



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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After bearing witness to the historic moment of a sitting Prime Minister of Canada joining us to honour Louis Riel at his gravesite, we have experienced another significant moment in our history – the sweeping victory handed down by the courts for the MMF and leadership.

The lawsuit was first launched under the leadership of Cassidy Caron as President of the Métis National Council (MNC) in 2022, and was continually propped up by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), even after Saskatchewan and British Columbia followed the MMF in leaving the national body. The lawsuit alleged that between 2019 and 2021, I, along with former president Clément Chartier and former executive director Wenda Watteyne, engaged in “secret, unauthorized and self-serving transactions.”

On November 24, 2025, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice dismissed the lawsuit in its entirety. In the decision, the court stated that there was no “scheme” or “scorched earth policy” as was suggested in the MNC’s 2022 statement of claim. Nor was there any attempt to cripple it or create any financial or reputational damage, as was also claimed in the MNC’s statement.

The full decision is publicly available on the MMF website and through our social media pages. For those who wish to learn the details, they are there for you to review. What is very clear is that the judge understood our actions for what they were –

strong efforts to ensure that the decades of work we undertook to protect and advance the interests of the people were preserved for the future. There was no evidence to support any of the allegations. The lawsuit was always a vindictive ploy by the leadership of MNC, MNO, and MNA to harm us, wasting millions and millions of dollars on a political vendetta. They had no ability to achieve quorum, or make decisions, and no ability to advance this court case with only two groups (MNO and MNA) attempting to look like a legitimate national body.

The court completely cleared Clément Chartier, Wenda Watteyne, and myself of any wrongdoing. The decision showed we were not guilty of any of the accusations levelled at us during our time leading the MNC. Not only did the decision vindicate us from any wrongdoing, it recognized and acknowledged that when we left the MNC, we left it in a stronger financial position than it had ever experienced. It also stated that we acted honestly and with a view to the best interests of our people.

Citizens know that one of the things I feel strongly about is the protection of my good name. This is not just a personal philosophy. It is an important lesson that was taught to me by my mother. It’s a lesson that is deeply rooted in the traditions, culture, and values of our Ancestors. It is part of our own justice model, where the family often acts as intermediary with individuals who lost sight of the fact that their actions harm the broader family. A good name was the entire family’s responsibility to protect, just as the reputation of our Nation is ours to protect.

The importance of preserving your good name is something I always carried in my heart. So, of course, it was difficult to see these individuals from MNO, MNA, and MNC create false narratives that directly attacked my name and the name of the MMF. It was hard to wait three long years to see these narratives finally overturned.

Now that this moment has arrived, it has proven that I made the right choices, living my life as a protector and a servant to Red River Métis Citizens. The court recognized what is in my heart and the sense of justice that informs my actions. To have the truth revealed so clearly renews my energy to continue devoting my life to the protection and preservation of our people.

This decision is much more than a legal win. It represents a safeguarding of our collective dignity, identity, and governance as the Red River Métis. It confirms that the leadership you elected has acted with integrity and honour, even under extreme pressure, political division, and scrutiny. We did not take shortcuts or act in secret. We endured every

accusation, every whisper campaign, every slur against our reputations. We continued to do what was right, thoughtfully, with transparency – often under difficult circumstances.

Citizens know that this is not the first time that our Nation’s leadership has been unreasonably called into question. Louis Riel himself was put on trial, with his methods, motives, and his very sanity questioned at times. Throughout many challenges, he never failed to stand up for his people and his principles. He kept his commitment to his truths and continued to document the facts of how Canada treated our people. It is this kind of strength and conviction that runs through the veins of all Red River Métis. It is what allows us to hold ourselves together and strong, even when it seems all hands are turned against us. This strength and refusal to surrender reside at the very heart of our identity as a Nation. It is what has allowed us to survive – even during our darkest days.

However, this court decision is not an end. It is the beginning of a new chapter in our Nation’s history. It is a renewal and a reaffirmation that we are on the right path, honouring our Ancestors and the sacrifices they made for our existence today.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Citizens who believed in justice, fairness, and truth throughout this challenge. Your belief in the integrity of your Red River Métis Government sustained us as we walked this path.

We will continue to honour your faith and confidence by moving forward with our important priorities – our treaty, the settlement of our land claim, and the defense of our identity, which lies at the heart of this victory. We will hold our heads high, with our minds focused on our future and our hearts full of the wisdom and knowledge of our Ancestors.

We are and will remain true to our cause and to our identity we are the Red River Métis, Louis Riel’s “little Nation,” and we will never surrender to those who seek to bring us down.

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. ∞

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THIS DECISION IS MUCH MORE THAN A LEGAL WIN. IT REPRESENTS A SAFEGUARDING OF OUR COLLECTIVE DIGNITY, IDENTITY, AND GOVERNANCE AS THE RED RIVER MÉTIS. IT CONFIRMS THAT THE LEADERSHIP YOU ELECTED HAS ACTED WITH INTEGRITY AND HONOUR, EVEN UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE, POLITICAL DIVISION, AND SCRUTINY. - MMF PRESIDENT DAVID CHARTRAND

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CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: RED RIVER MÉTIS ENTREPRENEURS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT ANNUAL RED RIVER MÉTIS BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS GALA

The RRMBCD’s second annual awards gala showcases successful Red River Métis businesses

Red River Métis entrepreneurs stepped into the spotlight at the second annual Red River Métis Business Excellence Awards Gala – an evening dedicated to entrepreneurs who drive the economic future of the Red River Métis.

and have been for many years and haven’t received the profile that they need and deserve,” said John Coutris, CEO of the RRMBCD. “Now it’s time to educate our market here in Manitoba about our wonderful entrepreneurs and their businesses.”

missing over those years is just that promotional piece – celebrating Red River Métis entrepreneurs and their businesses, letting people know that we’re here to stay, we’re part of the economy, we’re contributing.”

The gala celebrated 15 Red River Métis finalists across five categories, with the winner carefully selected by three judges per category – made up of Red River Métis Citizens from the Red River Métis Business Association Advisory Group. To see a list of all 15 finalists visit the RRMBCD’s 2025 Excellence Awards Gala Page.

Judges used multiple metrics to determine which businesses are making a measurable impact – not only financially (financial details remained confidential with the Louis Riel Capital Corporation), but also observing the social impact made within their communities.

Although each finalist is working hard to build the Red River Métis economy, only one outstanding entrepreneur in each category could take home the award. The 2025 Red River Métis winners are:

- ∞ Traditional Economies Award:
Season Kirkwood of SAYZOONS
- ∞ Youth Entrepreneurship Award:
Trystan Goertzen of True Stain and Paint Ltd
- ∞ Infinity Women Secretariat Award:
Deena Caplette of Kid City
- ∞ Outstanding Business Sales under \$1M:
Victoria Perrie of Perrie Law
- ∞ Outstanding Business Sales over \$1M:
Alex Hupé of Shortline Moving Solutions
- ∞ President’s Lifetime Achievement Award:
Oliver Boulette

Red River Métis entrepreneur Deena Caplette has been in business for over 15 years running Winnipeg’s favourite family entertainment centre, Kid City.

“Winning this award is just, honestly, an honour and a privilege... There are incredible candidates



Held at the Fort Garry Hotel, the gala was swimming with nearly 450 attendees sharing warm embraces, friendly smiles, and networking in their exceptional Red River Métis fashion.

On November 27, 2025, the Red River Métis Business Development Corporation (RRMBDC) – an affiliate of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) – filled the Fort Garry Hotel ballroom with Citizens, entrepreneurs, and valued guests to celebrate Red River Métis business owners and their vision of innovation and determination.

While the RRMBCD hosts the event each year, the gala would not be possible without collaboration across MMF departments and affiliates – including the MMF’s Economic Development Department, the Louis Riel Capital Corporation, and the Métis Economic Development Organization.

“We need to showcase our Red River Métis entrepreneurs... they’re the builders of Manitoba

“We all want to and need to help celebrate the successes of our Red River Métis entrepreneurs,” said Coutris. “The one piece that we’ve been



The 2025 Red River Métis Business Excellence Gala award recipients were recognized in their respective categories for their remarkable talent, determination, and dedication to community.





here tonight,” she said. “I’m just proud to be a Métis business owner. From the beginning of my business, RRMBC and MMF have been here and helped me to make my dream a reality. I am beyond thankful and grateful for the empowering forces in the entire community.”

Also awarded at the gala was the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award, granted to Oliver Boulette for his dedication to Red River Métis economic advancement. On the night of the gala, he greeted guests in the main hall with traditional fiddle music.

“I’m going into 21 years now serving my Red River Métis Government. [My] job tonight was to chase you all in [to the ballroom] with my fiddle music...”

thank you all again for giving me this honour,” said Boulette.

Gala events are often priced well out of reach – but RRMBC set out to do the opposite. The celebration was built for the Red River Métis Community, with tickets prices as low as \$100 – ensuring accessibility remained at the heart of the evening.

“Our event is a community event. We want to make it affordable for our Citizens to celebrate our entrepreneurs, their businesses, and their success,” said Coutris.

The significance behind this gala isn’t just about awards – it’s about recognition. Red River Métis entrepreneurs are already driving Manitoba’s

economy forward, and this event rightfully acknowledges that.

“Now is the time [to] promote on a broader scale... we want to raise that flag for Red River Métis businesses and help them procure and grow through our efforts and continue in their success,” said Coutris.

Visit the RRMBC website to learn more about bookkeeping, marketing, group benefits and future networking events offered to Red River Métis business owners year-round. To find more exceptional Red River Métis talent or to register your own Red River Métis majority owned business, visit the Red River Métis Business Directory. Through the MMF, your dreams can come true.

SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: MEET KELSEY GILLESPIE

Kelsey Gillespie, owner of CatEyeStrophic Inc., is a proud Red River Métis entrepreneur who has dedicated herself to offering products and services that make you feel beautiful. What began as a part-time lash business has grown into a thriving career. Today, she runs her business full-time, offering a wide range of services including teeth whitening, spray tans, brow services, and more.

Gillespie has benefited from many programs offered by the Louis Riel Capital Corporation, pursuing the Métis Women Entrepreneur program as well as additional certifications and business experience. She was recognized for her efforts as a Youth business owner with the 2024 Red River Métis Business Development Corporation’s Young Entrepreneur Award!

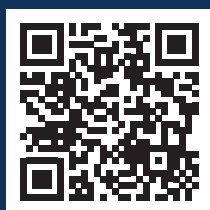
Visit catyestrophic.com to learn more about her growing business and see how you can shop Red River Métis!



2026 RED RIVER MÉTIS EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Rooted in Culture, Rising with Pride



Mark your calendars! The 2026 Red River Métis Early Learning & Child Care Conference is coming, and you won’t want to miss it. **Scan the QR code to register.**





SAVE ENERGY & MONEY WITH MÉTIS ENERGY EFFICIENCY OFFERS

Efficiency Manitoba and the Manitoba Métis Federation are working together to help make energy efficiency upgrades easier for Red River Métis Citizens.

Qualified households can receive free energy-saving upgrades such as:

- ✓ Insulation upgrades
- ✓ New high-efficiency natural gas furnace
- ✓ Energy efficient light bulbs, showerheads and aerators, air sealing products and more

Find out if you qualify

Visit efficiencyMB.ca/MEEO

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