

For January 13th 2014 Publication

President's Message

Happy New Year! I hope that my first President's Message of the year finds you all cheerful, safe, and in good health.

We have once again turned a page of our history and now look forward to the New Year. Everything I have seen and heard makes me optimistic and I am confident this year holds much promise. I am sure it will be a great success just like our past year. Along with each of you, I too look forward to the upcoming achievements of our Metis Government and benefits for our Manitoba Metis Community.

We look to the future but we must never forget our past and those who walked beside us during prior years but who have passed on and now watch over us. Our departed grandparents, parents, siblings, children and cousins, as well as friends and neighbours will always be dearly remembered in our hearts. They offered us homes filled with warmth, love, and security. They nurtured us and helped us to grow. They will be missed.

We also remember the labors, resolve, and sacrifices made by our Ancestors to create, develop, and protect their rights and the future opportunities for their children, grandchildren, and for those yet unborn. Our Ancestors dared to dream and built a legacy of community, province and country. Much pain and much happiness accompanied their day-to-day and year-to-year struggles and accomplishments.

Our Ancestors, led by our Metis Leader Louis Riel and others, ensured we would be remembered as the Founders of Manitoba and Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation. This is a legacy many Canadians tried so hard to forget. This past year the Supreme Court of Canada made its historic MMF Land Claim Decision. This was a wake up call. Canada must now come to the negotiating table to right the wrongs committed against us. Truly our time has come!

Today, our grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, as well as our friends and neighbours, continue to build strong families and healthy communities. They have made great progress. Yet they face challenges and the MMF, as your Metis Government, has a very important role to help them overcome the obstacles they face in meeting their needs and in reaching their goals.

Over the coming months, we will resume building on the solid foundations the MMF has carefully placed during the past year. We will implement the plans and strategies we created for Metis health, rights and claims, and other social benefits. Economic development will continue to be a priority. Partnerships with other governments, institutions, and industry leaders will, without any doubt, create new opportunities for business growth, education, training, and jobs.

We kicked off the New Year by signing a groundbreaking economic partnership agreement between the MMF and Norway House Cree Nation. We will be opening a pharmacy that will have far reaching community benefits for all. The MMF is also working with Sagkeeng First Nation to realize a similar partnership. I recognize Chief Ron Evans, Chief Donovan Fontaine, and their councils, for their clear vision and strong leadership and I thank them making this possible.

This past year the MMF leadership and staff, along with our affiliated institutions MEDO, LRCC, MEDF, LRI, and others, worked hard and made considerable gains for the benefit of the Manitoba

Metis Community. Together we will continue the good work. Together we will choose our path. Together we will build our future. Together there is nothing we can't accomplish.

Meeqwetch.