

President's Message

May 20, 2015

When families, neighbours and friends support one another, they are united and can overcome nearly any adversity and share their success. When we build up our children and share our experience and knowledge with them, our communities are strengthened. This type of cooperation and sharing is not only key in our homes and families, they are key in our communities, our locals, our regions and our province.

This approach also works between nations. Last week I attended the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group in Yellowknife with provincial, territorial and other Aboriginal leaders to explore future opportunities to address priority areas such as education, economic development, housing, ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls, disaster mitigation and emergency management. While I am pleased with progress in economic development and education, it is important for us to keep applying ourselves to the tasks at hand and create a collaborative environment that will lead to tangible results and advance all priorities.

This collaboration, or cooperation, between the MMF and our First Nation and Inuit neighbours is crucial. These partnerships lead to success. As we give support to one another, we strengthen our families, communities, and nations. This in turn gives us a blessing in return that is overflowing. I am reminded of a lesson I learned from my Priest at a young age. He said that when we give, we receive a blessing. This is true! When we give our support to each other, build each other up and work together for the good of all people, we see success that is so much greater.

The MMF strives to create an open and cooperative environment where partnerships can thrive. The MMF MEDOCare Pharmacy is an example of how beneficial partnerships can work. When we spend our hard-earned dollars on products and services provided by the businesses owned by our community, then our dollars produce a big benefit for our community. The benefits of the purchase will go to our people.

Already your purchases at MEDOCare are making a difference for our Elders. With the profits from MEDOCare Pharmacy, the MMF has been able to create the MMF Elder Vision Care Initiative. This service is helping our Elders, who have limited income, through the process of receiving an eye exam, getting a prescription and ordering their prescription eyeglasses. This has happened because you are supporting MEDOCare Pharmacy by getting your prescriptions here. I encourage you to keep doing this. Remember, MEDOCare Pharmacy is able to deliver your prescriptions to your home anywhere in Manitoba or Canada!

But on the other hand, if our money is spent outside our community-owned business, in foreign or non-aboriginal owned businesses, then it is the outsider owners or shareholders who get most of the benefits. It is clear then, as simple as 1-2-3, that to help our community we must spend in our community owned businesses.

Another example of good partnerships is the housing construction on Hallet Street in Winnipeg. Over 70% of the contractors involved are Metis and other First Nation businesses. In Brandon, the housing development will have over 80% Metis and First Nation contractors providing the construction of new housing for Metis people. N4 Construction is another good example as well. This Metis construction

company has partnered with Aboriginal-owned companies with Metis and First Nation employees to help meet the Manitoba Hydro Bipole III development needs. These for-benefit business partnerships are a smart approach to ensuring our community needs are met. They help build a strong foundation for future benefits for all our children.

Other minority groups in Canada have realized the importance of coming together with one voice and purpose. They have formed mutually beneficial partnerships with other groups and their people have supported those ventures. This openness to partnership and community support have led to great success. I call on all Metis citizens, friends and businesses to support each other. Support good partnerships. Invest in and buy from Metis businesses and their partners. Help them survive and succeed. Their success will strengthen us as a community. It will help bring prosperity to our families and a sense of pride at what we can accomplish together.

If you are a Metis business or entrepreneur, I want to encourage you to visit the Louis Riel Capital Corporation. Join the Metis Business Directory – make it known that you are open for business! If you need help, call (204) 589-0772 or toll free (800)-387-6004 to see how your business can grow!

I want to remind everyone that planning for Annual General Assembly (AGA) is underway. This year we are meeting at the Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg on September 26 and 27. Already the Honourable Thomas Mulcair, leader of federal NDP and the Leader of the Official Opposition, has committed to come and speak at our Assembly. At our AGA trade show we have some great opportunities for businesses to showcase their products and services. If you are a Metis or other Aboriginal business, you won't want to miss this opportunity to network and get your business in front of the Metis community. There are some great sponsorship opportunities as well. Give Jasmine a call at the MMF Home Office. You can reach her at (204) 586-8474.

Upon closing, I offer my prayers for our friends, family members, and veterans who have passed on and my condolences to those who have lost a loved one. My hopes are with those who are sick or shut in and I offer my best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch,