



pathways

SYNCRUDE CANADA LTD. ABORIGINAL REVIEW 2012

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Welcome

There are many different pathways to success. It could be sitting around a campfire and sharing cultural knowledge. It could be studying for certification, a college diploma or university degree. Or it could be a young mind discovering the thrill of science for the very first time.

There is no end to the remarkable successes and accomplishments amongst Aboriginal people in our region, our province and across our country. *Pathways* captures these stories and connects with First Nations and Métis people making positive contributions in their communities, bringing new perspectives to the table and influencing change in our society.

Join us as we explore these many diverse pathways and learn how generations both young and old are working to make a difference.

The stories in *Pathways* reflect the six key commitment areas that are the focus of Syncrude's Aboriginal Relations program:

These include: Corporate Leadership, Employment, Business Development, Education and Training, Community Development, and the Environment. As a representation of our ongoing commitment to work with the local First Nations and Métis communities to create and share opportunity, *Pathways* is one among many initiatives meant to foster dialogue and celebrate shared achievements.

pathways

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LEADERSHIP

Leadership is found amongst young and old alike. And as a member of many regional and national organizations, Syncrude works with business and governments to champion the continued advancement of Aboriginal people across the country.

BUSINESS

Wood Buffalo is home to some of the most successful Aboriginal businesses in Canada. Syncrude works closely with Aboriginal business owners to identify opportunities for supplying goods and services to our operation.

EMPLOYMENT

As one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in Canada, Syncrude's goal is to create opportunities that enable Aboriginal people to fully participate in all aspects of our operation.

ENVIRONMENT

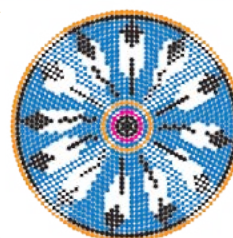
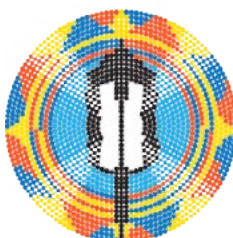
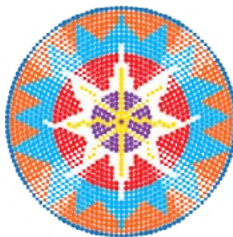
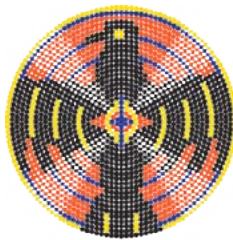
We are committed to working with local Aboriginal advisors on such matters as end-land use and how we can minimize the long-term impacts of our operations on traditional land uses.

EDUCATION

Learning unlocks the door to reward and personal growth. Syncrude is committed to working with Aboriginal communities to explore and create diverse educational opportunities.

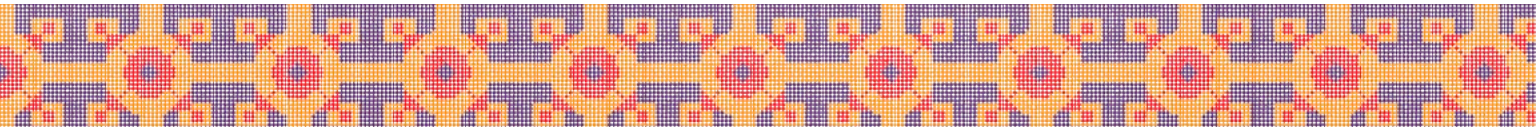
COMMUNITY

Canada is a country rich in diversity and culture. Syncrude is committed to helping Aboriginal communities celebrate success and continue to build capacity for further progress and achievement.



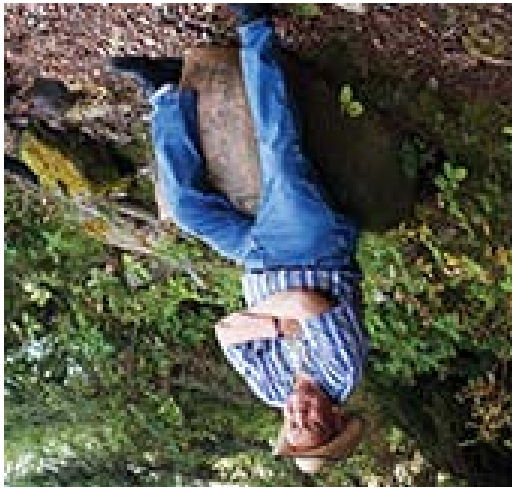
YOUR THOUGHTS

Through *Pathways*, we hope to bring you inspiring stories that capture the heart, spirit and success of Aboriginal people and communities. We invite you to share your opinion and tell us how we're doing. www.syncrude.ca/pwfeedback



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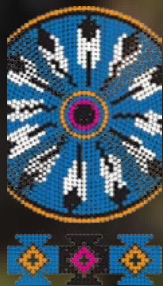


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Front Cover photo: Dorey Lake near Fort Chipewyan



CULTURAL TEACHING IN AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM



TO THE STEADY THUMPING OF DRUMS, REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL OIL SANDS COMPANIES ARE TRYING TO PIT THEIR WITS AGAINST ELDERS AND YOUTH FROM THE MIKISEW CREE FIRST NATION IN TRADITIONAL HAND GAMES. THERE'S PLENTY OF LAUGHTER AS THE GUESSING GAME PROGRESSES. AND, AS ELDER RITA MARTEN OBSERVES, NO SMALL AMOUNT OF LEARNING.

"It's very entertaining and it's good to see people participating and learning," said Rita.

The hand games were a part of the Mikisew Cree First Nation's Cultural Retreat held at a campground just outside Dorey Lake.

The three-day event served as a training session for the oil sands industry led by the entire community.

"We're using the knowledge and skills within our community to educate industry about our community's traditions and culture," explained Melody Lepine, the Mikisew Cree First Nation's director for government and industry relations. "In the past, the retreat was funded by donations from industry. This year, a couple of people within the industry suggested changing that model to a workshop, where companies could send employees for training."

Melody researched different events and came up with an agenda that drew heavily upon the knowledge of the community, from seminars on making traditional crafts, to learning Cree words and phrases, to walks in the forest with Elder George Wanderingspirit to learn about the value and medicinal qualities of different plants.

"Industry really saw the value in what we set up because we have more companies and representatives here than in any previous year," Melody said. "All the participants are going to share their experiences with their companies and co-workers. This will help industry better understand our community and the connection to the land."

"You can only say it in so many words in a boardroom. Coming out here, people who work in industry can see and experience first hand what we are talking about. And that's a good thing."

Elder George Marten



ELDERS OF THE MIKISEW CREE FIRST NATION
TEACH THE COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY
EVERYTHING FROM THE HEALING PROPERTIES
OF PLANTS, TO SPEAKING AND WRITING THE
CREE LANGUAGE, TO PLAYING HAND GAMES.
THEY PRESERVE VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE BY
PASSING IT ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION.



Sally Whiteknife



George Kaskamin



George Wanderingspirit



John Whiteknife

Alec Courtoreille



CENTURIES OF LIVING OFF THE LAND, LAKES AND RIVERS OF NORTHEASTERN ALBERTA GIVE THE MIKISEW CREE FIRST NATION A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. NATURE IS APPRECIATED FOR WHAT IT PROVIDES. IT IS ALSO USED AS A CLASSROOM TO TEACH TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.









Edward Marten

THE STEADY BEAT OF DRUMS PULSED THROUGH THE BOREAL FOREST AS A VOICE FOR THE SOUL WITHIN TRADITIONAL SONGS. THE GUITARS, FLUTES, HARMONICAS AND VOICES ARE INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC AND HELP INDUSTRY UNDERSTAND THE VIBRANT CULTURE THAT STILL EXISTS TODAY.



Larry Ratfat



Chief Steve Courtoreille
and Bradley Saulteaux





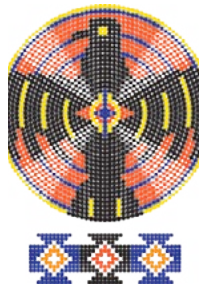
SOME STORIES ARE TOLD THROUGH BEADWORK, RATTLES AND BRACELETS. INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES BEGAN TO APPRECIATE THE INTRICACY OF THIS CRAFTWORK BY LEARNING HOW IT GETS MADE.







THE ART OF CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT



FAMILY AND FRIENDS DESCRIBE ARTIST ALEX JANVIER AS A HARDWORKING, CREATIVE VISIONARY WHO INSPIRES EVERYONE HE COMES INTO CONTACT WITH.

They call him a great artist, a trendsetter, a truth-teller, a lone wolf and a real down-to-earth guy. Indeed, he is all of those things. When it comes right down to it though, the 78-year-old Cold Lake First Nation resident,

one of Canada's most celebrated artists, is really just a simple man with simple pleasures.

An award-winning painter whose unique work reflects both the tribulations and celebrations he's experienced throughout his lifetime, Alex credits the artistic talent of his mother and other close relatives as having played an instrumental role in shaping his art, and the path he's chosen to walk in life. He credits family, friends and community for allowing him the opportunity to live in a quiet, peaceful environment where he not only enjoys the simple things in life, but also maintains a dogged determination to preserve Aboriginal tradition, culture and lifestyle.

“WE ARE THE CARETAKERS OF THE LAND AND WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT IT REMAINS CLEAN AND HEALTHY. WATER, AIR AND SOIL ARE PRECIOUS COMMODITIES AND EVERYTHING ON THE PLANET DEPENDS ON THEM FOR SURVIVAL.”

“In 1971 we began to build a home for our family,” Alex explains. “Today the natural beauty of the land continues to surround us; it remains as it has always been. In the woods and along the shoreline it remains a place of natural beauty. It is awe-inspiring. Life at Cold Lake is the last bit of Shangri-La on the southwest shore of English Bay. We recently fulfilled a lifetime dream and opened a new gallery in our community. It will act as a continuous showplace for Janvier art. The facility has now been completed and the people, should they have the desire, will come.”

During a career that has spanned nearly six decades, Alex has wowed the world with his socially engaging artwork. He takes his responsibility to family, community and culture very seriously, and though the load has often proven heavy, he remains both lighthearted and clear headed. He retains the visions of his youth and works in earnest to fulfill the destiny cast upon him by a lifetime of achievement and recognition.

Alex credits family, friends and community for allowing him the opportunity to live in a quiet, peaceful environment.



“We need to utilize our resources, but in turn we need to ensure that we are taking the appropriate steps to guarantee our longevity,” noted Alex in a recent interview. “The Creator has provided us with many good things and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are properly cared for; we must take the time and exercise the effort necessary to ensure that life on Earth prevails forever.”

The first public showing of Alex’s work took place in 1950 at the International Vatican Exhibition in Rome, Italy. Since that time his art has been seen at dozens of major exhibitions throughout the world and his collected works adorn the halls and walls of private, corporate and public buildings. His latest achievement got underway in May this year when the Art Gallery of Alberta paid homage to Alex’s art by showcasing more than 90 pieces of his work. The exhibit, sponsored by Syncrude, drew more than 1,000 visitors on opening day and tens of thousands in the days that followed.

Alberta Art Gallery curator Catherine Crowston calls Alex “an incredibly prolific and gifted artist who explores new paths, creates in various styles and perspectives and through his work brings attention to the issues that concern Aboriginal peoples everywhere.”

Alex’s wife, Jacqueline, says that “though he has become somewhat of a celebrity over the years, it is important to note that Alex never sought any favour for himself, nor did he have any illusions of grandeur about his work or his ability to create wonderful pieces of art. He’s a proud and simple man with some rough edges, a loving heart and a dedication to family, community and the preservation of his culture.”

Alex’s eldest son Dean praises his father. “My dad is a great artist,” he assures, “but he is also a loving father with outstanding business skills. He’s blazed a trail for others to follow and we are all very proud of him and what he’s accomplished in life.”

Students explore the world of Alex Janvier



IF A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS, SOME LOCAL YOUTH HAVE BROUGHT HOME A LIBRARY'S WORTH OF INSPIRATION.

This past June, 15 students from Fort McMurray Composite High School and École McTavish had the chance to visit the Alex Janvier Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Alberta.

"We were studying his life as a Dene person, and his time in residential school, which he has captured in some of his art," says Julia McDougall, Aboriginal studies instructor at Composite High School. "In the art class they were studying his paintings, which went hand in hand with what I was teaching in Aboriginal studies."

The students were met with a guide who explained more about the art. "When they saw the art in person, they understood it more fully and it sank in," says Julia. "After the tour we went to a section in the gallery called *Abstract Memories* and we got to do a hands-on project with the students. It was a great experience!"

The students were thankful for the experience, which was sponsored by Syncrude. "I had a great time!" says Dylan Nutler, art student at Composite High School. "It was very interesting to see the different pieces."

Now Julia has her sights on a class trip even further south. "I'd like some day to take my kids to the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico," she says. "It's such a celebration of Aboriginal people and culture, and I'm hopeful one day we will have the opportunity to be a part of that."

Alex is surrounded by his work at his Cold Lake art gallery. Below, Alex with his wife Jacqueline.



AN ENTERPRISING JOURNEY



SHORTLY AFTER JOINING SYNCRUDE IN 1978 TO WORK IN THE STEAM BAY, DAVE TUCCARO REALIZED HE PREFERRED RUNNING HIS OWN BUSINESS.

It turned out to be the right decision for the longtime Syncrude contractor, who was inducted into the Canadian Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame at a February ceremony in Toronto.

"I always had a bit of an entrepreneurial streak. When I was working as a crane operator for different contractors in the oil sands, I started up some businesses, including a janitorial services company. I also bought two taxis. I also owned an auto repair shop and a bakery at different times," says Dave. "But my career really started when I took over Neegan Development."

Syncrude played a critical role in helping see Neegan through some tough times at the start.

"At the time, we were going broke because we had too much heavy equipment that wasn't being used," says Dave, a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation. "So I went to Dennis Love, who was Syncrude's manager of Mining at the time, and explained the situation. Dennis sent over a couple of people to evaluate our heavy equipment fleet and finances and then changed the scope of our tree-clearing contract to allow us to survive and reorganize."

"DAVE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL ROLE MODEL FOR THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY. HE IS A VERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS LEADER AND ONE THAT ESPOUSES THE KINDS OF ATTRIBUTES THAT YOUTH EVERYWHERE SHOULD ASPIRE TO." — *Jim Carter, Retired Syncrude President and COO*

From those struggles, Dave's business empire has grown into several companies that now employ more than 350 people.

"It's been a win-win and it showed real foresight on the part of people such as Eric Newell, Jim Carter, Dennis Love and others to see the potential in the Aboriginal community as suppliers," says Dave, whose business revenues have grown by more than 160 per cent since 2004. "At the time, the conventional oil patch in Alberta was closed to Aboriginals so what Syncrude did was very visionary. It created a win-win-win template that other industries from across the country have adopted when it comes to engaging the Aboriginal community."

The recognition pleased Doug Golosky, who nominated his friend and longtime business associate for the honour.

"Dave has done a lot for the Aboriginal business community and deserves this recognition," says Doug, who established the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association with Dave in 1993. "He has always promoted Aboriginal people, getting into business and improving themselves."

In addition to being a champion in business, Dave was a force in the community, donating more than \$200,000 annually to different non-profit groups, including the United Way, Native Youth Hockey and Rotary House's Imagination Library Early Literacy Program.

The Canadian Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame was introduced in 2005 and has inducted 17 visionary leaders.



Dave Tuccaro shares a smile and some insights into his remarkable career at the Hall of Fame ceremony.

Photo: Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business





INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE



CHANGE IS IN THE AIR AND THAT SUITS TABITHA QUINTAL JUST FINE.

The Syncrude instrumentation technician apprentice and mother of three is excited about where the future will take her and her family.

“I love getting up every morning and coming to work,” says the Syncrude Aboriginal Trades Preparation (SATP)

graduate. “With every other job, I’ve had to work so much. Now I get paid vacation, and I work four days a week. I’m learning so much—everything I do is hands-on. And through it all, coming to work every day is bringing me closer and closer to achieving my journeyman ticket in instrumentation.”

She has also been enjoying more time with family instead of working tirelessly just to make ends meet.

“The hands-on training that I receive here and the help that I get from my co-workers and from my mentor make me feel like I am more than prepared for the next step in getting my journeyman’s ticket,” says Tabitha, who was raised in Conklin.

“IT HAS BEEN A LOT OF HARD WORK BUT I FEEL LIKE I’VE EARNED IT, AND I DESERVE IT.”

The SATP program is a customized seven-month, full-time credit program at Keyano College and, upon graduation, qualified students are offered full-time employment at Syncrude.

Melissa Harasym, a journeyman instrumentation technician and Tabitha’s mentor, can’t praise Tabitha enough.

“She doesn’t let anything slip past,” says Melissa. “She wants to be very thorough. She likes to get in there and do the work, and that’s one of my favourite things. She wants to be here, and she wants to learn.”

Melissa says the position does require a high level of competence and skill, but she believes in Tabitha’s abilities.

“A lot of people, including the panel and process operators, are all counting on those instruments to be reading the way they should be, and it’s our job to make sure they are,” says Melissa. “It is very important that we are detail-oriented and thorough. I wouldn’t worry about Tabitha out in the field doing a job. I would have full confidence in her.”

Indeed, Tabitha’s personal focus and determination has paid off in spades. “What helped me get through the program was the prize at the end,” she says, “and that was a career with Syncrude.”

A graduate of the Syncrude Aboriginal Trades Preparation program at Keyano College, Tabitha Quintal is now an enthusiastic instrumentation technician apprentice.



HOME TO OPPORTUNITY



RON JANVIER LEFT THE CHIPEWYAN PRAIRIE DENE FIRST NATION AT AGE 15 TO PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LARGER WORLD. NOW, ALMOST 40 YEARS LATER, RON HAS RETURNED TO TRY TO BRING THOSE OPPORTUNITIES CLOSER TO HIS BOYHOOD HOME.

Ron was seconded from Syncrude to his First Nation in October 2011 to oversee construction

of the 100-acre Chipewyan Prairie Commercial Park on Highway 881, about 115 kilometres southeast of Fort McMurray.

It all started with a conversation at the Syncrude Boreal Open golf tournament earlier that summer.

"I was down at the course representing Syncrude when I ran into Chief Vern Janvier and one of the councillors," Ron says.

"They asked me if I would work on developing this industrial park if they could get me seconded from Syncrude. When I said yes, they approached Syncrude about having me come back here to oversee construction of the park."

And his career at Syncrude has equipped Ron with the skills to manage the project.

"I started out at the maintenance shop at the mine as a welder but got involved in maintenance planning. I became a business analyst as a development move and I learned all about operating budgets and capital spending," says Ron, who joined Syncrude in 1980. "I also worked as a shutdown coordinator for our shovels, where I planned for the workforce and equipment. My career at Syncrude helped me develop a lot of different skills that have been very useful for my work with the First Nation."

The business park will include a gas station, a convenience store, an office building and a business incubator to help entrepreneurial start-ups grow into businesses.

"The incubator really serves as a school for small business, where people learn everything from business plans to budgets. The gas station and store are badly needed because this community doesn't have a store and we are working on a business plan with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada," Ron says. "The rest of the park, about 80 acres, will be leased to different clients and we have a lot of interest from industry."

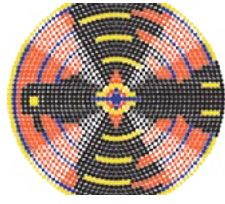
The project should be completed when Ron's secondment ends in March 2013, but that probably won't end his involvement.

"My goal after I retire is to work with my First Nation. I know what I can do to help my community. I left here when I was 15 to pursue opportunities because there weren't any here at the time. I hope we can change that, starting with this industrial park."

"My career at Syncrude helped me develop a lot of different skills that have been very useful for my work with the First Nation," says Ron Janvier.



A RIDE BACK IN TIME



**JUST ACROSS THE CLEARWATER
RIVER FROM FORT MCMURRAY'S
BUSTLING DOWNTOWN, RICHARD
GOLOSKY GENTLY STEERS HIS
RUSTED, WEATHERED 1983 DODGE
HALF-TON DOWN A BEATEN PATH,
INCHING ALONG AS SLOWLY
AS RUSH-HOUR TRAFFIC.**

Unlike drivers trapped in congestion, there's no stress for Richard as he steers his truck slowly over the bumps and through ruts while watching his son Rick and granddaughter Taylor weave along the trail on an ATV ahead of him.



The sounds of irritated drivers honking their horns and the racket of construction equipment are nonexistent as he bounces along a winding, grassy, rutted path through the boreal forest to his family's cabin, a journey he began taking when the 64-year-old Métis Elder was younger than his granddaughter is today. "We used to ride the horses out here during the summer or hop on the sleigh and get pulled here during the winter," Richard says. "I remember coming here in the late summer and we'd pick blueberries all weekend. We'd pack a lunch for the day and you were here until every bucket was filled."

Richard's grandfather George emigrated to the Wood Buffalo region in 1903 and originally began trapping in the area.

"He came from Romania and married my grandmother, who was Cree. He picked up the language and learned the ways of the land," Richard says. "The original cabin is gone but it was built in the same area where we have this cabin, which is about 10 miles from the Clearwater River and about five miles north of the airport."

The wildlife remains abundant in the area. Richard and his children set snares and traps along the trap line and check them regularly.

"The amount of wildlife in the area always depends on the number of rabbits. If there are plenty of rabbits, you'll see plenty of predators, including martens and minks," says Richard, who washes his traps in a mixture of hot water and spruce boughs to keep the scent neutral for animals. "Moose are plentiful and that always means wolves. I caught 11 wolves in one winter. Wolves follow them in. Once the wolves get behind moose, they follow them until they bring them down."

Métis Elder Richard Golosky began visiting his family's remote cabin when he was younger than his granddaughter is today.

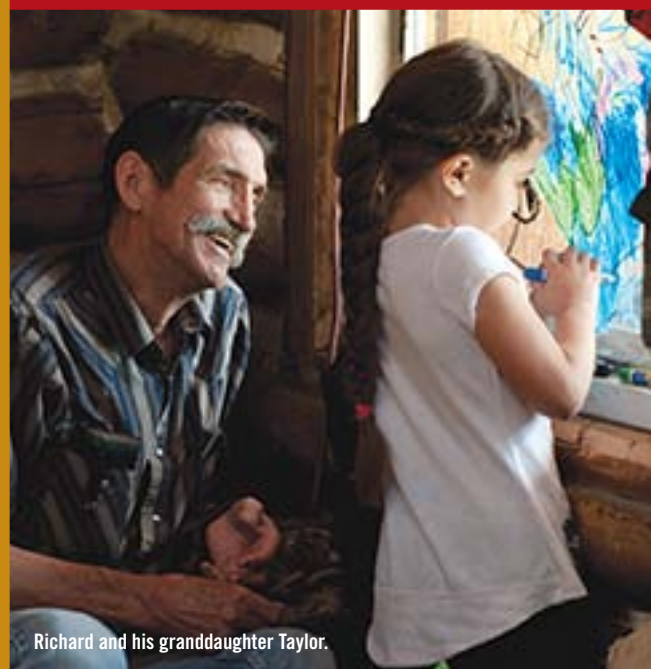




A grassy path leads to the cabin.



Richard values culture and tradition.



Richard and his granddaughter Taylor.

The trap line has been kept in the family for three generations and Richard wants to see his children and grandchildren continue to work the land from a cabin that Richard and his brothers rebuilt in 1980.

“My mother had it and my older brother Grant worked it before he passed away,” Richard says. “My daughter Destiny will have it one day.”

Unlike his grandfather George, who trapped for his livelihood, Richard sees setting out snares as preserving an important part of a cultural heritage for future generations.

“I wish I could carry on a conversation in Cree, but that’s something that I lost at residential school,” says Richard, who received his welding certificate from Alberta Vocational

College—the forerunner to Keyano College—in 1965. “Trapping today is a hobby rather than a livelihood, as it was for my grandfather. But it’s important to keep that tradition alive.”

Maintaining that link with the past has become more important with the rapid urban expansion on the other side of the Clearwater.

“There’s a lot more lights on the other side of the river than when I was growing up. But opportunities have come with the growth and my family has benefited from them,” he says. “I’m very proud of my daughter Destiny, who is a steamfitter/pipefitter. She now works in quality assurance on the Syncrude Emissions Reduction Project. But it also made me proud to see her knock down a moose when she was 16 years old from the front porch of the cabin. I hope Taylor gets the chance to experience that as well.”



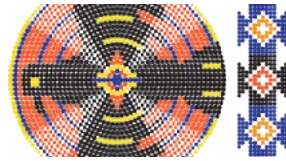
Celebrating Women of Inspiration

GIRLS INC. OF NORTHERN ALBERTA HAS ANNOUNCED ELSIE YANIK AS THE FIRST NOMINEE FOR THE NEW WOMEN OF INSPIRATION SERIES.

The series is a partnership between Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta and Syncrude, with a goal to recognize women throughout the Wood Buffalo region who inspire others, break new ground or old barriers, and help create positive change.

The series also aims to show local girls positive role models who live right here. "A lot of positive women are in the community. We want young girls to know that anything is possible," says Ann Dort-Madean, executive director of Girls Inc. Northern Alberta. "Mrs. Yanik is just one example of many in our region that we hope to recognize with the series."

Born in Fort Fitzgerald in 1917, Elsie has become a very well-respected Elder within the Métis communities of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. She has worked her entire 95 years to help others and be a positive role model in the north.



Highly regarded throughout the Wood Buffalo region, Elsie Yanik is the first nominee in the new Women of Inspiration series, presented by Girls Inc. and Syncrude. Elsie is pictured here at the 2010 Olympic torch ceremony in Fort McMurray.

Photo: Supplied

Elsie was raised by the Grey Nuns and, after her schooling, took over as the lay person in the church. Eventually, she moved to Fort Smith where she worked among the sick, aiding those with consumption and other illnesses.

Elsie is also known for her volunteer work; she is the President of the Voice of Alberta Native Women (now the ESQUOU organization), a ten-year member of the Young Offenders Board, and provides recommendations for community health on the Nunee Health Authority Board in Fort Chipewyan.

"I LOVE PEOPLE. I LOOK AT THE HEART AND NOT THE COLOUR OF THE SKIN. MY AIM IN LIFE IS TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE" —Elsie Yanik

She is also a huge advocate for education and the importance of successful Aboriginal women in business.

Just a few of Yanik's achievements include the Governor General's Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Stars of Alberta Volunteer Walk of Fame, a blessing from Pope John Paul II for her work within the Catholic Church, and an Honorary Diploma in Aboriginal Child and Family Services from Keyano College. She was also an Olympic torch bearer when it passed through the region on the way to the 2010 Vancouver winter games.

"My whole life is being with people and working with people," she says. "I love life—it will be one heck of a big fight before I go."

Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta and Syncrude will honour Elsie and eleven other Women of Inspiration nominees at the Women of Inspiration Gala which will take place in May 2013.

"It's an opportunity to recognize the women who are often the unsung heroes that make this region the great place it is," says Lana Hill, president of the Girls Inc. board of directors and Syncrude stakeholder relations advisor. "But more importantly this recognition provides young girls with role models to aspire to which can lead to a positive direction in the path that they take in life."

If you'd like to nominate a woman who has been an inspiration to you or someone you know in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, visit the Girls Inc. website at www.girlsincothernalberta.org.



TRADES PREPARATION PROGRAM CELEBRATES THIRD GRADUATING CLASS



“A DREAM DOESN’T BECOME A REALITY THROUGH MAGIC; IT TAKES SWEAT, DETERMINATION, AND HARD WORK.” WHEN JONATHAN FRANKLIN BEGAN HIS SPEECH WITH THIS COLIN POWELL QUOTE—HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT.

Jonathan was one of the 30 students who completed the Syncrude Aboriginal Trades Preparation program (SATP) this past March.

“I believe that every student here has their own unique set of skills and abilities that

would benefit Syncrude. We have built lasting friendships, laughed, motivated, and learned from each other, and always put forth our best effort. We have supported each other to complete the course which would allow us a chance to become an apprentice, which leads us to becoming a journeyman/

BACK ROW	Janis Lawrence-Harper, Keyano	Beverly Knibb, Keyano	Belinda Gauvreau, Syncrude Canada Ltd	Sonny Verreault, Keyano	Randy Pahtayken	Brett Plante	Tyler Manuel	
SECOND ROW	Murray Jamieson, Syncrude Canada Ltd	Joy Flett, Athabasca Tribal Council	Debra Ashby-Chaffey, Alberta Human Services	Mason Morley	Michael Roberts	Mitchell Tremblay	Tyson Tiedemann	Russell Lutz
FIRST ROW	Jessica Powder	Ralna Fowler	Laurie Cox	Karissa Coghill	Alyssa-Mae Laviolette	Crystal McEachern		



woman with Syncrude Canada—a career which we have always dreamed of,” said Jonathan.

Keyano’s SATP coordinator, Beverly Knibb, dubbed the initiative “challenging and rewarding.”

“The commitment and enthusiasm of the students made the tasks more enjoyable. The students were respectful and worked hard to achieve their goals. The students expressed their gratitude in the opportunity presented to them,” explained Beverly.

SATP was launched three years ago simultaneously at Keyano’s Clearwater Campus, Janvier Learning Centre, Fort Chipewyan Campus and Fort McKay Learning Centre.

It is sponsored by Syncrude, Alberta Employment & Immigration (AEI), Alberta Human Services (AHS), Rupertsland Institute, Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation, Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, Fort McKay First Nation and Mikisew Cree First Nation, with additional support from Athabasca Tribal Council, the Métis Locals, and Alberta Apprenticeship & Industry Training.

The 29-week initiative saw students trained to meet and exceed all requirements for employment with regional industries. Included is a four-week work placement with Syncrude. Many students have successfully completed all portions and are eligible to become indentured apprentices.

Jessie Webster	Jonathon Franklin	Cameron Cree	Elliott Cardinal	Tiffany Campiou				
Chris Tuccaro	Darwin McDonald	Craig Campbell	Jarred Seenum	Lily Upton, Alberta and Industry Training	Norm Stevens, Alberta and Industry Training	Ann Everatt, Keyano College	Nancy Lewis, Alberta Human Services	Chastity Kozakevich, Rupertsland Institute
Chantel Mercredi	Janice Richards	Caitlin Cree	Terra Dame	Michelle Whitehead	Joanne Clark			

WHERE DO YOU FIND INSPIRATION?

WE ASKED FIVE YOUNG ABORIGINAL ADULTS ABOUT THEIR INSPIRATIONS AND WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TOWARDS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS.

Courtney Paton

Nursing Student, Keyano College



"My biggest inspiration thus far has come from having had the chance to travel to different countries. This has allowed me to learn about different cultures and communities, and to meet people who have had to overcome

so much adversity. As Canadians, especially Albertans, we have so many opportunities and resources available to help us truly be the best we can be. So much so, that most of us take it for granted. I feel that it is my responsibility to humanity to take full advantage of my opportunities and be the best I can be, starting with education."



Cheryl Alexander

CEO & President, C & O Consulting



"Dr. T.B. Neil of Wits End Mediation and Tabernacle of Praise Church has inspired me in my personal and professional life. He motivates me to reach the top, to strive for new successes and to dream big. I attribute my success in maintaining a work-life balance to his leadership."



Nicole Bourque-Bouchier and her family.

Nicole Bourque-Bouchier

Co-Owner, The Bouchier Group

"Family. Having lost two sisters, Michelle and Jocelyn, my family has learned to thrive by being together and supporting each other. They have been my sounding board through my failures and successes in business and inspire me to create a prosperous future for all of us!"



Margaret DeCorby and her mother, Hazel.

Margaret DeCorby

Information Analyst, Syncrude

"I am fortunate to have many sources of inspiration in my life. The two that most profoundly motivate me to develop and grow as an individual are my mom and spending time in nature. My mom is an inspiration as she embodies compassion, trust, patience and hard work. It is by her example that I have developed the drive and tenacity to achieve my goals and create positive change in my life projects. Nature is an inspiration, as it provides a deep healing experience, and allows me to establish a work-life balance. While in nature, I gain perspective of my place in the universe and never cease to be amazed by the inspiration and peace I receive from it."

Corey Janvier

Owner/Consultant, Zeigteen Consulting



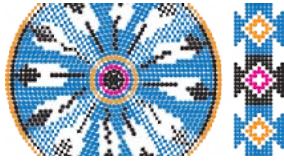
"The ones that inspire me are the ancestors of our people who have endured hardships in all aspects of life to ensure that present and future First Nations' people continue to move forward on our journeys."

Without their strength, resiliency and wisdom we would not have a voice in this present day. I am always learning from Elders who continue to teach what our ancestors have taught them, which allows me to continually grow in a positive way for myself, family and community."



Photo: Provincial Archives of Alberta

YOUTH HOCKEY GOES ON THE POWERPLAY



Matching last year's winning performance of four gold medals and one silver in the Alberta Native Youth Hockey Provincial Championships wasn't in the cards this past spring, but the anticipation, enthusiasm and excitement was on even par for the players.

At least one local team pulled off the rare double with Wood Buffalo's Senior Novice squad repeating as provincial champions.

"Last year Wood Buffalo teams won four championships and was runner-up in a fifth," says Atom coach Steve Jani. "This year we didn't have as much success in winning, but the players all enjoyed the weekend anyway. They look forward to this tournament all winter long. It's a chance

for them to reconnect with friends from other communities that they met through this tournament."

This was the 19th year that the Alberta Native Youth Hockey provincials have been a centralized tournament with age groups ranging from Novice to Junior. "In all, there were 165 teams competing. Wood Buffalo sent six teams in Senior Novice, Atom, Pee wee, Bantam, and Midget A and B. Next year I hope we can add an all-female team," says Steve, who coached a local squad to fourth-place in the Alberta Female Provincial Atom tournament in March. Syncrude has been a corporate sponsor of the provincial tournament since 2005 and has committed \$22,500 over the next three years.



Hockey provides a great athletic outlet for many of the region's Aboriginal youth.





A POST-CAREER CAREER

LESS THAN TWO WEEKS INTO RETIREMENT IN AUGUST 2009, GARRY FLETT RECEIVED AN UNEXPECTED PHONE CALL FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION BUSINESS GROUP.



"They had heard I had retired and wanted to know what my plans were," says Garry, who had just finished close to 30 years working for Syncrude. "My wife Nora and I were thinking about moving to a rural area and maybe do a little fishing and golfing. I certainly wasn't thinking about another job."

Three years later, Garry is still working as the president and CEO of a company with more than 1,400 employees and doesn't regret his decision.

"I still meet some of my retired buddies who worked with me at Syncrude for coffee and they tell me how bored they are and how they wished they had not left. I don't have that problem."

Garry is leaving an imprint on the organization, which recently moved into new headquarters in the TaigaNova Eco-Industrial Park in Fort McMurray.

"I'm a heavy-duty mechanic by trade. I don't have an MBA or a business degree. What I have is a background in business systems from working at Syncrude," says Garry, who was a team leader for shovels maintenance prior to retiring. "I knew what Syncrude expected from contractors. Now I'm a contractor and know what Syncrude wants."

In addition to his experience, Garry also brings Syncrude's values to his role.

"I've adopted a lot of Syncrude's values and business practices," he says. "I want to make sure this company is the best at what we do, not just because I have a feather in my hat. I want industry to see us as a supplier of choice."

Garry's success in the executive suite doesn't surprise fellow Syncrude retiree and former president and chief operating officer Jim Carter.

"Garry was always action-oriented. As a leader, he was a get-it-done sort of guy. He demonstrated he knew how to manage people as well as set and meet targets," says Jim. "It's so good when retirees choose to stay involved and use the skills they've acquired at Syncrude. I know it takes initiative and energy to do that but I'm glad Garry took that step. I'm sure his board of directors is pleased, too."

Indeed, the board offered Garry a contract extension and he has agreed to stay at the helm for another year.

SOLID GOLD

When the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Business Group decided to build a new headquarters, they wanted to make a statement.

"We want to be an environmentally sustainable business, so we incorporated that into our new building," explains Garry Flett, president and CEO.

The result is a gleaming three-storey headquarters and light duty maintenance facility in the TaigaNova Eco-Industrial Park that is Wood Buffalo's first gold certified building under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. LEED certification takes into account sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality and innovation in design.

"There are only seven buildings in the province of Alberta with this certification," Garry says.

"Our business wants to be a leader and reflect the values of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. This headquarters is a testament to both."

A HEALTHY ATTITUDE

VALISA ULRICH DEVELOPED SOME BIG DREAMS AFTER WATCHING THE DOCUMENTARY *SUPER SIZE ME*.



The film, which explored the impact of fast food on the health of consumers, inspired Valisa to pursue an education in nutrition and food science.

"I'm not sure yet if I want to be a dietician or go to medical school, but after watching *Super Size Me*, I knew health and nutrition would be an incredible field for me," says Valisa, who earned several scholarships for her studies including Syncrude's Rod Hyde Aboriginal Education Award, named after the former principal of Fort McKay School.

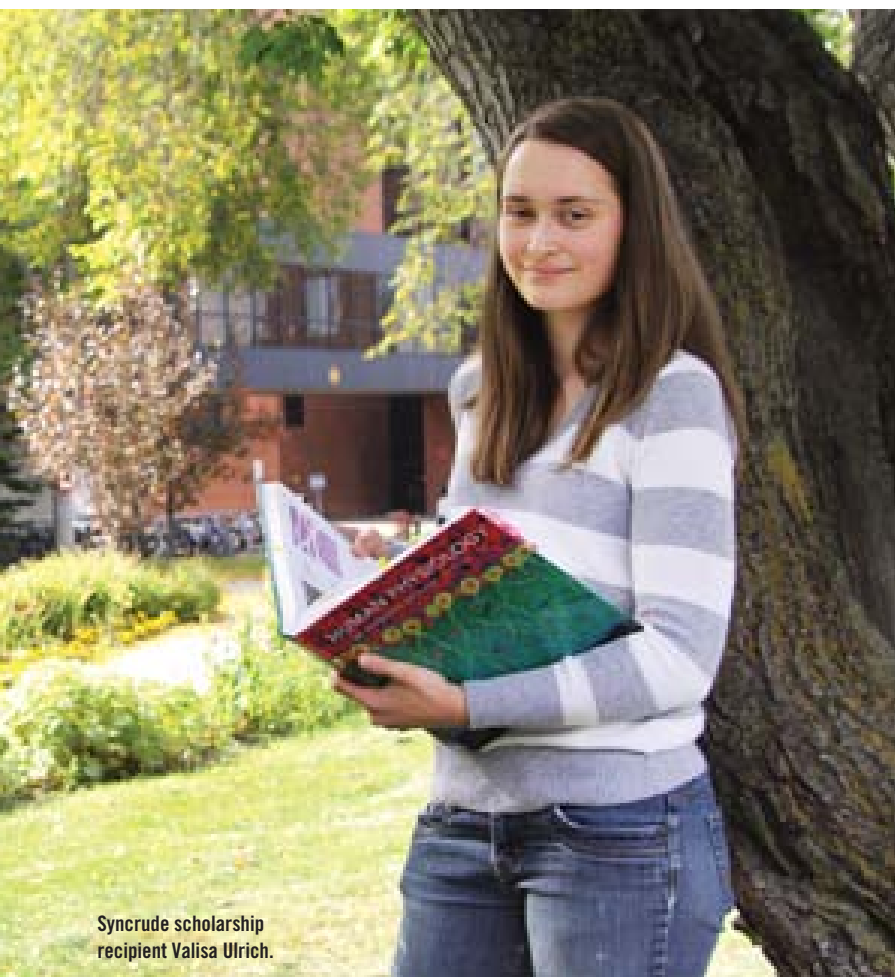
Valisa's mom, who is Métis, works for the provincial government and her father is a heavy duty mechanic at Syncrude.

"My sister graduated in 2011 with a degree in sociology, and she is saving up to go to law school," says Valisa, who is now 19 and in her second year. "She has been a real inspiration to me. My sister has always been there for me, and I've been able to look at her example and say, 'If she can do it, I can too.'"

When Valisa isn't studying, she is often running or browsing online for recipes. She has a passion for baking, which she admits with a laugh, is a bit of an unusual hobby for someone studying nutrition.

But she has found a solution that keeps her from consuming unwanted calories while also allowing her to exercise compassion at the same time.

"I give a lot of the stuff I bake away—either to friends or to people living on the street," she says. "I love sharing my baking with people."



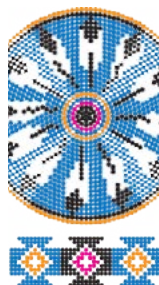
Syncrude scholarship recipient Valisa Ulrich.

Michael Durocher, general manager of Fort McMurray Métis Local 1935, reflects upon the stories of community Elders.



MÉTIS CULTURE AND HISTORY CELEBRATED WITH NEW BOOK

IT REQUIRED HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERS, A METICULOUS COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH AND A PASSION FOR PRESERVING THE PRECIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MÉTIS PEOPLE.



But at last, the *Mark of the Métis* project undertaken by Fort McMurray Métis Local 1935 has been concluded and books are now available.

"We compiled all the interviews and information into a book," says Michael Durocher, general manager of Fort McMurray Métis Local 1935. "It is absolutely incredible and even includes detailed maps."

Prior to her retirement, stakeholder relations advisor Nonnie Roth was granted a six-month secondment from Syncrude to work with Métis Local 1935 on the oral history research project.

The incredibly ambitious project was designed to document, collect, capture and celebrate Métis cultural traditions and contributions. Nonnie interviewed 95 individuals for the project.

There is a real urgency to record the stories of the Métis Elders who have lived on the land and witnessed changes firsthand.

The long-term goal of the project is to establish a northern Métis Research Centre where the history of the Métis can be stored and showcased.



Poplar Point Camp Services provides valued support to Syncrude operations.

LOCAL FIRST NATIONS COOKING UP SUCCESS



TWO LOCAL FIRST NATIONS HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADING FOOD AND SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANIES. THE RESULT IS SOMETHING DECIDEDLY DELICIOUS.

The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Fort McKay First Nation and ESS Canada have formed Poplar Point Camp Services, a joint venture that provides lodging services to oil sands clients like Syncrude.

"Each of the partners brings its own goals and ideals to the partnership," says Erin Meehan, president of ESS North America. "Shared respect, willingness to learn from one another, tri-party commitment to our joint and individual success, and a shared vision of our future makes working together seamless."

The business provides remote camp management, catering, housekeeping, janitorial, maintenance, procurement and logistics services, as well as many other services.

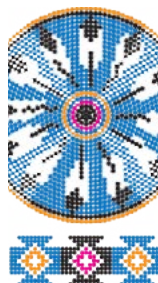
"We have a lot of experience and will continue to work together with Syncrude to meet the needs of people who stay at Mildred Lake Village or eat at the cafeterias and dash-aways," says James King, Poplar Point general manager. "We take great pride in what we do."

Erin believes respectful and mutually beneficial joint venture projects are going to continue to contribute to responsible development. She adds that taking the time to understand and partner with communities—whether those communities are cities, Indigenous groups, private land owners or clients—is the first step in ensuring accountability.

"As development continues to grow," says Erin, "it is even more important that we act responsibly and ensure we continue to remain accountable to those who allow us the opportunity to prosper."

BILATERAL AGREEMENT SHARES OPPORTUNITIES

IN SEPTEMBER, FORT MCMURRAY #468 FIRST NATION AND SYNCRUDE CELEBRATED THE SIGNING OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT.



Effective through April 1, 2014, the agreement aims to identify and address social priorities, socio-economic opportunities, and environmental concerns of the local First Nation.

Around 170 guests attended, including Band councillor Bernadette Dumais.

"It's always nice to get together with the community of our First Nation, as well as the players of industry," says Bernadette.

"It's really important that they get to know who we are, and we get to know who they are."

The agreement also sets out to enhance employment and business development opportunities.

"Having a bilateral agreement between Syncrude and Fort McMurray #468 solidifies our commitment to work together on impacts and opportunities related to our operations," adds Kara Flynn, Syncrude vice president of Government and Public Affairs. "It provides funding for consultation activities, cultural retention programs and a broad range of community initiatives."

Fort McMurray #468 First Nation Band councillor Cleo Reece accepts a gift from Syncrude's vice president of Mining, Greg Fuhr.

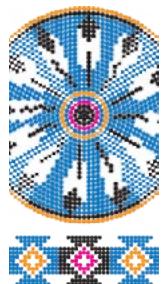




Dreams in Motion duo continues to inspire youth across the country.

Photo: Supplied

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART



THEY'RE THE QUINTESSENTIAL DREAM TEAM PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY—THEY'RE SMART, TALENTED AND A STRIKINGLY ATTRACTIVE PAIR.

After appearing on television in *Canada's Next Top Model* and *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*, Lindsay Willier and James Jones have teamed up to launch Dreams In Motion Inc., a youth empowerment company.

"We host interactive workshops and perform together to help youth focus on building self esteem, goal setting and healthy living," says Lindsay.

This year, Dreams in Motion participated in the INDspire Education Series Career Conference sponsored in part by Syncrude. The series was created to increase awareness of the diverse employment opportunities available to Indigenous youth and to give students an opportunity to interact with and learn from role models, such as Lindsay and James.

Originally from Sucker Creek First Nation, Lindsay earned her Bachelor's Degree in Child and Youth Care at MacEwan University before launching Dreams In Motion with James.

"We travel all over with this powerful message, and we go to some very remote communities only accessible by plane," says Lindsay. "To see the talent, the drive and the passion in these youth is very refreshing. Every single place we go, we walk away smiling."

Lindsay says positive role models helped shape her own life and success.

"My parents have been a huge influence in my life," she says. "My dad was raised in a residential school from the age of six to 13, so he had a lot to overcome, but I am so proud of him, because for the last 26 years, he has been drug-, alcohol- and smoke-free. My mom was born missing an arm, and she never let it slow her down, raising five kids and giving us the best childhood. My parents just celebrated their 27th anniversary."

As a couple, Lindsay and James have great respect for each other. "James has been an incredible support for me," says Lindsay. "He always says to me, 'Don't let success go to your head, and don't let failure go to your heart.' I've had many struggles—such as past relationships that were unhealthy. And now I'm going to the Vancouver Academy of Dramatic Arts, and every time I go to an audition and don't get it, it feels like a failure. But I always want to keep growing and challenging myself, and nothing feels better than that."

YOUTH PROGRAM BREAKING BARRIERS



FOR TWO FORT MCKAY STUDENTS, THIS WAS THE SUMMER THEY TURNED IT ALL AROUND.

While she was very impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of all the students involved in the Fort McKay Youth Summer Employment program this year, coordinator Kerry Trueman says two students stood out in particular.

"We had two youth who were both considered to be high-risk, and had struggled with addictions in the past and were labelled as trouble-makers in the community, but they had perfect attendance and breezed through the program earning awards and credits," says Kerry. "It was just really terrific to see them do so well."

About two dozen Fort McKay students spent their summer working and attending training to earn both cash and high school credits.

Earlier this year, Kerry had approached the provincial government to request that participants in the program be given the opportunity to earn high school credits for attending employment workshops and participating in skills training.

"Students had the potential to earn up to 15 credits, and for kids just one or two credits shy of graduation, it allowed them to graduate in the same year as their fellow classmates," says Kerry. "There was a real sense of pride for these students."

The Fort McKay First Nation once again provided a savings plan to match the earnings saved by program participants who were between the ages of 14 and 18 and were enrolled in full-time studies.

"Normally we end up with about one-third of the students completing the program, but this year, we had 15 students finish out of 21," says Kerry. "It was a great year, and these students worked hard and made a really positive contribution to their futures."



Fort McKay Youth Centre coordinator Kerry Trueman says it was a great year and students "really made a made positive contribution to their futures."



Students examine aerodynamics using specimens of various animals, such as eagle or owl wings.

Photo: University of Alberta

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MEETS WESTERN SCIENCE



WHAT DO EAGLE FEATHERS, ASTRONAUTS AND MODEL AIRPLANES HAVE IN COMMON? THEY ARE ALL PART OF A NEW INTERACTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE INTEREST IN SCIENCE AMONGST ABORIGINAL STUDENTS.

Called *Tales from the Science Buffalo*, it is being delivered by the University of Alberta's Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science & Technology (WISEST) initiative. It consists of five visits

throughout the school year and provides a unique opportunity for sixth grade students to engage in science activities that incorporate Indigenous perspectives. The pilot phase is taking place in Anzac and Fort Chipewyan, and WISEST hopes to expand to other communities in the future.

"Our goal is to establish relationships with the communities and not just go into a school and never return again," says Jen Duffy, WISEST outreach coordinator. "The students look forward to my visits. They get really excited about what we're doing, and more importantly, they're getting really excited about science."

The name of the program comes from University of Manitoba professor Blair Stonechild's book *The New Buffalo*, which describes access to education as the new resource to help Aboriginal people thrive in the 21st century. Each school visit is a chapter in a book of tales that explores and encourages learning through a combination of both traditional knowledge and western science.

The topics for each of the visits correspond to the five units in the Alberta science curriculum. The lessons are designed to be relevant to communities in the Wood Buffalo region and to Indigenous cultures. For example, students explore the significance and aerodynamics of eagle feathers, examine the engineering of aerial firefighting and talk about role models such as the first Native American astronaut, John Herrington.

"It really gives the students something to look forward to," says Denise Hemmings, WISEST chair. "It not only fosters an interest in science, but also gives them one more reason to come to school and to be excited about coming."

DIGGING UP THE PAST



AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS AS A HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR WITH SYNCRUDE, MAGGY HORVATH EXPERIENCED A LESS THAN TYPICAL SHIFT WHEN SHE DISCOVERED WHAT MAY BE A NEARLY COMPLETE PLESIOSAUR AND THE 10TH FOSSIL FOUND ON SYNCRUDE LEASES.

"It's a long-necked plesiosaur, which is a marine reptile with a very long neck, small head and short body. This is a very rare find," says Dr. Don Brinkman, director of Preservation and Research at the Royal Tyrrell Museum.

After unearthing the fossil in November 2011, Maggy followed Syncrude's protocol for fossil finds. This required her to stop digging in the immediate area and notify a Syncrude geologist.

"I think it's great that I'm part of this. It felt pretty good to call my son and let him know that I found a prehistoric fossil while working in the mine," says Maggy. "As operators we always keep our eyes out for a find like this."

Krista Gammon, Syncrude's geologist who liaises with the Royal Tyrrell on fossil discoveries, worked closely with scientists and technicians from the museum while they were examining the site. "We are highly impressed that Maggy was able to see the fossil," says Krista. "It's exciting that this was discovered at Syncrude."

Alberta's oil sands are located in an area that was once part of a prehistoric sea. Several important marine reptile fossils have been discovered at Syncrude, including one found in 2000 which was 110 million years old and declared to be one of the most complete Cretaceous Ichthyosaurs of its age ever discovered in North America. In May, a nearly complete elasmosaur was discovered and estimated to be around 114 million years old.

"Not only was the overburden good places to live, but they were great areas for the marine reptiles to become fossils," says Donald Henderson, curator of Dinosaurs at the Royal Tyrrell Museum. "When they died and went to the seabed, there was enough sand brought in by the rivers to cover them so they could remain there for millions of years."



Shovel operator Maggy Horvath was quick to recognize a rare find when she saw the skeletal remains of an ancient marine reptile while digging in Syncrude's North Mine on November 14.



The annual science fair sparked a lot of curiosity among students at Fort McKay School.

IMAGINATIONS RUN WILD



FORT MCKAY SCHOOL STEPPED INTO THE FUN WORLD OF SCIENCE EARLIER THIS YEAR AT THE 2012 SCIENCE FAIR.

The theme for the event was "Science is Fun" and 75 students from E.C.S. to Grade 8 participated in the event.

"The kids love the science fair, they get right into it. Every year on the day of the science fair, kids are lined up at 7:50 a.m. waiting to get into the school," says school principal Ruth Ryan.

The science fair offered the students the chance to show their projects to parents, the community and

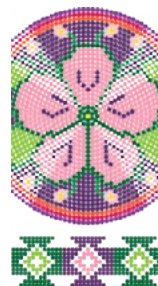
industry. "It's really a great day for the students to display their talents. They get a chance to explain to the guests, visitors and parents what they worked on over the last two weeks," adds Ruth. Some topics chosen by students included how to create your own silly putty, the four seasons and how to make your own lava lamp.

Syncrude's Stakeholder Relations team set up an interactive science booth in the gym. "Our involvement with the School/Industry Committee gives representatives from several companies the chance to participate in the science fair also," says Lana Hill, stakeholder relations advisor. "For our project we focused on our reclamation efforts at Syncrude, the types of plants we are using, and also talked about the traditional medicinal uses of those plants."

Lana also handed out white spruce tree planting kits to each student and visitor at the event. For each kit that is planted and registered by the students, a tree will also be planted in a developing country.

Wilfred Grandjambe, a Grade 4 student, was part of a group that created a science project called *Weaponry*. "We wanted to make weaponry and play with Lego men," says Wilfred. "We built it all from scratch; I wanted to make this to show the different types of weaponry. I like the science fair because it's cool."

ELDERS TOUR SYNCRUDE OPERATIONS



DURING A RECENT TOUR, SYNCRUDE WAS PRIVILEGED TO DEMONSTRATE TO ITS NEIGHBOURS THE COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO REDUCING ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

On September 14, 2012, a delegation of Elders representing the Fort McKay First Nation and Métis Local #63 visited the Mildred Lake facility.

The day began with a presentation from Diane Phillips, senior environmental scientist, on Syncrude's Sulphur Emissions Reduction Project (SERP). The \$1.6 billion investment will retrofit a flue gas desulphurization unit on the operation's two original cokers, reducing emissions by about 60 per cent.

"This is a project that will make the air cleaner," explains Diane. "That's important to Fort McKay."

Elders also learned about the base mine lake water-capping project from research scientist Samantha Tavener.

"I think it's very important," explains Elder Wilfred Grandjambe, regarding the chance to visit Syncrude. "We like to know what's happening and what they're doing."

However, Wilfred also explains that industry's impact on the environment remains a concern for the community. "I understand that Syncrude is really trying hard to make it better every day and every year. But the air, that's the one big problem," he says.

Each year, Syncrude hosts a tour for Elders of local First Nations and Métis Locals to learn about their concerns and ideas.

Research scientist Samantha Tavener discusses the water capping project with Elders Wilfred Grandjambe and Celina Harpe.





Bird counts measure oil sands reclamation success



KEN FOSTER AND CHRISTINE GODWIN BEGIN WORK AT 1:30 IN THE MORNING, DRIVING A HALF-HOUR NORTH FROM FORT MCMURRAY TO SYNCRUDE'S SPRAWLING PROPERTY OFF HIGHWAY 63 IN THE OIL SANDS.

Armed with bug spray, a compass, an air horn to scare away the odd bear and the tiny tools of their trade, they set off into the bush on the site of the petroleum producer's former West Mine.

They flail at mosquitoes and push branches away from their faces as they hike into a forest of aspen, jack pine, poplar and spruce planted in the late 1980s on the reclaimed land. Keeping an eye out for wood bison and coyotes and foxes and deer, by sunrise they are in position and waiting for migrating songbirds to fly into their wispy nets.

For two years, Foster and Godwin have been capturing and banding birds as part of a study that compares their nesting, breeding and survival rates on natural land with the former mine site Syncrude is working to return to its original state.

A collaborative project with the Institute for Bird Populations in California, the program is underwritten by Syncrude and the Oil Sands Developers Group. The data collected is shared with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Alberta's Department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and the U.S. Geological Survey. Results of the study have been promising but inconclusive due to the narrow time frame.

"It is too early to judge the data as being indicative of any trend, but what I can say is that the diversity of species we have found on the reclaimed land is similar to what you

would expect on natural habitat," says Foster, a biologist and president of Calgary firm Owl Moon Environmental. Godwin, also a biologist, is Foster's partner in the business.

"We are catching birds in reclaimed areas, including birds we banded last year that have returned to the same area, and birds that are young, too, so it is supporting production."

Foster and Godwin came up with the protocol for the study and took the idea to industry. Initially a two-year pilot project, it has since been extended to a third year. Using 24 monitoring stations spread across the region, the researchers are assessing how well the birds adapt to reclaimed land. Together, Foster and Godwin banded 1,600 birds at six sites last summer and, working with a team of eight, recently finished banding an additional 3,500 at two dozen stations.

"The results for the first year were so exciting, additional companies became involved," Foster says. "We talk with them about objectives. But at no time do they tell us how and where to do our work."

On a muggy day in late summer, Foster and Godwin pull off to the side of Highway 63, pack their equipment and begin to hike into the restored boreal forest.

"There is a reason the birds come," Foster says, surrounded by a cloud of mosquitoes. "It is a buffet here in the summer."

In a few minutes, they startle a half-dozen bison, part of a herd that belongs to the Fort McKay First Nation, sending the massive animals barrelling across the rolling landscape.

Soon, they come across an anthill upturned by a hungry bear, and patches of berries.



As part of the study, birds are inspected and banded.

After a 20-minute walk, Foster and Godwin reach their monitoring stations and demonstrate how they set up their nets, which are about 13 metres long and two to three metres high. A chickadee flitters dangerously close.

In a normal morning, they catch and band about 50 birds in their nets; occasionally, they capture 100 or more. "In a lot of ways it is like fishing," Foster says. "You get up in the morning and the weather is perfect and you are all excited, but then the fish aren't co-operating. Other days the weather is sketchy and conditions just don't feel right, but you can't help but catch a fish on almost every cast."

A year ago, Foster and Godwin banded 52 species of songbirds. This summer, they banded about eight or 10 species more, including a few on provincial and federal lists of concern. Having finished their field work in mid-August, they are just beginning to analyze data, but the list is long—creepers and finches and jays and kinglets and nuthatches and robins and sparrows and thrushes and warblers.

Foster and Godwin use pliers to carefully fasten the bands, and always work bare-handed—most of the birds are so small and delicate they could be hurt if handled with gloves.

By Marty Klinkenberg. This article is reproduced from the Edmonton Journal with permission.

Waterfowl deterrent system attracts international interest

THE SAME ADVANCED RADAR TECHNOLOGY THAT HELPS KEEP BIRDS AND PLANES APART AT MANY AIRPORTS IS NOW PROTECTING BIRDS FROM CONTACT WITH SYNCRUDE'S TAILINGS PONDS.

The new Accipiter® Bird Protection Radar System is designed to deter birds from tailings ponds by tracking and then activating deterrents.

"It gives us the ability to see three dimensions," says Steve Gaudet, manager of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs. "The radar systems include 300 falcon modules, with flashing strobe lights, high powered acoustic devices and traditional propane-fired noisemakers. When birds are detected, the falcon models start flapping their wings and squawking loudly, while the acoustic devices emit sound to deter birds from the area." The deterrent system has even attracted attention from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, an Accipiter client.

Prior to acquiring the system, Syncrude gathered information on radar and bird protection systems from resources like Transport Canada. "They were a useful source of information on bird deterrent and conservation methods, even though they were a different industry whose aim was to prevent bird and aircraft collisions," says Steve.

In addition to activating deterrents when needed, the new system offers additional benefits towards bird protection. It tracks the movement of every bird in its field of view every couple of seconds and permanently stores the data for analysis.

"If birds are flying over the ponds, we'll get an indication on our monitor," says John Fresz with Syncrude's Bird Environment Team. "As it flies, the bird will leave a trail, so we know where the bird is travelling." This information is then recorded and used to monitor migratory patterns of waterfowl in the area.



The new waterfowl deterrent system includes mechanical falcons and cannons on land and water.

Seed collection helping to grow future forests

An industry group is collecting the seeds that will grow into the shrubs and trees found across reclaimed landscapes.

The vegetation cooperative created by Syncrude and others is assisting operators with recreating functioning forest ecosystems on land reclaimed from oil sands mining.

"This cooperative helps us become one step closer to meeting our commitment of returning the land to a natural state," says Eric Girard, Syncrude vegetation specialist.

As part of the project, Syncrude is conducting new research on shrubs and seed longevity, which has not been done before. We're learning how long we can store the seeds and how long the seeds will remain viable," adds Eric.

Ensuring there is access to a constant and high quality supply of seed is essential and collection activities are ongoing all spring and summer. In 2012, 15 species of shrubs and three species of trees from upland habitat were collected by the vegetation cooperative.

"These species, added to those that Syncrude collects outside of the cooperative, give us a good representative set of woody plants of the boreal forest that were found on our lease prior to the land disturbance," says Eric.

Syncrude is one of several oil sands companies partnering to recreate functioning forest ecosystems by collecting seeds for reclamation purposes.

Spinning the water out of tailings

Syncrude is transforming fluid fine tailings (FFT) into a product that can be used in the reclamation process.

Water capping, composite tails and centrifuge technology are all techniques currently underway at Syncrude.

Centrifuge technology literally spins the water out of the tailings. A soft clay material is left over which can then be used in reclamation. A commercial demonstration project underway at Syncrude consists of eight large centrifuges that will process over one million tons of FFT during this year and next.

"We completed a pilot project in 2010/11 to test the centrifuging technology," says project manager Mike Kazamel. "We took the FFT from the ponds and used centrifuge technology. What you're left with is a semi-solid substance that eventually hardens up enough that you can actually drive a truck on it."

Water, another by-product, is recycled back into plant operations.

Centrifuges remove water from fluid fine tailings. The result is a soft clay material that, within a year, vehicles can easily drive over.



(Left to right) Fort McKay Elder Celina Harpe, Syncrude's vice president of Mining, Greg Fuhr, and Savannah Simpson.

Elders bring spiritual connection to tree planting day

Standing on what was once her uncle's trap line, Fort McKay First Nation Elder Celina Harpe blessed the first seedling placed in the soil at Syncrude's annual Family Tree Planting Day.

"I appreciate that we're having this tree planting day. It will be good for our future generation," Celina told the crowd.

Held in September, the event attracted around 170 Syncrude employees, their families and, for the first time, neighbours from the Fort McKay First Nation. Nearly 1,000 new trees and shrubs were planted at the Sandhill Fen Watershed project area. Species included jack pine, white spruce, red-osier dogwood, wild rose and shrubby cinquefoil. Celina was helped in planting the day's first tree by 11-year-old Savannah Simpson.

"It's important that our children understand why we're here and our responsibility to put the land back," says Leah Hachey, a long range planner in Tailings and Reclamation who brought along her seven-year-old daughter Jamie.

After the final seedling was planted, guests boarded buses for the short ride north to Fort McKay, where everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch, live music and traditional dance.

"All of us at Syncrude would like to thank the community of Fort McKay for hosting our employees and families," says stakeholder relations advisor Lana Hill. "I have heard so much positive feedback from everyone who attended. They really appreciated the opportunity to visit Fort McKay and learn more about local Aboriginal culture."

Environmental monitoring group welcomes new president

In July, the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA) elected Syncrude environmental scientist Diane Phillips as its president.

"She always brings a strong personal commitment to putting the most scientifically sound monitoring system in place," says lead scientist and executive director of WBEA, Dr. Kevin Percy. "I've really come to know and respect Diane over the years for her commitment to the organization and for the knowledge she brings on air quality monitoring."

Diane contributed to the association as a member of the Ambient Air Technical Committee for 10 years and as chair for five. "What stands out for me is her long-term experience and deep knowledge in air quality monitoring and measurement," says Dr. Percy.

During her 32-year career with Syncrude, Diane was involved in overseeing the operation's air monitoring network in the early 1980s and later the transition of air monitoring responsibilities over to WBEA. "It's important that an independent third party conducts the monitoring, so stakeholders have confidence in the data," she says.

WBEA monitors the air in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through a variety of air, land and human monitoring programs. It operates a local network of 15 air monitoring stations and 20 passive monitoring stations.

"We want to make sure the organization remains healthy, has the right resources and, as we grow, remains focused and responsive to stakeholder needs," says Diane.



Senior environmental scientist Diane Phillips is WBEA's new president.



ABORIGINAL RELATIONS SCORECARD

Syncrude Direct Workforce

Total Aboriginal Employees

2011

492

2010	2009	2008	2007
484	479	435	413

Representation in:

Total Workforce (%)

2011

8.6

2010	2009	2008	2007
8.4	8.4	8.1	8.5

Administration, Professional and Technical (%)

2011

5.5

2010	2009	2008	2007
5.4	5.9	5.5	5.3

Trades and Operators (%)

2011

11.2

2010	2009	2008	2007
10.5	11.3	10.2	11.4

Syncrude hired 36 Aboriginal people in 2011. This represents 15.4% of our overall hiring. Of our total workforce, 8.6% are of self-declared First Nations, Métis or Inuit descent.

Education

Interested in a Syncrude scholarship?

Since starting operations in 1978, Syncrude has provided ongoing financial support towards the educational endeavours of students throughout the province. Our goal is to continue building on this success and ensure even greater accessibility to financial resources in the future.

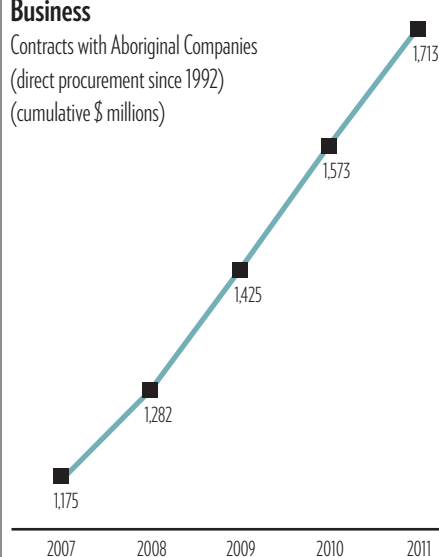
Through major endowments at several Alberta education institutions, students are able to access scholarships focused on a variety of fields, including engineering, nursing, education and environmental sciences. For a complete list of available scholarships, please visit syncrude.ca and click on Community-Syncrude Awards and Scholarships. Many of the awards available are prioritized for Aboriginal and northern Alberta recipients.

Our Aboriginal Business Commitment

Syncrude is committed to providing opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to provide products or services to our operations. In evaluating proposals, preference is given first to local Aboriginal businesses if all other factors in a contract are equal. We also encourage other contractors to employ Aboriginal people and sub-contract work to Aboriginal businesses.

Business

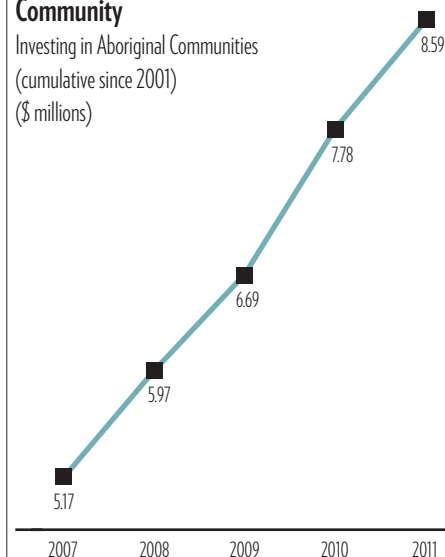
Contracts with Aboriginal Companies
(direct procurement since 1992)
(cumulative \$ millions)



Total Aboriginal business spending for 2011 was \$140 million, the eighth straight year that Syncrude's Aboriginal business volumes have exceeded \$100 million. The cumulative total for Syncrude business with First Nations- and Métis-owned companies since 1992 is now over \$1.7 billion.

Community

Investing in Aboriginal Communities
(cumulative since 2001)
(\$ millions)



Syncrude invested over \$1 million in Aboriginal initiatives and projects during 2011.



Recruitment and Retention

Leadership and Management (%)

2011

5.5

2010	2009	2008	2007
5.8	5.9	5.6	6.0

Aboriginal New Hires (% of all hires)

2011

15.4

2010	2009	2008	2007
10.4	10.8	6.7	4.6

Aboriginal Attrition Rate (%)

2011

5.6

2010	2009	2008	2007
10.2	9.8	11.9	9.8

Aboriginal Employee Service (# of years)

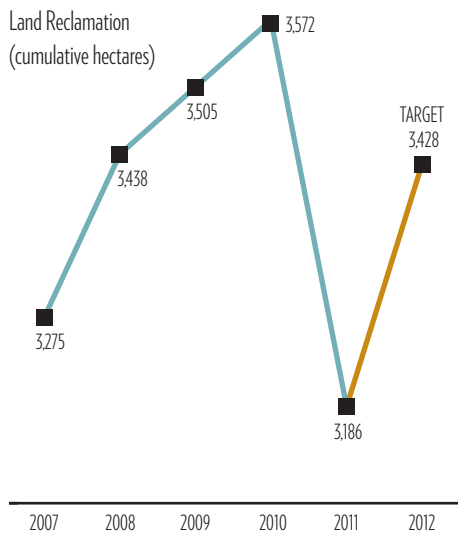
2011

10.2

2010	2009	2008	2007
9.8	9.9	10.4	10.9

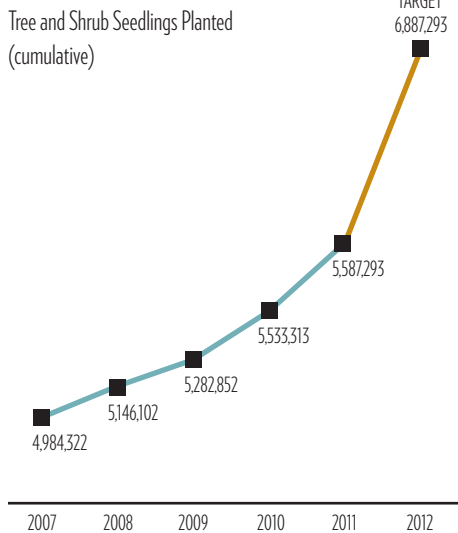
Environment

Land Reclamation
(cumulative hectares)



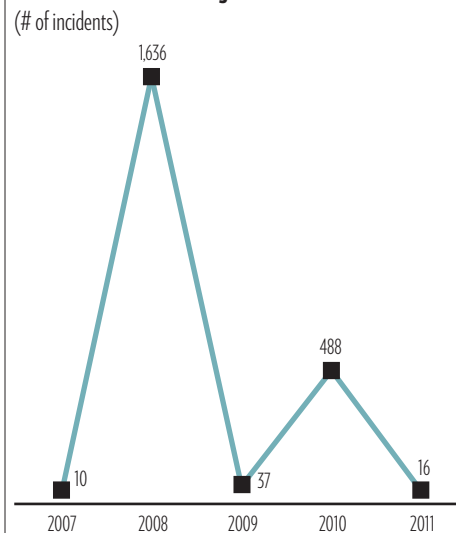
Environment

Tree and Shrub Seedlings Planted
(cumulative)



Avian Incident Tracking

(# of incidents)



Syncrude has permanently reclaimed over 3,000 hectares to date and planted around six million tree and shrub seedlings. Permanent land reclamation numbers have decreased due to changes in the Government of Alberta's definition of permanent reclamation. This has reclassified some land to either temporary reclamation, such as the bison pasture, or land with soils placed and available for revegetation (but on which no planting has yet occurred).

We continue to research ways to improve our waterfowl and bird protection system (see page 37). The above numbers include all bird and waterfowl mortalities related to oiling. Incidents are reported to the Alberta Government Environment and Sustainable Resource Development department.

Our Aboriginal Relations Program

THE GOALS OF OUR ABORIGINAL RELATIONS PROGRAM ARE TO:

- Meet Syncrude's regulatory consultation requirements
- Develop relationships that support effective consultation
- Attract and retain qualified employees
- Ensure our Aboriginal business development program provides value to all parties
- Gain support for Syncrude among local Aboriginal communities
- Target Aboriginal community investment to areas that support Syncrude's business objectives
- Ensure Aboriginal communities have adequate capacity to engage in all areas of oil sands development
- Consider traditional land uses and traditional environmental knowledge in our Environmental program

Progress toward these goals is stewarded by Syncrude's Aboriginal Relations Steering Committee, whose mandate is to ensure that Syncrude delivers on its six key commitment areas. The Committee includes senior managers and advisors from throughout Syncrude who meet monthly to guide and champion strategies to ensure positive outcomes for Aboriginal stakeholders. An Aboriginal Relations team supports the Committee; they manage the day-to-day interactions and relationships with local stakeholders.



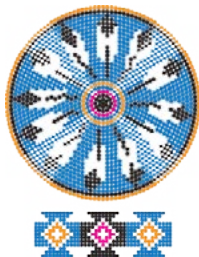
The Aboriginal Relations Steering Committee

Back Row	Doug Webb Aboriginal Business Liaison	Kara Flynn Vice President, Government and Public Affairs	Colleen Legdon Manager, Community Relations	Christine Simpson Stakeholder Relations Coordinator	Donelda Patterson Manager, Workplace Policies	Peter Read Vice President, Strategic Projects
Front Row	Fred Payne Manager, Regulatory Affairs	Dr. Tom Lawley Chief Medical Office	Greg Fuhr Vice President, Mining	Chaim Lum Manager, Procurement	Robert Hargreaves Manager, Facilities	

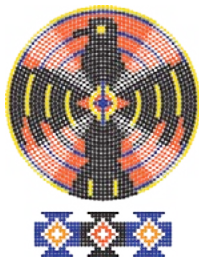
Missing in photo: Steve Gaudet, Manager, Environmental Affairs and Lana Hill, Stakeholder Relations Advisor



SYNCRUDE'S ABORIGINAL RELATIONS PROGRAM IS FOCUSED ON SIX KEY COMMITMENT AREAS: CORPORATE LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND ENVIRONMENT.



COMMUNITY



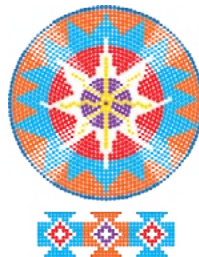
LEADERSHIP



EMPLOYMENT



ENVIRONMENT



BUSINESS



EDUCATION



Our Aboriginal Relations Team

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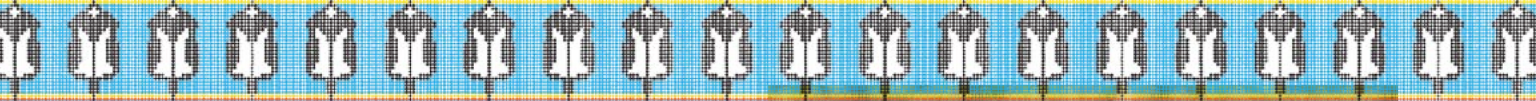
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Syncrude has played a proud role over the years in supporting individuals and communities to reach their goals.

A Note from Scott

I hope you enjoyed reading this year's edition of *Pathways*. This is Syncrude's tribute to the many remarkable journeys of Aboriginal people in our region and across Canada. Their inspiring stories speak to ever-strong connections with family, nature and community.

Take Richard Golosky, for example. In a world full of supermarkets and bustling shopping malls, he and his children still favour their small cabin in the woods, where they collect blueberries and manage their trapline.

Or Syncrude employee Ron Janvier or retiree Garry Flett—both committed to staying in their community, building new enterprises and giving back.

Renowned Canadian artist Alex Janvier also reflects on his relationship with nature and how it has inspired masterpieces now found in museums and art galleries around the world.

At Syncrude, we too believe in the value of connections and *Pathways* is just one way we reach out to local communities. We believe in a principled approach to consultation in which we establish long-term relationships based on collaboration, honesty and integrity. Furthermore, we aim to strengthen the ties of understanding through direct and respectful dialogue.

In any relationship, it's important to recognize and celebrate great milestones. Without a doubt, in Wood Buffalo, we have many. My thanks to everyone who contributed their time and stories. I hope readers find as much inspiration from them as I do.

Scott

Scott Sullivan
President and CEO



These organizations and initiatives recognize Syncrude for its expressed commitment and comprehensive programs to support Aboriginal people.

EXPRESSIONS OF STRENGTH

Preserving traditional knowledge is important to Aboriginal people throughout the Wood Buffalo region. Rita Marten shares the value of words by teaching the Cree language to guests at the Mikisew Cree First Nation's Cultural Retreat.

Rita Marten



www.syncrude.ca

The Syncrude Project is a joint venture undertaking among Canadian Oil Sands Partnership #1, Imperial Oil Resources, Mocal Energy Limited, Murphy Oil Company Ltd., Nexen Oil Sands Partnership, Sinopec Oil Sands Partnership, and Suncor Energy Oil and Gas Partnership.



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