

Progress Report

Government of Canada Update on Aboriginal Initiatives

First Issue Winter 2002

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA LAUNCHES NEW PUBLICATION

The Government of Canada is pleased to introduce *Progress Report*, a new publication that provides timely and relevant news on key activities and initiatives aimed at strengthening Aboriginal people and communities. For additional information on any story, readers are encouraged to access the website links found at the end of each article.

RESULTS OF FIRST-TIME SURVEY SHOW OPTIMISM AMONG FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

In August, the Government of Canada launched its first-ever national survey of First Nations people. More than 1,400 people living on reserves across Canada were asked about a number of issues, including quality of life on reserves, treaty rights and governance, and the Government's performance.

Overall, the results were positive. Most respondents indicated that they are optimistic about their futures — a view shared by most Canadians. However, the survey also found that a majority of First Nations people believe the quality of life on reserves is below that of the national average, and that providing the tools for good governance could improve community conditions.

Announcements in the December 10, 2001 federal budget highlighted \$185 million to address health and educational issues for Aboriginal children and youth.

For more information on the survey results, visit www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/s-d2001/2-01244_e.html.

FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY LEVEL CONSULTATIONS CONCLUDE

More than 9,000 First Nations leaders and individuals across Canada recently participated in face-to-face consultations and information sessions on issues related to governance under the *Indian Act*. Community members also responded to questionnaires or used interactive media to share their views.

Early results indicate that leaders, Elders, women, business owners and entrepreneurs want change.

The Government of Canada will use the collected data to develop options to help formulate new governance legislation — a change that will help strengthen First Nations communities. The Parliamentary process, which will involve further consultation, will follow, with the objective of implementing new governance legislation in 2003.

For the complete story, visit www.fng-gpn.gc.ca, or call 1-800-550-1540.

BUILDING FUTURES, TRANSFORMING LIVES — AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

As part of its commitment to improving the quality of life for First Nation and Inuit communities, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada recently added \$100 million to bring the total available to \$125 million for strategic investments in economic development projects. The ventures, which range in scope from dental clinics to large-scale irrigation projects, are supported through seven economic development programs: the Economic Development Opportunity Fund; the Resource Acquisition Initiative; the Major Business Projects Program; the Resource Partnerships Program; the Regional Partnerships Fund; the Resource Access Negotiations Program; and the First Nation Forestry Program.

Response has been overwhelming. Aboriginal entrepreneurship is growing at twice the rate of the national average — there are now over 20,000 Aboriginal businesses across Canada.

For more information about Aboriginal economic development programs, visit www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/ecd/index_e.html.

ABORIGINAL CANADA PORTAL PROVIDES 'ONE-STOP SHOPPING'

The recently-launched Aboriginal Canada Portal is a single Internet gateway to over 12,500 links for and about Aboriginal people in Canada.

Visitors to the Aboriginal Canada Portal — a joint initiative of the Government of Canada and six national Aboriginal organizations — have one-stop access to information about Aboriginal businesses, organizations, news, and economic development. To find out more about this unique initiative, visit www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2001/2-01128_e.html, or access the Portal directly at www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca.

For more information, or to add your link to the Portal, call 1-888-399-0111.

FEEDBACK

Progress Report invites your comments. What topics would you like to see featured in future issues? Let us know if you'd like us to send *Progress Report* to a colleague.

Drop us a line at:

Progress Report

Communications Branch

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

19th Floor, Room 1900

10 Wellington Street

Ottawa ON K1A 0H4

E-mail: progressreport@inac.gc.ca

Fax: (819) 953-2305

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