

## **President's Message**

*March 8, 2017*

This weekend the Manitoba Metis Federation will be hosting its inaugural Government Summit at the Hotel Fort Garry – just a stone's throw away from where Louis Riel and his Métis provisional government created the province of Manitoba and ushered it into Confederation with Canada.

As we progress towards full self-government, there are important matters that need to be considered, discussed and understood. During the Summit, we will be hearing from experts in law, governance and organization. However, this will not be a time of simply hearing from outside voices. We have selected delegates from locals across the seven regions, within the province of Manitoba, to come together and discuss how we will face the changes and promises of this brighter time for the Métis Nation.

The Métis are a grassroots people. We work together at the local level to overcome challenges, make plans for the future and to help each other move forward. We are not a government from the top down. The Métis government instead takes direction from its citizens. The elected leadership, including me as your President, are offered direction and advice from you, our Métis Citizens. It is you who helps direct and set the course for the Métis Nation.

As your democratically elected leadership, we fulfill our mandate. This mandate is set by you through your involvement in your locals and regions. It is shaped by your involvement in our annual general assemblies and democratic elections. We are guided by what you share with us.

There are a number of ways in which you can interact with your Métis government. First, every Métis Citizen can connect through their Local. Locals are found all across the province of Manitoba. A complete list of our community locals can be found here:

[http://www.mmf.mb.ca/docs/MMF\\_Locals\\_Map\\_Dec\\_2015.pdf](http://www.mmf.mb.ca/docs/MMF_Locals_Map_Dec_2015.pdf).

Métis Citizens can also access their Métis government through one of the seven regional offices found throughout the province of Manitoba. Regional office information can be found here:

[http://www.mmf.mb.ca/regional\\_offices.php](http://www.mmf.mb.ca/regional_offices.php).

Métis Citizens can also contact their Métis government directly via its website located at <http://www.mmf.mb.ca>, telephone at (204) 586-8474, social media via its Facebook page located at <http://www.facebook.com/ManitobaMetisFederationOfficial/> or Twitter located at [http://twitter.com/mbmetis\\_mmf](http://twitter.com/mbmetis_mmf). For communication on land claims negotiations and other areas of current and future needs or focus, we invite you to send your thoughts to [ideas@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:ideas@mmf.mb.ca).

Access to your Métis government is just a short visit, call or click away. Opportunities to be a part of your Métis government are plenty. From participating in your meetings, voicing your ideas and concerns during community consultation, participating as a delegate at important gatherings, accessing training resources, to working as an employee with your Métis government, it all begins with you. I encourage you to get involved. Join your local and attend the meetings. Write your elected representative. Access the programs and services provided to you as a Métis Citizen.

Regular elections, local meetings, regional assemblies, annual general assemblies and ongoing consultations and committees are critically important to our Métis democracy. Our Métis government is both deliberative and participatory. These are rare traits in any government but our traditional democratic structure ensures all important dialogue and direct participation of our people.

If you are interested in Métis leadership, become active at your local level. Learn to serve and lead right in your own community. Develop your skills and when the opportunity comes, run for any of the various service opportunities that exist at the local and regional level. We need committed people like you to invest in your community. We need the insights, skills and experiences you bring. I've said it often and it bears repeating. Together we are strong. When we stand united, we can overcome any challenge or obstacle thrown onto our path to success.

I look forward to sharing with you in the days and weeks to come what we have learned and discussed during our inaugural Government Summit. These are exciting times for the Métis Nation. It is a time for us to be diligent and wise. The winds are blowing favourably for us, but we must still take care and set our course so we may take full advantage of every opportunity that comes our way. With your help, input and support, we can be confident in our plans as we work toward the future of our Métis Nation.

I offer my hopes for our Métis 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,