



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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you may know, in response to the wildfires in northern Manitoba, our province has been operating under a state of emergency since late May. These wildfires are massive and likely generational in their scope and scale. Thousands upon thousands of individuals, including our Citizens and our First Nations relatives, were forced to flee their homes with very few belongings. Some came without shoes, or with only the clothing on their backs, carrying their young children and boarding planes and helicopters to escape the dangers of the wildfires near their homes.

Manitoba is well known as one of the most generous provinces in Canada, and our Nation, the Red River Métis, were among the first to mobilize in response to the needs of evacuees. From the time the state of emergency was declared on Wednesday, May 29, it took less than 24 hours for our evacuee support centre at 406 McGregor to open its doors, offering a warm meal, a chance to rest, and an opportunity to pick up needed supplies. Donations poured in from our community and soon started to come in from the broader community.

Because the team worked so quickly to stabilize our Citizens who were fleeing the fire, finding them accommodations that worked best for them, as well as putting out a call for support from the community, our emergency response team ended up with an abundance of donated clothing, hygiene

products, baby needs, pet supplies, and food provided by commercial kitchens.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the emergency response team, led by Red River Métis Community Resource Department Director Stephanie Meilleur, for their dedication and long hours of planning and preparation to get us to a place where we could support the broader community.

The outpouring of donations and volunteer time from the Red River Métis Community and all Manitobans in response to the needs of evacuees has been profound and deeply moving. I am particularly proud of the ways in which our Citizens and the staff at the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) mobilized in support of our northern Citizens and all evacuees.

I also extend my sincere thanks to our Red River Métis business community, which also showed up and offered services and supports. From offering a bouncy castle for kids at the Leila soccer complex, to donations of prepared foods, cash donations, and other critical resources, we are seeing the generosity of our business community and our allies across Canada.

I also wish to recognize all our Regions, and the hard work they have undertaken. The Winnipeg Region, led by Vice-President Andrew Carrier, and his executive team of Ministers JoAnne Remillard and David Beaudin have been constant and friendly faces at 406 McGregor, lending their support and assistance to the MMF's emergency response team efforts. Vice-President of The Pas Region Judy Mayer has been working around the clock to receive our Citizens and all evacuees who came to The Pas for shelter. Each year, this Region increasingly becomes engaged as the front line in supporting Citizens during wildfire evacuations. While they become stronger each year, I also recognize these efforts require long hours and sleepless nights for Vice-President Mayer and her dedicated team. The Southeast Region, led by Vice-President Denise Thomas, has also done tremendous work in supporting Citizens who were evacuated due to the fires in the East. Vice-President Julyda Lagimodiere and her Thompson Region team have been supporting as many as possible in their Region, and have themselves been managing the impacts of the fires on their air quality and the overall well-being of Citizens.

I also thank Vice-President of the Northwest Region Frances Chartrand for lending her support to both The Pas Region and to Citizens who safely evacuated to the Northwest Region, for offering their care and support to those around them., I also

want to thank Minister Will Goodon and Melinda Haney of the Southwest Region for their quick response in, setting up a donation distribution centre in Brandon, for Citizens and all evacuees who have sought shelter in that city. Lastly, I want to thank the Regional Administrator Jack Park of the Interlake Region for helping mobilize their Locals, with members like Corinna Ginther of the Selkirk Local, who hosted donation centres and have donated trailers-full of much-needed supplies. I thank all Locals across Winnipeg, the Interlake, and beyond for all their hard work, demonstrating the power of our grassroots governance. Anita Campbell, Spokeswoman for IWS, has been by my side as we mobilized our government in support of evacuees, and I thank her for her dedication and hard work on these efforts.

While these fires are incredibly large and dangerous, leaving many people at risk of losing their homes and their belongings, we have also seen that out of crisis comes strength and an opportunity for beautiful moments of caring and compassion. There are many stories that will emerge from these trying times. Some will be heartbreaking, but there will be many more that celebrate the best of humanity, as we rise up to help one another and prove that when Manitoba faces a challenge, we are ready to stand together to help those in need. Without a doubt, your Red River Métis Government and our Citizens will play a role in these stories.

There can also be no question the part of reckoning that will follow this state of emergency will be the need to grapple with the effects of climate change. Wildfires happen every year, but rarely this early or this fierce. It's clear that the world is changing around us, and what we know to be normal environmental impacts have changed. The MMF, your National Government, stands ready to play its part, here in the heart of our Homeland, the province we brought into Canada. This is where our Nation was born, and we will always stand ready to protect those who call it home.

Of course, Manitoba isn't the only province facing a Wildfire State of Emergency. Our neighbours in Saskatchewan have also declared a state of emergency due to the wildfire crisis happening in their province. We have been able to make wellness checks and, through our Beyond Borders department, have been able to offer support to our Citizens regardless of where they live.

One of the great disappointments I do have emerging from these fires is the federal departments that have acted in a discriminatory manner to the Red River Métis as a whole. Not



once did Indigenous Crown Relations or Indigenous Services Canada reach out to ask how our Citizen evacuees are doing, or whether we need their help or support, and the Red Cross did not make any effort to support our Red River Métis evacuees or find them accommodations. It's unfortunate that we're still in this situation in 2025. After our long history and our long fight for recognition of 150 or more years, we still face discrimination, despite being in a time of crisis where everyone should be coming together. The fact that this discrimination is continuing at a time where lives could potentially be lost, it is deeply upsetting that federal departments continue to ignore the Métis. However, even if they continue to ignore us, nothing will ever stop us from being who we

are. We continue to work with others, continue to support our own Citizens and help others as we've always done. Governments who fail to recognize us for who we are and what we can do, and what our people should receive in support will one day have a reckoning with us, and that day will come sooner than later.

I know our Citizens are proud of the work we've been able to accomplish together, and as your President, I have not only seen the outstanding things we've done, I have also heard about it from many people, including our Premier, Wab Kinew, and his government. Know that we will continue to do everything we can to play our part in protecting the people who call Manitoba home.

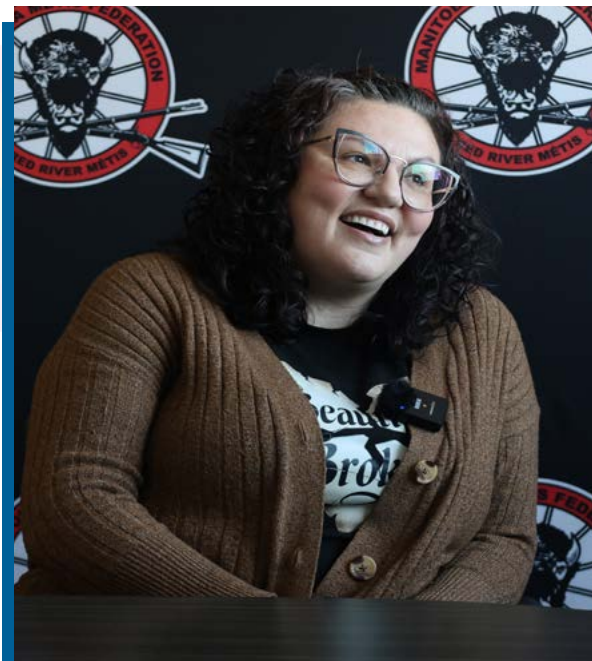
Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those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

Meeqwetch,

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



RED RIVER MÉTIS VETERANS DEPARTMENT NOMINATES CITIZEN TO ATTEND 2025 INVICTUS GAMES



The Red River Métis Veteran and her daughter have moved all around the globe, going as far as Costa Rica, but no matter how far they drift they always find their way back home to Manitoba.

Red River Métis Veteran Cheryl Leblanc attended the 2025 Invictus Games in Vancouver this past February. The Invictus Games bring over 500 wounded, injured, and sick (WIS) service personnel and Veterans from over 20 nations to compete in adaptive sports (Invictus Games Foundation). The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)'s Red River Métis Veterans Department nominated Leblanc to attend as a MMF Citizen.

Leblanc found Red River Métis Community by getting involved with the MMF as a Youth Representative within the Interlake Region.

"My grandmother, she's from Saint-Laurent originally. She lives in the (assisted living centre) in Saint-Laurent," she said. "Culturally, growing up (there wasn't) a lot; my dad never went out there. My grandmother would stay connected to her sisters but (there) wasn't a lot growing up. It wasn't until I was (about) 19... that I got connected with the MMF."

It was through that connection that Leblanc entered the Canadian Forces. 20 years ago, unsure of what she wanted to do, the Citizen came down to 150 Henry Ave and found a liaison for the Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program (CFAEP). She decided to sign up for the three-week pre-recruit training course (PRTC) (Government of Canada).

"I did the Aboriginal entry program, and I joined in Montreal. I actually called my dad from Montreal crying because I signed up for three years; I was like, 'Look, what did I do?'... I was there for about 10 and a half years... I got out briefly and I went to reserves. (I was) full time reserve for another six to seven years and then (during) COVID-19, I decided to get out," she said. "I'm trying to figure out where I land now."

Not only did the MMF help Leblanc join the Canadian Forces, it also enabled her to attend the Invictus Games as a guest. Janet Stevenson, the Director of the Red River Métis Veterans Department, was the one to facilitate the nomination.

"I knew that there was a Veterans department (but) I knew nothing about it... there's more need for Veteran advocacy and I think that's kind of where I connected with Janet," she said. "I went to the (MMF) Remembrance Day event in Portage La Prairie... and I touched base with her there... Not long after I ran into her in in Portage, she sent me an e-mail and said, 'hey there, the MMF would like to nominate you.'"

The Citizen highlighted how The Invictus Games brings Veteran communities together. Leaving the military can feel like leaving behind a built-in sense of community - finding it again can be a challenge.

"There (are) really great community events... they always have a good turnout and people need community... a lot of people miss the military community because when you're posted around or you go to course... there's always people around, then when you leave you miss that. It's nice to connect with other Veterans," she said. "It's part of the transition phase that everybody is going through."

After years of serving, many Veterans find it hard to ask for help. Leblanc knows that struggle firsthand.

"I think part of it is pride, part of it is not knowing where you can get the supports," she said. "Whether it's connecting to the Veterans Department (at the MMF)... or the Legion, Southern Chiefs, the CFMWS (Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services) resources or the Transition Centre... resources are out there. We just have to reach out."

Leblanc attributes the possibility to attend the Invictus Games to the determination and groundwork put in by those who came before her.

"Going there would not have been a possibility if it wasn't for having the Veterans Department, where I had connected with Janet," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to attend (the Invictus Games) had it not been for those people before me; even in the MMF, like President David Chartrand's endurance over many years... (we) require that endurance to create possibilities like this for myself or for others... we are where we are because of other people's sacrifice."

Cheryl Leblanc exemplifies the commitment of Red River Métis Veterans to their community. The MMF remains dedicated to supporting, honouring, and uplifting Veterans. Visit our Red River Métis Veterans Department website to learn more and get involved.

Works Cited

- **Invictus Games Foundation. Invictus Games Foundation.** <https://www.invictusgamesfoundation.org/>

- **Canada. Government of Canada. "Canadian Armed Forces Military Personnel Instruction 01/07 - Annexes - CAF Military Training Programs for Aboriginal Peoples of Canada".** <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canadian-forces-military-personnel-instructions/cf-military-training-programs-for-aboriginal-peoples-of-canada/canadian-armed-forces-military-personnel-instruction-01-07-annexes-caf-military-training-programs-for-aboriginal-peoples-of-canada.html>

RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZEN CALEIGH MILLER BRINGS INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION TO THE (HR) SPOTLIGHT



Caleigh Miller, a Beyond Borders Citizen from Saskatchewan now living in the Yukon, is the first recipient of the Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) highlight from the Yukon. She's a powerful example of how MMF Citizens are making impacts beyond borders – proudly representing the Red River Métis Nation across Canada.

Out of 8,000 members, MMF Citizen Caleigh Miller was one of five Human Resources (HR) professionals selected for the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources for BC and Yukon (CPHR BC & Yukon) 2024 HR Spotlight. This recognition is given to inspirational members who have made a significant impact in the workplace or conquered a daunting challenge; with this accomplishment, Miller demonstrates the professionalism and excellence of the Red River Métis.

"They really look at people who have made a significant change to the workplace... based on the information that had been submitted as part of my Government of Canada nomination, I was selected to receive one of the spotlights. (I was) very honoured and very humbled," she said. "I also learned that I was the first ever recipient of this award from the Yukon. We often hear a lot (of what is happening) in the big cities... it's really difficult to make impactful change unless you're in one of those places."

Miller has done outstanding work throughout her career. She worked on the first Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) plan for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency of Canada (CanNor), highlighted in a letter of implementation as a response to the call to action. Mainly focused on reducing barriers for Indigenous Peoples, Miller worked on not only recruitment but also employee retention.

The IDEA plan was shaped by a commitment to addressing colonial impacts through careful and intentional action.

"We hear a lot about sort of the Indigenous perspective... recognizing that Indigeneity is as broad as the ocean is deep. The Inuit, the Métis, and the First Nations... nobody can speak for one particular group," said the Citizen. "I really try to think about what it's like to recognize (the) colonial impact... to be able to leverage (the) privilege that I have to speak for those who aren't necessarily able to speak for it – bringing those types of perspectives into the work that I do."

As a proud MMF Beyond Borders Citizen herself, part of Miller's hand in the IDEA initiative includes bringing Red River Métis Citizens into the conversation.

"It's saying (that) the Red River Métis are hardworking people, resilient people, entrepreneurs, skilled in languages, creative; those are all attributes that can be harnessed, and I (think) 'what can I do to find these people, to bring them in, to make their work experience better so that they can actually share these gifts and talents with all of us,'" she said.

I'M SO PROUD TO BE PART OF THE MÉTIS NATION AND THE MANITOBA MÉTIS FEDERATION. (IT'S) SUCH A STRONG ORGANIZATION THAT IS WORKING SO HARD TO SORT OF SAY, 'LOOK AT HOW STRONG THESE PEOPLE ARE, LOOK HOW RESILIENT THESE PEOPLE ARE' AND I CAN BE PART OF THAT.

- CALEIGH MILLER

Before the Red River Métis Citizen became the exceptional HR professional she is today, she started at the Canadian government in a summer program 21 years ago.

"I started directly out of university... and I ended up stumbling into the field of human resources and worked (in that) for many years... I worked in a number of different organizations over time, but in 2010 an opportunity came up to relocate to Whitehorse, Yukon for a position and it was a promotion, so I accepted," she said.

Miller continued working in different organizations over the years but landed in the Canada's Free Agent program, a career mobility program that allows pre-qualified federal employees to develop skills while supporting different government departments. The opportunity led Miller to the position she now holds: senior policy analyst in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.



The Citizen has taken the time to learn her Red River Métis family's history, pushing past previous generations of shame. Her family originally settled in the Red River area before heading further west into Saskatchewan, where she was born and raised.

"I support the governance process for the classification program and pay equity program. A lot of what that entails is doing research into those different programs on different policy aspects so that we can form recommendations to the Government of Canada on ways that those programs can be enhanced or improved," she said. "(I get) the chance to be there working directly in programs on that national scale."

Miller's work on the national level in HR isn't the only thing she is proud of.

"I'm so proud to be part of the Métis Nation and the Manitoba Métis Federation. (It's) such a strong organization that is working so hard to sort of say, 'look at how strong these people are, look how resilient these people are' and I can be part of that," said the Citizen.

MMF Spotlight is proud to celebrate exceptional Citizens like Caleigh Miller, whose impactful work uplifts both herself and fellow Red River Métis across the Homeland. If you someone you know have a story to share highlighting your involvement in the Red River Métis community, please reach out to communications@mmf.mb.ca.

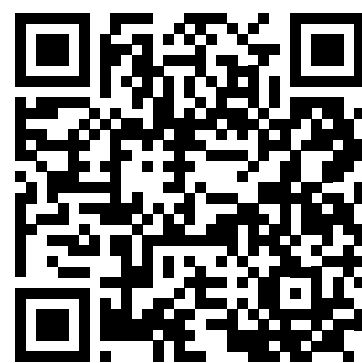


RED RIVER MÉTIS WILDFIRE EVACUEES

The Manitoba Métis Federation is doing our best to ensure Red River Métis Citizens are staying up-to-date as the state of emergency brought on by the wildfires continues to unfold across the province.

Follow us on social media or visit our website for important updates regarding essential item donations and online fraud prevention.

Want to volunteer? Please contact:
431-294-7452
emergencyvolunteers@mmf.mb.ca



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