



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As Citizens know, our Cabinet is made up of representatives from across Manitoba, who represent the various Regions where our people live and work, as well as our Beyond Borders Citizens. While we remain in constant communication with one another at the Cabinet level, and each Region is consistently engaged with Local leadership, Citizens from one Region don't always know what's happening in other Regions.

I asked the Vice-Presidents of our Regions to share some of their recent activity with me for this President's message, so Citizens from all Regions and Beyond Borders can learn more about Regional activity. However, the overwhelming response has made it clear that there is so much going on in our Regions that it's simply not possible to share all the activities in one message. I will start by sharing reports from The Pas Region and the Southeast Region in this message, but will continue to share more with you in the coming weeks.

Judy Mayer, Vice-President, The Pas Region

I'm proud to share that The Pas just finished a successful 24th Family Nite, which took place on the Saturday evening of the Trapper's Festival. Of course, this means that next year we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of this event, which is always sold out and jam-packed, as Red River Métis Locals and visitors alike come together to celebrate our traditions and enjoy great food, music, and fun. We are already planning for next year's big festivities, and look forward to showing everyone how our Region puts on a celebration.

Of course, we also work hard to keep our democratic systems alive and well. I can report that we will be holding our leadership meeting with our Local executives in the near future, as we are focused on advancing our governance structures and consulting on our Local By-Law amendments, to enhance our grassroots political framework. Locals continue to thrive in our Region, and three of them are seeking new members of their executive team, to ensure that regular meetings and discussions are taking place with Citizens who are members of these Locals.

Also in the near future, we will be hosting a supper with our Citizens who will be awarded a King Charles III Coronation Medal for their service to our community and our Region. We also expect to be hosting a Veterans and Youth conference in late spring, and later on in the year, unveiling a sign that honours and celebrates Connor Dewar, NHL hockey player and proud Red River Métis Citizen who was raised in The Pas.

Our housing, childcare, and community facilities on the newly named Mayer Way are well-established. The family units are still under construction, as is the playground and edible forest, but we know that work will continue. Once complete, we expect to see a fully functioning community, with Red River Métis seniors, Youth, and Citizens able to enjoy the greenspace and spend time together. We have also completed construction of the food security greenhouse for our Region, with plans in place to begin operations in the spring.

Our childcare centre has also been built and is ready to be operational, but finding certified, trained candidates to lead the programming in our Region has been a challenge. I encourage those with leadership experience in Early Learning and Childcare to reach out to our Region to learn more about the opportunities available and what our community has to offer to residents.

As with other Northern Regions, we know that Citizens in The Pas are worried about protection of their harvesting rights. I have consistently relayed that Citizen Harvesters who have done their due diligence and are harvesting in accordance with our Laws of the Harvest will be protected, and I have shared that all charges against our Harvesters have been dropped by the Province of Manitoba. We will continue to communicate with Citizens and help them understand that their rights are protected, and outline where harvesting is allowed and where it is not.

Our Citizens are still concerned about the lakes in our Region, which has been visibly affected by the

tailings from the old copper-zinc and sulphide ore mines near Sherridon, affecting both drinking water and fishing activity. Contaminants have devastated Cold Lake, turning the water orange there, and have also made their way into Kississing Lake.

It's clear that stewardship of the lands and waters of our Region must continue to be a focus for us, as we still see new parties interested in extracting resources, without consultation with our people. We will continue to advocate for our inclusion in all matters related to resource extraction, as we understand the long-term consequences for generations to come.

Denise Thomas, Vice-President, Southeast Region

It's been a busy and active time in our Region, and I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Locals in our Region who chose to host events to celebrate February 17, which is known as Louis Riel Day in Manitoba. It's worth remembering that these Locals are run by volunteers, and it's their hard work and dedication to sharing our Red River Métis culture, music, and food that made these events possible.

Our Locals don't just put on events, they also form the important backbone of our Region's governance structure. We will be hosting our Local leaders, along with Citizens, at our upcoming Regional meeting on March 29 at the Lac Du Bonnet Community Centre.

It's been very clear that our advancement through the signing of our historic modern-day Treaty has increased the already active participation in our grassroots governance structures. We have been very busy with by-elections and elections for both our new and existing Locals, which would not be possible without the support and engagement of our Chief Electoral Officer, David Gray, and his team, as well as the participation of our Regional executives, Shawn Nault and Marielle Gauthier, who are critical to the continued strength of our Region. This election activity includes two Locals that had not held elections for many years: Marchand and Woodridge. Traverse Bay Local is another which will be holding elections on March 20.

Like The Pas Region, we will also be holding governance consultations about the Local By-Law amendments, as we know that feedback from our Locals play a vital role in the advancement and long-term strength of our grassroots governance. This consultation will be taking place at the Jean Desrosier Centre in St. Malo on April 5.

Conclusion

As you can see, our Regions are highly engaged and active, and our Locals are thriving across the heart of the Homeland. I'm proud of all the work that is being done by all representatives of our Government, and how involved our Citizens are with

our activities and cultural celebrations. 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. ∞

THE MMF HAS YOUR BACK (AND YOUR FURS): GOT FUR? THE RED RIVER MÉTIS FUR COMPANY IS HERE TO HELP



The RRMFC is ensuring Red River Métis Trappers can continue practicing traditional ways of life, paying 25 per cent above market price for raw fur and hide.

Got fur? The Red River Métis Fur Company (RRMFC) has your back. The RRMFC is a community-based fur trading company established by the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) in 2021 to revive Red River Métis fur trade. Our Nation has a historical place in the Northwest economy via trade; we fought and won the battle for free trade at the Victory of Frog Plain in 1816.

Jason White, who's been involved in the fur industry since he was 5 and is now the director of the RRMFC, tells us about the historical significance of the fur trade.

"If you look at the history of not only Red River Métis Citizens, but Canada in general, the foundations were built on the fur trade. We want to have that sustainability, that livelihood, that tradition keep going for more generations. We want to see it sustain itself for tomorrow," he said.

Reviving the fur trade while promoting conservation and ensuring sustainability helps preserve the balance of the ecosystem of our National Homeland. Darrel Ferland, MMF Minister of Traditional Economies, elaborates on the revitalization initiative.

"Supporting the Red River Métis fur industry is one example of the MMF's commitment to revitalization

while preserving our traditional ways," said Minister Ferland. "Creating economic development opportunities for our Citizens is a priority focus for the MMF."

Fur prices are constantly fluctuating depending on the global fur market, but the RRMFC believes in fair pay for our Red River Métis Trappers participating in this commercial activity. The RRMFC supports Trappers by paying 25 per cent above market price. This subsidy ensures Red River Métis Citizens can continue to make a living in one of the last traditional economies of our people.

White speaks to the heart of trapping, despite the global market.

"It's a way of life. I can honestly say that trapping is going to go on forever; whether people make money doing it because they just love being in the field, being in the bush, being outdoors and enjoying themselves. If they make 100 dollars or they only make 10 dollars, they're still going to be Trappers," said the director.



THE FUR COMPANY ESTABLISHES FUR ROUTES THREE TO FOUR TIMES A YEAR," SAID THE DIRECTOR. "A DATE AND TIME WILL BE ESTABLISHED, TRAPPERS WILL COME, BRING THEIR FURS, WE GRADE THEM, INSPECT THEM AND GIVE A FAIR MARKET VALUE OF 25 PER CENT ABOVE WHAT GLOBAL CONDITIONS ARE DOING RIGHT NOW.

- JASON WHITE



For Trappers' convenience, the RRMFC runs routes across Manitoba to buy furs. The next fur run will be in the spring, covering the different Regions within the course of 10 days.

"The fur company establishes fur routes three to four times a year," he said. "A date and time will be established, Trappers will come, bring their furs,

we grade them, inspect them and give a fair market value of 25 per cent above what global conditions are doing right now."

White says to come with your MMF Citizenship card ready, and big game furs prepared.

"Make sure that you wash out all the blood stains and comb out the burs; presentation on a raw fur is everything to any fur buyer," he said.

Since the first run roughly 2 years ago, the number of Trappers bringing furs and hides has doubled, but White would still like to see more Red River Métis Youth involved.

"We have some (young people) involved, but I would like to see more Red River Métis Youth engaged," he said. "In any industry, if there's no Youth involved, that industry really doesn't have a future."

Following the processing of raw furs and hides, the RRMFC provides them to Red River Métis artisans for free who can sell their creations back to the RRMFC for a profit. The traditional artworks are marketed by the MMF as traditionally Red River Métis made through the Red River Métis Marketplace.

If you have furs to sell, come meet the RRMFC at their next fur run and get fair pay for your efforts. Visit the RRMFC website for more information or email jason.white@mmf.mb.ca.



The RRMFC does multiple fur runs a year throughout Manitoba, reaching Red River Métis Trappers who have furs to sell.

RONALD KERR: WE TIP OUR HATS IN ADMIRATION OF THIS RED RIVER MÉTIS HATMAKER



Ronald Kerr celebrates his Red River Métis Heritage by designing and creating culturally inspired hats featuring sashes, traditional furs, feathers, and much more.

Hatmaker Ronald Kerr has always loved hats. Ironically, he doesn't wear hats all that much, but he does wear plenty of metaphorical hats; Kerr enriches his Red River Métis Nation with ornate, culturally inspired hats, and a passion for community outreach.

The Red River Métis artisan stumbled upon hat-making later in life but credits his creativity in part to a legacy of Métis artists.

"We are loaded full of amazing artists in our community. Looking back through even my family history, a lot of them were beaders. I'm not a beader, I have loose beads when I try," Kerr explained. "That creative side is there with a lot of us Red River Métis. It's just finding that connection, finding that passion and, finding where we belong in this whole creative world."

Kerr recalls the first hat he completed just before Louis Riel Day last year.

"It was an old western hat that I reformed into a boss of the plains, (which is) a rounded hat, it's very ornate looking with banding on it. I was thinking 'I'm going to put a sash on it.' I'm going to reform this beautiful black hat and add some embellishment to it," he said. "I had an old tulip print shirt and I used that as a liner. That was my very first hat."

The process of hat-making can be quite long and tedious, but that doesn't stop this Red River Métis artist.

"The reforming portion of it can take anywhere from 10 to 20 hours because I don't have those big hatmaker tools. I'm using an iron; I'm using forms that I'm making myself because it costs a fortune to be a hat maker. But it's a goal at some point," he said.

Another highlight of Kerr's creations is the ability to add personal touches to custom orders. Community leaders such as Minister Will Goodon and Minister Renee Cable can be seen sporting some of Kerr's personalized hats.

"It brings enjoyment to other people because they get to participate in how I design things," he said. "I'll include things about their families, who they are as individuals. It has an impact on them. That's the creative side they add in."

The Citizen found hat-making on his healing journey. The Red River Métis artisan is open about struggling with sobriety and dealing with a stressful career as a paralegal bailiff.

"I needed a positive activity to do with my time and that's where it started," said Kerr. "And then it was another hat. After that, I was like 'Oh, I really like this design.' I started designing something else and then I started adding more natural elements to it and then it just progressed from there."

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— RONALD KERR

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Kerr's passion extends beyond hat-making; he is also heavily involved in community outreach. The passionate Citizen has been a part of Morgan's Warriors, a community outreach group, since its inception.

"I love heart work, I love community service. I think that we all should take something out of that sometimes. There's a lot of people that are disconnected in our own city that don't know what is actually happening here," he said.

Kerr has also been working towards running a sobriety support group for Red River Métis men through the Manitoba Métis Federation in the future.

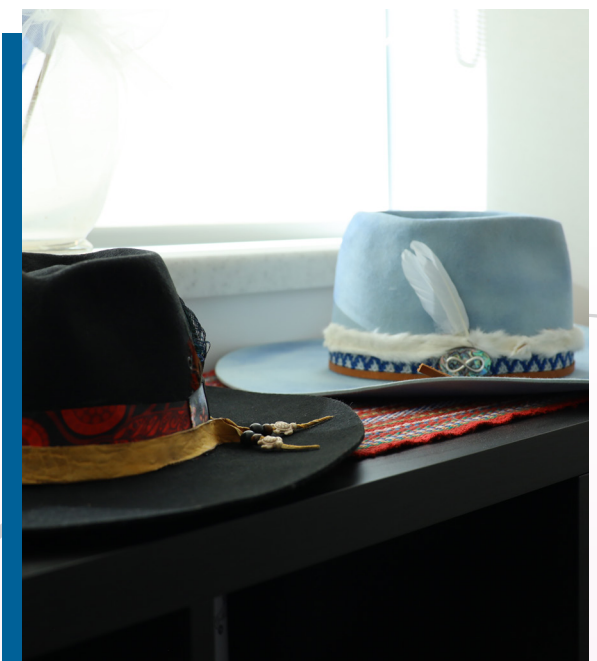
"A lot of our Citizens out there need those supports," he said. "As men, the way that I was brought up was to hide your tears and hide those emotional moments in your life. (If) we offer those things to other individuals that came from the same type of background as me, they can open up and have an opportunity in life to do amazing things."

The Red River Métis Citizen's hat-making has become part of his outreach efforts. He doesn't just sell original and custom hats; he donates them to support community funding initiatives. He encourages everyone to donate what we can, whether it's clothing, money, or time.

"There's a lot of organizations and groups out there that need support. It's hard for the smaller guy to get anything for funding," said Kerr. "I've donated probably 15 to 20 hats to different organizations and groups... I think one auction was \$200 for a hat, which was great. It was \$200 they didn't have."

Both in his artistry and in how he cares for community, the craftsman illustrates his Red River Métis pride. Soon, Kerr will add author to his list of prideful accomplishments as he's working on a book with Pemmican Publications.

You can see more of Ronald Kerr's magnificent artwork and contact him to purchase a hat of your very own through his Indigenous Art Collective profile.



Kerr took months to start the baby blue hat, but inspiration finally came when he received weasel fur from the Red River Métis Fur Company's artisan program.

We need **YOUR** Red River Métis knowledge!

1 Are you **Red River Métis**?

2 Do you have connection to the **lands or waters** across the National Homeland of the **Red River Métis**?

3 Do you or your family have **Red River Métis knowledge** you are willing to share?

4 Are you a **Trapper, Commercial Fisher, or Timber Harvester**?

**Honarium & travel costs will be provided*

We want to learn about **Red River Métis history and land use** across the **National Homeland**

To schedule a Red River Métis knowledge Interview, please contact **Brennan Richards**
EMAIL: brennan.richards@mmf.mb.ca
PHONE: (204) 894 – 6938



**ATTENTION
RED RIVER MÉTIS
CITIZENS**



Get involved in your Red River Métis Government and have your voice heard.

We're making changes to our MMF Local By-Law and we need your input!

Visit the MMF website for access to the survey and workbook.

Scan QR code for more information on how to take the survey

