

President's Message
June 28, 2017

Typically during the summer months, many governments, organizations and businesses enter into a bit of a pause. Some take advantage of the warmer weather and take vacations with their family and friends. Others, however, such as the leadership and staff of your Métis government, do not slow down or take a break. We become busier!

This Summer will be no different. This year I will be once again touring the regions throughout Manitoba to meet with you face to face. Cabinet members and Regional VPs will be participating in Regional meetings, special community consultations, and various celebrations. I look forward to my Summers when I get this chance to join with each of you for these important gatherings.

Your Métis government remains committed to creating partnerships to search and find innovative ways to build healthy families, safe and secure communities, and strong local economies. I am looking forward to sharing some of these partnerships with you personally during the Métis government's summer tour.

Just this past Monday I was very pleased to introduce and launch our mobile office. This mobile office will bring Citizenship and other services directly to our Métis Citizens at home in their villages and towns throughout Manitoba. The Manitoba Metis Federation is a grassroots government, built from the ground up. It is important for your Métis government to be able to reach right into our towns and villages, meeting directly with our Métis Citizens.

Many Métis do not live close by a Regional Office and have no means of getting to one. Nearly 50% of Métis Citizens in Manitoba live in rural and remote areas of the province. Without cars or bus access, many Youth, Elders and shut-ins, cannot get a ride to the Regional Office.

This mobile office will have staff to talk to, face-to-face, about Youth and Elder and many other services including helping our Métis people get the forms and assistance they need for their Métis Citizenship Cards. Other services that will be available through this mobile office will also include: helping Métis Citizens renew their CTF stickers and receive their big game tags; communicate with Métis Citizens about a variety of matters such as employment and training opportunities; and MMF consultation meetings.

Very soon, Canadians will be celebrating the 150th birthday of Canada – a country that the Métis Nation helped found. As Canada's Partners in Confederation, and the Founders of Manitoba, the Métis under Louis Riel's Provisional government created a List of Rights outlining the rights, obligations, and expectations the people of the North West had in the face of negotiating their part in Confederation. In that List, the Métis called on the federal government to, among other things, create and honour Treaties with the Aboriginal People of the North West, including the Métis. The List of Rights also stipulated that all government, legal and judicial systems be bilingual – services must be presented in both English and French. Canada is bilingual and has such a high regard for diversity because of the forward thinking of our leaders like Riel. This List of Rights would go on and serve as the framework for the Manitoba Act, 1870 bringing the province of Manitoba into Confederation with Canada.

Also this week, the Manitoba Metis Federation, in partnership with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and in collaboration with the Centre du patrimoine and the Saint-Boniface Historical Society, is pleased to announce the opening and hosting of a travelling exhibition that showcases some of the rich history of the Métis Nation. The Federation was an instrumental in developing the original version of the exhibition, which was so successful that it was presented at the UNESCO offices in Paris earlier this year. It is now going on the road across the Métis Nation Homeland.

From June 27 to October 28, the exhibition *Hiding in Plain Sight: Discovering the Métis Nation in the Archival Records of Library and Archives Canada* will be at the Saint-Boniface Historical Society at 340 Provencher in Saint Boniface, Winnipeg. The exhibition explores the portrayal of Métis—some of whom are “hiding in plain sight”—in reproductions of artwork and photograph collections and the accompanying descriptions. It aims to foster a better understanding of the history and the culture of the Métis Nation. I encourage each of you to visit this exhibition if you find yourself in Winnipeg. It is something I believe you will find interesting and informative.

As we head into the summer, I want to thank each of you for your continued support of your Métis government. For those of you who are sick or shut-in, I offer you my prayers and thoughts. May you be encouraged and comforted by family and friends. Remember each other. Be safe and may your activities build for each of you strong relations and many happy memories. I look forward to seeing you this summer.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand.