



# STATE OF OUR NATION REPORT

Newsletter – Winter 2017

Prepared for: *NCN Annual General Assembly*

## TWO YEARS OF BUILDING MOMENTUM

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Over the past two years we have continued to build momentum. Over the past year we have started building many new houses as well as repairing many others. We will continue to make improvements to our housing stock this year as well. A number of major infrastructure projects are also in the planning stages including a new women's shelter, multi-plex, and lagoon. We are also in discussions about a new water treatment plant, community health centre and high school.

We also have major governance projects underway that will add to our long term socio-economic development. These projects range from ensuring we have a capable senior management team in place and that we have good governance tools such as updated human resource and financial policies.

We are planning for a vote on our Constitution and hope that NCN will be

the first Manitoba First Nation to assert our sovereignty in such an important way. Our Land Code and the development of land laws and policies is well underway. NCN continues to be a leader in these governance initiatives as indicated by our recent hosting of a land use planning conference that brought together a diverse group of people and ideas.

The vision I laid out in the

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*"Our success can only been possible with the help of the team of people we've worked with who are equally committed to staying the course. We can all work towards more opportunities to live within a strong Nehetho (Cree) culture and a vibrant community that allows us to honour our past and realize and celebrate our dreams now and into the future."*

- CHIEF MARCEL MOODY

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last election is being implemented and we are creating new opportunities for NCN now and in the future. But we must pull together to stop the violence caused by alcohol, drugs and gangs in our community. I have spoken about this before and it is essential that everyone take this issue

very seriously as it affects us all.

I continue to believe that by working together we can accomplish our goals together collectively. Thanks you for your continued support.

Ekosani!

## HIGHLIGHTS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS



### INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

#### ► MYSTERY LAKE DEVELOPMENT

We are finalizing the terms of the lease arrangements for our hotel. We need to complete the land designation process similar to the one we did for the store at NCN. This procedure is required under the Indian Act provisions. If we had our own Constitution and Land Code in place we would be able to use those to develop our own laws. We currently anticipate that the vote on land designation for the Mystery Lake will take place before the votes on the Constitution and Land Code.

We are examining a number of options for the further development of our lands in Thompson including a gas station/convenience store,

an office complex, walk-in clinic with a pharmacy, an expanded gaming centre, and a distribution centre for medical marijuana.

#### ► WATER TREATMENT PLANT

We applied for a new water treatment plant through the Building Canada Fund two years ago but changes at both levels of government resulted in changes to the process. The funds for these types of infrastructure projects are back with INAC so our application was sent to INAC. In discussions with them, they anticipate the design of the project will proceed this summer and construction will begin if all goes well in the summer of 2018. The costs of the project have been updated and the location of the new plant is under discussion. Originally the plant was to be

located across from the gas station to help facilitate further expansion of our community including the various major infrastructure projects we have in the planning and discussion phases.

#### ► LAGOON

This project was also part of the original Building Canada Fund application and is now moving ahead through INAC. A project manager is to be hired in the next few months and the project will start once the ground thaws.

#### ► CAUSEWAYS AND ROAD PAVING

This has been a frustrating process but finally the contract has been awarded to NCLP and Strikewski to prepare the sub-grade and base. Asphaltting is to follow the

preparation of the base. The asphaltting of PR 620 has been deferred for a few years given the province's concerns about its finances but this project remains in MIT's capital plan. It is my understanding that the province will consider asphaltting at least to the land fill site if it can be co-ordinated with the causeway project. I am waiting for more details and will share those in future newsletters and assemblies.

► **MULTI-PLEX**

We hired an architect to plan and design this important

community infrastructure. Class C estimates should be available shortly so that an application can be made to INAC for its consideration. It is possible that up to \$2.3 Million may be available which would help us given that the cost of a multi-plex is so high.

► **WOMEN'S SHELTER**

NCN is one of five First Nations in Canada to be approved for the construction and maintenance of a women's shelter. We have a number of technical administrative steps that need to be taken related to

design, finalization of architect and project management contracts, construction schedule and the development of a fundraising plan. This facility is important for the protection of our women and children from the violence many in our community face on a daily basis. We must concurrently grapple with the root causes of violence so that future generations will not be forced to leave their homes. In the meantime, this shelter will provide more permanent jobs for our people.

► **HOUSING**

Over the past two years, we have secured funding for, and started to implement the most massive housing program in our Nation's history. Since the start of our current fiscal year on April 1, 2016 the following projects are all in various stages of planning and completion:

- 12 bungalows (3 complete and 9 at various stages of construction)
- 10 other units in various stages of development
- 10 more units to be built by an INAC engaged contractor who is to review the sites in the community by the end of February



PHASE 1



PHASE 1&2

**Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation – Multi-Plex Conceptual Image**

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- 6 Mobitel units for transitional occupancy for our Citizens while their houses are being repaired
- 4 Plex for RCMP
- 8 Plex and 3 house renovation projects at various stages of construction
- 10 unit renovation project scope of work ready for construction to start soon

Additional housing initiatives will be considered during the 2017/18 budget process. Community input is required regarding the ongoing damage to houses related to alcohol, drug and gang activity which is costing our Nation significant time and resources to address.

Staffing for housing has presented many challenges. A recent job competition resulted in no fully qualified candidates. A decision was made to try to have an NCN Citizen mentored and trained through a formal training plan for the position. Over the next while we will examine how to best restructure the housing authority to meet the changing and ongoing needs of our Nation.

### ► HIGH SCHOOL REPAIRS

As the current high school was considered unsafe for staff and students, major renovations were required. A project manager was hired to manage the project for NCN and to ensure quality and cost control. The total cost of this project

is over \$800,000.00. We anticipate the project will finally be completed by spring break so that the students and staff can get back to a normal school day.

### ► NEW SCHOOL

In the meantime we are also undertaking a detailed study to examine the need for a new high school as it is very important that our youth obtain a quality education. INAC has agreed to fund a study that will examine the condition of our existing schools, any deficiencies, their life expectancy as well as our future needs. The key is to examine what our requirements are to create and maintain a supportive learning environment. There will be an extensive consultation process with NCN Citizens, the project team, and Chief and Council to examine needs and priorities, present options and obtain input on preferred options.

### ► NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

FNHIB has confirmed that NCN will receive funding for

the design of a new community health centre within the next few months. We are over capacity at our existing nursing station and need a new state-of-the-art facility. Further community input will be obtained related to this initiative also.

### ► NCN FAMILY FOODS STORES

We have been successfully operating the Thompson Family Foods for the past few years. Our new store in Nelson House is set to open on



February 23rd. We are also in discussions about expanding our Family Foods operations into other communities. We also want to explore potential food production opportunities that will help to ensure food security for our Nation for years to come.

# GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

## ► CEO SELECTION PROCESS

Following the resignation of Theresa Yetman as CEO in December, a fair and transparent recruitment process was implemented. The position was advertised nationally with a preference for qualified NCN Citizens. Twelve people applied. Following pre-screening of the applicants, five were interviewed. They were evaluated on the basis of the criteria in the job posting. Kathleen McKay Bluesky was the successful candidate. She will start her employment with NCN in mid-July following her current maternity leave. Kathleen is the first NCN Citizen to achieve an MBA from the Asper School of Business. We look forward to working with Kathleen to move our Nation forward.

## ► SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief and Council approved updated job descriptions for the senior management team which consists of a CEO, CFO (Chief Financial Officer), Executive Director of Operations, Executive Director of Human Resources and Executive Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Special Projects. The senior management team is now comprised of: Ms. Bluesky (CEO), Yvonne Hart (CFO),

Lianna Anderson (EDO), Kim Linklater (EDHR), and Norman Linklater (EDIGSP). As Mr. Linklater is on a health related leave of absence, Joyce Yetman has been assigned as interim executive director during his absence.

## ► POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Our Human Resource policies are being reviewed and updated. Chief and Council have approved several new policies that are being reviewed with all staff as part of NCN's ongoing commitment to professional development. The policies are: Respectful Workplace, Off-Duty Conduct, Criminal Records, Criminal Charges and Complaints, and Human Rights Accommodation. The remaining policies will be completed in the near future. Financial policy development will then take place along with a review of other NCN policies.

## ► CONSTITUTION

We plan to have a newsletter update and one more round of small group meetings at NCN so we can vote to approve our Constitution this summer. This is an important document as it lays the foundation for the rights and responsibilities of NCN Citizens, Chief and Council and our staff. Recent

developments in the US continue to demonstrate the importance of having a strong Constitution. Indigenous peoples throughout North America are developing their Constitutions. We hope NCN will lead the way in Manitoba as this is an important way to assert our rights.

## ► LAND CODE AND LAND USE PLANNING

This important initiative is being co-ordinated with discussions about the Constitution as both provide us with mechanisms to pass our own laws. The draft Land Code will be discussed with the community over the next few months and we also anticipate a vote on it before the fall. As noted, we have so many different projects underway that we need to ensure we have proper land use and community plans in place. These projects are also underway and further community input will be sought over the next few months.

## ► SELF-GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS

The Constitution and Land Code processes are two important steps in the journey to becoming self-governing. Other Nations are at different stages and we are constantly examining and sharing information so NCN

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will have the benefit of best practices.

## ► NNCEA AND ATEC

ATEC and NHEA were to be amalgamated to form *Nisichawayasi Nehethowuk Culture and Education Authority* so all education and training matters would be co-ordinated for the benefit of our community. This decision remains educationally sound but unfortunately, we have run into a number of unanticipated problems during implementation. As a result, for the time



being it appears to make sense to leave the two entities separate to avoid ongoing operating conflicts between the two entities.



# FINANCIAL MATTERS

## ▶ CAP/CIP BUDGETS

This year approximately \$5.7 million is available, there was \$13.6 million in a total of 50 applications submitted. Of the funds available, \$1 Million will continue to be part of the budget to pay for the forward commitment loan of \$12 Million used to construct and renovate houses in our community as discussed during the Wuskwatim PDA 2 discussions. The CAP-CIP Committee has recommended budgets that are similar to those in previous years.

## ▶ AUDITS

The audits for 2016/17 are almost completed and will be available to the community soon.

## ▶ ANNUAL BUDGET PLANNING PROCESS

Chief and Council will be meeting for the first two weeks of March to review and finalize our budget for the upcoming fiscal year. In future years we hope to amalgamate all NCN finances and seek more community input during the budget planning process.

## ▶ MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS

As part of Canada's 150 year celebrations in 2017, NCN has received funding from Western Diversification for 50% of the costs for the cenotaph project, the entrance sign, the baseball field and the pow wow arbour. We need to budget \$400,000 approximately for NCN's share of the costs.

## ▶ WHAT'S NEXT

Our community has a very busy year ahead of us. We have many initiatives underway and must remain co-ordinated and committed to see them all through to completion.



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## **YOUR COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO US**

Please let us know your thoughts, concerns and feedback on these and future plans. We hope to maintain a government that will listen to you and act only in your best interest.