



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As many of you know, our Citizens are once again facing serious flooding and storm-related impacts. I have personally received many calls from Citizens who are dealing with damage to their homes and properties, and I can hear the fear and worry, particularly from those who cannot easily leave their communities because of water on the roadways.

The Northwest Region has been hit particularly hard, including Swan River, Roblin, Dauphin, San Clara, Duck Bay, and surrounding communities. Some areas have received as much as 200 millimetres of rain in a matter of days, and 30 communities have declared a state of emergency. Parts of the Southwest Region, including Brandon, Russell-Binscarth, St. Lazare, Boissevain, and other areas are also under flood warnings.

Your Red River Métis Government has been actively working to support our Citizens across the Regions. Not only have we been contacting individuals to ensure they are well, but we have also been sending equipment and people to help with clean-up efforts, with the Northwest Region remaining the hardest hit during this second wave, along with parts of The Pas Region.

Together, across both waves, our team has responded to 224 requests for support by email and phone, made 3,706 wellness calls, and heard from 51 communities seeking support. These numbers represent our people, from families to Elders, who are doing their best through difficult conditions, which shows how strong our people are, but also why the continued response of your Red River Métis Government matters.

These numbers tell a story, and while it's a story about resilience for our people, it's also a story of neglect. Too often, our Citizens fall between federal and provincial systems, with neither level of government taking responsibility for ensuring that our families receive the emergency supports they need, in spite of their duties to us, which the highest courts in the land have affirmed they owe us.

Our Nation continues to be left to fill the gaps created when governments design programs and responses that do not consider our needs as the Red River Métis. In many ways, we are resilient and self-reliant because of this ongoing treatment, but that does not make it acceptable for these governments to continue this pattern. I have expressed this view loudly and clearly to both levels of government, and I expect them to respond. Ignoring us goes against their own laws and constitutional commitments, and it is blatantly obvious to our people.

Remember, not only do the provincial and federal governments have a responsibility to us, but we pay taxes in the billions to both governments. It's reasonable to expect those taxes to be used in ways that help us. But even without the support we should be getting from the federal and provincial governments, your Red River Métis Government will do what it takes to help you stay safe and support you through this challenge.

In the meantime, I encourage you all to continue listening to local emergency officials, avoid unnecessary travel, and watch for changing road conditions and washouts. Your safety must come first.

I also encourage every household to take time now to prepare for weather-related emergencies and possible power outages. Know the risks in your area and have a plan. Keep the MMF emergency number close, have a bag ready to go, along with some non-perishable foods, medication, flashlights, a wind-up radio, and other necessary items like identification in an easy to reach location in your home.

Make sure you check in with Elders, family members, neighbours, and anyone who may need help with transportation, medication, mobility equipment, or home care arrangements. Not only is this our way, and an important part of our culture, it could make all the difference for some people who might otherwise struggle alone.

I am very proud of the MMF team, both in the Regions and at Home Office, who worked long hours over holidays and weekends to make sure our Citizens felt supported. For three years in a row, we have faced major climate change-related emergencies, and each time our staff and our people have stepped up with commitment, compassion, and strength.

Much of this work happens quietly and behind the scenes, where our Citizens don't always see it happening, but I can assure you as your President that I have seen the hard work and dedication of these individuals. They make me proud that the strength of our Nation is visible in the strength of our staff.

I have also heard many stories of Citizens helping one another – checking on Elders, sandbagging properties, feeding volunteers, and supporting neighbours. These acts of care and service reflect the traditional ways of our people.

In just one example from my home community of Duck Bay, the Local leadership gathered the community for a free bingo night, along with stew and bannock. The event was very well attended and brought laughter to people who have been spending their days watching the sky and the roads with worried eyes. This is another way that our Nation shows its resilience, by finding ways to gather and laugh, even in the toughest of times.

I am also reminded that our traditions thrived in Ste. Madeleine. The Red River Métis know that this was more than a place on a map. It was a reflection of our Nation, built by families who shared work, cared for one another, and helped each other through the tough times, even in the face of displacement and hardship. When someone was in need, the community stepped up. This is how we have thrived in the face of hardship in the past, and it's how we'll continue to succeed – together, unified, and prepared to do what it takes to look after each other.

Normally, we would be gathering in Ste. Madeleine in the coming weeks, to bring laughter, joy, and music to the site of the once thriving village, but we know too many of our people who would normally be there with us will be at home instead, trying to clean up, keep their homes liveable, and helping their neighbours deal with the flood and wind damage. Because we cannot all come together to share in honouring Ste. Madeleine, we have made the difficult decision to postpone it until the issues facing so many of our people have been addressed. We will engage with the Local in the coming days and find another date for this event. The new dates will be announced on our website and social media accounts, so keep an eye out for the announcements.

Until this crisis is over, please keep being Red River Métis – keep true to our traditions and our ways, keep looking out for each other, and be confident that the MMF has your back – always.

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. ∞





VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZEN DEDICATED TO SAVING LIVES

First responder Gerry Desjardins recognized by Travel Manitoba for decades of service



Red River Métis Citizen Gerry Desjardins poses with partner Andrea Mensforth after winning Travel Manitoba's Volunteer of the Year award.

Sitting in a room of 500 people, Red River Métis Citizen Gerry Desjardins could hardly believe when his name was announced as Travel Manitoba's Volunteer of the Year award winner. The emergency first responder won alongside his partner, Andrea Mensforth, for their over 23 years of volunteer ski patrol at Falcon Ridge Ski Slopes.

"I actually thought I was at the Academy Awards [because] they said 'the award goes to' and they said my name and Andrea's name and I just could not believe it and everybody was cheering and clapping," he said. "It was nice to us because we don't volunteer to be rewarded or to be recognized. We volunteer to give back and to help others and to fill a void."

Over their decades of service, Desjardins and Mensforth, who met at ski patrol training, have volunteered over 11,000 hours for the ski resort.

"You have to think of in those 11,000 hours, that's just not putting a band-aid on somebody. That's splinting somebody, that's dealing with a medical emergency, whether it's stroke or diabetic or cardiac," said Desjardins. "In any given day, you never know what's going to happen at a ski hill... so, we're on alert and ready to go. There are people in all those years that we did save. If we hadn't been around, who knows what the outcome could have been."

Desjardins' passion for volunteering started when he was just 17 – having learned from his parents who volunteered with the Lions Club of Winnipeg, an international network of volunteers.

"There were just different things that they had as fundraisers so they could raise money to donate to people in need... I wanted to give back to

communities and people just like my parents had for over 45 years," he said. "I loved the idea of volunteering because there are so many people in this day and age now that do not volunteer; you can't be expected to get paid for everything you do in life."

The Red River Métis Citizen started his volunteering journey with St. John Ambulance, where he found his overlapping passion of volunteer work and helping those in need.

"I was a volunteer with them (St. John Ambulance) and I did special event medical with them as a medical first responder, and I headed up their transport division. I got two old outdated retired city ambulances and turned them into medical first aid posts and spent many years there. [I] loved it," he said. "I wanted to give back to people, give back to community, give back to society."

Since saying goodbye to St. John Ambulance, Desjardins has volunteered with numerous organizations, including Canadian Red Cross, GlobalMedic and GlobalFire, Search and Rescue Manitoba, the provincial Urban Search and Rescue team, South East Whiteshell Fire Department, and Canadian Ski Patrol, to name a few.

When the Citizen isn't volunteering with numerous organizations, he's putting his hands-on experience to good use by teaching First Aid and CPR, which is another source of fulfillment for him.

"I love teaching people what I have learned as my many years of being a first responder and a firefighter and a search and rescue person... I bring to the table real life stories," he said. "People enjoy when I teach them because when they leave my class, they have the confidence and skill and knowledge that they can actually now apply... to save others."

Desjardins currently teaches corporate and community First Aid/CPR training through the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Affiliate, Louis Riel College.

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"They came to me and they said, 'can you teach a few courses for us... we need a full-time instructor,'" said Desjardins. The corporate and community training provides group First Aid training, leading to official First Aid certification for participants. "[It's] very popular and much needed for every corporation and company. I've been with them at Louis Riel College now for over a year."

Working for the MMF affiliate has brought a sense of belonging to Desjardins as a Red River Métis Citizen surrounded by community.

"It's a great group to work for because we all speak the same language... It doesn't matter where you work, what department, what affiliate – it's one great big happy family," he said. "It shows when we have our Annual General Assembly, when we have staff and affiliates and Citizens come out and we can fill a building with over 6,000 people, and everybody gets along very well and just enjoys the time together."

Desjardins wants Red River Métis Citizens to know that the MMF is a great resource to help find their path in life.

"If people are wondering what their direction is in life, what their mission and goal is, I believe the MMF could help you with that because they have sponsorships and bursaries and they have an education training department that they can get you different skill sets and knowledge," he said. "You have to know what your goal, passion, and mission in life is. I found out at an early age that I love helping others."

It's Red River Métis Citizens like Gerry Desjardins who demonstrate tireless dedication to helping others and saving lives that keep our Red River Métis Communities safe and thriving. If you want to book training with Desjardins, visit: louisriecollege.ca/corporate-community-training/.



Desjardins brings real-life examples and roleplaying scenarios to set his students up for success in the real world.

SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: ZOE LAVALLEE

There's no job too big or too small for Zoe Lavallee, who runs the can-do carpentry business Zoe's Carpentry. Lavallee goes above and beyond working closely with clients to customize their projects, bringing their vision to life. Operating out of her home garage and a mobile trailer workshop, Lavallee offers services in Winnipeg and southern Manitoba. If you want the job done right with quality at the forefront, reach out to Zoe's Carpentry at facebook.com/ZoesCarpentry.





STE. MADELEINE HERITAGE LOCAL MÉTIS DAYS
JULY 17 - 19, 2026

What's happening...

POSTPONED
TO AUGUST 21 - 23, 2026

...and more! | Market Village | Sunday Mass | Monument Unveiling

JUNE 23, 2026 
NATIONAL ELECTION

THANK YOU TO OUR CITIZENS FOR COMING OUT TO VOTE!
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES!

To view the full results, visit **MMFELECTIONS.COM**
 or scan the QR code:



The MMF is the National Government of the Red River Métis

