

## **Designation Vote – Community Store – Correcting Misinformation**

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF**

You elected Chief and Council in 2014 to act in the best interests of NCN. You gave us a mandate to pursue a number of initiatives. We will continue to do what you elected us to do till the next election. Part of the mandate you gave us in 2014 was to build a new store at NCN. The new Three Rivers Store is almost ready to be opened. Unfortunately as we do not have our own Constitution and laws in place yet, we must continue to use the processes in the Indian Act. This requires us to hold what is called a “land designation” vote. In a few months we will also have to have a second land designation vote for our new Mystery Lake reserve lands.

In simple terms, a land designation is the *Indian Act* process that allows the Minister of Indian Affairs to grant an interest in land such as a lease. Even though we consider ourselves to be a self-governing Nation, INAC conducts this process. They send out the information package and covering letters as well as the ballot.

Unfortunately, some NCN Citizens received a letter with a typographical error in the last line of the covering letter. This is NOT a substantive error as the other information is accurate. Unfortunately, some of our own Citizens have been spreading misinformation about the implications of this typographical error and have been telling our Citizens not to send in their ballots or to vote no.

INAC has acknowledged its mistake, and advised that they would address the error at the public meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup>. An excerpt from an email sent to C&C is quoted as shown below:

*“My apologies for that silly mistake. The good news is that it will not impact the referendum whatsoever ...*

Chief and Council reminds NCN Citizens that this referendum is fully supported by Chief and Council although it has to be conducted by INAC given the Indian Act. We have provided updated reports regularly about this important initiative which was one of the key infrastructure developments I said we would deliver during the 2014 election. A YES vote will result in INAC providing at least \$800,000 to help fund the store. This is very important and will allow us to use other funds to build other infrastructure such as housing. INAC requires a positive vote to allow the lands to be leased for the store.

Leadership means acting on facts and providing accurate information about the implications of a mistake in this case, a mistake made by a third party. In this case, Chief and Council has discussed the matter with INAC officials and our own legal counsel to confirm the typo is not CRITICAL and does not affect the rest of the information provided. Chief and Council does not think that a minor typo which does not impact any of the other information in the package or the vote, should be used for political purposes by those aspiring to get elected. This is not showing leadership given the negative consequences for our community. We need the store to open at NCN. We deserve to have a state of the art store that provides food and other necessities of life for our people locally.

Therefore, we must NOT allow a typographical error and some people’s inaccurate characterization of this error delay or prevent our store from opening. We do not have multiple store options at NCN unlike in larger urban centres. Please vote in favour of the designation and help us get the store open as soon as possible.

Chief and Council is pursuing economic development and infrastructure initiatives that will better the lives of our Citizens. We are not just pursuing initiatives based on whether particular individuals support us or have their own political aspirations. Our vision statement is clear. For the past two decades our goal has been and continues to be, to exercise sovereignty that sustains a prosperous socio-economic future for all of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.

So I urge you to help implement our NCN vision by VOTING YES!  
Ekosani!