

President's Message

June 4, 2015

When a young person receives education and training leading to a job, they get more than a job. They get a foundation to build a career. They get pride of accomplishment. They get pride for being a contributor to their family, community and nation. These are strengths that can never be taken away. These are qualities that stay throughout life. The importance of an education, either on the job, or as a certificate, apprenticeship, diploma or degree, cannot be overstated.

The Metis are healthy, hard-working taxpayers. When a family member has a job, they are able to contribute financially to the needs and aspirations of their family. Being able to pay the rent, buy a car, go to school, purchase groceries, and put away a little for savings are all day-to-day achievements that add up to a better life. Yet, a job is more than getting things. A job provides many other important benefits: a stronger self-confidence, new knowledge, and the opportunity to forge new relationships, to name just a few.

The MMF through our Metis Employment & Training (MET) department, as well as through our Louis Riel Institute (LRI), provides supports to assist our youth and adults in getting the education and training they need to help get that job. Whether you are currently unemployed or underemployed, or in school wondering about next steps, please feel free to get ahold of the LRI or MET staff for advice on what training programs or employment initiatives might work for you. If you are entering or already in college or university, you may be eligible for scholarships or other funding. Again, please contact the LRI or MET.

This past week, I participated in the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Partnerships Conference. In addition to writing the introductory remarks for the conference kit, I also spoke at the conference opening. Taking place in Vancouver, the conference theme mainly focused around the renewal of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) funding. The renewal of the ASETS is critical to meeting the needs of our youth and adults looking to upgrade their employment skills.

ASETS funding is also a fundamental tool used by our MET department to build industry partnerships by matching future employees to the training and employment needs of industry as well as providing financial and expert supports to both. The ASETS agreement that the MMF currently holds ends this year. It has only been extended for another year instead of renewing for five as normally done. This extension means funding could cease at the end of 2016. I believe it is crucial this federal program be renewed for another five years and into the future. The ASETS funding program is critical to economic development through employment and training.

Appropriately enough, one of the objectives of the Vancouver Conference was the building of sustainable partnerships, a role in which MET using ASETS funding has been a national leader. The conference was a great opportunity to examine best practices in this partnership development. It also provided opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas, share approaches, make recommendations, and develop networks with a view to influencing the direction of the ASETS renewal.

The creation of partnerships with industries is an important part of the MET approach for increasing opportunities for training and employment. Working with companies to create an effective and flexible plan to develop the training needed for the growth of industry matched with the skills and interests of our trainees, is a big part of what we do. This is the approach in our MMF MET partnership initiatives, which have included the Forbes Brothers, Metis N4 Construction, and Enbridge, to mention just a few.

Recently, working with institutional and government partners, the MMF MET department took steps to address the shortages in healthcare workers in rural and northern Manitoba communities. We offered an 18-month course and graduated many much-needed licensed practical nurses. These are important steps. I have often said that ensuring the health of an individual also strengthens their family. This will in turn strengthen the community and the nation.

I would like to thank the organizers of the conference for their hard work and congratulations on their accomplishment. I am confident the conference will become an annual event. I would also like to thank our elected representatives and staff, and government and corporate officials for the achievements on making our industry partnerships such successes.

I offer my hopes for our Metis people who are sick and shut in. I also offer my prayers for those who have departed and my condolences to their family, friends and neighbours. My best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch,