

pathways

SYNCRUDE CANADA LTD. ABORIGINAL REVIEW 2013

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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.

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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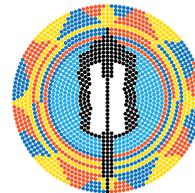
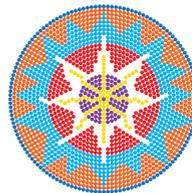
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The stories in *Pathways* reflect the six key commitment areas that are the focus of Syncrude's Aboriginal Relations program: These include: Business Development, Community Development, Education and Training, Employment, the Environment and Corporate Leadership. 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.

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.

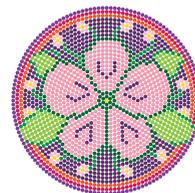
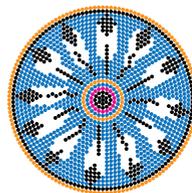


EMPLOYMENT

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.

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.

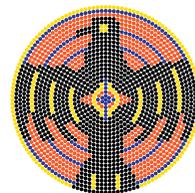
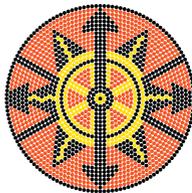


ENVIRONMENT

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.



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.

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Front Cover photo: Artist Frederick McDonald





TRAPLINES and DRAGLINES

By Will Gibson Photography: George Webber

Having worked in the oil sands for 30 years, Chief Ron Kreutzer wants to ensure the rest of his members at the Fort McMurray 468 First Nation receive the same opportunities.

Elected Chief in 2011, the Syncrude retiree has begun a major push to bring more money and more jobs to the Band's 700 members, about half of which live on the Band's 5,000-acre reserve south of Fort McMurray.

"We've seen development throughout the region, from SAGD sites such as Long Lake and Surmont near our reserve to the mines further north," says Ron. *(cont.)*

The 66-year-old's own career tells the story of the changes in the region. A self-described "jack of all trades" who grew up in Anzac, just east of the Band's reserve, Ron also received a "bush" education, working traplines in the winter and working as a surveyor on the region's rivers in the summer. "There were plenty of fur-bearing animals around here: lynx, fox, wolves, wolverines, rabbits, squirrels, pretty much anything

you could name. I remember we trapped 2,600 squirrels one winter," he says. "I also worked on a boat that cleared all the stumps and trees from the water on the Athabasca so the boats could navigate through."

After working as a roughneck on rigs that began drilling in the region in the 1960s and 1970s, Ron heard about an opportunity to work with Bechtel, the contractor building the Mildred Lake site for Syncrude.

"They sent somebody to Anzac to recruit labourers to help build the plant. I think they took seven of us," Ron recalls. "I decided to stick around even though it was a really long drive to work."

Ron became a heavy equipment operator, working on the giant draglines and bucketwheel reclaimers at the original base mine. "I basically learned on the job; we all did," Ron says. "I wound up staying with Syncrude



for 28 years before I retired in 2005.”

But Ron had no intention of whiling away his days. Instead, he ran for Chief in order to help the current generation realize the benefits of development.

“Our goal is to get more work with the oil companies, both with Christina River Enterprises, as well as member-owned companies, such as Centrefire—a heavy

equipment contractor—and Gregoire Lake General Contracting Ltd.,” says Ron. “We’ve hired Steve Jani to head Christina Lake Enterprises and work with industry. We want to bring money into the reserve as well as create jobs for our members, whether they live on or off the reserve.”

While wanting to engage with industry, Ron does worry about some of the

side effects of development, including the state of Gregoire Lake. “I stopped fishing in there 10 years ago, when we started finding worms in the fish,” says Ron, whose house overlooks the lake. “There’s too much traffic on that lake and a lot of high-powered boats; we would like to see a horsepower limit put in for boats and watercraft on the lake.” *(cont.)*

“There’s too much traffic on that lake and a lot of high-powered boats; we would like to see a horsepower limit put in for boats and watercraft on the lake.”



A hand in a dark jacket reaches out from the left side of the frame towards a blurred forest background. The hand is open, palm facing up. In the center of the image, there is a blue callout box with a white border containing a quote.

**“We want to bring money
into the reserve
as well as create jobs
for our members, whether
they live on or
off the reserve.”**

Ron sees—and hears—how population growth in the region has brought some unwelcome changes. “You don’t hear the songbirds in the woods anymore,” he says. “That probably has something to do with the magpies, who never

used to be up here when I was a kid. They followed the people up here.”

Even with his reservations about some of the impacts brought by oil sands development, Ron is committed to helping Fort McMurray 468 First Nation to adapt

and benefit from it while working with industry to minimize the impact.

“We want to work with the oil companies because they are not leaving,” Ron says. “It’s important for our people to benefit from what is happening all around us.” ●



FRED McDONALD
An
**ARTIST'S
JOURNEY**
COMES FULL CIRCLE

“All children are artists.
The problem is how to remain
an artist once he grows up.”

- Pablo Picasso

By Will Gibson Photography: George Webber Artwork: Frederick McDonald Jr.



Frederick McDonald Jr. never struggled to find inspiration growing up, either in the pristine wilderness of the Boreal forest or from the people who shaped his childhood.

The acclaimed artist hopes to pass along some of those lessons to the next generation of young people growing up in the Fort McKay First Nation amongst changing landscapes and external impacts, from iPhones to industrial development around the reserve.



“Fort McMurray was a great place to grow up, to be a boy, to learn about life. There are a lot of great memories from that time,” says Fred, the Fort McKay First Nation’s director of Culture and Special Events. “A big part of that was down to my parents Margaret and Fred. They taught me so much.” *(cont.)*

A resourceful man, Fred's father built his own house and worked at different times as a dozer operator, carpenter, tire man and concrete finisher. He also enjoyed carving things out of the dead wood found on the banks of the Athabasca River, an artistic bent inherited by his son.

"By the time I was in high school, art came naturally to me. When I went to university my goal was to be the team photographer for the Toronto Maple Leafs, even though I happened to be a big New York Rangers fan," Fred says with a smile.

As most young men did at the time, however, Fred put off university and took a site job at Syncrude as a pipefitter and steamfitter, where he worked for 10 years before deciding he needed to see the wider world. In Australia, he experienced an epiphany. "It was the first time I started to think of myself as a Native person," he says. "I saw what was happening with the Aborigines, as 'they' call them, and how they were viewed as a problem."

Returning to Canada, Fred decided to pursue his avocation and began painting and broadening his horizons at the University of Calgary, earning both his undergraduate degree and Master in Fine Arts, with a minor in English. Here, Fred stood out. *(cont.)*







Fred McDonald and
his daughter, Raven





“It started to become a job and I didn’t want that, and I wanted to work here in Fort McKay, particularly with preserving our culture.”



“In university, I had a hard time understanding the attitude of some of the artists in the program. They were coming from a different place. For them, art was ‘ME, ME, ME.’ I was coming from a much different place as an artist in wanting to showcase First Nations culture and share it. It wasn’t about me; it was about my people. I wound up refusing to hold my exhibit on campus, because of nefarious situations instigated by other students, and went to the Banff Centre where I did my Master’s exhibition, which is traditionally done at the university.”

At the same time, Fred also grew through studying other artists, notably the influential Ojibwa artist Arthur Shilling, whose portraits stood out for their sentimentality in a time of turbulence.

“At that time, there was lots of talk about colonization in Canada so there were a lot of angry Native people painting angry pictures. I wanted to show the positive about Aboriginal culture,” he explains. “And Shilling really spoke to me through his use of colour and sentimentality of his subjects, particularly Mike St. Germaine (*Old Mike—Sitting in Arm Chair*). They were lovingly portrayed. He cared about his people and how he portrayed them.”

The great Mexican muralists of the 1920s—Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jose Clemente Ozozco—served as inspirations and influences, both in terms of their vision and their approach to life. “There’s a famous story about Rivera, who was paid \$20,000 by the Rockefellers, which was an enormous sum of money in the 1930s, to paint one of his monumental murals in New York. It was called *Man at the Crossroads* but they asked him to remove an image of Lenin from the painting. He refused to do it so they paid him the money and took down the mural,” Fred says. “So Rivera went down to the Palacio de Bellas Arts in Mexico and repainted it. I wanted to look beyond Canada for influences because there is no great national art beyond the Group of Seven. The scope and detail of the Mexican muralist’s work really spoke to me.”

With his art adorning private collections and public galleries, Fred’s body of work spoke to his own growing influence in Canadian cultural circles. But after many years of taking commissions for works that hang in the offices of corporate headquarters and public halls, Fred saw the need to give back to the community and region that nurtured him, and put down his brush and easel. “I needed another challenge as art was no longer challenging me.”

“It started to become a job and I didn’t want that, and I wanted to work here in Fort McKay, particularly with preserving our culture,” he says. “We’ve started holding culture camps up at Moose Lake, where youths in the community spend time in the bush with Elders and learn about our traditions.”

By separating the young people from their iPhones and Xboxes and steeping them in the deeds of their ancestors and learning to track animals, and catch and clean fish, the young people get a chance to experience what Fred and past generations did in the region. Through that is one of the ways in which he hopes to help preserve the identity of the Fort McKay First Nation. And maybe even inspire other young artists at the same time. ●

MASTER OF THE
MÉTIS
J
I
G


By John Copley



He's a writer, a singer, a storyteller, an auto body mechanic, an educator and a multi-talented musician. He's also well-known in the province as one of the best when it comes to performing his traditional dance, the western Canadian Métis jig.

His name is Corbin Poitras.

"I was born into a musical family," smiles the 25-year old Elk Point resident, "so I guess it's just natural that I love song and dance. I think I began learning the steps when I was about three years old but I didn't begin competing in talent shows until I was six."

Appearing on stage and in front of large audiences for as long as he can remember, Corbin credits his musical family and his revered fiddle-playing dad, Homer Poitras, who passed away in 2010, for both his melodic talents and his love of family, friends and heritage.

"My dad instilled a sense of Métis pride throughout the family," notes Corbin. "He brought me up to be a proud Métis person, a man who puts family first, honours his commitments and respects his culture. I love performing and do so quite often, but I also enjoy sharing my culture in other ways."

And that includes sharing his knowledge with students.

"I've been very fortunate in that regard," he says. "Going out to the schools and talking to the kids



is something that gives me great pleasure. I've been doing it for some time now but was particularly pleased when I was invited to Fort McMurray last October to participate in a project sponsored by Syncrude and several other resource sector industries. I was invited to meet with students and to share my culture with them. I was invited back earlier this year and visited five schools in the region; it was a great experience. The students really had a good time and I was thrilled to see how willing they were to participate and to learn."

Corbin, chosen as one of this year's scholarship recipients at the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards, is also pursuing a journeyman's ticket in auto body mechanics and a Bachelor of Arts in Education.

"My wife and I will soon see the birth of our first child, so right now that's my priority," he explains. "I should have my journeyman's ticket sometime early next year and I have already completed one year toward my education degree."

Sharing his culture and his heritage with students through stories, song and dance is a path that Corbin says he will continue to pursue well into the future.

"My family is very supportive; they want me to continue because they know how important it is to share your knowledge and to be proud of who you are. Teaching is something I thoroughly enjoy and I really appreciate every opportunity I get to share my culture. For me, sharing Métis culture with others isn't a job, it's a way of life; it's who I am." ●



Love and respect for the environment is a value deeply ingrained within the community of Fort Chipewyan and in one resident in particular.

whole life. “I was always working on the trapline or getting out and listening to the birds after a long winter when everything is coming alive in the spring.”

Sharing his knowledge of the land has been a lifelong ambition. One example is his volunteer work for the Centre for Environmental Indigenous Resources (CEIR), where for almost six years he

Syncrude Aboriginal business liaison Doug Webb speaks highly of the accomplished business leader. “People like Sonny who support their communities and establish positive business role models in the region set the stage for the next set of entrepreneurs who can develop growth opportunities for independent, self-sufficient enterprises.”

NORTHERN STAR

By Marissa Ho, Kevin McLean



Sonny Flett (above) shares the stage with other recipients at the annual Indspire Awards.

Photography: Indspire

In fact, Métis Elder Sonny Flett was recognized earlier this year by the Indspire Awards for his lifelong commitment to building bridges of understanding between traditional knowledge and industry.

“Everything turned out great. I have to give credit to Indspire—the way they had it all organized was really awesome,” Sonny says of the award ceremony. “I also had 18 family members come out who are all really happy for me. Things like this really give the younger generation a little boost to keep working with the environment.”

Sonny, a councilor with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, has been closely connected to the outdoors his

taught students about various woodland plants and their medicinal purposes.

Sonny also has a keen business sense. Since 1982, he has provided transportation services for Syncrude’s Fort Chipewyan Rotational Employment Program. This program enables participants to be employed by the company while remaining active residents of their community. Fly-in/fly-out transportation and Fort McMurray-based accommodation is provided by Syncrude to residents of the remote northern community.

In addition, Sonny was a key player in creating such successful ventures as Akita-Wood Buffalo Drilling Ltd. and Wood Buffalo Catering Ltd.

For Sonny, the crossroad between traditional and contemporary provides an opportunity for growth, and he has done a lot of work to encourage a cooperative relationship between industry and Aboriginal people. “We have to work hand-in-hand with industry to protect the environment,” Sonny says. “It’s not an overnight deal—it’s a long process and we have to start with a positive dialogue.”

Congratulations to Sonny as the recipient of the 2013 Indspire Award for Environment & Natural Resources. Syncrude is proud to be a major sponsor of the annual Indspire Awards. ●



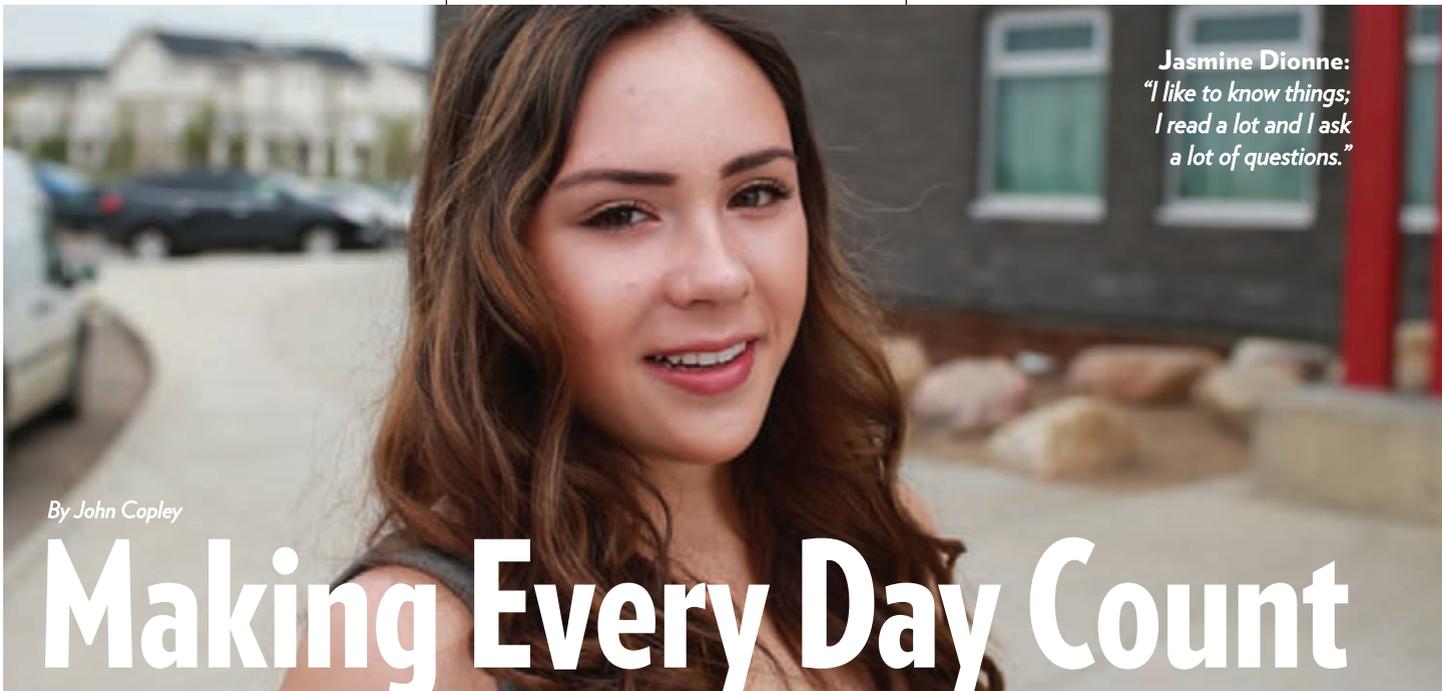
Being chosen as a recipient of a Belcourt Brosseau Métis Award was a proud moment and special honour for 17-year-old Jasmine Dionne.

Leaving home for the first time is the biggest obstacle Jasmine will have to overcome. “It won’t be easy, especially for my mom. Our family is very close and the distance will inhibit regular weekend travel, but we’ll make it work; opportunities like I have right now don’t come without a bit of sacrifice.”

Jasmine was encouraged by her mom and dad to pursue law as a viable career

count. Do that and there will be no looking back.”

Jasmine is the fourth recipient of the Syncrude scholarship through the Belcourt Brosseau Métis awards program, an initiative established at the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) in 2001 by the directors of the Canative Housing Corporation, Orval Belcourt, Dr. Herb Belcourt and Georges R. Brosseau Q.C.



Jasmine Dionne:
“I like to know things; I read a lot and I ask a lot of questions.”

By John Copley

Making Every Day Count

Photography: Bob Nylen

A graduate from Fort McMurray’s Holy Trinity Catholic High School this past year, Jasmine is currently enrolled at the University of Calgary and has aspirations of becoming a corporate lawyer. “I know it will take a lot of hard work before I can reach my goals, but I’m up to the challenge,” she says.

Maintaining an 88 per cent average, Jasmine graduated with honours and was awarded for academic excellence. “I worked hard in school, maintained my grades and stayed away from activities that could have been a distraction. This award has given me new focus; it’s like I’m representing the city and the entire municipality of Wood Buffalo and that gives me even more incentive to succeed.”

option. “Mostly because of my interests—and my personality,” she laughs. “I like to know things; I read a lot and I ask a lot of questions.”

The first one in her family to attend university, Jasmine is hopeful that her cousins, friends and others will see her as a role model and perhaps put out the extra effort to ensure they also have an opportunity to pursue successful careers. To those still in junior and senior high school, she offers this advice: “It can be tough at times, but when it is, look toward the bigger picture and ask yourself: if I quit today, what will I think of myself tomorrow? To succeed, even at the high school level, we have to persevere, stick with the program, turn in every assignment and make every day

The goal is to help Métis Albertans realize self-sufficiency through post-secondary education. Since 2002, the awards have provided more than \$4.5 million and more than 1,000 awards to more than 700 Métis students at institutions across Alberta and beyond—making it the largest non-governmental source of student funding for Métis students in Canada.

“We very much appreciate the support we receive from our corporate sponsors,” notes the program’s marketing manager, Theresa Majeran. “These outstanding companies are helping to educate Aboriginal youth and, in doing so, are creating great hope where there was little and opportunity where once there was none.” ●



The Boostrom family celebrates life through music, harmony and song.

Mel plays in The Shantelle Davidson Band, along with Dan Gillies and the band's namesake. A member of Métis Local 1935, he is known to play pretty much anything with strings and has been doing so since he was 12.

"I love country music and I love the fans. This is music with a good, honest message," says Mel. "Music definitely

Both his daughters are completely at ease on stage and in life. Mel remembers the time his youngest daughter requested country music performer Gord Bamford's autograph, and then without hesitation, handed it back for a do-over stating, "Excuse me, but you misspelled my name."



The **Boostrom** family: (L to R) Karlie, Deanna, Kelsea and Mel

Photography: Lucas Leung

A Life in Tune

By Shannon Sutherland

Mel Boostrom laughs as he flips through his photo album recalling memories and moments with family, fellow musicians and music superstars.

"It's kind of crazy when I look through this and see all the people we've been blessed to meet and play with over the years," says the local performer and Syncrude panel operator. "George Canyon, Reba McEntire, Dierks Bentley, Tom Cochrane, One More Girl, Chilliwack..."

...and the list goes on...

runs in the family, and our Métis culture has been an influence as well. My cousins also have a band called Nicely Put Together, and the culture just pours through them."

Mel and his wife, Deanna, who plays and sings as well, have two daughters, Karlie, aged 12, and Kelsea, aged seven.

"My daughter was humming before she could talk," says Mel of Karlie. "It was really her who got me started with music again after I had stopped for a while. I started playing so she could start singing along. We started playing festivals and, before you know it, winning competitions—even with her competing against adults."

Mel says Gord laughed and said, "Now give that back to me. I don't want Kelsea with an 'A' telling everyone that I spelled her name wrong."

The life of a musician can sometimes mean a life on the road, but Mel tries not to travel too much. He wants his family to enjoy a "normal lifestyle" but admits music will always be deeply woven into the fabric of their family.

"We love it," says Mel. "We get some beautiful musicians and lifelong friends coming through our home, and have some amazing experiences.

"We're thankful for every moment." ●



It was 1,000 pens that helped Métis entrepreneur Todd Pruden write the next chapter in his story.

A former school teacher and former police officer, Todd has also carved out a cultural niche in the promotional industry allowing him to differentiate his business with a distinctive product line.

“Dreamline originally sold promotional products such as jackets, caps, flashlights, travel mugs, decals, and so forth, but I began to see a need for introducing

“I’m very passionate about giving back to the community of Fort McMurray. I grew up in Fort McMurray, went to school here, played sports here, went to college here and even came back as a teacher at Timberlea Public School from 1991 until 1993. I have been blessed to grow up here and I would truly love to return the favour by finding ways to give back.”

A DREAM BUSINESS

By Shannon Sutherland

Photography: Sheila Hahn

“I still remember my first sale,” says Todd, the CEO of Dreamline Promotions Inc. “An old friend of mine, Ryan Pinkney, ordered 1,000 pens.” Now, 10 years later, Todd has grown his business to serve a wide range of clients from minor hockey league teams looking for jerseys, hoodies and jackets to multinational companies requiring thousands of products.

Established in 2003, Dreamline Promotions is a locally owned and operated Aboriginal company, a member of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) and a member of the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce.

“other lines of products,” he says. “We began to carry Aboriginal products including dream catchers, talking sticks and other Native crafts and jewelry.”

He says as Dreamline grows and the sales increase, he has been able to give back to the community.

“I have a foundation currently being created and plan on supporting local community organizations through it,” says Todd.

Todd knows that all the supporting characters in his story could someday be authors of their own success stories, and he wants to see that happen.

“I offer to mentor young people with the entrepreneurial spirit,” he says. “I speak with students in schools and make myself available to work with those that have a vision of where they see themselves in the business world. I believe that it is critical to find a way to give back to your community.” ●

When the lights dimmed and the music rose, the 189-seat theatre was filled to capacity. A light fog drifted across the stage glistening softly into fainting lights as a dream-like creature wearing the skeleton of a large sturgeon fish danced slowly in the distance. Thus began *Where the Blood Mixes*, a highly acclaimed award-winning play that deals with the aftermath of the now defunct Indian Residential School system.

Written, notes playwright Kevin Loring, “to expose the shadows below the surface of the community, and to celebrate its survivors,” the play appeared at Theatre Network in Edmonton earlier this February.

TURNING DARKNE



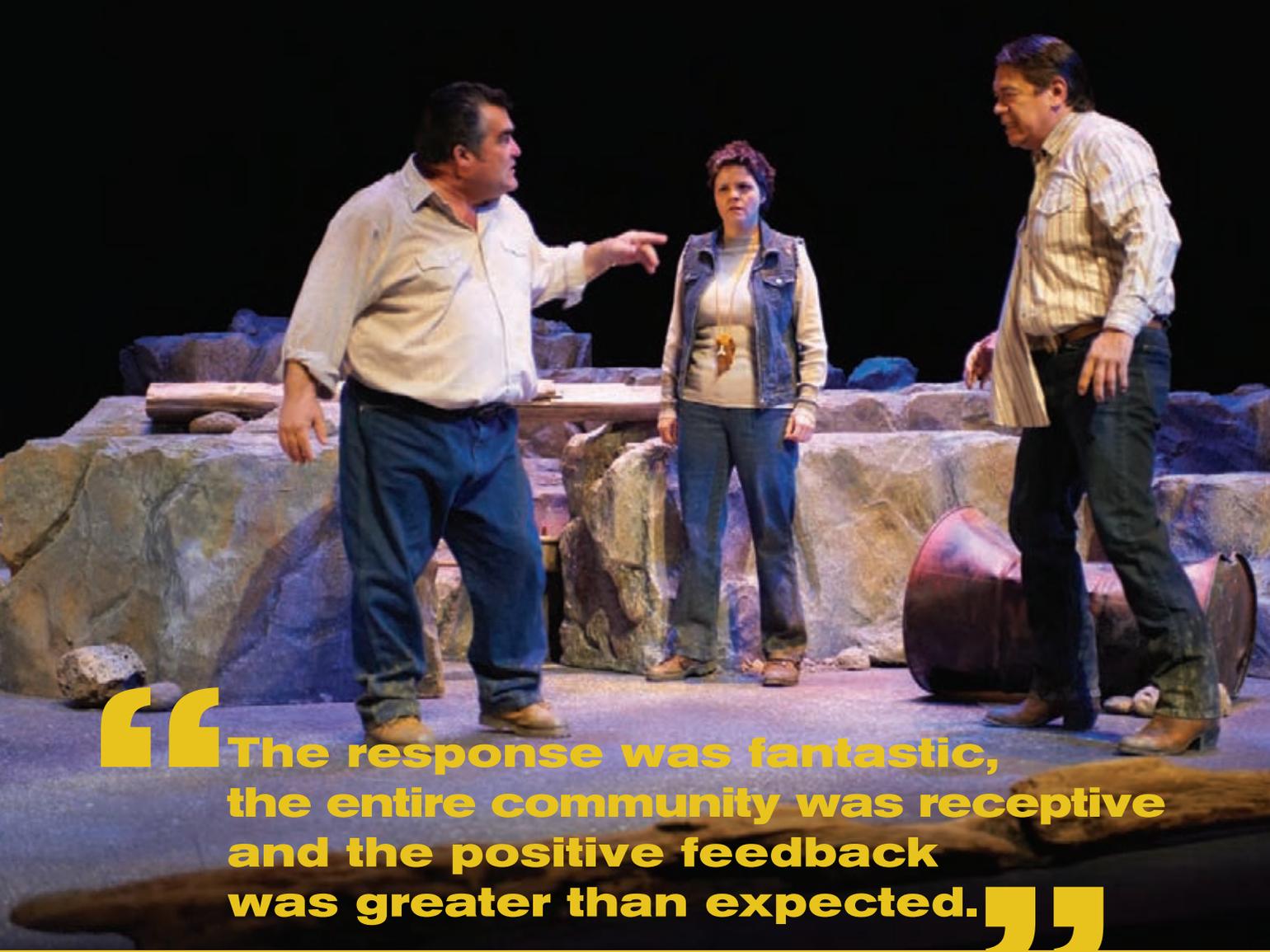
“The play deals with a very unpleasant piece of Canada’s history,” notes Gemini-winning actor, Lorne Cardinal, “but it is a story that needs to be told, not just for the people who went to the schools, but also for the people who know nothing about them.” *(cont.)*



SS INTO DAYLIGHT

By John Copley

An award-winning play provides insights into the residential school system and its ongoing impacts.



“The response was fantastic, the entire community was receptive and the positive feedback was greater than expected.”

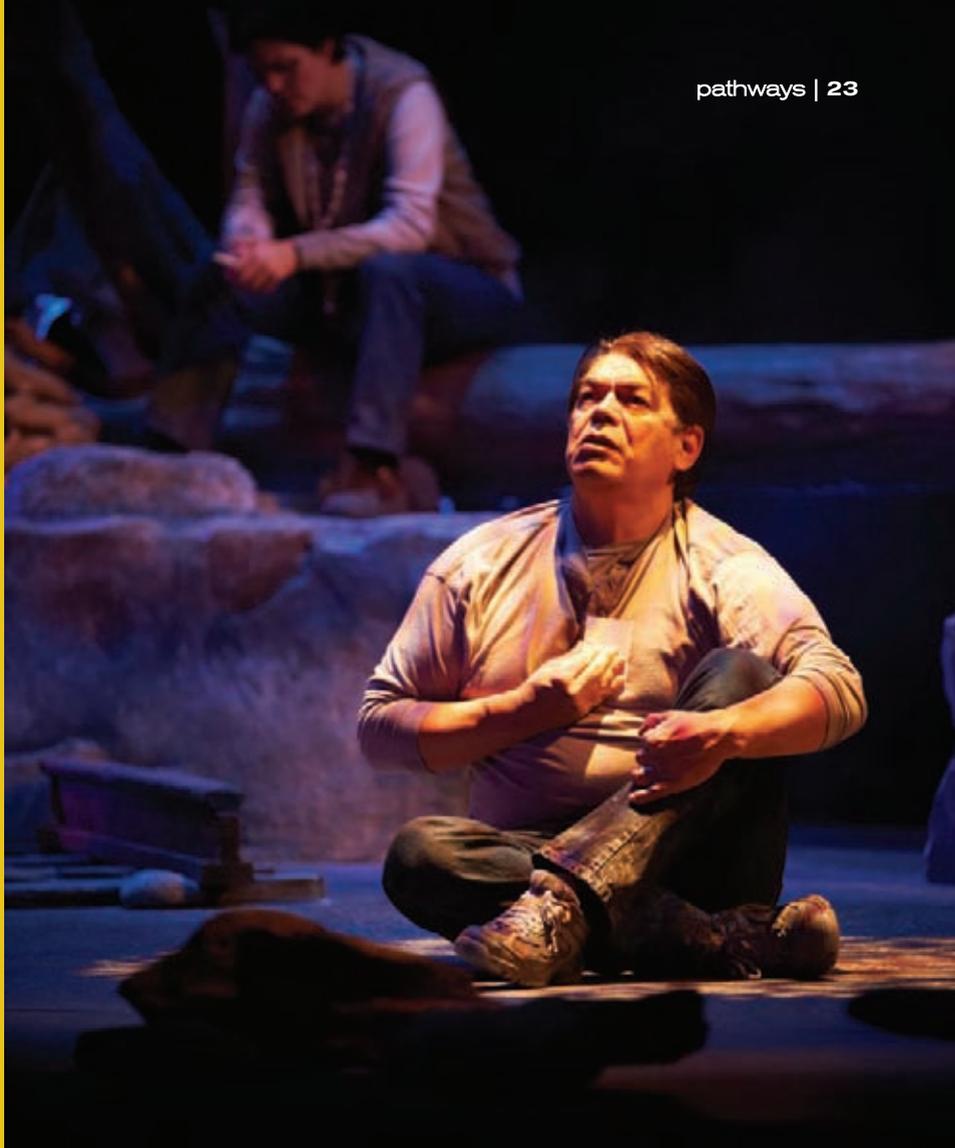
Cardinal, who played the role of a residential school survivor, was moved by the storyline and often thought of his parents, both residential school survivors, when he took to the stage. His years of experience as an actor helped him through the tough spots, but it was the reaction of the sold-out audiences that moved him the most.

“The room was full for almost every performance and the audiences really responded to the message that the playwright was looking for,” he says. “They watched, they clapped, they gasped, they cried and they went home knowing a little more than they did when they walked

into the theatre—and that’s what’s important.”

Winner of the 2009 Governor General’s Literacy Award for Drama, *Where the Blood Mixes* is a heart-wrenching, gut-twisting tale that delves into the lives of two former residential school students who, 20 years after their experience, have not managed to overcome their despair nor restore the self-esteem that the school’s policies stripped away. Passion, anger, sadness, violence, humour and joy are just a few of the emotions that audiences discovered when they attended the play.

“I was surprised when I first heard the stories about what went on in those schools,” notes 44-year-old Edmonton theatre-goer Melissa Smith, “but I was shocked when I found out that what I’d heard those many years ago was true. I went to the play to learn more and I was rewarded with an outstanding cast, a great play and much more insight into the hardships that Aboriginal society continues to face each day. I learned a great deal about the pain the students dealt with and I think that healing will be complete when every Canadian stands up and speaks out when others fail to think twice before passing judgement.”



Director Bradley Moss was pleased with the quality of the play, the performance of his actors and the number of seats that were occupied throughout the play's three-week run in Alberta's capital.

"Of the 4,300 seats available in Edmonton," he says, "almost 4,000 were filled. That is an excellent percentage and much of the credit is due to the hard work of outreach coordinator Rosealie Grey."

Rosealie was brought on stream by Theatre Network thanks in part to a grant by the Edmonton Community Foundation and Syncrude's sponsorship. Her expertise as an organizer and planner paid off.

"I made a lot of phone calls and talked to a lot of people," she smiles, "and in the end I think we accomplished what we set out to do."

She contacted Aboriginal and mainstream media, reached out to high schools, post-secondary institutions and numerous youth organizations. She connected with Aboriginal communities, organizations and businesses by making calls, utilizing social media, sending out emails, handbills and newsletters and by visiting them in person. "The response was fantastic," she says. "The entire community was receptive and the positive feedback was greater than expected. The

cast was invited to participate in meet-and-greet sessions with students and Elders. Student matinées included question-and-answer periods, and outreach events were held with playwright Kevin Loring and the cast.

"It was definitely an experience that I would enjoy participating in again. Thanks to the support the outreach project received from Syncrude, we were able to reach out to a far broader audience and the results were evident by the numbers of people who came out to see the play." ●

June 17 2013



Over \$300,000 had been raised as of October 2013 to assist in recovery projects.

AFTER



A History Worth Preserving, Stories Worth Sharing

Heritage Park safeguards the cultural riches of northeastern Alberta for future generations

By Chelsey Hynes

Our region is an ever-changing melting pot of diversity and culture. Preserving the memories and experiences is the Fort McMurray Historical Society, whose collection at Heritage Park boasts hundreds of artifacts that paint a colourful picture of the past.

In particular, Aboriginal culture has had a tremendous impact on shaping the region into what it is today, and significant pieces now call Heritage Park home.

However, flooding in June 2013 put Heritage Park and its invaluable historical collections, archives and buildings at risk. Since then, the community has opened their hearts and wallets to assist the organization with relief efforts, including a \$75,000 donation from Syncrude.

While work continues on rehabilitating the six-acre site, Heritage Park was gracious to allow photographer George Webber and writer Chelsey Hynes to capture some of its important Aboriginal artifacts and present them here for *Pathways*.

REFLOOD



ARROWS Arrows would be hand-made out of whatever wood was available. Individual preference was also a factor. Rocks or bone would often be used for the sharp tip, and bird feathers accompanied the tail end to provide accuracy while firing.

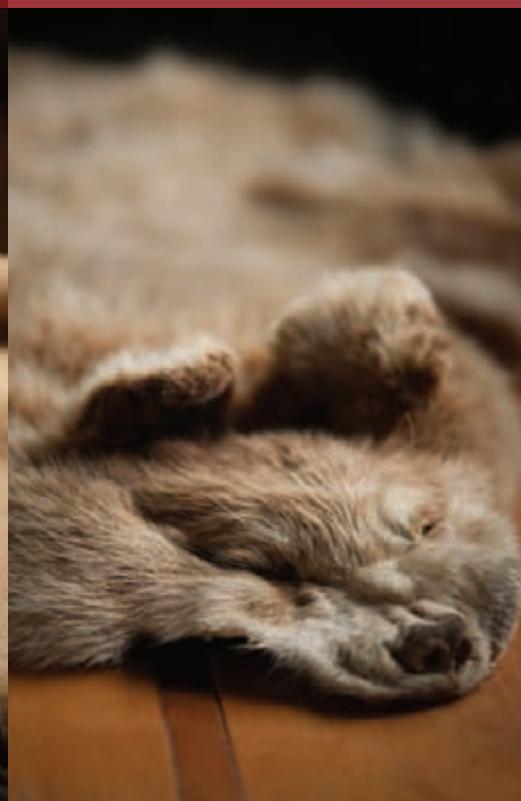
COIN POUCH This coin purse was made out of birch bark, an ideal material to work with. Birch bark, plentiful in the region, could hold water, or be written on, molded or burned. It was also used to create canoes, containers and paper.



MOCCASINS Each pair of moccasins is an example of great craftsmanship and artistry. Moccasins were worn inside accommodations as well as out in the elements. They are soundless on snow, which provided great advantages while hunting, and could be strapped into snowshoes. Beading and decoration were personal preferences and sometimes they were lined with fur. *(Donated by Mrs. Frances Jean)*



ANTLER & FOX PELT Fort Chipewyan is the oldest settlement in Alberta and was the major stopover for fur trading in northern Canada. Hunting, trapping and fishing were all vital and provided much needed meat, hides, furs and tools to the First Nations and Métis people.





QUILL BOX While porcupine was a good source of food, its quills were also put to use. This handmade quill box was made from porcupine quills and would store small items. *(Donated by Marg De Hoog)*

ARCHER'S QUIVER & BOW Each bow was designed to fit the archer's hands. The grip and width had to be comfortable and the wood would be hewed for each individual person when possible. Traditionally they were made of wood and sinew.



WOMAN'S PURSE The traditional art of leather work and beading have a long history. Beading detail would be a personal preference and any materials used would be based on availability and functionality. This purse showcases the art form perfectly. *(Donated by Mrs. Frances Jean)*

SNOWSHOES This specialized footwear provided a means of transportation that was twice as fast as walking through the snow. Each pair was made from rawhide and wood, and each individual knew how to make their own pair. It was crucial to have the knowledge to fix the snowshoe, especially when walking far distances or in remote locations like on traplines.



CLOTHING The seasons were critical components of survival and made living off the land essential. This included following the groups of animals and fish as they shifted throughout the year. Meat would provide a food source for entire communities and all parts of the animal would be utilized. Raw hide was stretched and tanned to make clothing, shoes and tipis.

The Fort McMurray Historical Society contributed factual historical information to this story. For more information about the Society, please visit : www.fortmcmurrayhistory.com





Smart Energy

Students get up close and personal with the wonders of science

By Chelsey Hynes



Syncrude apprentice **Tabitha Quintal** speaks with students at the company's booth.

Photography: Matthew Michetti

From what started as a vision from past principal Rod Hyde, the Fort McKay School Science Fair has continued to expand each year.

Current principal Ruth Ryan is glad to have the support of the community and industry at the annual event, which was held this past May. The event allows students the opportunity to get up close and personal with science, and creates a hands-on experience for everyone involved.

“Industry sets up their own booths and hosts experiments for the students to try. The children look forward to testing those experiments, as well as showing off the hard work they’ve put into their own creations,” says Ruth. “Students will practice their presentation with classmates prior to the event. They are

proud of their hard work and will share their project with anyone who will listen.”

The entire school partakes in the day-long event and, depending on

“It helps to build confidence and self-esteem in our students, and you can feel the energy in the room the day of the event.”

the grade, student participation ranges from classroom experiments to individual science projects. Students are encouraged to conduct research and prepare their project based on individual interest. Highlights over the years have included a mouse trap catapult, electric cannon ball, “does colour affect taste?” exhibit, and the classic baking soda volcano.

Although the science fair primarily focuses on research, experiments and science, the end results are far greater for the students.

“It helps to build confidence and self-esteem in our students, and you can feel the energy in the room the day of the event,” says Ruth. “It’s really quite special.” ●



A Positive Force

Children's author brings powerful messages to Canadian schools

By John Copley

Victor Lethbridge is an accomplished musician, an award-winning author and a member of Saskatchewan's Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation. So it should come as no surprise that one of his books would change the lives of Aboriginal youth across the country.

something they could not only continue to learn from, but also that they can share with others in the community, especially with their families and their friends," Victor explains.

And from those ambitions was born the book *Little Chief and the Mighty Gopher*. The book, which comes with an interactive CD that presents the tale in a traditional storytelling manner, is accompanied by

and helpful and I think I accomplished that. I was very fortunate to collaborate with well-known illustrator Ben Crane. I created the characters and he gave them life; we also worked together on my second book, *Little Chief and the Gift of Morning Star*, a story that deals with loss and grieving and how to cope when unexpected and unpleasant things happen to you."



Photography and Illustration: Supplied

"We visited a dozen schools in the region and we received the same response in each one—people like the book and the messages it delivers."



Victor and his wife, residents of Rolling Hills, Alberta, have spent the last decade delivering interactive workshops designed for Aboriginal students in kindergarten through high school. The focus of the workshops, which vary depending on the age and maturity of the participating group, includes such themes as bullying, suicide, alcohol, drug and gambling addictions and crime prevention. The workshop sessions also deal with grieving, forming lasting relationships, building self-esteem and developing life's goals.

Three years ago, the Lethbridges decided they wanted to add a new element to their workshops—something that would help keep the youth they work with interested and motivated.

"We wanted to leave them with something they could take home,

music and song and how to deal with bullying. The book was a huge success—and in more ways than one.

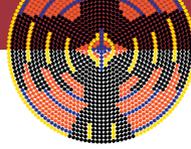
Not only was Victor's first book being used as a teaching tool, it quickly became a Canadian best seller and was named the Children's and Young Adult Book of the Year at the 2011 Alberta Book Awards. In addition, *Little Chief and the Mighty Gopher* also won the 2010 Moonbeam Bronze Medal for best first book by an author, the 2010 Griffin Award, the 2011 Nautilus Silver Medal in the children's book category and the 2011 R. Ross Annett Award.

"I was both surprised and pleased when my name was read out at the awards ceremony," says Victor. "Music is really my forté but once I began to write, the book took on a life of its own. I wanted to create something that would be useful

Last year Victor received an invitation from Syncrude to bring his workshops into the schools in the Wood Buffalo region. The workshop series was a big success, and as a result he was invited back again this year.

"The students enjoyed it and the teachers loved it," notes Victor, "and thanks to Syncrude's support, we were able to hand out about 4,000 copies; every student was able to take one home to share with their families and friends. We visited a dozen schools in the region and we received the same response in each one—people like the book and the messages it delivers."

The first goal has been met. Now Victor expects to write at least two more books in the *Little Chief* series. ●



Leading Ladies

Community celebrates Women of Inspiration

By Marissa Ho

How do you pick just one? That was the question when Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta envisioned honouring role models in the Wood Buffalo region. But the answer was simple—why not recognize them all?



Elsie Yanik

Hilda Orr-Desjarlais

Nancy Woodward

Angela Adams

Nicole Bourque-Bouchier

Photography: Bob Nye, Woodward Family

With that, and Syncrude’s support, the Women of Inspiration series was born. The goal of the series is to recognize women throughout the Wood Buffalo region who inspire others, break new ground or old barriers, and help create positive change.

“A lot of positive women are in the community. We want young girls to know that anything is possible,” says Ann Dort-Maclean, executive director of Girls Inc. Northern Alberta.

Of the twelve honourees announced in 2012, five are of Aboriginal heritage. Syncrude congratulates:

Elsie Yanik was the very first honouree in the Women of Inspiration series. Elsie is known for her volunteer work, such as providing recommendations for community health on the Nunee Health Authority Board in Fort Chipewyan. Some of Elsie’s most notable achievements include the Governor General’s Award for Lifetime Achievement, and receiving a blessing from Pope John Paul II for her work within the Catholic Church.

Hilda Orr-Desjarlais, administrative assistant at the Fort McKay School, is also a mentor to many students, providing them with the extra support they need. For over 30 years, Hilda has called the Wood Buffalo region home and the last four of those have been spent with the school enriching the lives of Fort McKay youth. “The kids at the school have so much potential. I want them to believe in themselves as much as I believe in them,” she says.

Nancy Woodward was a pillar in her community, leading with grace and determination. After being sent to a residential school in Fort Chipewyan for three years during her childhood, she was finally reunited with her family and worked to relearn her Native language and family’s traditional ways of life. Nancy passed away in 2012, but leaves a strong legacy that her family, including seven children, fourteen grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren and her foster children, can surely be proud of.

Angela Adams is a cornerstone of the community and has been instrumental in building Fort McMurray into what it is today. She is the first woman to hold the position of secretary treasurer and grievance chairperson of the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union, Local 707. Angela is also a long-serving public school board trustee where she has worked hard to instill gender equality within the local school system.

Nicole Bourque-Bouchier, co-owner of The Bouchier Group, has, along with her husband, grown their company from a small staff of five people and just 10 pieces of equipment, to over 500 employees and more than 200 pieces of equipment. On top of creating a successful company, she has also been the only female president of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA). She was instrumental in helping NAABA build strong relationships with senior levels of industry in Wood Buffalo. ●



Bright Stars

Local community honours over 100 Aboriginal high school graduates

By Marissa Ho

A huge applause greeted this year's graduates at the Traditional Celebration of Achievement.

High School and Composite High School. The celebration has since evolved to include four high schools and feature lineups of great entertainment and speakers. Elders still present each of the

graduates with an eagle feather. As well, each student also receives sweetgrass—a symbol of cleansing and a clear vision for the future, a miniature Métis sash and a blessing box.

Photography: Fort McMurray Public School Division



The celebration recognizes and honours the First Nations, Métis and Inuit graduates of the Wood Buffalo region. “This event is an important celebration in the Wood Buffalo region that allows the Aboriginal communities to promote cultural pride and traditional teachings,” says Julia McDougall, who watched her own son attend the event during its inaugural year, and who is now a Traditional Celebration of Achievement committee member. “Most importantly, it is an opportunity to honour our youth together as a community.”

The event was brought to life 16 years ago when a liaison worker and a group of volunteer mothers discussed how to best honour graduating students. The first Traditional Celebration of Achievement started as a gathering to share a meal with family and to present an eagle feather to graduates from Father Patrick Mercredi

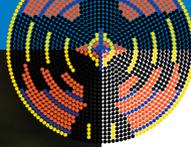
“This event is an important celebration in the Wood Buffalo region that allows the Aboriginal communities to promote cultural pride and traditional teachings.”

Julia McDougall



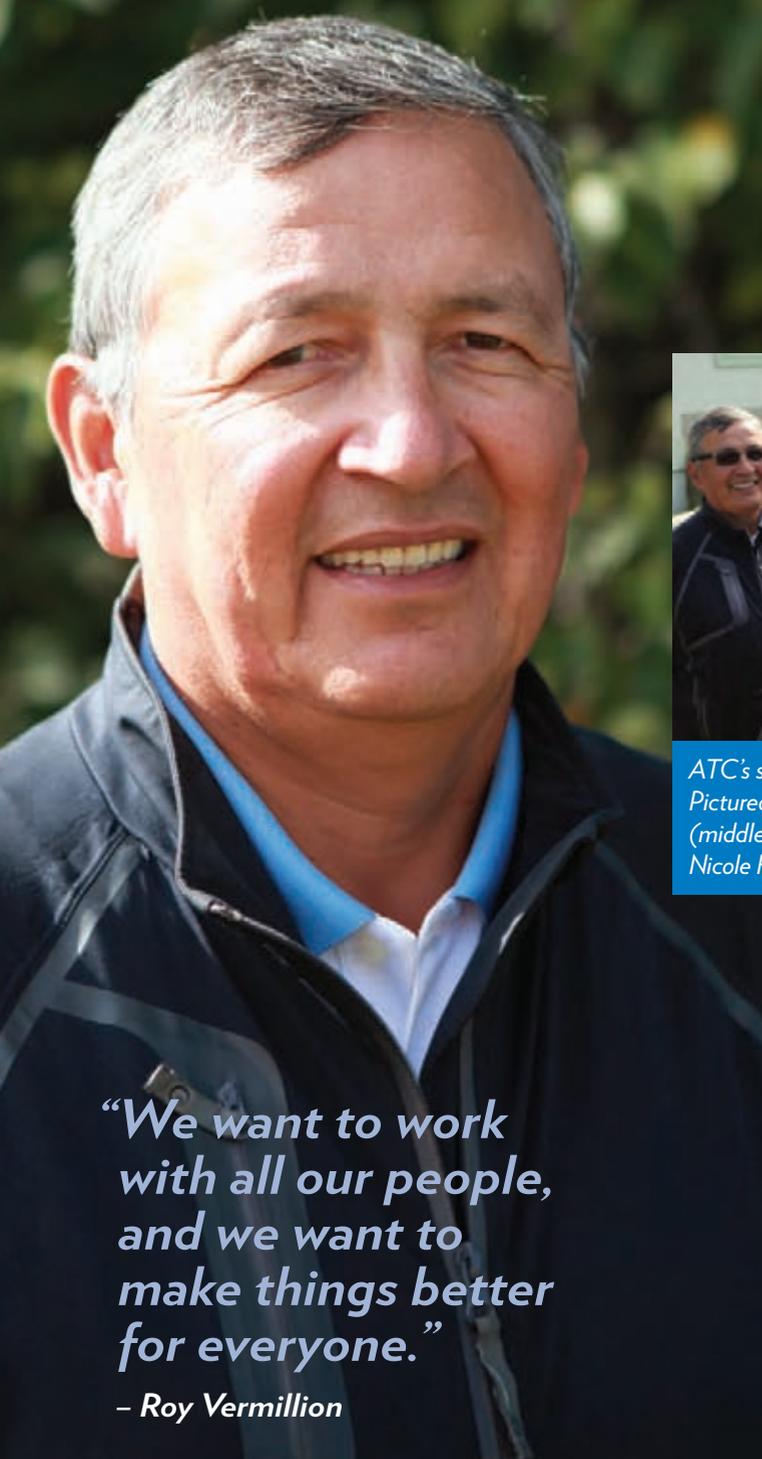
While the celebration has become more elaborate, the number of participating students has also grown significantly—from less than 30 students 16 years ago to over 100.

Amelia Hesse (pictured above, bottom left) was one of this year's honourees. “The Traditional Celebration of Achievement means a lot to the Aboriginal students in Fort McMurray and surrounding areas,” she says. “It was something I looked forward to attending all year. It helps us embrace our culture and allows us to be proud of who we are and where we come from. Being recognized as a successful Aboriginal student was a great experience. The celebration allowed me to realize how important education is for everybody.” ●



A Milestone Built on Respect

By Chelsey Hynes



“We want to work with all our people, and we want to make things better for everyone.”

– Roy Vermillion

Respect has been the driving force behind the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) for the last 25 years. Respect for Mother Earth, traditions and culture, and for the surrounding First Nation communities that call the region home. As the organization celebrates a quarter century of successes, opportunities and challenges, ATC’s chief executive officer Roy Vermillion recognizes the need to learn from the past and continue to do better.

“Our role has always been to assist the five First Nations in our region by identifying current or emerging priorities, and using the strength of our peoples to work collectively towards the end goal,” says Roy, a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation.

Their mandate has always been to promote and enhance quality of life through programs and services for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Chipewyan Prairie Dené First Nation, Fort McKay First Nation, Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, and Mikisew Cree First Nation. Established in 1988, the ATC has grown from seven staff members to a peak of 35.



ATC’s staff have been instrumental in the organization’s success. Pictured here from L to R are (front row) May Tourangeau, Rita Marten (middle row) Roy Vermillion, Margaret Caine, Tina Michael, Kara Dube, Nicole Fraser, and (back row) Pam Herman, Nicole Grant, Charles Nokohoo.

“Some of my proudest moments have come from seeing our people retain their language and culture while succeeding in a non-Native world, with my staff and colleagues standing beside me,” adds Roy.

Currently, the ATC leads a regional gathering which takes place every two years, and plans to expand this to a regional athletic games competition in the future with contemporary and traditional elements. Future initiatives such as this, along with their ever-holding resolution, will ensure the ATC continues to do what is right for the First Nations.

“We have an open relationship with the Chiefs and Councils. We want to work with all our people, and we want to make things better for everyone,” says Roy. “We want to help our neighbours.” ●



ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

By Chelsey Hynes

For 19-year-old Lucy Kootenay, Father Mercredi High School is home. She played rugby outside on the athletic field, packed hampers for Santa's Anonymous in the gymnasium, shot hoops on the basketball court, and met lifelong friends in the cafeteria. It's also the place she discovered her passion for chemistry and received the mentorship needed to succeed.

Because of her passion, Lucy is the 2013 recipient of the Rod Hyde Aboriginal Education Award.

"I always loved going to chemistry class because it came really natural to me. I like the straight forward methodology and that everything is either black or white, there is no grey area," says Lucy, a member of the Alexander First Nation. "Everyone always says to do what you love, so chemistry is a natural fit for me."

After graduating from Father Mercredi High School in 2012, Lucy went on to study general sciences at Keyano College for a semester and then completed one semester at the University of Saskatchewan for her Bachelor of Science. But being closer to family and smaller classroom sizes have drawn Lucy to the University of Alberta campus in Camrose, where she continues her studies as a full-time student this fall.

No matter where she has obtained her education, one of Lucy's biggest mentors is Father Mercredi vice principal Brendan Toner, who always ensured she was on the right path.

"I am very proud to have watched her grow up the way she has," says Brendan, "and she is on the verge of making a big impact on the world as a graduating Aboriginal student going into post-secondary studies."

With the help of mentors and her own hard work, post-secondary education is always a route that Lucy knew she wanted to pursue. Once she completes her Bachelor of Science undergrad program, graduate studies are a potential next step and after that the sky is the limit.

"Completing a degree will open countless doors for me and I'm excited for the future," she says. "One thing I've learned throughout my studies is that you can never ask too many questions or be too curious. That's one thing I'm not going to change."

"Everyone always says to do what you love, so chemistry is a natural fit for me."

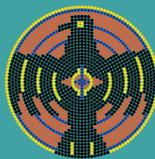
The Rod Hyde Aboriginal Education Award was established by Syncrude in 2006. It provides one \$2,000 award annually to an Aboriginal student from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo pursuing post-secondary education. If you or someone you know is interested in applying for the award, visit www.syncrude.ca or call 780-790-6356. ●



Ray
Of
Light

By Shannon Sutherland





Marilyn Buffalo lives up to her Cree name, Morning Sun Woman. She wakes up at 5 a.m. and is soon at her desk in her home office to provide policy consultation on health, education, business and economic development. A few hours later, she's back down in the kitchen cooking breakfast for her family.

"In my Cree culture, we put a lot of value on our extended family," says the Samson Cree First Nation member, a residential school survivor and leader relentlessly preoccupied with the well-being of others. "Right now, I have four grandchildren and three great grandchildren with me from the ages of 26 all the way down to three months. During the summer, I often have more family members living with me."

Marilyn has invested her life to youth. She is an activist and a justice-seeker, and was the first Indigenous woman appointed as advisor of Native Affairs at the University of Alberta. She was the founding chair of the General Faculties Council Committee on Native Studies and helped guide the development of the Faculty of Native Studies and Native Student Services.

She is a former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada and a former top political candidate for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Now Marilyn plans to run for Chief of the Samson Cree Nation.

"As leaders, whether we are elected officials or not, we have a responsibility to inspire our youth," says Marilyn. "The majority of our population is youth, and we, as Elders, make up only a small part of the population. So, as Elders, we need to use our influence to impact as many youth as possible." In fact, Statistics Canada reports about half the Aboriginal population is under the age of 25, and only six per cent is 65 or older.

Marilyn says encouraging youth in their educational journeys and ensuring access to education has always been a priority for her.

She recalls being 13 years old when she saw a library for the very first time. "I just remember sitting on the floor looking up in awe at the rows and rows of books and thinking, this is amazing," she says.

"The day I lose my desire or ability to communicate with young people is the day I will retire," adds Marilyn. "And I am certainly not there yet. Our youth inspire me—we have some of the finest artists, dancers and creative thinkers and business minds in the world."

"We just need to help them bring their best to the world."

Congratulations to Marilyn as the recipient of the Dorothy McDonald Leadership Award at the 2013 Esquao Awards, presented by the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women. Syncrude is a proud sponsor of the award and annual ceremony. ●



"Our youth inspire me... We just need to help them bring their best to the world."





No Fear

How a teacher and grandmother shaped one woman's road to leadership

By Shannon Sutherland



Photography: Kim Williams/The Banff Centre

It's the people who dared who became the people who inspired Roberta Jamieson. Roberta, president and CEO of Indspire, says as a young student, one of her teachers boldly broke away from the prescribed curriculum, which portrayed Indigenous peoples as "savages" and taught that Christopher Columbus "discovered" America.

"She told our class of Indigenous students that we should remember our roots and our proud history," says Roberta. "This stuck with me. She taught me the importance of critical analysis. I was outraged at the impact of colonialism on my community, and I was determined to take up a leadership role so I could change that."

Through Indspire, Roberta oversees an Indigenous-led not-for-profit organization that has provided \$54 million in support to help more than 16,000 Indigenous students complete their education. She is also the executive producer of the Indspire Awards (formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards), sponsored in part by Syncrude.

"I knew at an early age that education was a force that I could use to make positive changes for my people and my country," says Roberta.

Her family, in particular her grandmother, was also an important influence in her life.

"My grandmother—a very important figure in our culture—taught me to speak the truth and not to be fearful in the face of assumed authority," says Roberta. Her parents also influenced her—her father as a visionary and her mother as an example of determination.

"I knew at an early age that education was a force that I could use to make positive changes for my people and my country."

Indspire plays an important role in not only strengthening Aboriginal education but also in creating relationships between Indigenous communities and the public and private sectors, and fostering positive change that benefit the entire country.

"My goal is to expand the role of Indspire in transforming the kindergarten to grade 12 education of Indigenous youth," she says. "By educating Indigenous youth, we are helping them reach their potential and contribute to the economy through jobs in key industries, including oil and gas, resource development and more."

Roberta believes a strong leader is one who has a clear sense of vision that is informed and supported by the people around her or him. "I see leaders in every Indigenous young person I meet," she says. "They all have potential." ●



By Shannon Sutherland

Photography: Bob Nyen

From Bush to Business

Doug Webb (left) discusses opportunities with Mel Grandjambe, chief executive officer at the Fort McKay Group of Companies.

“It was a cold December afternoon in the year of our Lord nineteen-hundred-and-sixty-two during the time of the white bear and the killer snow,” begins Doug Webb.

“Just kidding,” he says with a laugh. “I was born in Fort McMurray in December 1962. The fifth child of seven.”

Syncrude’s Aboriginal business liaison doesn’t take himself too seriously, but he certainly isn’t taking his new role as a relationship builder lightly.

Doug’s early years growing up in the area as a Métis person have definitely given him a deep appreciation for his roots and how they’ve brought him into a position where he has the privilege of witnessing those around him—many of whom he grew up with—thrive.

“In this role I have come what seems like full circle,” he says. “The kids I played with are now members of the local business community as business owners and CEOs. I have a chance to go to the outlying communities and re-connect with old friends and rediscover my own Aboriginal heritage.”

As a child, Doug spent his days playing in the bush, swimming in the rivers and fishing under the Grant MacEwan bridge. Later

in his youth, he and his brothers trained as boxers alongside Canadian champions. Then, as a young adult, he joined Syncrude and became a journeyman service technician working in the autoshop, later taking on leadership roles.

He landed his most recent role as Aboriginal business liaison in 2012. It allows him to spend more time with his wife and son. It also enables him to break down any barriers that could hinder Syncrude from building successful relationships with Aboriginal communities. His goals are to share opportunities where they exist and create opportunities where they may not.

“I like learning the old ways when visiting the communities and meeting my old friends that I grew up with,” he says. “I hope to ensure success for those companies we work with. I look forward to meeting new people in this role and understanding the positive Aboriginal influences in our community.”

He adds, “I want to set an example for my son so that he can understand and share our proud history.” ●



“I want to set an example for my son so that he can understand and share our proud history.”



Founding NAABA president **Dave Tuccaro**:
"It's not like this anywhere else in the world."



Two Decades of Partnership

By Maggie Grant

Photography: Foto Source

The Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) celebrated 20 years of business development and industry partnerships earlier this year.

Since its inception in 1993, NAABA has grown from 11 full members to over 110, while revenues generated by NAABA companies have grown from \$20 million in 1993 to \$1.6 billion in 2012.

"When we started, our goal was to work together as a group of Aboriginal-owned businesses to create jobs and training opportunities for the betterment of all people in this region," says founding NAABA president, Dave Tuccaro.

This work has certainly garnered massive success and has made the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo a model for communities across Canada in terms of Aboriginal business opportunities. "It's not like this anywhere else in the world," adds Dave.

Syncrude has been active with NAABA since its earliest days. "I'm proud that Syncrude has been an Associate Member and a strong supporter since the beginning," says Syncrude president and chief executive officer Scott Sullivan. "Syncrude and I look forward to a continued great relationship with NAABA so we can keep building on all we've achieved together."

Former Syncrude president and chief operating officer Jim Carter was involved in the initial conversations that led to the formation of NAABA. "Syncrude did a lot to help promote and

develop Aboriginal companies at that time, but we also wanted to help them expand to provide services to multiple organizations," says Jim. "NAABA enabled the companies to broaden their horizons and gain more confidence in their business capabilities."

On its 20th anniversary, Jim says it's a true success story. "I congratulate NAABA and the founding leaders that helped get it started. When you look back, their visionary endeavours

have manifested themselves into this strong organization. It's a hallmark for Aboriginal business across the country."

Tyrone Brass, former NAABA president and owner of Bayzic Oilsands Electric, spoke about the organization with high regard at its celebratory gala in February 2013.

"I firmly believe in Aboriginal people and Aboriginal business," said Tyrone, a former 20-year Syncrude employee who now provides the company with electrical instrumentation services. "We want to be the conscious voice of the region. NAABA has been very good at being the vehicle to allow Aboriginal businesses and people to join industry as it progresses forward.

We are local, we are Aboriginal, and we want to be a part of it."

Syncrude's support for Aboriginal business has helped foster this progress, investing more than \$1.8 billion in Aboriginal businesses since 1992. ●



"NAABA enabled the companies to broaden their horizons and gain more confidence in their business capabilities."





Event increases awareness of Aboriginal culture

By Marissa Ho

On June 17th, 2013, Syncrude held its inaugural Aboriginal Awareness Day to share and celebrate local Indigenous culture with employees. The event was a huge success with over 100 employees partaking in the celebration.

The day started off with bannock and tea served at locations throughout the operation. Hamburger soup, bison stew and other traditional flavours were also served. Traditional crafts and artifacts were on display, adding to the rich experience for people unfamiliar with the culture.

Elder Eva Janvier welcomed everyone with an opening prayer and Nick Giant performed a drum song. Entertainment was provided by the Fort McKay dancers, making their first public appearance, and Métis dancers from Janvier and Chard. Jimmy Cardinal and Martin Hamelin from the Nicely Put Together Band also performed until strong winds and rain forced them off the stage.

But that didn't worry Matthew Michetti, Syncrude stakeholder relations advisor: "In Aboriginal culture, strong winds are a sign of good luck because they signify positive change and rain is a symbol of cleansing." ●



Photography: Bob Nyen

A Royal Honour

By Tara Abraham, Chelsey Hynes

Since the beginning of operations, Syncrude has committed to foster and develop relationships with neighbouring Aboriginal communities. In June, Kara Flynn, vice president of Government and Public Affairs, received an award which reflects these important efforts.

The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was awarded to Kara, and recognizes Syncrude for its commitment and work with Aboriginal communities. The medal was presented by Honourable Bernard Valcourt, federal minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, and Roberta Jamieson, president and CEO of Indspire, on behalf of Governor General David Johnston.

"This is a great honour," says Kara. "Throughout our company's history, Syncrude has been dedicated to promoting Aboriginal inclusion in our workforce and ensuring our Aboriginal neighbours are able to successfully participate and share in the benefits of our operations."

Formerly known as the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, Indspire focuses on Indigenous education in Canada and is a partner organization in the program to select candidates who have dedicated themselves to serve their fellow citizens, their community and their country.

"We're truly inspired by the work that you do within Indigenous communities and the significant contributions you have made within the region and across Canada," says Roberta. ●



Syncrude vice president of Government and Public Affairs, **Kara Flynn** (middle) accepts the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal from Honourable Bernard Valcourt and Roberta Jamieson.

Photography: Supplied



Green Zone

Sandhill Fen research project guides wetland reclamation

By Chelsey Hynes

Photography: Bob Nyan

“If we don’t reclaim the land we disturb, we don’t have a right to produce oil,” believes Syncrude environmental scientist Jessica Clark.

That way of thinking is what drove Syncrude scientists and researchers to attempt reclaiming the industry’s largest fen wetland from a former open-pit mine. Since 2000, 57 hectares have been reclaimed—about the size of 30 football fields. Out of this area, 17 hectares have been devoted to becoming a fen.

“These types of landscapes are found naturally in our region and part of being a responsible oil sands developer is ensuring we return this area back to a similar habitat,” says Jessica. “We currently work with universities across North America to ensure we have the best possible research. We look at water, vegetation, climate, nutrients and soil to measure our efforts. Water is key for sustainability and the insects and plants we see are a good indication if we’re on the right track.”

Construction of the wetland, called the Sandhill Fen, was completed in 2012. The last year has acted as a baseline for the ongoing research that will take place for the next 20 years by scientists from around the continent.

Dr. Simon Landhäusser, a forest ecologist with the University of Alberta, has spent hundreds of hours with his students working at the fen and calls it a model landscape. “We are supplying data to other scientists and researchers based on our studies at the fen so we can learn from each other,” says Simon.

Dr. Sean Carey, a hydrologist at McMaster University, agrees. “This is the first wetland creation project, period,” says Sean, who has been involved with Syncrude research for over a decade. “This type of opportunity allows our students to get their scientific juices going and helps to better understand the successes and failures that will ultimately guide reclamation efforts.”

Part of the role for research students and scientists is to help observe and interpret information from hundreds of monitoring stations throughout the area. “There is a good plan in place,” says Sean. “The hardest thing now is to have patience and see how the landscape changes over time. Once the hydrology, biogeochemistry and vegetation finds some equilibrium through the next five or 10 years, that’s how we can expect the habitat to stand.”

With the help of reclamation operations and research, eventually all of the former East in-pit mine will be returned to a natural landscape. “It’s important we do this,” says Simon. “I want to help us to do better.” ●

Growing up in Fort Chipewyan, Lori Cyprien can recall drinking traditional medicinal tea that would soothe a sore throat or an upset stomach.

Now as a Syncrude team leader, she leads the field activities responsible for the company's reclamation research, specifically the Sandhill Fen project which will offer some of the similar traditional aspects Lori grew up with.

"The conditions we've created for plants and animals are exceeding our expectations, and it's evolving into a landscape full of biodiversity and life," says Lori, a member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

Numerous traditional plants have been planted or are already growing naturally throughout the landscape. Rat root is a medicinal plant found in wetland environments, and it's now calling the area home. Labrador tea—a shrub that aids stomach aches and nausea—is another returning medicinal plant. Located in the uplands surrounding the fen, different berry species such as blueberries, strawberries, cranberries and pin cherries, can be found.

Foxes, birds and a variety of aquatic invertebrates have also been spotted. An exciting find was the discovery of a common night hawk, which is a species at risk. A nest was built and eggs were hatched in the area. Great care was offered by all research teams to ensure these birds weren't disturbed.

A fen is a type of peatland commonly known as muskeg to the Aboriginal people in the region. They look onto this area as an important resource within the natural environment. Fens store and help purify the water that flows through it. They are also a great place to find moose, a staple in most Aboriginal people's diets.

A year has passed since the fen's first full growing cycle and Lori and her team are confident something special is happening. "We did something right here," says Lori. "The vegetation, animals and birds are returning and calling the area home." ●

A Traditional Perspective on Fens

By Chelsey Hynes

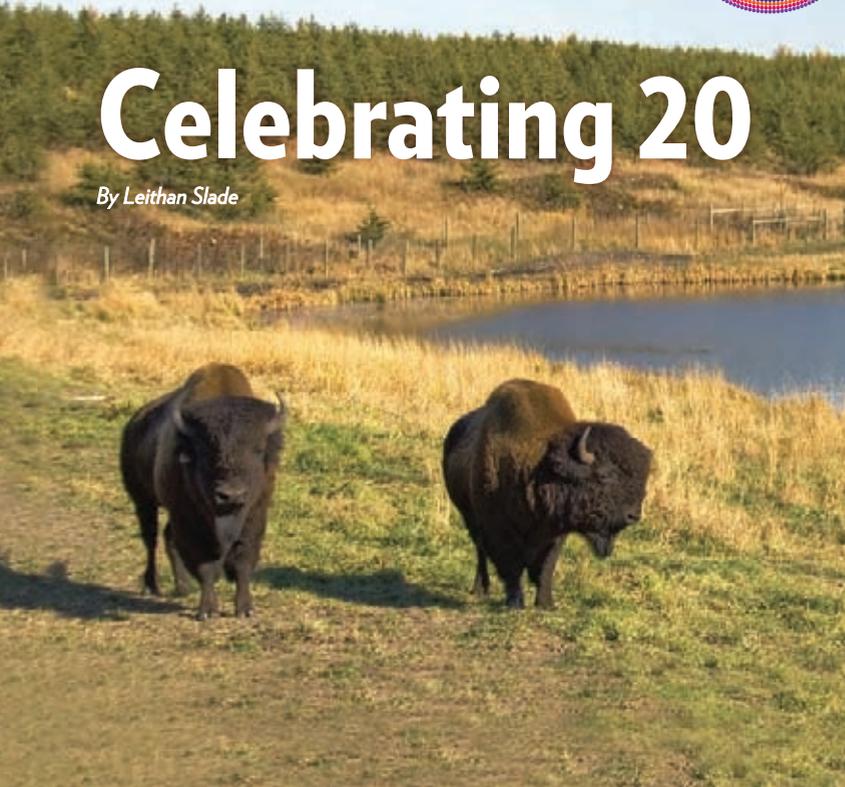


Lori Cyprien hands out seedlings at the fen during a Syncrude family tree planting day.



Celebrating 20

By Leithan Slade



This year, Syncrude and the Fort McKay First Nation celebrate 20 years of the Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch.

In 1993, talk of reclaiming some of the land disturbed by Syncrude's mining operations evolved into the idea of introducing large mammals to test the land's sustainability. Both cattle and elk were considered before it was suggested that Syncrude reintroduce an animal that had once roamed Alberta's Boreal forest—the wood bison.

Today, the herd numbers in the hundreds.

Brad Ramstead, ranch manager and a senior reclamation scientist with the Fort McKay Group of Companies, believes the project is a great accomplishment: "If we were able to reclaim ground and work 20 years to sustain the largest land mammal in North America, I think you can say we've been fairly successful." ●

Photography: John McQuarrie

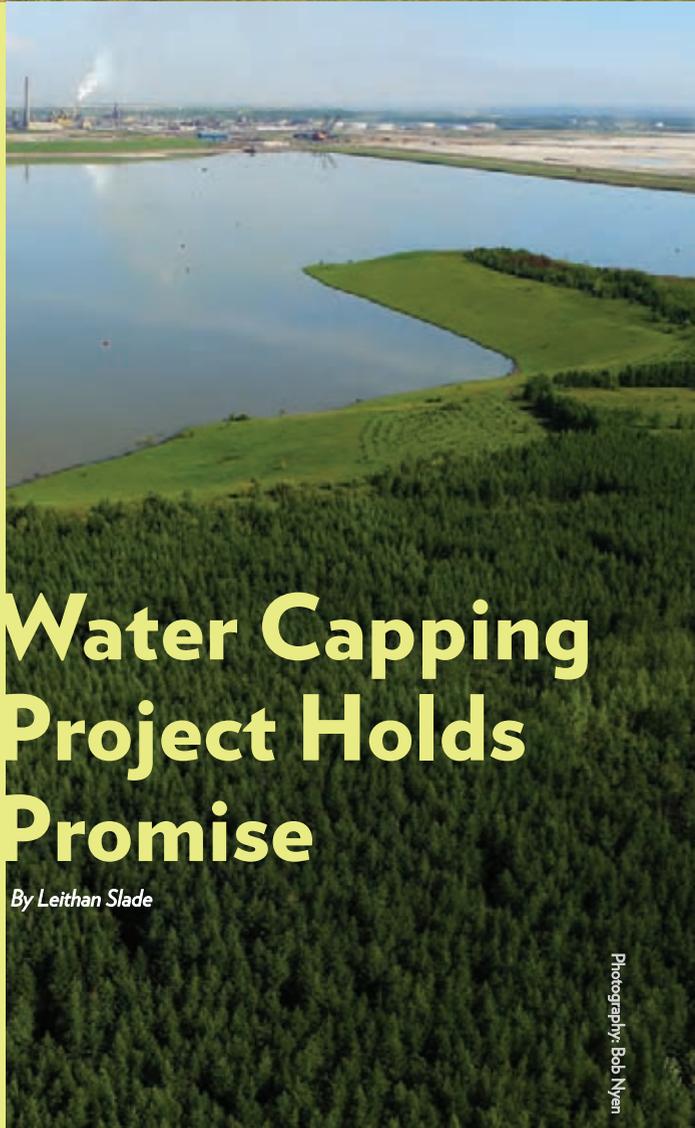
The taps have been turned off as Syncrude continues towards commissioning the industry's first commercial demonstration of tailings water capping technology.

Studied for over 25 years at Syncrude, water capping involves placing a layer of water over a deposit of fine tails (clays and silts). Scientists demonstrated the success of this technology through laboratory and field research, which is seeing 11 test ponds already evolving into natural ecosystems.

A commercial-scale project is now underway west of Highway 63 in the former West mine pit. Effective December 31st, 2012, the flow of fine clays, silts and tailings water into the pit was stopped, marking the beginning of the remediation of material through a natural biological process.

The area will contain fine tails under a five-metre layer of water. Fresh water will be added from nearby Beaver Creek Reservoir, bringing nutrients and seeds to help spur the growth of aquatic vegetation. Water will also flow out to a recycle water pond where it will be used in the extraction process.

Research indicates that, over time, a water-capped lake will develop and evolve into a healthy aquatic environment. "We won't see the area evolve immediately because the natural process takes time," says Michelle Velez, Syncrude senior tailings advisor. "We will continue to monitor its development over the coming years to ensure the lake indeed provides a safe and effective means of incorporating tailings into this type of reclaimed landscape. It holds great promise for the industry." ●



Water Capping Project Holds Promise

By Leithan Slade

Photography: Bob Nye

The Road to Reclamation

By Tara Abraham

The seeds, trees and shrubs on Syncrude’s reclaimed land have as much a story as the people planting them.

The oil sands industry has a goal to expand the number and diversity of species, including grasses, trees, shrubs and wildflowers, in reclaimed areas. Towards this, Syncrude and other companies collect seeds and vegetation material (e.g. root cuttings) for reclamation, which are then sent to the Smoky Lake Forest Nursery for extraction, processing and storage.

The Smoky Lake Nursery is one of the largest in Canada. It has 10 million pieces of greenery and 200 acres of bare root fields.

Once the seeds are cleaned, they are registered by original location and shipped to the provincial seed storage facility, which keeps all seeds in a safe storage centre until needed by Syncrude.

“On average, around 2,000 trees and about 500 to 1,000 shrubs are planted on each hectare,” says Syncrude senior agrologist Eric Girard. “The density and species list varies because Syncrude increasingly uses salvaged soil that is directly placed. There are a lot of seedlings coming in from reapplying the original soil; I just add what is missing to achieve a sustainable functioning forest.”

For example, on Syncrude’s Sandhill Fen, species planted include fen slough grass, fen water sedge, fen short sedge, cotton grass, bull rush, tamarack, birch and seaside arrow grass.

Although spring and summer are busy seasons for Syncrude’s reclamation team, the results outweigh the effort. “It’s wonderful to see these seedlings go in the ground,” says Eric. “It’s a story worth sharing.”

Starting in 2016, Syncrude expects to plant close to one million trees and shrubs every year. ●



Photography: Tara Abraham, Bob Nyman



ABORIGINAL RELATIONS SCORECARD

Syncrude Direct Workforce

Total Aboriginal Employees (#)
2012

474

2008	2009	2010	2011
435	479	484	492

Representation in:

Total Workforce (%)
2012

9.1

2008	2009	2010	2011
8.1	8.4	8.4	8.6

Administration, Professional and Technical (%)
2012

5.9

2008	2009	2010	2011
5.5	5.9	5.4	5.5

Trades and Operators (%)
2012

11.7

2008	2009	2010	2011
10.2	11.3	10.5	11.2

Syncrude hired 32 Aboriginal people in 2012. This represents almost 10 per cent of our overall hiring.
Of our total workforce, over nine per cent 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.

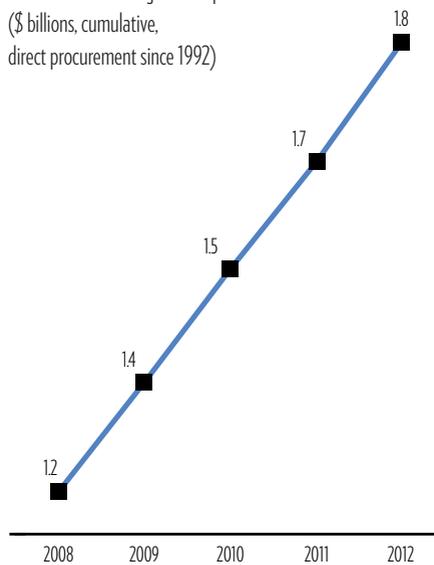
Through major endowments at several Alberta education institutions, students are able to access scholarships focused on a variety of fields, including engineering, nursing, education and environmental sciences. For a complete list of available scholarships, please visit syncrude.ca and click on Community-Syncrude Award 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

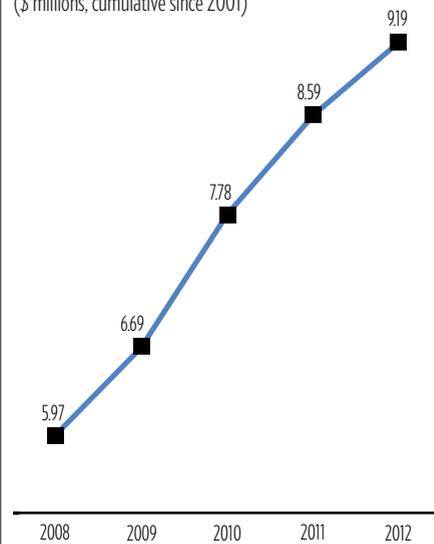
Contracts with Aboriginal Companies
(\$ billions, cumulative,
direct procurement since 1992)



Total Aboriginal business spending for the year was over \$158 million. The cumulative total for Syncrude business with First Nations- and Métis-owned companies since 1992 is now over \$1.8 billion.

Community Investment

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



Syncrude donated over \$600,000 to Aboriginal initiatives and projects during 2012.



Recruitment and Retention

Leadership and Management (%)

2012

6.0

2008	2009	2010	2011
5.6	5.9	5.8	5.5

Aboriginal New Hires (% of all hires)

2012

9.8

2008	2009	2010	2011
6.7	10.8	10.4	15.4

Aboriginal Attrition Rate (%)

2012

10.4

2008	2009	2010	2011
11.9	9.8	10.2	5.6

Aboriginal Employee Service (# of years)

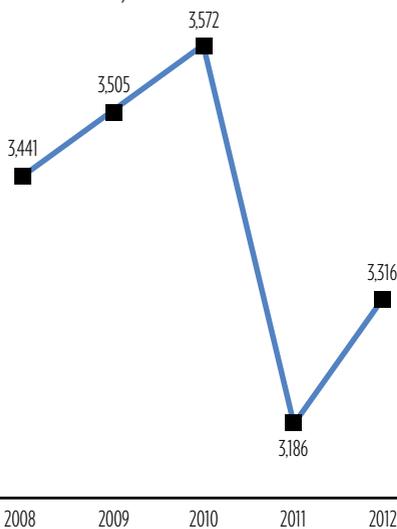
2012

10.2

2008	2009	2010	2011
10.4	9.9	9.8	10.2

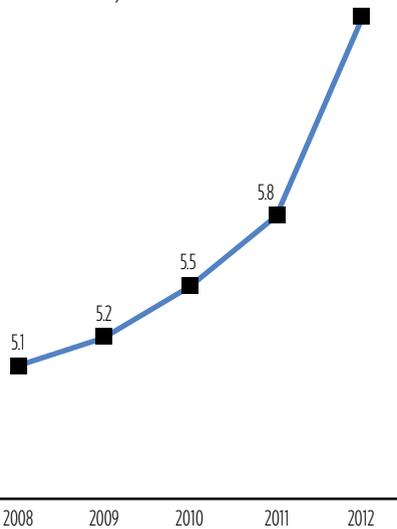
Environment

Land Reclamation (cumulative hectares)



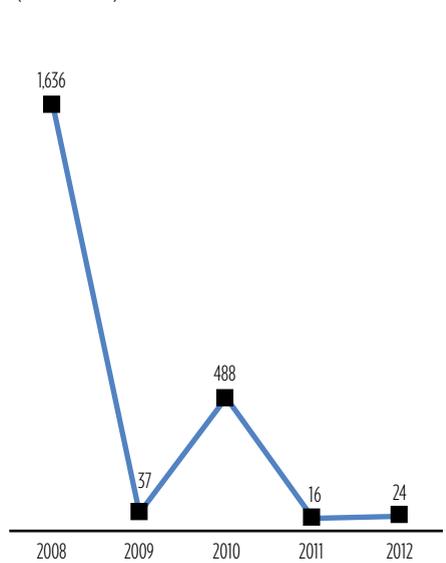
Environment

Tree and Shrub Seedlings Planted (millions, cumulative)



Avian Incident Tracking

(# of incidents)



Syncrude has permanently reclaimed over 3,300 hectares to date and planted about seven million tree and shrub seedlings. Another 1,000 hectares are ready for revegetation. Note: Permanent land reclamation numbers decreased in 2011 due to changes in the Government of Alberta's definition of permanent reclamation. This reporting change 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).

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 towards 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.

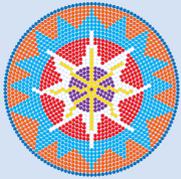


The Aboriginal Relations Steering Committee

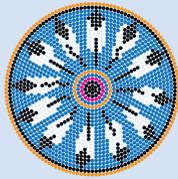
Back Row	Doug Webb Aboriginal Business Liaison	Kara Flynn Vice President, Government and Public Affairs	Colleen Legdon Manager, Community Relations	Christine Simpson Stakeholder Relations Coordinator	Donelda Patterson Manager, Workplace Policies	Peter Read Vice President, Strategic Projects
Front Row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

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

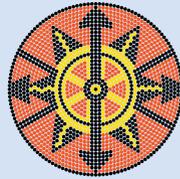
Syncrude's Aboriginal Relations Program is focused on six key commitment areas: Business Development, Community Development, Education and Training, Employment, Environment, and Corporate Leadership.



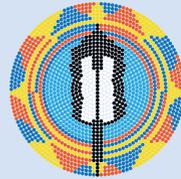
BUSINESS



COMMUNITY



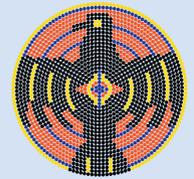
EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



ENVIRONMENT



LEADERSHIP



Our Aboriginal Relations Team

Back Row

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Christine Simpson
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or 780.790.6405

Missing in photo: **Belinda Gauvreau**, Senior Recruitment Representative, gauvreau.belinda@syncrude.com or 780.790.6123



CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

Syncrude's greatest resource is our people. Today, around nine per cent of our workforce is of First Nations, Métis or Inuit descent. Here, we celebrate both our new Aboriginal employees and those who have contributed many years of outstanding service. We salute you!

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Alexander Brushett | Dwight CG Flett |
| Cordell Cassell | Connie Gladue |
| Garret Coffey | Mark Harding |
| Perry Cullihall | April Hinks |
| Jesse Dewolfe | Matthew Hobbs |
| Karyn Frank | Willis Janvier |
| Annette Gladu | Phillip Jean |
| Michael Grandjambe | Roy Lepine |
| David Hynes | Glen Louie |
| Mike King | Gregory Lucas |
| Garrett Marcel | Gregory Mahoney |
| John Penney | Matthew Martinook |
| Derrick Piche | Trent Mason |
| Dylan Roberts | Rhonda McKay |
| Conway Rumbolt | Cassandra Mclean |
| Elaine Salas Lickon | Robert Metacat-Yah |
| Naomi L Shaw | Shawn Netmaker |
| Arron Sinclair | Patrick Organ |
| Karyn Sullivan | Steven Organ |
| Sherry Tremblay | Jody Pierce |
| Vince Vermillion | Jamie Plamondon |
| Candace Voyageur | Derrick Quilty |
| Melissa Winsor | Brandon Roberts |
| Randy Wood | Kyle Sand |
| Wendy Adonyi | Melanie Serroul |
| Mark Benoit | Sylvia Skinner |
| Ralph Bodden | Jamie Sullivan |
| Blaine Bradley | Klint Taylor |
| George Brown | Cody Tremblay |
| Tristan Cook | Alan VanWalleghem |
| Patrick Courtoreille | Terri Lynn Villebrun |
| Edward Dilney | Jeff Voyageur |
| Jinny Flamand | Ryan Voyageur |
| Peter Fleming | |

0-4 Years of Service

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Nelson Dawe | Shaun Ferguson | Andrew Cobble Dick |
| Lukas Forbister | Jonathan Franklin | Derek Courtoreille |
| Jonathan Hansen | Sheldon Hynes | Jake Couture |
| Launa Herman | Alyssa-Mae Laviolette | Rodney Curtis |
| Natasha Hicks | Tyler Manuel | Arlene Deschamps |
| Mark Hobbs | Chantal M Mercredi | Matthew Flaro |
| Alexander Jani | Lisa Nelson | Kurtis Girard |
| Blair O'Neill | Randy Pahtayken | Maxwell Goulet (Wolfe) |
| Patrick Robinson | Robert Penney | Amythyst James |
| Cory Struck | Daniel Perepeluk | Christine Janvier |
| Adam White | Kelsey Piercey | Cindy Lays |
| Stephanie L Whitford | Michael S Roberts | Gerry Letendre |
| Aurella Young | Christopher Selman | John McCullough |
| David Bennett | Blaine Simpson | Tabitha Quintal |
| Tiffany Campiou | Audrey Smith | Sylvia Seegerts |
| Joanne Clark | Neill D Snow | Shawn Sinclair |
| Charles Courtoreille | Bruce Thevarge | Alicia Smith |
| Laurie A Cox | Mitchell Tremblay | Vicky Tremblay |
| Caitlin Cree | Tracy Tricoteux | Tyrone Tuccaro |
| Camille Croteau | Christopher Tuccaro | Gale Wood |
| Melanie Cyr | Allan Waldner | Kingsley Woods |
| Ryan Daigle | Trina Walker | Leslie Yellowknee |
| Terra Dame | Jessie Webster | Chantelle Zalluski |
| Kenneth Desjarlais | Matthew Woodford | Justin Beaudry |
| | Dawn Abel | Bill Bertschy |
| | Robert Berland | Trudy Boostrom |
| | Roxanne Bigstone | Priscilla Bourke |

5-9 Years of Service

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Herman Alook | Grant Curnew | Lori Hunter | Priscilla Snook | Randy Marten |
| Drew Anderson | Errol Curtis | Cory Jahelka | Matthew Steinhauer | Renie Muise |
| Shawn Bain | Duane Davidson | Robert King | Steven Szenti | Floyd Oppenheimer |
| Chantelle Benoit | Shayne Davis | Christina Laboucane | Joyce Tuccaro | Stephen Perry |
| Wallace Campbell | Margaret DeCorby | Marty Lands | Josh Welsh | Karen Pruden |
| Christine Cardinal | Scottie Drew | Joshua Lands | Tricia West | John Tatti |
| Michael Cardinal | Jeremy Dyson | Norman Lands | Barb Buchanan | Tonya White |
| Liam Carson | Patrice Ethier | Amy MacKenzie | Arthur Bunning | Lorraine Awasis |
| Bradi Chalifoux | Jonathan Farrell | Geniveve Manuel | Sarah Callan | Buck Beaton |
| Deana Chalifoux | Lester Flett | Bella Marten | John Ciupa | Wayne Brake |
| Steve Champagne | Ian Flett | Ryan Owen Marten | Craig Courchene | Greg Buffalo |
| Jason Charette | Dwayne Flett | Richard Michelin | Rene Courtoreille | Linda Collins |
| Connie Chartrand | Jeremiah Fryer | Jerry Molnar | Ryland Coventry | Joyce Decoine |
| Misty Courtoreille | Roxanne Goodwin | Curtis Morfitt | Todd Fleming | Glenn Drew |
| Gregory Curl | Robert Grandjambe | Wilbert Quintal | Sallie Gladue | Richard Duncan |
| | Larry Grills | Michael Sharpe | Robyn Gladue | Chad Hildebrandt |
| | Christopher Hamacher | Katherine Sharpe | Oliver Janvier | Delbert Hodgson |
| | Amanda Hunter | David Sinclair | Marlene L'Hirondelle | Chad John |



**10-14
Years of Service**

Thomas Flett
 Adam MacDonald
 John Wylie
 Ruby Cardinal
 Thomas Champagne
 Leonard Florence
 Lisa Hamm
 Lana Hill
 Adam Lustig
 Shari MacRae
 Kevin McDougall
 Jennifer McLeod
 Ron Paul
 Jody Simpson

Douglas Adekat
 Paul Balmer
 Ken Bell
 Barney Cartwright
 Dana Chartrand
 Ian Doka
 Wayne Evasiuk
 Shannon Flett
 Decker Harpe
 Carrie Jazwinski
 Marlene Lane
 James McDonald
 Kurt Russell
 Carla Scrivener
 Robert Tourangeau
 Richard Tuccaro
 B. Alice Tucker

Rochelle Young
 Joel Blake
 Tamara Gillard
 Corey Gushue
 Lindsay Harpe
 Colter Kuntz
 Bruce Lepine
 Kevin Mandeville
 Robert Mathews
 Ryan Mclver
 Sherisse Mills
 Jimmy Noskiye
 Jesse Parker
 Jeff Sluchinski
 Chris Tremblay
 Keith Tuccaro
 Kyle Williams

**15-19
Years of Service**

Deanna Adams
 Patricia Cobbletick
 Michelle Cormier
 Dwayne Flett
 Allen Hansen
 Dwila Hodgson
 Anthony Ladouceur
 Wayne Noskiye
 Michael Punko
 Andrew Bacon
 Judy Best-Plamondon
 Tracy Coombe-Young
 Gordon Grandjambe

Margaret Horvath
 Grant Hundseth
 Leon Kreutzer
 Micheal Martin
 Jason McKenzie
 Brad Paquette
 Vincent Sangrey
 Tracy Unger
 Melvin Boostrom
 Jennifer Janvier
 Mabel Laviolette
 Robert Lepine
 Michael McPherson
 Gregg Patterson
 Elaine Rose
 Gloria Blanchard

Anne Boucher
 Fred Cardinal
 Dwight Flett
 Greg Gladue
 Gary Laprise
 Alberta Malcolm
 Janelle Scott
 Joyce Walker
 Brenda Ganter
 Mathew Grant
 Wayne Kosik
 Clinton L'Heureux
 Ken Leece
 Jeffrey Massan
 Gord Patterson
 Anthony Punko

Kenny Kaskamin
 Melissa L'Hirondelle
 Wayne London
 Real Loutitt
 James Marten
 Russell Marten
 Derek Organ
 Terryl Phillips
 Russell Renaud
 Mason Richard
 Dustin Sidoroff
 Jennifer Stewart
 Troy Thompson
 David Balmer
 Rod Bear
 Jason Bourassa
 Conan Boyer
 Michel Cote

Lori Cyprien
 David Dewart
 Dustin Doucet
 Blair Drew
 Raymond Dube
 John Farrington
 Daniel Genereux
 Ron Groat
 Darryl John
 Marc Judge
 Holly Lavallee
 Jamie London
 Jerry Marten
 Loretta McCallum
 Dayna Mcneilly
 Tawana Mercereau
 Quentin Mercredi
 Richard Pelletier

Christa Piercey
 Tammy Powell
 John Renton
 Tyler Richter
 Lora Shea
 Michael Shelvey
 Fred Balmer
 Perry Best
 Chad Collier
 Keanyn Coutu
 James Helmer
 Kristin Higney
 Clayton Kuncio
 Benny Larocque
 Ryan Mclvor
 Peggy Mooney
 Joanne Nickel
 Scott Pruden

**20-24
Years of Service**

Glenn Beebe
 Barry Boucher
 Clifford Cardinal
 Veronica Chartier
 Leonard Grant
 Richard Houle
 Jason Jonasson
 Rick McDonald
 Roland McKay
 Elmer Nanemahoo
 Christine Simpson
 Charles Tremblay
 Lawrence Whiteknife
 Steve Benoit

Daniel Bowen
 Joey Hamelin
 Donald Kootenay
 Daniel Brown
 Larry Roussin
 John Davids
 Adam Gladue
 Grant Pocha
 Russell Voyageur
 Rita Cyprien
 Jeanette Flynn
 Donald Foy
 Burton Metchewais
 Marty Quintal
 Darren Squire
 Stanley Wylie

**25-29
Years of Service**

Mike Cardinal
 Raymond Courtorielle
 Ron Foy
 Lorne Gallagher
 Elizabeth Grandjambe
 Travis House
 Bonnie Jones
 Loretta Mercredi
 Howard Plante
 Valdon Prodanik
 Herman Tremblay
 Guy Cote
 Steven Gaudet
 Patricia Golosky
 Peter Hansen
 Timothy Humphrey
 Sharon Peterson
 Sandie Thompson
 Stuart Tourangeau
 Aaron Whitford

Janet Alook
 Henry Castor
 Fran Clarke
 Real Couture
 Stephen Graham
 Richard Grandjambe
 Leonard Hansen
 Darrell Humphrey
 Tony Muswagon
 Brad Swanberg
 Douglas Webb
 Sharon Wright
 Paul Cyprien
 Paul Fleming
 Clifford Flett
 Belinda Gauvreau
 Andrew Golosky
 Peter Powder
 Myles Roy
 Timothy Flett

**30+
Years of Service**

David Tourangeau
 Judy Coote
 Lyle Huppie
 Brant Sneddon
 Dawn Sneddon
 Todd Sneddon
 Ennis Gladue
 Gary Plante

Larry Renton
 Melvin Callan
 Art Forbister
 Henry Shirt
 Norma Waquan
 Daniel Forbister
 Dennis Mercer
 Joseph Lafond
 Charles Cote
 Lester Forbister
 Allen Michalko



A successful partnership between the Fort McKay First Nation and Syncrude, the Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2013.



A Note from Scott

Remarkable accomplishments. Remarkable people. That's what you'll find here in this year's edition of *Pathways*, Syncrude's annual review of our Aboriginal relations program. I believe you will find the featured individuals and their stories inspiring.

For example, take Ron Kreutzer—as Chief of Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, this retired Syncrude employee is making great strides in advancing the growth of his community (p 2). Or Fred McDonald—a renowned artist and director of Culture and Special Events with the Fort McKay First Nation, he speaks to us about his journey of artistic discovery (p 9). There's also Roberta Jamieson—as President and CEO of Indspire, and a Member of the Order of Canada, she has made it her life's mission to champion educational opportunities for Aboriginal youth across the country (p 36).

These leaders are tremendous role models for youth such as Lucy Kootenay and Jasmine Dionne. Lucy is a recent Syncrude scholarship recipient who's taking her love of chemistry to great heights (p 33). And Jasmine, a student at the University of Calgary, is one of this year's recipients of a Belcourt Brosseau Métis Award (p 17).

Pathways is about capturing exceptional stories such as these, but it's also Syncrude's opportunity to report back to the community on our Aboriginal relations program and our focus on responsible oil sands development. We're proud to be one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in Canada and earlier this year *Alberta Venture* magazine named us Alberta's Best Workplace for Diversity.

Pathways is a unique publication and I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who agreed to share their stories with us and to those involved in bringing the book to you.

I hope you enjoy this year's edition. I know our team is always looking for more great stories to feature in the future, so feel free to send us your ideas or any feedback you may have to info@syncrude.com.

Scott

Scott Sullivan
President and CEO



Towards Sustainable Mining
Vers le développement minier durable



Progressive
Aboriginal
RELATIONS
GOLD
LEVEL
Canadian Council for
Aboriginal Business



Aboriginal Human
Resource Council
connections - partnerships - solutions

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

“In university, I had a hard time understanding the attitude of some of the artists... I was coming from a much different place as an artist in wanting to showcase First Nations culture and share it. It wasn't about me, it was about my people.”

– Fred McDonald





Syncrude

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 Ventures Partnership.



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