



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last week, Premier Kinew and his government expressed their intent to find an alternative solution to carbon pricing, and introduced legislation to move to carbon sequestration. Also called carbon capture and storage, carbon sequestration is one of Canada's approved methods of reducing the harm we do to our climate. Yet economists and other experts continue to state that carbon pricing is the lowest cost approach to combatting climate change. The province's proposed switch to carbon sequestration means that each family in Manitoba would lose access to an average of \$1,200 dollars in rebates in 2024. Still, the shift to carbon sequestration will likely take years to come into effect, so it is still important that Citizens understand carbon pricing and what they stand to lose in rebates.

Carbon pricing and rebates are still making headlines in our Homeland and beyond, with partisan politics creating division amongst voters and spreading inaccurate information. Carbon pricing is called a "carbon tax" by some and "a price on pollution" by others.

Putting a price on pollution isn't unique to Canada – it's being done across the world in many, many other countries and jurisdictions. This means that it's a model that is not going away, and time will tell if any of the other options put forth will be as effective. But time to head off the heating of our planet is in limited supply.

Partisan politics should never play a role in combatting climate change, because the impact of failing will live beyond any kind of political slogan or fight of the day. Make no mistake, climate change is very real and the consequences are already becoming apparent.

Canada saw record-breaking forest fires in 2023, with 18 million hectares burned and over 200,000 people evacuated. Lack of snow and unseasonal warmth prevented or limited northern roads from opening, making access to needed goods challenging for those communities that rely on them.

The world has already had the hottest decade in recorded history. We've seen our seasonal patterns change, which creates risk of drought and crop failure, even in temperate places like our Homeland.

The effects of climate change are already irreversible. Countless international institutions, scientists, and environmentalists have made that clear. Ignoring it or doing nothing about it won't change that fact, and it won't change the consequences for our children and grandchildren. Without significant efforts by all, we will not be able to keep the global average temperature to the set target of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The consequences of climate change

The world needs to cut current carbon emissions by almost half to keep global warming at 1.5 degrees. Estimates suggest that our current path will lead us toward an overall change of 2.4 to 2.6 degrees Celsius by 2030.

At an almost three-degree temperature change, some coastal cities are expected to become uninhabitable, meaning places like Vancouver and New York could see their entire population forced to relocate.

At three degrees warmer, underwater heat waves will cook sea life, including fish, plants, and coral reefs. The world will experience an average of 29 extra days of extreme heat per year. Some of our favourite things, like coffee, grapes, and chocolate, are sensitive to changes in their environment, and may no longer be available, or may come at a cost that is out of reach for most households. The World Health Organization warns that drought is expected to displace 700 million people by 2030.

At a 4.5 degree or higher increase, the majority of the planet would no longer be able to sustain wildlife.

Even if we sustain carbon pricing in Canada, we know that global climate policies still fall short of what must take place in order to prevent the almost three-degree temperature rise. The world is standing on the precipice of major weather and climate-related catastrophes. Canada must do its part to reduce pollution.

Understand the facts of carbon pricing and rebates

The goal of Canada's carbon pollution pricing model is to reduce as much as one-third of our emissions by 2030.

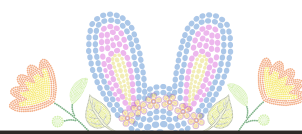
I recently shared a video with my granddaughter to teach her about carbon pricing. In it, the speaker compared carbon pricing to using a grocery cart. When you go to a grocery store, you put a loonie in the cart so you can use it. That loonie is an incentive for you to return the cart and get your money back. The grocery store doesn't make any money from your use of the shopping cart.

This is similar to carbon pricing. It's what is called a net zero tax, with more than 90 per cent of the funds collected going back to individual Canadians. What you pay for the pollution you contribute by driving your car or heating your home with coal or oil doesn't stay with any government, or any tax bucket. It's collected and then returned.

In Manitoba alone, close to half a billion dollars are brought back into the province by the rebate to half a million families, which includes our own Red River Métis families. This averages out to approximately \$1,200 in 2024, per family. Of course, there are households who use more gasoline or other fossil fuels for their needs. But 8 out of 10 households will get more money back than they pay.

Let me be clear, the current high prices of food and housing that we are all experiencing are not the result of carbon pricing. The cost increases we have been seeing since the pandemic are driven by – among other factors – the supply chain disruptions from the pandemic itself, as well as the Russia-Ukraine war. Corporate greed is also a factor.

We live in a society where companies work hard to maintain and grow their profits. This means they will seek the most cost-effective ways to do business, keeping costs like labour and office space low, and avoiding new expenses. Also, if there is high demand for something – like a new car – and the supply is limited, companies can charge whatever they think they can get away with for their goods and services. This means that the only way to incentivize them to change the way they do business is to cut into their bottom line.



Don't misunderstand, the Red River Métis are entrepreneurs and we believe that businesses should make a profit. But there is a difference between making a profit and refusing to change your business model even if it is doing harm. A trapper who ignores the balance of nature and takes more than can be sustained will find himself with nothing to harvest.

I strongly encourage our Citizens to do their homework and fight back against the disinformation and partisan politics that are playing a role in creating negative sentiments on the price on pollution.

While you are doing your research, remember that for married or common-law partners, only one in a pair will receive the rebate, not both. The Canada Revenue Agency will pay the rebate to the person whose tax return is assessed first. Check both of your accounts and tax returns before assuming that your family isn't receiving a rebate.

I know people are hurting with the current high cost of living, and sometimes it feels impossible to get ahead. But don't lose sight of the fact that carbon pricing comes back to you and your family, in the end.

Protecting our Homeland – the legacy of our Ancestors, our gift to our children

The Red River Métis are a collective – which means we hold our rights collectively. This is not just a legal fact, it is part of who we are. When our Nation came into being and we started living in settled communities, we shared hayfields and wood lots for firewood. We were taught to take only what

was needed when harvesting, leaving something for others, including the animals we share our Homeland with. We were taught never to take all the berries, or all the fish and fur.

This has been our way since our beginning and our traditional lifestyle was in harmony with nature. Those who still participate in our traditional economies understand that all the things we're seeing – raging forest fires, very mild winters, drought and flood risks – all negatively impact our lives and our environment. Those who live in rural and remote areas are the ones most vulnerable to the effects of the changing climate, and they are often the first to see them. Living outside of harmony with our environment will continue to push nature toward a sharp rebalance. As we know, when nature steps in to rebalance the ecosystem, it is vicious.

Conservation and good stewardship of our Homeland are key to our identity, and an important part of what our Ancestors fought to preserve. We have a responsibility to make sure that our Homeland is here for generations to come.

Saving our environment will take all of us. The Red River Métis have led the way in the past, standing up for what is right and in the best interests of the collective. Once again, we need to stand up for a just cause – for our children, as well as for the water, land, and animals that are a part of our Homeland.

There are so many challenges in the world today, with Russia flexing its muscles as a nuclear powerhouse and making threats to the West. Make no mistake, Russia is more than capable of

destroying the world. Wealthy people know this and are already building bunkers to protect themselves and their families against the risk of war, famine, and any other risks to themselves.

This leaves the working poor and middle classes to bear the brunt of the consequences of buying into partisan politics and denying climate change.

Canada is a country that prides itself on its values of equality, fairness, diversity, and balance – values that I believe were informed by our own Nation's values. We must be ready to be leaders in the world and show that we will not waver in our fight against catastrophic climate change.

We have a choice – we do something to help our planet or we do nothing. We either take this seriously and do what we must, or we watch our Homeland and the rest of the world cook itself. Right now, Canada is being tested, as is the rest of the world. Our Citizens have a choice, just as everyone does – do we lean into what our Ancestors taught us about sharing and protecting what we all hold in trust, or do we let modern partisan politics lead us astray? I know where I stand on this matter, and I encourage you to stand with me.

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.

Meeqwetch,

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

ANIMATOR AMANDA STRONG TIES RED RIVER MÉTIS IDENTITY TO HER ARTISTRY



Amanda Strong is an award-winning stop motion animator who focuses on bringing Indigenous stories to the mainstream media.

After stumbling across her late grandfather's camera in high school, Amanda Strong's connection to the arts was forever changed.

The Red River Métis Citizen began exploring her passion for photography at the post-secondary level.

"I was fortunate to learn both analogue and digital methods of capturing images. I soon learned that this tool was a vessel for emotion, for expression, to tell stories – and not just that of documenting existing things we regularly encounter," she said. "It became my personal portal. As this self-expression evolved, I learned and explored other means of image-making using paint, and expressive material as a vessel. I integrated these materials with camera-based imagery."

After receiving her bachelor of applied arts in interpretative illustration and a diploma in applied photography from Sheridan College, Strong quickly learned the importance of community and collaboration. She began to work with other creatives, leading her to start exploring the basics

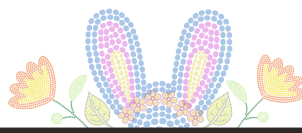
of animation, and from that point, she never looked back.

"Most of my artistic journey has been through the act of trying and doing in the moment. Taking risks and learning through the process is a big part of how I operate and learn. Stop motion animation was always a process and medium I enjoyed viewing. I was fascinated by its process and its openness for endless possibilities of telling a story," said the animator.

As her interest and experience with moving image media continued to grow, stop motion felt like a natural medium for the artist to learn and create with.

"It was the perfect amalgamation of my comfort with photography combined with all the potential in the world to make worlds with physical material and work collectively with artists to create and share important stories," she said.

Since discovering her love for stop motion animation, the Red River Métis animator's films



have screened internationally. Her most notable screenings have taken place at the Cannes Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, the Vancouver International Film Festival, and the Ottawa International Animation Festival. Her television work has also had a global reach.

"Much of my time is spent dreaming up ideas, directing and producing Indigenous content via my studio as well as for television," she said. "I have directed several award-winning animations and am also a director of *Molly of Denali*, the first Indigenous TV animation, on PBS."

For the last 20 years, Strong has trained and worked in photography, illustration, film, and animation. She has been nominated for two Emmy Awards and a Canadian Screen Award, and was recently the first Canadian Fellow to participate in the Sundance Institute Native Filmmaker's Lab.

Her connection with the artistic community further inspired her to explore her connections with her own identity. Despite growing up in Ontario and currently residing in British Columbia, Strong has always felt a powerful connection to her Homeland.

"I have a great appreciation for my learning and experience with my maternal grandmother directly, even though we lived away from her (Homeland). For me, it's important to know where your family is from," she said.

After learning the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) accepted out-of-province Citizens, Strong decided to pursue Citizenship.

"I understand the importance of community and being claimed by a community. I have learned from many Métis people and groups spanning many provinces but for me, it was not about accessing services or resources but rather connecting to the land of my family and preserving and celebrating our culture for generations to come," she said.

The animator grew up with stories of her grandmother's lived experiences as a Red River Métis woman.

"Though I did not physically grow up in a Red River Métis community, (my grandmother) shared with pride who we are and provided our family with a pathway to connect. She did not have an easy life growing up and always fought for Métis rights and what she believed in, even if it was against the grain of society," Strong said.

Her grandmother's passion for Red River Métis rights helped Strong build connections with her community beyond borders.

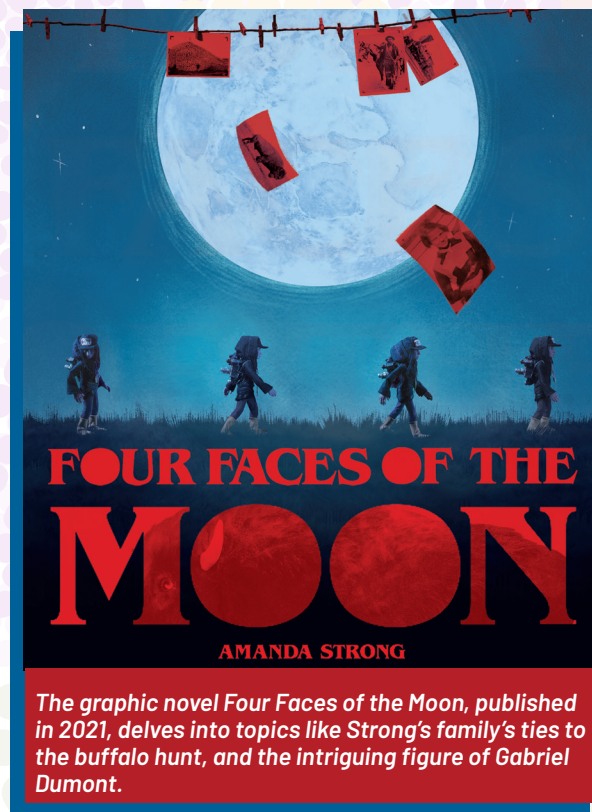
"She helped me connect to the Indigenous and arts community in Toronto. Her strength and heart are something I hold closely in how I live and work. I am honoured to continue to learn and connect through her spirit and nationhood," said the animator.

After relocating to Vancouver, British Columbia, the animator started Spotted Fawn Productions in 2010, which was then incorporated in 2014.

"This was a space to merge my artistic interests and training with a dream to make stories move and create space and opportunity for Indigenous and marginalized artists," Strong said.

The Indigenous community-oriented studio focuses on stop motion, other forms of animation, and virtual reality.

"I also have a keen interest in how screen-based content that is based on physically built elements can exist within physical space," she said. "Many of our films have been exhibited in physical exhibitions in tandem with the films, providing audiences with a different way to look at the stories and work and experience the physical pieces that take so many years to make."



In 2021 Strong published her first graphic novel, *Four Faces of the Moon*, with Annick Press. The story has been published in French, Michif, Cree, Nakoda, and Anishinaabemowin.

Four Faces of the Moon represents a culmination of extensive research involving collaboration with her grandmother, extended family, Métis historians, and language speakers. The exploration delves into her family's ties to the buffalo hunt, and the intriguing figure of Gabriel Dumont. The book also sheds light on the gradual decline of language within her family over just a few generations.

"To be Métis, it's integral to do the work to know where we come from, to honour our connection to our First Nation relatives and the land," she said. "Sometimes we only have fragments of

these histories and stories. I was very fortunate to have my grandmother in my life for 35 years, and this project was a way to honour her life and experiences."

Strong's newest project, *For When the Starving Return*, is a stop motion animation based on the short story "Wheetago War" by Richard Van Camp. She describes the project as "something special" that will be propelling her into new creative and technical territories.

"It's rare for a story to be so timeless throughout an entire production, especially when that process spans seven years," she said. "I vividly remember Richard Van Camp inviting me to create an animated universe and the goosebumps that formed on my body from reading his short story "Wheetago War." This story offered a balance of terror and beauty and invited me to explore important and relatable topics of gender spectrum, greed and destruction of the land, and the return of ancestral medicine and teachings."

A co-production with the National Film Board of Canada, the project is set to premiere in the fall of 2024.

The animator's connection with her identity has made her effective at telling Red River Métis stories.

"Being Michif is the core of who I am and will be at the core of any stories I work on, whether that be Red River Métis or if I am invited to help tell someone else's story through animation," she said.

When working on projects, Strong does her best to ensure Indigenous artists are involved in story and creative execution. She also understands the importance of working with Elders, language speakers, and knowledge keepers to ensure her team is working in the best way through all stages of production.

"(When) working in film and animation it is important to have a purpose and to believe in the process. The foundation of that purpose and process comes from experience, values, and teachings that have been shared with me – and will continue to evolve as I walk forward with new teachings and experiences to come," she said. "This industry can often function and have structures that feel contrary to Indigenous ideologies. For me, it's important to be aware of these differences and strive to live and work in a way that honours cultural teachings."

As the animator's career grows, she hopes to create content that is accessible for children and young adults, and challenge what we can often think of as "animated content."

"This medium is indeed an art form; it's cinema and has the potential to tell meaningful, political, and social stories. It can educate us on so many levels," she said. "The pairing of visual worlds and sonic



landscapes does have the power to touch souls and challenge the way we look at the world, to lend empathy and, most importantly, to give voice and representation and tell authentic stories.”



As a Beyond Borders Citizen, Strong hopes to strengthen her connections with the MMF and give back to her community through her art.

Although she’s now a successful animator, Strong’s career path wasn’t always easy.

“I was rejected from film school and yet I make films and animation for a living. I have been turned down and rejected on many occasions and it still happens to this day,” she said.

Despite encountering rejection in her career, she has embraced these challenges as valuable learning experiences which have ultimately contributed to her success.

“It’s important to be grounded in the reason why we create, which is not always about acceptance or accolades,” she said. “It’s important to be able to work through the times that aren’t plentiful and find people and support to work through those times.”

The Red River Métis animator hopes to encourage Youth to not give up on their dreams, even amid tough moments.

“Even in rejection, there is something to learn. We never know what’s on the other side of who is assessing us or our applications, so it’s important to never give up. I’ve always found it inspiring and important to surround yourself with caring and ethical people who can challenge you but also support you in a way where there is constructive growth,” she said. “Mistakes can often lead us to happy accidents to help us grow and learn and sometimes lead us to a new way of looking at things or a new way of creating. Never be afraid to ask for help, especially when you need it. And never forget to give back to someone in need when you are able.”

Strong hopes to strengthen her connections with the MMF and give back to her community through her art.

“I look forward to having an opportunity for potential collaborations with the MMF in telling Métis stories and history in whatever form we’re able to create,” she said.

RED RIVER MÉTIS SCHOLAR DEBUTS NEW WORK



Congratulations to Red River Métis scholar Laura Forsythe on the upcoming release of the book *Around the Kitchen Table: Métis Aunties’ Scholarship*. The book, which Forsythe helped edit and contribute to, looks beyond the patriarchy to document Métis women and their contributions. A book launch will be taking place at McNally Robinson Grant Park on April 11 at 7pm. To read more about Laura Forsythe, University of Winnipeg Assistant Professor and MMF Bison Local Chairperson, visit Our Citizen Spotlight page: <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/citizen-spotlight/laura-forsythe>



Conservation Trust Fund
(CTF) stickers for the 2024-2025

Harvesting season

are available on April 1.

