



Le Métis

EST. 1871

YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with *Windspeaker*, a digital news outlet owned and operated by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta. Through this interview, I was able to share more about the facts regarding our Treaty. You can find the article in *Windspeaker* here: [windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/bill-c-21-delay-wont-halt-red-river-metis-self-government-mmfsays](https://www.windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/bill-c-21-delay-wont-halt-red-river-metis-self-government-mmfsays)

As Citizens know, the second reading of our Treaty in the House of Commons faced a challenge by the Conservative Party of Canada, who are using our Treaty to advance their own political agenda against the current government. They are pointing to the concerns raised by a few First Nations leaders, and repeating these concerns as though they are based in truth. The federal Conservatives are well aware that these concerns are not true, as we've extensively reviewed the wording of our Treaty with representatives of their party.

Even the small minority of First Nations leaders who have raised issues with our Treaty know that the concerns they state are not based in fact. They are using our Treaty to push their own agendas, by creating a veil of fears and concerns that are not true.

It's sad when a few leaders put effort into dividing Indigenous Peoples, when history has proved over and over again that working together is the better way forward. However, I know that we will win this fight in the end. All these inaccurate objections do is create discomfort within the grassroots of the First Nations and Red River Métis Community, where First Nations grandmothers support their Red River Métis grandchildren, and First Nations husbands and Red River Métis wives are being pushed to stand on opposite sides of a made-up fight.

Citizens who have been drawn into discussion or debate on this topic will be happy to read some of the quotes from Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada in the article, where they are clear that they intend to continue working with us to see our Treaty across the finish line. They understand

exactly what this Treaty is, and what it is not. They know that this small minority of First Nations leaders are suggesting that we require their permission to conclude this Treaty.

Let me be clear – we have never needed the permission of anyone to govern ourselves. It was our Cree relatives who gave us the name Otipemisiwak – the people who own themselves. The name fit us back when it was first given to us, and nothing has changed since then. We are a self-governing people, the people with the oldest patriotic flag in Canada, the buffalo hunters, and the Michif speakers. Our Treaty means something to us, as it rights a historical wrong done to our people. It also ensures that no matter what government we face, we do so on a Nation-to-Nation, government-to-government footing. However, our Treaty does not fundamentally change the fact that we are a self-governing Nation, just as we always have been. It doesn't change the fact that we are Section 35 rightsholders. It doesn't change our right to our proper place in Canada's Confederation. The Treaty is important. However, it doesn't stop us from continuing the important work of advancing our Nation.

That's why you will also see in the article that I talk about the fact that, aside from the Treaty, my focus in this term remains on the fundamentals that have characterized my decades of work as your President. Clearly, economic development is the path that will allow us to secure a legacy for the coming generations.

Like I shared with Citizens during our recent election cycle: You cannot have a government if you can't afford it. I, along with your Red River Métis Cabinet, have worked hard for many years to ensure that we can afford to be a government. We have programs and services to help our young people gain an education through an endowment fund of over \$30 million to fund our students in perpetuity for up to \$5,000 each year of post-secondary education.

We also help families buy their first homes or repair their homes. We have the backs of our harvesters who honour our Laws of the Harvest, and will fight for their rights in the courts. We buy fur from Red River Métis trappers and give it to Citizen Artisans to create their products, then we buy those products to sell in our store. We have programs and services to support Citizens when they need to travel to Winnipeg for medical reasons. When fires or floods impact our Citizens, we're there to help them pick up the pieces. We put up our own money earned from our business ventures to create the Bridge to Justice Fund for our Sixties Scoop survivors, while we pursue their cause in the courts.

Some of these programs are supported through the return of our taxes from Canada. Your Red River Métis Government stretches every tax dollar to maximize the number of Citizens we can help, and abides by the sometimes complicated and ever-changing reporting systems required by funders. Every penny of our taxes that we get back is reported on and accounted for.

Even when we consider how best to allocate the funds we earn through our various business initiatives, we are very careful. We build programs and services so that they can benefit the greatest number of Citizens. No program is launched without a long-term plan for that program to become self-sufficient. In short, the MMF is being secured for the long term, so that future Presidents

and Cabinets can continue to offer programs and services that help Citizens achieve their dreams.

So when you see buildings in the downtown area that now proudly fly our flags or bear our brand, understand that each and every one of these investments has been considered carefully. Each investment is expected to generate revenue that comes back to your Red River Métis Government, and fuels the programs and services that make all the difference to our Citizens and families.

Clearly, our Treaty matters. And there is no doubt in my mind that we will see it become the law of the land. But with or without it, we will continue to advance as the Red River Métis and work on the priorities that make a difference in the lives of Citizens. We will continue to play a significant role in the economic advancement of the Heart of our Homeland, and beyond borders. We will continue to work toward finding our place in Canada's Confederation.

So as the summer heats up and Citizens' attention turns to spending time with family, know that your Cabinet remains focused and dedicated to the work of advancing our economic strength, and driving the conclusion of our Treaty.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those who are grieving. I will keep you all in my prayers, as always.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. O.M. ∞





WE'RE RAVEN ABOUT WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED: RED RIVER MÉTIS-OWNED NATURE STORE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Jennifer and Richard Gobeil on 20-year journey running Winnipeg nature store



For a die-hard birder, there's nothing like waking up in the early hours of the morning to find a rare bird feeding on the seed you put out the day before. Red River Métis Citizens Jennifer and Richard Gobeil, owners of Wild Birds Unlimited, share that enthusiasm with their customers as bird hobbyists themselves.

This year, the Gobeils are celebrating an incredible milestone: 20 years of running their nature shop.

"Wild Birds Unlimited is a backyard bird feeding hobby store," said Jennifer. "We sell all kinds of products for people to enjoy their backyard... we provide feeders and bird baths and of course the bird food that goes into it."

A little over 20 years ago, Richard was investigating franchises when he came across Wild Birds Unlimited.

"We visited a few in the Toronto area; we went to [the] franchise headquarters in Indianapolis... and thought, 'this is something that could work,'" he said. "I grew up in Winnipeg, [but I] spent a lot of time in the Southeast [Region] where my father came from, and that's where I developed... a love for nature."

Before getting into the nature shop business, the couple fed birds in their own backyard – unaware that their passion for nature and the outdoors was part of a thriving hobby.

"When [Richard] came across it, we thought, 'oh, that would be a nice place to spend your day and help people be able to enjoy the hobby as well,'" said Jennifer.

It was through the connection to nature that Jennifer – with Richard's support – reconnected to her Red River Métis identity.

"I didn't have that connection growing up. It wasn't something that was really talked about in my family," she said. "So, that makes it more exciting for me that I've taught myself and I am proud of it, and helping our kids and our grandkids, [to] show them the way and to be proud to be Métis."

Not only is their passion for birds and nature reflected in their wealth of knowledge, but also in how they operate their business.

"We donate a lot of money to different organizations. We work with FortWhyte a lot, we work with Oak Hammock Marsh," said Jennifer. "We're a drop-off centre for wildlife havens. So, people can bring [injured animals and birds] to our location and we just kind of take care of them until they're picked up."

The couple opened the store on May 2, 2006. Richard was working in the trades, which he continues to do today, and Jennifer shifted from staying at home taking care of their kids to becoming a business owner.

"Before that, I had a background in transportation," she said. "So, I worked for some trucking companies as fleet manager and [did] customer service. That actually did come in a little bit handy now... some of that knowledge did follow me for sure."

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[BIRDING] DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPENSIVE HOBBY... WE WORK WITH EVERYBODY IN ALL DIFFERENT BUDGETS. I WOULD TELL THEM JUST START BY PUTTING ONE FEEDER OUT AND PUT SOME BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED IN THERE AND JUST WATCH... I THINK PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO REALIZE THAT IT'S COOL TO FEED BIRDS. – JENNIFER GOBEIL
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Richard and Jennifer have been married for 27 years and have three kids who help out at the store, all who have inherited their parents' birding knowledge.

When reflecting on the past 20 years of business, Richard said what he's most proud of is his wife Jennifer, who managed the business and raised the kids while he returned to work in the trades. Jennifer looks back on the relationships she's built with her customers with pride.

"They're showing you pictures of their grandkids and, of course, their yard, and their birds in their yard and squirrels... you really make relationships over the course of 20 years," she said. "I find people who come into the store are generally happy... they come in with a smile and they talk about their birds and the joy it gives them."

The Gobeils continue to expand their knowledge so they can educate their customers, whether they end up purchasing a product or not – making the shop stand out from a big box store.

"The idea is that we would like to be the place that people go to in Manitoba when they want to learn something about feeding birds," said Jennifer.

You can get into bird feeding no matter your age or whether you live in the city or the country – the hobby is for everyone.

"I think there's some stigmas about it, that it's something your grandma does or older people," she said. "I definitely have customers of all different ages."

The team at Wild Birds Unlimited makes sure that each customer's needs are met no matter their experience.

"[Birding] doesn't have to be an expensive hobby... we work with everybody in all different budgets. I would tell them just start by putting one feeder out and put some black oil sunflower seed in there and just watch... I think people are starting to realize that it's cool to feed birds," said Jennifer.

Birding can be a very rewarding hobby, with enthusiasts building strong connections to nature.

"People really feel deeply about their birds. They come in the store and they say, 'my chickadees don't like that.' Or, 'my goldfinches prefer this seed,'" she said. "So, they feel a real connection to the birds. It's almost like they're their pets."

If you're wanting to make bird friends, set up your yard for critters, or switch your regular bird seed to their popular no-mess blend, visit Wild Birds Unlimited. Visit order.wbu.com/winnipeg to learn more about Wild Birds Unlimited or visit the team in-store at 11 Reenders Drive in Winnipeg.

Do you love birds? Keep up with the Manitoba Métis Federation's Energy, Infrastructure and Resource Management Department's Citizen Science events, including backyard bird counts and birding walks. Learn more and apply to become a Citizen Scientist at mmf.mb.ca/environment-climate-change.

SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: JUSTIN KUTASIEWICH



Justin Kutasiewicz grew up in Winnipeg before pursuing his passion in Swan River with the opening of Evolve Chiropractic. As a Red River Métis business owner, Kutasiewicz brings the Red River Métis spirit into his practice by giving back to the community and keeping every patient's best interest at heart.

With a thoughtful, community-centred approach to care, Evolve Chiropractic is sure to meet your chiropractic needs. Visit evolvechiropracticmb.com to learn more about what Kutasiewicz and his team have to offer.

LOUIS RIEL COLLEGE TAKES LEAP OF OPPORTUNITY WITH THE OPENING OF ITS NEW CAMPUS

On July 29, Louis Riel College (LRC) was proud to open its first-ever campus at the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) building at 200 Main St. Hosted by LRC Director Sharon Varga, the event saw MMF Ministers Joanne Remillard, Minister of Education; Richard Genaille, Associate Minister of Education; and Minister Andrew Carrier, Winnipeg Region Vice-President in attendance for the ribbon cutting event. Renee Cable, Manitoba's Minister of Advanced Education and Training, was also present.

The campus has an array of classrooms that welcome students from all backgrounds who are seeking new opportunities, meaningful careers, and personal growth. This milestone opens the door to new possibilities for future generations, helping pave a brighter future for Red River Métis Citizens and all students who choose to learn and grow together. See more at louisriecollege.ca.







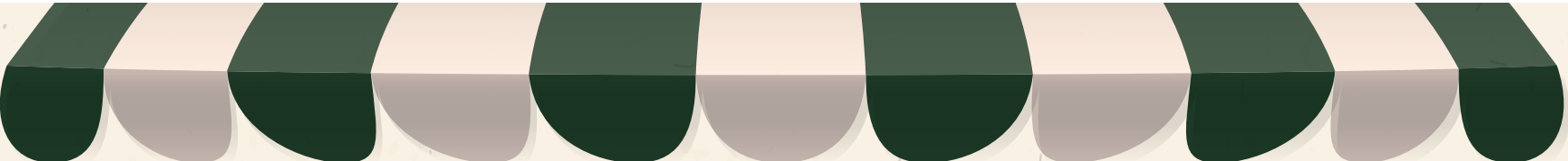
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YOU ARE INVITED!



The MMF welcomes Red River Métis Citizens to attend the 4th Annual

RED RIVER MÉTIS FARMERS' MARKET DAY

In collaboration with Le Marché St. Norbert Farmers' Market and the St. Norbert Local, the MMF is inviting Red River Métis Citizens to join us on **Saturday, August 8 between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.** to celebrate the **4th Annual Red River Métis Farmers' Market Day**.

Join us in highlighting our culture and entrepreneurial spirit with **Red River Métis vendors**, entertainment, interactive workshops.

COME JOIN US!

August 8, 2026 | 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

3514 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB



