



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February is "I Love to Read" month here in the heart of our Homeland. The goal is to encourage people – particularly children – to read more, and to enjoy the act of reading. I know the MMF will be an active participant in encouraging readership in young people, with representatives of our government going to schools to read books to students, educating them about Red River Métis history and culture.

Michif as part of early childhood education

There's no question that the best time to introduce new information and new skills is when we are young. Along with reading, we can use books as a gateway to help youth learn new languages. That's why we are also actively engaging Red River Métis Youth in learning Michif as part of "I Love to Read Month."

It is our language, created by our Ancestors, and we must protect and nurture it. Right now, it remains a critically endangered language, with very few who grew up speaking it. The MMF remains dedicated to the preservation of our Red River Métis language. It's why we created a new portfolio dedicated to it, led by Minister Andrew Carrier. Even though having a portfolio dedicated to its preservation is relatively new, we have always been active in Michif preservation, and we will continue to make targeted investments to support it. This includes many different parts of our government working together to instill pride and knowledge at every age and stage of our Citizens' lives.

We begin teaching Michif to our children during their earliest learning years, through our childcare centres and resources provided to our licenced, home-based childcare facilities.

Books about our culture and language are always available to children and staff at the centres. Michif greetings like hello and welcome are posted on parent information boards at our centres, and children interact with puzzles, books, and blocks that provide them with both English and Michif words. Language games, memory games, stamps, and more include Michif words. Through day-to-day conversations, the staff at centres also incorporate daily teachings in Michif – often through the Michif word of the day, taken from our regularly posted "Michif Word of the Day" on our social media pages.

Of course, no early childhood education for Red River Métis children would be complete without music – songs in Michif are regularly introduced to our children, which helps them develop music literacy, as well as building on the acquisition of our language. Language Keepers are often guests at the childcare centres, so they can engage with children and encourage the use of Michif language in everyday ways – using Michif terms for colors, seasons, everyday clothing items, numbers, and more.

We also make sure resources are made available to parents at our childcare centres, through recipes, articles in newsletters, and other tools. We also include Michif language tools and activities in our My Little Métis boxes, which are designed to engage the whole family and are shipped to Citizens across the globe.

As you can see, your Red River Métis Government is committed to the preservation of Michif for children and their parents. However, these are not the only ways in which we are engaging Citizens with Michif resources. While it's important to introduce Michif at this critical early stage of development, we also know that it's also important to provide language tools to adults seeking to acquire more knowledge.

Ensuring long-term sustainability of Michif supports

It's important to understand that Indigenous Language programs previously funded directly by Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage have been revamped into a five-year program, which requires us to be more strategic in our approach, given the time limit. We're reorganizing our entire approach to Michif language supports, to ensure it has long-lasting benefits for all our Citizens, no matter where they live,

particularly since our mandate has moved beyond Manitoba's borders.

The Louis Riel Institute (LRI) is an affiliate of the MMF committed to the revival of the Michif language as one of the roots of Red River Métis culture. LRI has a long history of partnering with MMF Regions and community and will maximize these relationships as it re-establishes and teaches the Michif language throughout the province and Homeland.

Some of our Citizens, particularly in the Southwest Region, will be aware of some of the changes we've needed to make to current programs, including the LRI MAP House in Brandon. The reality is that the LRI MAP House operated from April 1, 2023 until January 2024 without having any funding secured. The closing, although difficult, was a necessary decision.

The MMF is now in a position where we must ensure that all outstanding bills and costs are paid, and they must be paid by the MMF. This is how we can make sure the brand name of your Red River Métis Government is not in any way misunderstood or misrepresented as having outstanding debts. Let me be clear – these debts aren't ours and the decision to incur these debts was approved by others, without ensuring the funds are in place. We will clear up that financial challenge and move ahead with a strategy with a broader perspective that ensures Michif resources and supports are there for everyone we represent. It's unfortunate that this happened and it emphasizes the importance of ensuring all departments and affiliates report back to Cabinet to gain approval for initiatives. This ensures the funding is in place, and that we don't make decisions in isolation that could jeopardize our ability to continue supporting our Citizens in this generation, and the ones who follow.

This closure is part of the overall strategy to revamp LRI and ensure that it is effective and meets the needs of our people. The Institute is currently governed by provincial legislation, and answers to a Board of representatives from post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

This is our language, and LRI is our institute. We need to be able to ensure that LRI remains viable and offers our Citizens culturally appropriate and targeted supports. We must have alignment in our Michif language programs, so that as many Red River Métis Citizens as possible have access to our language and culture.

New ways to support Michif preservation

The Michif language is more than just words. It's about building community, cultural renewal, and Red River Métis identity. Although LRI was unable to secure continued funding from Canada for the MAP House program, the MMF remains committed to preserving our Michif language.

We are now actively seeking proposals to promote Michif. Programs must have measurable outcomes, and ensure that every dollar is spent wisely. The application for funding is now up on the MMF website: mmf.mb.ca/michif-language.

Each application will be reviewed by an advisory committee, to ensure it meets the goal of broadening access to Michif language resources.

Another way we will be expanding the accessibility of Michif resources is through the revival of Pemmican Publications. Minister Lagimodiere is hard at work reviving this arm of our government, so that we can produce more books in our language, as well as about our culture and history, to help learners acquire more of the language at every age and stage of their learning process.

I would like to thank Minister Andrew Carrier for his work in evolving the Michif language portfolio and Minister Joan Ledoux for her work ensuring the education system helps promote the Michif Language. I also thank Minister Chartrand for her work ensuring that our very youngest Citizens learn Michif in our childcare centres.

Our language, like our culture, are important parts of our inheritance from our Ancestors, and we will never allow them to be extinguished.

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. ∞

TOP RANK DIAMOND DRILLING COMPANY THRIVES IN CANADIAN MINING INDUSTRY

Red River Métis-owned Top Rank Diamond Drilling (TRDD) has worked in five provinces and three territories in Canada. With over 63 projects completed, owner Devon Rank has come a long way since starting the company in 2006.

Once TRDD drills the ore from an exploration hole, the company tries to grow the ore body.

"We're mapping out the geology of the ground with all these holes, so there's infill drilling, and they'll make a geological map based on the data of all the drill holes we've done, and it will prove how many ounces (of ore are) in the ground and how large the ore bodies are," said Rank.

The owner has been exposed to the drilling industry all his life, and started as a helper on the diamond drills when he was 18.

"My family has been involved in the drilling industry before I was born. My father, Richard, was a diamond driller all over Canada, and my older brothers Derek and Travis also followed in my dad's footsteps," Rank said.

"What inspired me is seeing the travelling my family did within the diamond drilling industries. The pay rate was also so much higher (than minimum wage)," he said. "My first job was in Stewart, B.C. I worked as a helper for six months. I was promoted to diamond driller and then a foreman shortly after."

Rank always dreamed of starting his own business, but was unsure how to finance a diamond drill at his young age. He recalled a family member mentioning grants he could apply for through the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) affiliate lender, the Louis Riel Capital Corporation.

"I made a business plan of what it would take to get started," he said. "My application was accepted, and I couldn't believe it. The MMF grant provided me with the necessary funds to secure a loan, allowing me to purchase the equipment and resources needed to start the company."

The Red River Métis Citizen started Top Rank Diamond Drilling, located in Ste. Rose Du Lac, after working with his dad and brothers in Kelowna, B.C.

"The guy I was working for was retiring and offered me the opportunity to purchase one of his rigs to get started, and then I subcontracted through him," he said. "For the first five years, he groomed me into the industry, showing me how to bid on and set up contracts."

After that, TRDD kept expanding as the diamond drilling industry grew in demand. In 2011, Devon married his wife, Tammy Rank. The couple have two children: Weston, age 12, and Macey, age 9. When Rank is not working on a project, he takes the time to coach sports and spend time with his family. Tammy has been Top Rank Diamond Drilling's project manager since the company started and has taken pride in its rapid growth since its start in 2006.

"We started with having the company out of his parents' yard, running everything from his parents' house to then buying an acreage, building a huge shop, and being able to run everything through here," she said. "We also have a lot more employees, going from 10-11 steady guys, and now we have about 40-45 employees (during the summer.) So, that's been growth for us."

Top Rank Diamond Drilling operates year-round, but the peak of their work comes around the spring and summer seasons. The diamond drilling company has worked hard to ensure Indigenous representation is reflected in their staffing, with 75 per cent of the company's workers identifying as Indigenous.



Devon Rank started Top Rank Diamond Drilling in 2006.

The business owner said that even though diamond is in their name, they don't just drill for diamonds, but service the mining industry with the core samples. Core sampling is used for exploring the underground with a special drill to extract a cylindrical sample of material from below the surface, which is then checked for any ore, a natural solid material from which a metal or valuable minerals can be extracted.

"It's called diamond drilling because we use a diamond (drill) bit because it cuts the rock," he said. "We'll drill core sample for diamonds and uranium. Lithium is popular now with the electric cars and (batteries). So (we also drill for) zinc, gold, copper, silver, and rare earth metals."

“I’M NOT SURE IF I WOULD BE WHERE I AM NOW WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE MMF.” - DEVON RANK, OWNER, TOP RANK DIAMOND DRILLING



Devon and Tammy Rank have two children: Weston, age 12, and Macey, age 9. When Devon is not on a project, he takes the time to coach sports and spend time with his family.

"We understand that our employees are the backbone of our company, and their happiness and growth are vital to our success," said Rank. "We are committed to fostering a positive work environment and providing opportunities for our employees to develop their skills and advance in their careers."

The company undertakes a variety of drilling projects.

"We offer exploration drilling to public mining companies, we do core samples, we offer skid-mounted and heli-portable (drilling) rigs," Rank said.



Red River Métis-owned Top Rank Diamond Drilling has worked in five provinces and three territories in Canada, completing over 63 projects.

"Drilling can be done any time of the year. We've worked (anywhere from) on the side of mountains to drilling on the lake in winter."

Top Rank Diamond Drilling has also done turnkey projects where they've set up camps and provided a full-service camp with cooked meals for on-site staff.

The Red River Métis company operates six diamond drills, which are transported by helicopter or can be skid mounted.

"All our drills can be dismantled for remote areas and break down into 1,800-lb lifts. We can dismantle all the equipment, move it into remote sites, and then reassemble it on site," he said. "Our rigs are some of the most efficiently flown rigs, so it saves clients helicopter time to bring this equipment in and set up."

Top Rank Diamond Drilling deploys heavy equipment, including bulldozers, excavators, mini track loaders, semis, trailers, trucks, and ATVs. Now being in the industry for 18 years, the company has transitioned from growing their business to supporting their clients through the excellent services they provide.

"We've seen other companies in the past grow too quickly, and then, the level of service they provide is substandard. We prefer to keep it smaller and offer superior service to our clients," said Rank.

Giving back to their community is always at the forefront of the Ranks' minds.

"We strongly believe in the importance of supporting and uplifting the communities around us," Rank said. "Every year, Top Rank donates towards Christmas food banks, gifts for kids, sports, community fundraisers, and more. In 2023 we donated over \$11,000."

Rank hopes that by sharing his story, it may inspire other Red River Métis entrepreneurs to get started on their journey.

"I'm not sure if I would be where I am now without the help of the MMF," he said, adding your dreams are never too big to be chased.

"It wasn't easy in the beginning. It's not easy now, but it's worth it. Don't doubt yourself despite the age or position you are in. Work hard to achieve your goals and reach out to those who can give you good advice," said Rank. "Keep the people that are rooting for you close. Always appreciate what you have and when you can give back."

MMF AQUATIC CONSERVATION EFFORTS SHINE IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT



The Manitoba Métis Federation was on hand for the January 22, 2024, Government of Canada announcement to launch the Canada Water Agency and the investment of \$650 million over 10 years in the Freshwater Action Plan to protect and restore water quality and ecosystem health in major watersheds across the country. Your National Government of the Red River Métis highlighted our projects currently funded by the Canada Water Agency, which aim to restore and improve aquatic habitats in the Red River Basin, including the restoration of habitat along the Seine River.




MARCH 2ND @ 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM



2024

RED RIVER MÉTIS CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

JOIN US ALL-DAY FOR:

WORK SHOPS	MÉTIS ELCC PANEL	SILENT AUCTION	INSPIRING CONVERSATION	GOOD FOOD
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REGISTER NOW! EMAIL ELCC@MMF.MB.CA

Join the **Manitoba Métis Federation** and the **SELKIRK STEELERS** for our

LOUIS RIEL DAY

Weekend Event

Market, booths, entertainment, 50/50 draw,
stew and bannock dinner, and more!

Experience Red River Métis culture and thrilling MJHL Hockey!

February 16-17, 2024  10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

SELKIRK STEELERS GAME
starts at 7:30 p.m. both nights!


