

Le Metis President's Message

I invite all our Metis Citizens to join us this month at our Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) 47th Annual General Assembly (AGA) taking place on September 26th and 27th in Winnipeg at the Assiniboia Downs. The AGA is an important and integral part of our MMF governance. It is a great opportunity to meet the other delegates, discuss issues and aspirations, report and evaluate progress taken over the past year, and together make plans and take action for our collective future.

Each year our Assembly focuses on a theme, which can be based on an important issue, special event, or idea. This year's theme, as many of you may already know, is: "*Governance in Action.*" The MMF, as the self-government representative of the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community, continues to be strong and fruitful growing from roots deep within our community, our culture, and our territory.

Founded, in 1967 the MMF united numerous grassroots community, political, and cultural organizations, locals, and associations, to bring a modern voice to the Metis of Manitoba. The MMF brings all Metis together from across the province to focus energy on common goals using fundamental democratic and rights-based principles. The MMF is the manifestation of our People's right to self-government and our Ancestors' spirit of self-determination.

It is you, the Metis People, who delegate and provide direction to your Metis Government and its Institutions. In our MMF Constitution, among our objectives is "to provide responsible and accountable governance on behalf of the Manitoba Metis Community using the constitutional authorities delegated by its members." This delegated authority is through our MMF ballot-box elections, Regional Assemblies, and the reporting and resolutions at the annual AGA. This delegation gives MMF its legitimacy and power.

The MMF jurisdiction includes those areas identified by our MMF Constitution, as well as those recognized under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. As your Metis Government, the MMF promotes the political, social, cultural, and economic interests and rights of our people. Among these we continue to take steps toward the settlement of our MMF Land Claim, as well as the protection of our harvesting rights and traditional territories with our Metis Harvesting Initiative.

Indeed, while building our Metis Government we have been engaged in many struggles over the years, and we have celebrated much success. In protecting our governing authority and jurisdiction, and our rights, we battled in the public, political, and legal arenas. Notable among these, in the 2013 Supreme Court of Canada MMF v. Canada Decision, also known as our Land Claim, the MMF was recognized as "*the body representing the collective Métis interest [...];*" while the 2008 Goodon Decision recognised the MMF as the "*governing body of Metis people in Manitoba.*"

The AGA, together with the Regional and Local Meetings and our Elections, ensures participatory democracy and accountability. The AGA is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. It is also where your representatives, staff, and volunteers can showcase their year's hard work. Most of us mark the year throughout with celebrations whether for birthdays,

anniversaries, or other special events. Similarly the MMF marks its strength and development by the continuing number and success of our Assemblies. Each Assembly is an unprecedented sign of MMF growth and activity.

Each assembly is an essential blend of serious fun and serious business. It is an unequalled opportunity to see old friends, gather with extended family, and to join with our community representatives in providing ideas and direction to determine what kind of Manitoba and Canada our children and grandchildren will live in. As part of this year's AGA, as in previous years, there will be a Youth Conference. I recommend to our Youth that you attend, so check out our website for registration information. I will see you there.

Upon closing this week's message, I offer my prayers for our friends, family, and neighbours who have passed on. I also offer my sympathies and my condolences to those among you who have lost someone you loved and who will be dearly missed. My hopes to those who are sick or shut in, and my best wishes to all.

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