



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last week, your Red River Métis Government hosted its first ever Michif Language Summit. I was pleased to attend the opening ceremony and deliver greetings to participants on behalf of the MMF.

The opening ceremony was a tremendous celebration of our culture, with a fashion show highlighting the outstanding talent of our designers. These outstanding designers showed their creativity by weaving aspects of our culture into their designs and producing garments that would be at home on any runway in the world.

The Métis fashion show was followed by a “battle of the strings” that showcased the talents of duos Michael Audette and Troy Flamand against the skills of Ryan Spence and René Jobin. It was a rousing, joyous way to conclude a beautiful evening, and I extend my congratulations to our Culture, Heritage, and Michif Language Minister Barbara Fleury and her team for hosting such a stellar opening ceremony, as well as a Summit that placed our community's focus on the importance of preserving the Michif language.

Without doubt, we can never slow down our efforts to keep our language alive. Historically, our Nation has always been multilingual, and remains multilingual today. For example, we understand that Riel spoke five languages, as did Gabriel Dumont. Over time, through this multilingualism, we eventually created a language, which is now known as Michif. That is the only one language that was created by our Ancestors. Today, it is critically endangered, and to lose it would be to lose an essential part of our identity.

Called an impossible language by those who've studied it, Michif is one of only seven so-called “mixed” languages in the world. Of those seven languages, only one was similar to ours, taking parts of two full languages to create another new language. This language, called Mednyj Aleut, was spoken on Bering Island, with Russian verbs and Indigenous Aleut nouns. However, as of 2022, that language has died, along with its last speaker.

We can never let this happen to our language. A language is not just the words people use – it is deeply connected to a way of looking at the world. It influences how we think, how we understand what is around us, and how we communicate with one another. It is no less fundamental to our culture than the jig, the sash, our beadwork, our flag, or our heroes. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has described language as the bridge between the brain and society. When we think about language in this way, we begin to see that it is more than words alone.

One thing to recognize is if you look at the Indigenous languages that are prominent in Manitoba, you can see Saulteaux is the language of the South. When you get past the Swan River area, the Cree language begins to dominate. And if you go further north, it's the Dene language that takes over. Depending on where our people live, they may also speak Cree or Saulteaux, or Dene languages. These languages were preserved and taught in classes, and have a stronger presence than Michif, which did not benefit from early efforts to save it.

Regardless of what Indigenous languages our people know today, this knowledge does not make them Cree Métis, or Saulteaux Métis, or Dene Métis. As we remain multilingual, we are French speaking Métis, or Saulteaux speaking Métis, or Cree speaking Métis, and so on. Being multilingual Nation does not change the fact that we are a Nation, and re-defining our Métis-ness based on the language we speak takes away from our unity, history, and shared culture.

For example, my hometown of Duck Bay used to be a Michif speaking community, but also Saulteaux speaking. When I was growing up, Saulteaux was the dominant language. My mother never went into a classroom a day in her life, so this was the only language she spoke, as did many in the community.

Because Saulteaux is my first language, I can see and understand that Indigenous languages are wired differently than English, or even French. With someone who understands the language, a story in Saulteaux is not words, it is like a film that plays in the mind. Sentences and ideas are constructed differently. It describes things ways that English and French cannot. While I wish I had learned Michif, my understanding of Saulteaux gives me insight into how that language would have changed the very essence of our Nation, had it been allowed to thrive.

Never forget that the loss of our language was directly caused by what was done to our people by Canada. After we brought Manitoba into Canada's Confederation, the reign of terror was visited upon us, forcing our community to scatter far and wide, and bringing about a strong sense of fear and shame to identify as Red River Métis.

Even when our Ancestors suppressed the Michif language and used only French, they were still judged and treated harshly for using that language. In some families, the language persisted, but in many, children were encouraged to speak English at school and at home, to keep them safe from judgement and racism. Just like that, the fluency in Cree and French, along with the other languages that enhanced Michif, were all but lost to the next generations. Canada fully intended this result, trying to erase our existence and reduce us to nothing more than a footnote of history.

As always, we owe a debt of gratitude to those families who kept the language alive and gave us a place from which to nourish the seeds of Michif for the next generations of our Nation.

But as our Citizens know, we – the Red River Métis – are fighters. It is in our blood, in our hearts, and in our minds. We never give up on what we believe in. So, while Michif is critically endangered, we are slowly bringing it back from the brink of extinction. There is no doubt in my mind that we will succeed.

Our child care centres are reintroducing Michif to our youngest Citizens. Pemmican Publications is working on a strategy to publish books in Michif. We create platforms like this Summit for our Language Keepers, so they can share what they know with new learners. We are even using technology, in conjunction with the knowledge of our Michif speakers, to give language tools to as many of our Citizens as we can. Each of these efforts brings Michif closer to our families, our communities, and our everyday lives.

I encourage our Youth to take every opportunity to learn our language, but more importantly, to speak it. It doesn't matter if your pronunciation is not perfect, or if you haven't learned all the words for the things you want to express. Fear is one of the biggest reasons why languages stop being used. Fear of saying words incorrectly, of being misunderstood, or of being mocked because of your limitations. But if we do not make the effort to speak our language, in whatever limited way we have, we have little hope of success in reclaiming our language.

We are well past the time in our history when shame forced us to shy away from our language. As we continue to advance ourselves on many fronts, from economics to education to home ownership, the Michif language must also be part of the equation as we find our rightful place in Canada's Confederation. A Michif revival would prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the attempt to rid us of our existence was a complete failure. It sends a powerful message that the Red River Métis are strong now and will be strong well into a brighter future.

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. ∞





MEET THE NEW MINISTERS IN THE MMF CABINET

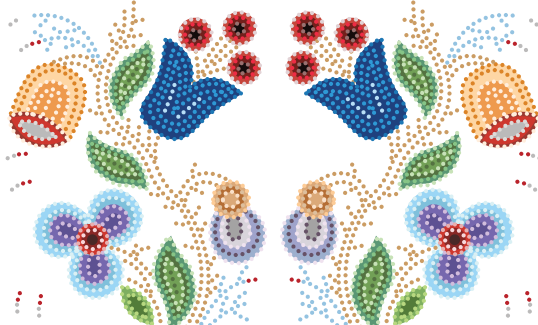
As the 2026 Red River Métis National Election ushers us into the next four years of our Government and the Red River Métis Citizens it serves, we look toward an exciting and hopeful future for the Nation.

Carving the path of this new era of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), along with our strong Cabinet veterans, are four new faces elected to represent their respective Regions and uphold Red River Métis values for generations to come: The Pas Regional Executive Officer Linda Camille Bertholet, appointed as Minister of Beyond

Borders; Southwest Regional Executive Officer Barbara Fleury, appointed as Minister of Culture, Heritage, and Michif Language; Southwest Regional Executive Officer Wesley Hannah, appointed as Minister of Métis Employment and Training; and Interlake Regional Executive Officer Clint Webb, appointed as Associate Minister of Sports and Youth.

To see the entire MMF Cabinet, their elected Regions, appointed Ministerial Portfolios, and mandate letters visit: mmf.mb.ca/mmfc-caucus-cabinet.

MMF Spotlight is honoured to introduce you to the new faces in the MMF Cabinet representing Red River Métis Citizens.





MINISTER CAMILLE BERTHOLET
THE PAS REGIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND MINISTER OF BEYOND BORDERS

Minister Camille Bertholet is a 50-year-old Red River Métis woman born and raised in The Pas, Manitoba. The Minister remembers a time when being Red River Métis was nothing to be proud of, but now she couldn't be prouder of her heritage.

The Minister has been active in her Local for over 15 years, as she was a chairperson for the Local Advisory Committee before being elected as a Regional Executive Officer for The Pas. She was also appointed by Mona Buors, Minister of Métis Child and Family Services, to sit on the Michif CFS agency board in 2024, which Minister Bertholet served on up until her inauguration into Cabinet.

Minister Bertholet, her husband Sean Bertholet, and their 30-year-old son Marcus makes what the Minister calls "the perfect little team." Their family also extended their hearts and home to two Inuit boys, who they fostered.



MINISTER WESLEY HANNAH
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND MINISTER OF MÉTIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Minister Barbara Fleury is one of nine children born to Fred and Yvonne Leclair from St. Lazare, Manitoba. Growing up in a low-income Red River Métis family, Minister Fleury learned that she had to work harder to prove what she was capable of. This pushed Minister Fleury to become the strong Red River Métis woman she is today.

The new Minister spent time serving on the Southwest Regional Métis Council for 23 years before acting as president of the council for another eight.

Minister Fleury was married to the late MMF Minister and Veteran John Fleury for 48 and a half beautiful years. They have five children and are blessed with 10 grandchildren.

SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: COLE DUNBAR

Meet Cole Dunbar is a Red River Métis Citizen based in Snow Lake, MB, whose many roles reflect his creativity and community spirit. His business, Good Times Coffeehouse, has become a cozy third space where people can gather, connect, and be inspired. The coffeehouse is a cornerstone of the tight-knit community, and offers a range of services. When he isn't in the coffeshop, Dunbar wears one of his many other hats – photography, aviation, forest firefighting, and fire detection. Learn more about the magic of Good Times Coffeehouse at facebook.com/p/Good-Times-Coffeehouse-100091473835720/.







MINISTER WESLEY HANNAH
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND MINISTER OF MÉTIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The son of the late Allen and late Beatrice Hannah, Minister Wesley Hannah was born and humbly raised in and around Portage la Prairie.

Minister Hannah has experience in governmental responsibility, having worked for the Manitoba government for 32 years. He also has spent 26 years active in the Portage Local. He was first elected as chair in 2002, serving for eight years, and again in 2022, for another four. Through the Portage Local, Minister Hannah has created programs in Culture, Education, Elders, Youth, and Community Awareness. His goal was – and is – to empower the Red River Métis Community and Citizens.

His mother was his true inspiration to become involved with the MMF by teaching him about his Red River Métis identity. Minister Hannah is also a proud husband to his wife Rhonda Hannah, father to his three children, and grandfather to five grandchildren.



MINISTER CLINT WEBB
INTERLAKE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF SPORTS & YOUTH

Associate Minister Clint Webb is a dedicated healthcare professional committed to serving his community and supporting the well-being of others. His career has included roles at Percy E. Moore Hospital, Selkirk Mental Health Centre, the Selkirk Youth Home, and Stony Mountain Institution, where he has worked with individuals from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances.

The Associate Minister has always been passionate about sports and giving back to his community. He has coached baseball, hockey, and basketball. Through healthcare, family, coaching, and community involvement, Associate Minister Webb continues to make a positive difference in the lives of those around him.

Outside of his professional life, Associate Minister Webb is a devoted husband and father who takes great pride in his wife and children. Family is an important part of who he is, and he values the time spent together and the experiences they share.

MINISTER Q&A

HOW WILL YOU REPRESENT THE MMF?

Minister Camille Bertholet (The Pas): I plan to help my Region grow. With all the changes we see in today's times, so many of our Red River Métis Citizens are wanting inclusion – Citizens who reside in other provinces, countries... that is my first main goal. I want to establish friendships across Canada with our Beyond Borders Citizens.

Minister Barbara Fleury (Southwest): My late father-in-law, Elder George Fleury, was one of the founders of the Southwest Region, and now I shall continue the Fleury legacy with great pride.

Minister Wesley Hannah (Southwest): I will represent the interests of the Red River Métis Community, participate respectfully in discussions, and share information in accordance with the MMF.

Associate Minister Clint Webb (Interlake): As this is my first experience at this level of our governance... I am looking forward to listening to our Citizens and bringing their concerns to the table.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO WITH YOUR NEW PORTFOLIO?

Minister Camille Bertholet (The Pas): I am mostly looking forward to learning and supporting our Citizens to the best of my ability. I ask for patience, as I am still familiarizing myself with the very important portfolio of Beyond Borders.

Minister Barbara Fleury (Southwest): With my portfolios, Michif Language and Culture and Heritage, it will be an honour to be able to continue the dreams of our Elders that have passed on.

Minister Wesley Hannah (Southwest): The Métis Employment and Training portfolio contributes to our Citizens' betterment in life, and I hope to continue to support Red River Métis Citizens looking to access employment and training.

Associate Minister Clint Webb (Interlake): Meeting with our Youth and listening to their stories, ideas, and experiences pertaining to interactions with sports and programming, to learn what works and what could be improved.

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZENS?

Minister Camille Bertholet (The Pas): My main message to our Citizens is to be true to yourself, be mindful of our Elders, and be a proud Red River Métis. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the National Assembly this year.

Minister Barbara Fleury (Southwest): To my Red River Métis Citizens, I will do my best to continue the work of our Elders and those leaders who have come before us.

Minister Wesley Hannah (Southwest): I am proud to serve the Red River Métis Citizens, to build on the principles of our Nation and to preserve our inheritance for the Youth of our future.

Associate Minister Clint Webb (Interlake): I would like to thank all of you who took the time to let your voices be heard by voting. I look forward to meeting and hearing from you all.

To learn more about the 2026 Red River Métis National Election and Inauguration of the Red River Métis Government, read the MMF Spotlight article: *A new era: Celebrating the inauguration of the National Government of the Red River Métis*, or visit mmfelections.com. To read more about MMF President David Chartrand's decision-making when appointing Ministers to their respective portfolios, read the *July 23, 2026 President's Message*.





STE. MADELEINE HERITAGE LOCAL MÉTIS DAYS

RESCHEDULED TO
AUGUST 21 - 23, 2026





Red River Métis
MARKETPLACE

Has opened a new location!

Located at
**355 EVELINE ST.
IN SELKIRK, MB**

Red River Métis Marketplace sells
authentic handcrafted items from
Red River Métis artisans.

REDRIVERMETISMARKETPLACE.CA



Health & Wellness

Are you a Red River Métis Citizen living with Congenital Heart Disease?

We want to hear from **Red River Métis
patients** and caregivers about their
healthcare experiences.

For more information, please
contact Cameron Bouchard at
boucha57@myumanitoba.ca.

This work, led by Dr. Anna Chudyk, was approved by Committee for
Harmonized Health Impact, Privacy, and Ethics Review. Participation
is voluntary and your information will be kept confidential.



V:24/Jun/2026