they need to feel some sort of normalcy. So we tried to make it as relaxed as possible."



Creating a Made-in-Saskatchewan plan for Reconciliation

What does Reconciliation look like for health? For education? For justice? For economic livelihood? For child welfare? These are some of the questions we asked a group of 23 diverse Saskatchewan leaders with considerable experience working in these five areas identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. You can see their answers at <http://otc.ca/main/reconciliation>.

These discussions are part of a series of dialogues being convened by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and its partners to provide the people of Saskatchewan with an opportunity to articulate and build public consensus around a vision and plan for reconciliation. Get involved. Let us know what you're doing to improve the livelihood of all people in Saskatchewan. Tell us how you define reconciliation. Join the conversation at www.otc.ca

**Reconciliation.
Momentum is building.
What does it mean to you?
Where will you start?**

Saskatoon Declares Year of Reconciliation

Saskatoon City Council unanimously declared a "Year of Reconciliation" beginning on July 1, 2015. Council's June 22 motion calls on City Administration to "work with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, and other community groups, leaders and institutions in Saskatchewan, to promote reconciliation in our province."

The OTC and the City will continue to support Council's proclamation and work with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, the Central Urban Métis Federation and other partners to develop an action plan and communications strategy to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

Get involved! Tell us your ideas. Let us know what you're doing to further reconciliation.

RECONCILIATION
WHERE WILL YOU START?

WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE
JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT [WWW.OTC.CA](http://www.otc.ca)

Office of the Treaty Commissioner

www.otc.ca

Northwest School Division (NWSD) and Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) Students Discuss what Reconciliation Means to them in Various Aspects of Their Lives

On September 9th-11th, 2015 the NWSD and MLTC held their annual Aspiring Student Leadership and Cultural Camp at Camp Oshkidee on Jeanette Lake. Forty students along with their teacher Leadership Mentors came together to develop leadership skills and to learn about First Nations and Metis Culture in a hands-on educational setting. Cultural teachings included: The Circle of Courage, Elder Processes and Protocols, Treaty and Treaty Simulation, Metis World View, Pipe Ceremonies, Sweat Lodge (Leadership Mentors), Traditional Games, Aboriginal Entrepreneurialism, Pow Wow Dances, Nature/Medicine Walks and Reconciliation.

After participating in a Treaty Simulation session and learning about Treaty negotiations, students and leadership mentors were introduced to Reconciliation definitions and were invited to expand on its meaning in groups. They then proceeded to determine how it could be best used in various aspects of their lives such as: when playing sports; with their families; with their friends; in their communities and in their schools.

Our young leaders presented their understandings and learnings to the entire group as a culminating activity. The process was engaging, informative and certainly helped to give students a better understanding of what reconciliation is and how they can use it in everyday life.