

President's Message

February 24, 2014

Successful economic development is important, indeed critical, to the future of Metis governance and the health and future of our Metis community. When setting up processes and procedures, establishing and growing programs, funds, and businesses, we must always consider how these will contribute to our people's future goals and aspirations as well as how to reach their dreams of personal and family success.

Social and economic development will always be important in building a legacy for our children and grandchildren. The MMF as your Metis Government, through our Metis Economic Development Organization, also called MEDO, leads many business initiatives that build this legacy for the benefit our Community Citizens.

The Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC), the Metis Economic Development Fund (MEDF) and the Metis Economic Development Organization (MEDO) are fundamental parts of our economic development strategy. They do good work in assisting our Metis businesses compete in the marketplace. It is a central principle that these institutions coordinate with our captains of industry and community leaders to establish strong economic foundations upon which to build.

We at the MMF, LRCC, MEDF and MEDO have been developing responsible strategies for economic and business development guided by the needs of our Community, our Youth, our Women, and our Elders. Examples on how we are meeting these needs are the Louis Riel Endowment Fund, and the recent eye-glass program announcement for Retirees, as well as the Elders Firewood Program for home heating that we have had in place for some.

In an earlier message, I spoke about the importance of economic development through inter-indigenous trade. Our Metis culture reflects our commercial and entrepreneurial roots. Inter-indigenous trade and nation-to-nation business partnerships with other Aboriginal Nations are an important part of our history, our present, and our future. Economic alliances with First Nations in Canada and with the Tribes throughout the Americas hold much promise for mutual benefits.

As you may have heard, earlier this year we took important steps into this new world of and signed a groundbreaking economic partnership agreement between the MMF and Norway House Cree Nation. This coming April we will see the opening of a new pharmacy in Norway House. The FN will be a partner and owner in the pharmacy. The profits will be owned by the partners and used and distributed as per community priorities.

This pharmacy will have far reaching mutual benefits for both our Peoples. The MMF is also working with Sagkeeng First Nation and others to realize similar Aboriginal partnerships. These for-benefit pharmacies and other business

partnerships are a new approach to ensuring our needs will be met. Working together and supporting our businesses will be the path. Buying from our own Pharmacy and other businesses, whether community or private, will lead us to success.

We must never forget that to be successful we must always seize opportunities and work hard. Working together increases Metis business success and builds a strong economic foundation to support self-determination and self-government. Together, if we spend wisely and invest strategically, we will address community issues and bring about long-term community benefits for all.