



Le Métis

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last weekend, the Red River Métis held our Annual General Assembly (AGA), which is always a highlight of our year. I know our staff work very hard to deliver this to you, our Citizens, and I also know they all feel a deep sense of pride in being able to put on a spectacular event for you.

It's no secret that our Assemblies have been growing every year, so it's no surprise that this year was the largest attendance we've ever seen, showing that our Citizens are increasing their participation in our government and are invested in our advancements as we find our rightful place in Canada's confederation.

Along with our Rainbow Auction, annual pickle competition, music, dance, friendly competitions, and Monster Bingo, we made several important announcements throughout the weekend.

On Friday, we announced the establishment of the Red River Métis Power Corporation, the newest proud Affiliate company of your government. Through it, we will work to develop, majority own, and operate high quality alternative energy infrastructure, including wind farms, to generate sustainable, clean electricity to serve the growing energy needs of residential, commercial, and industrial users. Wind farms of 100 MW can provide the energy for 30,000 homes per day, the equivalent of the total number of homes in Brandon, Selkirk and Thompson combined. This, along with other environmental and conservation initiatives, form part of our commitment to ensuring the wellbeing

of the lands, waters, and peoples who share our Homeland with us. With climate change happening faster and faster, it will be important for even a water rich place like the heart of the Homeland to be ready to face the country-wide and global challenges that are coming our way, as clean drinking water becomes a bigger issue. Manitoba is unlikely to see new dams anytime soon, and with a limit on our ability to harvest energy from water, wind power becomes an important part of continuing to provide energy, without relying on gas, oil, or other fossil fuels to offset shrinking water resources.

I was also pleased to announce a new partnership with the Government of Canada to re-connect our families that are divided by the border between what is now Canada and the United States. *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada* announced temporary measures to reunite Indigenous families separated by this border, which is not of our making or choosing. This is an important first step towards the implementation of UNDRIP Article 36 and addressing the long-standing Jay Treaty issue.

Through the program, an applicant can show they are part of our community by using our MMF Citizenship card, which, for this purpose, is equivalent to membership in a Federally Recognized Tribe in the United States.

This was made possible by the groundwork done in our Beyond Borders initiative, including opening our MMF Citizenship to US Citizens. There is still much work to be done in re building our Nation across international borders, but we know we have many patriots who have come home to our Nation, including those who live in the United States. We even had several in attendance at our AGA, including one from as far away as California. I'm proud that Canada has recognized that many of our Red River Métis families have been divided by this border and have taken steps to undo the negative impacts of colonial boundaries. Those who want to learn more can visit the *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada* website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/ibx-measures.html>

On Saturday, I announced the Bridge to Justice Fund, an investment of up to \$2 million to provide immediate financial relief through a disbursement of \$5,000 to our Sixties Scoop Survivors who are still living, while we continue to pursue the existing lawsuit between the MMF and the Government of Canada. It's not enough to compensate our Survivors, who in many cases were outright trafficked and sold away to international

jurisdictions for as little as \$10 to \$25, but I hope it gives each of our living Survivors some measure of peace. We will continue to fight on behalf of our Survivors, but I know this eases the hearts of our Cabinet and Citizens who have longed to see justice for our Survivors.

This announcement was part of our opening ceremonies, and I was pleased to see so many dignitaries attend this event on Saturday morning to witness our Assembly's strength. Dignitaries came from federal, provincial, and civic governments, as well as industry partners, representatives of other Indigenous governments, and friends from across many communities. To me, the number of our friends, partners, and allies who attended our opening ceremonies shows how much respect our Nation has earned. They understand that we are a people of deep loyalty, who never turn our backs on our partners. That is who we are known as, and it forms a critical role in our identity, which is one of the reasons we will never let anyone distort our identity or harm our reputation.

Those in attendance last weekend know that our Assembly experienced the loss of one of our Citizens. Thomas Guiboche was at the Assembly on Friday when he was called to make his journey to his new home. While I was very proud of the quick response of our Citizens, staff and on-site medical team in support of Thomas and his family, we later received the news that there was nothing that could be done to bring him back to us. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his loved ones and the broader community who are mourning his passing. An inventor and strong-minded Citizen, Thomas was well-known to me. We often engaged in lively debates, and he rarely ever missed a community event. I saw him at the Assembly prior to his passing, but I could only wave to him from across the room, as there was no clear path to reach him at the time. It breaks my heart that I didn't have one more chance to speak to him before he began his journey to his new home. It reminded me of the importance of cherishing the time we have with each other. We should never miss a chance to connect with our community, friends, and family, because we can never know which opportunity will be our last.

We also experienced the loss of one of our staff later in the weekend. Marie Ehoussou was a cherished staff member of our Sixties Scoop Department, and I know the team was devastated to learn of her passing. Marie was a young woman who had only been with our government for a brief time, but like all who work for your Red River Métis Government, she was a member of our family. The flags on all our buildings are at half mast in honour



of Citizen Thomas Guiboche and staff member Marie Ehoussou. It's hard when we lose members of our family and community, and I know many will be affected by these losses.

Citizens or staff who need additional support to work through these losses can call our mental health line, staffed by Red River Métis counsellors from 7 am to 11 pm daily at 1-833-390-1041 Ext. 1.

It's clear our community is strong, as is our government and our democracy. Our Assembly has once again showed its wisdom and the unbreakable unity; characteristics that have allowed us to advance our Nation, and to persevere during the dark times. Our democratic structures date back to

the great buffalo hunts of our Ancestors, and they have continued to serve us well throughout time. When I am at our AGA, I am reminded of how their blood flows strong in the veins of their descendants who make up our Assembly. I commend our Local leadership and all who attended the AGA to share their voices and show the world that the Red River Métis are resilient, mighty and ready to meet the future with our hearts and minds strong.

I send my well wishes to Citizens who are honouring our traditions by Harvesting from our Homeland to feed family and community. Stay safe and remember – your Red River Métis Government has your back.

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 this past weekend. I will keep you all in my prayers as you go through this difficult time.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand, LL.D. (hon). O.M. ∞

WE ARE RED RIVER MÉTIS: CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND PROGRESS CELEBRATED AT AGA



All eyes were on MMF President David Chartrand during his State of the Nation Address at the MMF's Annual General Assembly, in which an investment of two million dollars for the Red River Métis Sixties Scoop Bridge to Justice Fund and the announcement of the Red River Métis Power Corporation were made.

Citizens and delegates filled the Assiniboia Downs to witness history as your National Government of the Red River Métis, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) hosted its Annual General Assembly (AGA) from October 18-20.

The AGA was a jam-packed three-day event filled with Red River Métis pride, groundbreaking announcements, culture, camaraderie, and democracy, as close to 4,000 Citizens attended, with many more connecting via Zoom and at satellite locations in Vancouver, Toronto, and Ottawa.

All eyes were on MMF President David Chartrand during his State of the Nation Address, in which an investment of two million dollars for the Red

River Métis Sixties Scoop Bridge to Justice Fund was announced [1]. The investment will be used to provide each eligible living Sixties Scoop Survivor an advance payment of up to \$5,000 – while the MMF continues to pursue the existing lawsuit between the MMF and the Government of Canada.

“Our (Sixties Scoop Survivors) are dying, they're never going to see justice like our Veterans. They're never going to get that apology like our Veterans waited 75 years to get,” said President Chartrand. “We're going to be launching a process... We are going to go and correct Canada's wrong, the government's wrong of what they did to our children.”

President Chartrand also spoke to the newly formed Red River Métis Power Corporation [2], which plans to develop and operate high-quality alternative energy infrastructure, including wind farms, to generate sustainable, clean electricity to serve the growing energy needs of residential, commercial, and industrial users. The corporation plans to prepare for up to 300 Megawatts of wind energy production in Manitoba.

“This is not small stuff we're talking about - this is a lot of power. Our job is to put together a plan and show Wab (Kinew) his dream that we will be accountable, effective, efficient, and as competitive as anybody else in this country,” said the President. “We will build and bring the wind through the corporation that will compete with anybody in the world.”

Many dignitaries were in attendance to speak at the Assembly's opening ceremonies, including The Honourable Anita Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba; The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs; The Honourable Mary Jane McCallum, Senator from Manitoba; The Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba; Winnipeg Mayor, His Worship Scott Gillingham; Scott McMurphy, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superintendent; Allan Danroth, Manitoba Hydro President; Dave Lamouche, President of Métis Settlements

General Council; and Minister Anita Campbell, Spokeswoman of the Infinity Women Secretariat.

The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, sent a recorded greeting, in which he said this gathering is a valuable opportunity for the Red River Métis Citizens to exchange ideas and reflect on the success of the past year, including innovative housing solutions and the ongoing progress towards the Modern Treaty Agreement.

“Your leadership continues to ensure safe and affordable housing for your Métis Citizens. Canada is an honoured partner with you on this important work through distinction-based funding delivered by the Manitoba Métis Federation,” said Anandasangaree. “Your commitment to core housing needs continues through important work such as renovations, repairs, and mobility adaptations of existing homes. Your dedication to these priorities and your efforts towards self-government and closing socioeconomic gaps remain unwavering.”

New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh joined the AGA live on video to deliver a speech, in which he said he fundamentally believed in nation-to-nation relationships.

“That's why, as the leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, I fully support the upcoming Treaty legislation in Parliament,” he said. “My commitment to you is I will work with other parties to get this done in Parliament. It needs to get done.”

The NDP leader also expressed frustration with Canada's failure to distribute the lands promised to the Red River Métis in section 31 of the Manitoba Act.

“I cannot stand by while the Prime Minister breaks another promise to you. So, that's why I'm going to fight to make sure these negotiations get underway, and when I'm Prime Minister, I will take it from a broken promise to a reality, to a priority,” said Singh.



The theme for this year's AGA was "We Are Red River Métis," which was celebrated throughout the weekend.

During the State of The Nation Address, President Chartrand also warned Citizens that a federal election is coming, and it may not be far away.

"We need to be there. We need to be ready for that. We need to make sure everything we have done and built – that nobody takes it away," he said. "Vote for someone who is going to say and do something for your family, your kids, and your future. Because, if not, you're failing yourself, your nation, and your country."



"WE HAVE A BIG FOOTPRINT DOWNTOWN, AND WHY ARE WE DOING IT? BECAUSE THIS IS OUR TOWN, OUR PROVINCE, AND OUR CITY. WE ARE GOING TO HELP REVIVE THIS CITY AS WE ONCE HELPED BUILD IT. YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN WHO WE ARE, BUT YOU'RE DAMN WELL NOT GOING TO FORGET WHO WE ARE NOW."

**– MMF PRESIDENT
DAVID CHARTRAND.**



President Chartrand's State of The Nation Address was an important reflection upon the advancements made by the Red River Métis over the past year, especially the acquisition of multiple parcels of land in the City's downtown.

"We have a big footprint downtown, and why are we doing it?" asked President Chartrand. "Because this is our town, our province, and our city. We are going to help revive this city as we once helped build it. You may have forgotten who we are, but you're damn well not going to forget who we are now."

On Friday evening, Red River Métis Citizens attended the Downs to play Monster Bingo, with \$50,000 worth of prizes available to be won. For Saturday night's entertainment, the MMF hosted a Métis Family Night featuring cribbage tournaments, duck and moose calling contests, jigging and entertainment by the Kinew Youth Jiggers, Norman Chief Memorial Dancers, The Legacy Trio – Marcella, Holly, and Brandi Vezina, as well as an Elvis performance by Gerry Barret.

The Red River Métis trade show was a great success, and Citizens were packed in the aisles. Trade show booths provided Citizens with the

opportunity to learn more about what MMF departments and affiliates offer, as well as introduce themselves to a variety of Red River Métis-owned and supporting businesses. Many booths were set up outside for Citizen interaction, such as a breast cancer screening, the Red River Métis Marketplace, a Métis button collaboration with Pop CoLab, and an interactive booth led by the Energy, Infrastructure and Resource Management Department.

Throughout the weekend, our young Red River Métis Citizens took part in Mini AGA, where they explored their Red River Métis identity, learned what it means to be part of the community, and learned Red River Métis culture through crafts, activities, and learning Michif.

On Saturday, during the Métis Child Family Service's report, the settlement for the Red River Métis Child and Family Services Class Action, also known as the Lafontaine Class Action lawsuit [3], was celebrated. Manitoba paid \$84,800,000 to settle the Lafontaine Class Action, with plaintiffs Rene LaFontaine and Red River Métis Citizen Mary Derendorf [4] attending AGA and were the first to receive \$5,000 cheques for the settlement.

At the heart of our governance framework, the AGA serves as a vital platform for the MMF Cabinet and Citizens to reflect on and celebrate the accomplishments of the Red River Métis Government. It also outlines our departments' guides and strategies for future success.



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A total of seven resolutions were read at this year's AGA. Passed resolutions included updated language to the Constitution, that MMF Cabinet consider undertaking effective measures to support research that reflects its Citizens and Red River Métis priorities, and a resolution for Cabinet to consider supporting the No Thanks I'm Good campaign and the Singing Red Bear Foundation – created by Red River Métis Citizen Joseph Fourre [5], after losing his son to a drug overdose – to help bring awareness and prevention of more deaths due to poisoned drugs throughout the Red River Métis Homeland.

On Sunday, the MMF announced the results of the MMF Pickler Classic and the silent auction winners, which raised \$36,356.00 for the Bereavement Fund.

At the end of the AGA, Citizens received chickens and produce courtesy of President Chartrand, Clifford Waldner, and the Bonhomme Hutterite Colony.

The MMF thanks staff, Citizens, and Locals for their dedication to making this another historic AGA. 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.

[1] "MMF Announces Investment of \$2m for Red River Métis Sixties Scoop Bridge to Justice Fund." Manitoba Métis Federation, 19 Oct. 2024, www.mmf.mb.ca/news/mmf-announces-investment-of-2m-for-red-river-metis-sixties-scoop-bridge-to-justice-fund.

[2] "MMF Launches Red River Métis Power Corporation with Plans to Build Wind Power Capacity for Manitoba." Manitoba Métis Federation, 18 Oct. 2024, www.mmf.mb.ca/news/mmf-launches-red-river-metis-power-corporation-with-plans-to-build-wind-power-capacity-for-manitoba.

[3] "\$530 Million Children's Special Allowance Class Action Settlements Have Been Approved." Manitoba Métis Federation, 05 Sept. 2024, www.mmf.mb.ca/news/-530-million-childrens-special-allowance-class-action-settlements-have-been-approved.

[4] "Le Metis – Manitoba Court Greenlights Landmark Class Action Settlement for Métis Children in Care." Manitoba Métis Federation, 26 Sept. 2024, www.mmf.mb.ca/le-metis/le-metis-september-26-2024.

[5] "Joseph Fourre: Métis Filmmaker Hopes to Shine at Emerging Filmmaker Pitch Competition." Manitoba Métis Federation, 21 July 2022, www.mmf.mb.ca/citizen-spotlight/joseph-fourre.

