



Le Métis  
EST. 1871



*"When the Government of Canada presented itself at our doors it found us at peace. It found that the Métis people of the North-West could not only live well without it . . . but that it had a government of its own, free, peaceful, well-functioning, contributing to the work of civilization . . . It was a government with an organized constitution, whose jurisdiction was all the more legitimate and worthy of respect, because it was exercised over a country that belonged to it."*

*- Louis Riel, Memoir*

Our second Annual General Assembly (AGA) in a single calendar year was a great success. Hosting two assemblies in one year is due to the need to catch up after the lockdown resulting from the pandemic. It was wonderful to be able to see that so many Citizens continue to be engaged in the governance of our Nation.

Make no mistake, ours is the largest Indigenous assembly in Canada. Not only did we have thousands upon thousands of attendees from within Manitoba, but we were also joined by many Citizens beyond borders, both online and in person – some Citizens came all the way from British Columbia and even the United States to participate in our democratic traditions.

Along with passing resolutions and engaging in important dialogue with our Locals – the grassroots foundation of our government – we shared our progress as your Métis government and our future vision for the Nation.

Saturday morning's opening ceremonies took place in front of a hall that was so packed, the Assiniboia Downs staff had to bring in extra tables, and there

were still some attendees who stood at the back to witness these historic proceedings. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, announced funding in the amount of \$23.1 million for our Red River Métis National Heritage Centre, which was quickly followed by Premier Heather Stefanson announcing a further \$10 million in support of our heritage centre. These announcements will help ensure that we will be able to offer an innovative, world-class experience to visitors, which may even include an opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation with our great leader, Louis Riel.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Red River Métis event without some fun and laughter. On Saturday night, we held our first ever Red River Festival as part of our AGA. This event included card tournaments, a talent show, and contests that allowed our Citizens to show off their traditional skills like jigging, moose calling, and duck calling, along with a joke contest and a laughing contest. Congratulations to all our winners, including Cathy Panson, who claimed top honours and became the national champion in Sunday's 2nd Annual Pickler Classic, out of a field of 35 submissions.

Over the course of the weekend, I also saw many Citizens proudly sporting new hats, beadwork, and clothing purchased from our Red River Métis vendors, artists, and artisans. It touches my heart to see so many people visibly proclaiming their identity as Red River Métis, making our assembly as colourful, patriotic, and festive as anyone could hope for. Supporting our vendors and giving our Citizens access to their beautiful work are important parts of growing our Red River Métis economy.

None of this would be possible without the tremendous efforts and hard work of the AGA team, all our staff, and volunteers. The success of our AGA relies entirely on their efforts, and it simply would not be the same without the heart and care they give every aspect of the planning and execution. Many Citizens stopped me to share how impressed they were with the assembly planning, and how well cared for they felt. This is the very essence of our Nation on full display – caring for one another, organizing for the benefit of the community, and ensuring our democracy continues to honour our inheritance from our first government, the *National Committee of the Red River Métis*.

Now that the assembly is done and we have heard the will of our Citizens, we must continue to build on the momentum we have achieved for our Nation. I can assure you that we will continue to make wise investments on behalf of our Citizens, expanding on the programs and services we are able to provide.

Inch by inch, day by day, we are slowly regaining the head start that was promised to our children when we brought Canada into the Northwest. Through our unity, hard work, and focus, we are building a strong legacy that we can pass on to our next leaders, and future generations.

As the season continues to turn, our harvesters should feel a great sense of pride as they go out onto the land to exercise our Section 35 rights and feed our families and communities. I hope all our harvesters stay safe out there and remember – your Red River Métis government has your back.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand. LL.D. hon. Q.M. ∞



# Red River Métis unite for Annual General Assembly

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) celebrated an extraordinary year of advancements for the Red River Métis at its Annual General Assembly (AGA) on October 14-16, 2022. Over 3,000 Citizens and delegates gathered at the Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg for the three-day event, co-chaired by MMF Minister Will Goodon, Métis N4 Construction CEO Marc LeClair, and Provincial Youth Advisory Committee member Sydney Fleming.

The AGA’s Opening Ceremonies kicked off with substantial funding announcements for the future Red River Métis National Heritage Centre located at 335 Main Street.

Minister of Northern Affairs Dan Vandal announced Canada’s contribution of \$23.1 million to the project.

“The story of our Red River Métis formation, and our contributions to Canada’s confederation, are an important part of our shared history,” said MMF President David Chartrand. “Through our heritage

centre, visitors will learn about how the Red River Métis were instrumental in bringing the West into Canada just 153 years ago. The Red River Métis were the economic engine of the West. It is symbolic that when you stand inside our new heritage centre at the corner of Portage and Main and look through the doors, you are facing northwest into our Homeland. This is the corner where all roads westward began.”

Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson provided a video greeting which earmarked a \$10-million investment from the province to help bring the heritage centre to life. This is one of many examples of the MMF’s priority of sustainability, and the project will see significant improvements to emissions reductions and energy savings.

Other notable dignitaries offering greetings included: Clément Chartier, Ambassador of Inter-Nation and International Relations; Minister Anita Campbell, Infinity Women Secretariat (IWS) Spokeswoman; the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-

Indigenous Relations; Manitoba NDP leader Wab Kinew; Manitoba Liberal Party leader Dougald Lamont; Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman; Stan Delorme, Chairman, and Harold Blyan, Vice Chairman, of the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement in Alberta; Diane Scoville, Chairperson, Alberta Métis Federation; and RCMP D Division Superintendent Scott McMurchy.

During his State of the Nation address, President Chartrand spoke on the strength and unity of the Red River Métis beyond borders.

“In the last three to four months, there has been a 30 per cent increase of people from outside Manitoba coming home wanting their citizenship card. We have 2,600 people today who don’t live in Manitoba that are getting their citizenship cards. They want to come home; they want to be with their family, the Red River,” he said.



President Chartrand’s State of the Nation address focused on Red River Métis strength and unity.



Provincial Education Minister Joan Ledoux and Associate Minister David Beaudin present David Parent with a Distinguished Leadership Award.



(L to R): Métis N4 Construction CEO Marc LeClair, Minister of Housing and Property Management Will Goodon, and Youth Representative Sydney Fleming served as Co-Chairs during the MMF’s AGA.



Members of MMF Cabinet pose for a photo during President Chartrand’s State of the Nation address at the 2022 Annual General Assembly.



Minister Goodon presents a gift to Minister of Northern Affairs Dan Vandal.



Cathy Panson poses with President David Chartrand and Dustyn Panson after winning the second edition of the MMF’s Pickler Classic.



On the heels of the first round of Beyond Borders meetings across the Homeland, Red River Métis Citizens across the Prairies joined the AGA via Zoom, with some making the trip to Winnipeg from as far as British Columbia.

“They’re talking about protecting our identity from all of those people that are trying to steal it, they’re talking about running in the future of our government, they’re talking about getting programs in the future. So, we have a movement that’s unstoppable. And we have to keep on building it, but you can only build it if you have pride,” President Chartrand added. “Believe in your Nation, believe in your government. Because that’s what it’s all about.”

A fundamental part of our governance structure, the AGA allows MMF Cabinet and Citizens to review and celebrate the Red River Métis Government’s achievements, while detailing and providing direction on plans for future prosperity. The jam-packed weekend featured presentations from MMF Ministers on recent milestones. Highlights included the Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan, progress to honour residential and day school survivors through a national monument in Ottawa and the commission of a special sash, as well as an update on the Red River Métis Fur Company, along with plans for a women’s shelter in West St. Paul.

During his Economic Development report, President Chartrand announced a \$5-million investment for a

targeted cost of living supplement for Métis Elders, students, and families in response to rising food costs. Between now and March of 2023, the program will provide a monthly stimulus of \$100 to Elders, \$75 to students, \$125 to families with one child, and \$150 to families with more than one child.

After a year of exciting economic advancements for the Red River Métis, President Chartrand brought even more exciting news. Over the next three years, the MMF is investing \$178 million into continued growth through housing, health care, hotels, pharmacy expansions, and more. Numerous developments include plans for foot care services at all MEDOCare Pharmacies, a clinic for women’s heart health at Plessis Road in Winnipeg, and a development in the community of St-Georges dedicated to housing for seniors and families.

During the Provincial Education report, Minister Joan Ledoux and Associate Minister David Beaudin awarded David Parent, Assistant Professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies and History at University of Manitoba, with an MMF Distinguished Leadership Award in Education, given to individuals who have made outstanding educational contributions for Red River Métis people in Manitoba.

The first Red River Festival took place at the AGA on Saturday, which was filled with rummy and crib tournaments, kids’ activities, as well as contests for

laughing, moose and duck calling, jokes, jiggling, and a talent show. Close to 500 people attended the festival, which raised \$1,800 in entry fees towards the MMF’s Bereavement Fund.

The Rainbow Auction, organized by IWS, raised \$28,743, with an additional \$15,000 from Métis N4 Construction for a total of \$43,743 towards the Bereavement Fund.

In keeping with Red River Métis harvesting traditions of canning, pickling, and preserving, the MMF hosted its second annual Pickler Classic. Among 35 submissions, Cathy Panson was crowned the pickler champion.

To wrap up the event, the MMF distributed hampers containing chicken, vegetables, honey, canned foods, and more for Elders and Citizens.

The MMF thanks everyone behind the scenes who helped make the weekend a tremendous success. In case you missed it, you can view the AGA on the MMF’s YouTube channel. Reports, other AGA documents, and photos can be found on the AGA website at [mmfaga.ca](http://mmfaga.ca).

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