

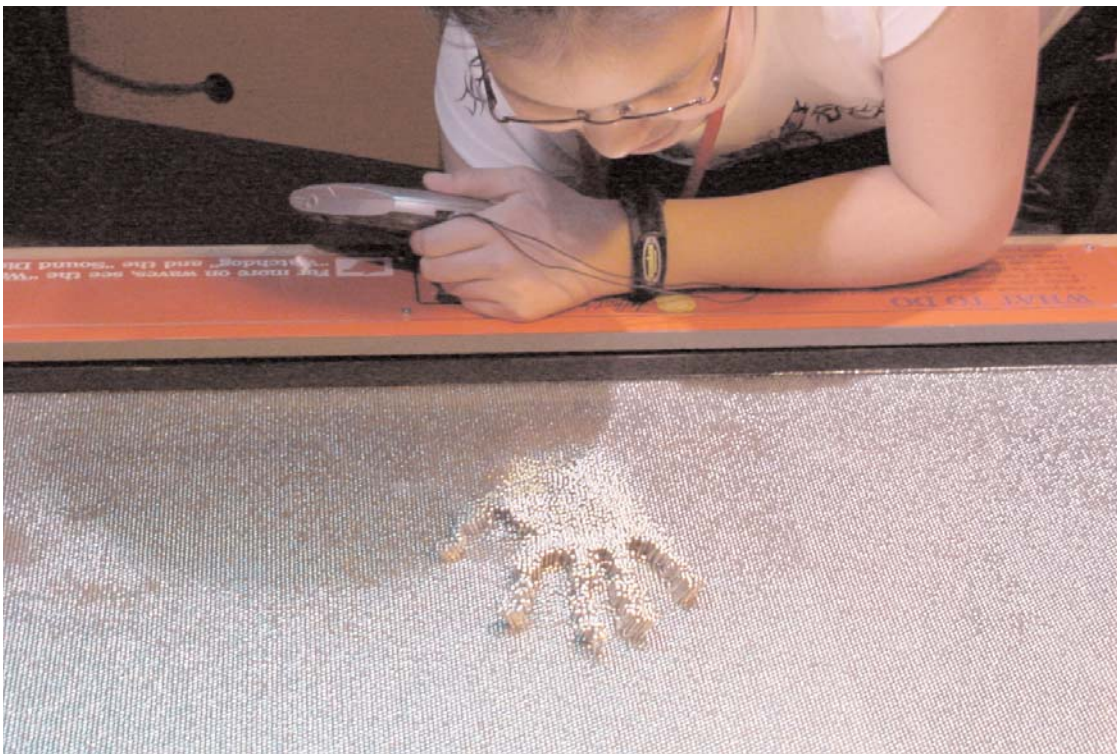
Eagle Feather

Celebrating First Nation Achievers in Manitoba

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PREPARED
BY INDIAN
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CANADA

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE



In this issue: First Nation and Inuit youth from across Canada touch the universe and learn about science careers in Manitoba (for details, see page 6).

Lifelong learning is the foundation of self-sufficiency and a better standard of living. The Government of Canada is committed to working in collaboration with Aboriginal people, provincial governments and other stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal children get a good educational start in life and to find new ways to better support Aboriginal lifelong learning.

In October, Winnipeg played host to the first of two working sessions on lifelong learning, held as a follow-up to the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable that took

place on April 19, 2004. At that roundtable, the Prime Minister set out a vision which included a focus on closing the gap between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians in key quality of life indicators, including health, education, housing and economic opportunities.

Learning can take you places, help you in your career and prepare you for a new one. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is proud to profile a few of the successful Manitoba First Nation people and projects in this issue of *Eagle Feather*.



Canada

Knowledge is the ticket

Ebb and Flow student shows learning can take you places

A student and teacher from Ebb and Flow First Nation, inspired by local herbs and knowledge, have shown their community that local knowledge can take you anywhere.

Calvin Chartrand's science project took the 13-year-old Grade 7 student to the Manitoba science fair and on to the Canada-Wide Science Fair in St. John's, Newfoundland.

"It was great to see Calvin get some recognition, some reward and praise. He's the first student from Ebb and Flow to go to nationals," said Brian Monkman, Chartrand's teacher.

The project began when Monkman realized he couldn't recall ever seeing a science project on traditional herbs and their medicinal properties. He knew it was an interesting topic, but also an important part of the community's tradition and culture. Monkman discussed the idea with Chartrand, who was eager to take it on.

Chartrand already had an enthusiasm for - and knowledge of - the subject. His grandmother had for years gathered herbs with him, and taught him about their various uses. Sweetgrass, sage, cedar and muskeg for tea are all readily available in the area.

Monkman stressed the project would be a lot of work and it would be up to Chartrand to do it. After six weeks of gathering his own herbs, reading, writing and studying, with Monkman providing proofreading and editing, Chartrand had an educational presentation on herbs polished and ready. Monkman was so impressed he entered it in the Manitoba Schools

Science Symposium, the provincial science fair.

Monkman wasn't the only one who was impressed; Chartrand was one of three students in his category selected to go on to the national science fair.

Monkman said the provincial

"It was great to see Calvin get some recognition, some reward and praise."

- Brian Monkman

science fair was exciting for both of them. "There were so many projects, and some were humongous compared to ours. But the way Calvin presented it I think is what got him in (to nationals)," he said. "He wasn't short of words, I can tell you that. He was great."

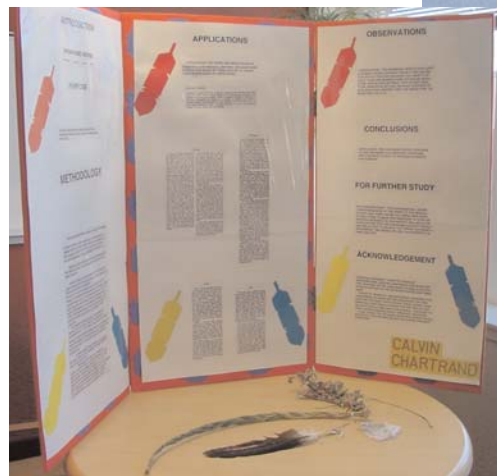
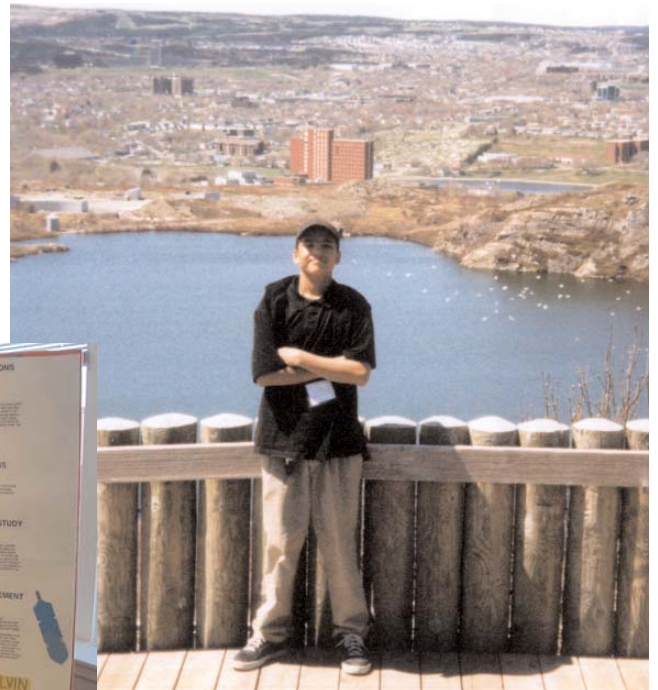
Next stop was St. John's for the Canada-Wide Science Fair. Chartrand, who had never flown in a plane before, was thrilled about the trip, but Monkman said Chartrand's grandmother Adeline was just as happy, knowing he was both

studying and sharing the knowledge she has used all her life.

Chartrand may have been a little nervous on the plane, but he wasn't nervous giving his presentation at a national competition. Monkman said the project opened up a lot of eyes to Aboriginal customs and traditions. "A lot of people don't realize these are medicines," he said. "Everybody (at home) has this stuff in their houses."

Monkman said the whole experience was great not just for himself and Chartrand, but for other students in the community, giving everyone some extra confidence and motivation.

"We're working on sending our second Ebb and Flow student to nationals," he said.



Ebb and Flow First Nation's Calvin Chartrand applied his Grandmother's teachings of medicinal herbs to a science fair project that got him all the way to St. John's, Newfoundland.

"Blazing a trail"

Training the key for taking advantage of new hydro projects

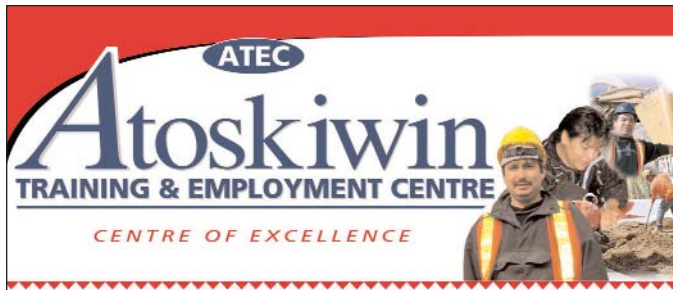


Photo credit: NCN

Representatives of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, the Government of Canada, Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro turn sod on a training facility that will enable First Nation people to be prepared for future hydro development opportunities.

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation's new training centre will usher in a new era of education and career opportunities - opportunities built on the foundation of northern hydro dams and other large-scale construction projects.

The Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence (ATEC), located on-reserve in Nelson House, will provide First Nations people with the entrepreneurial and trades skills needed to take full advantage of the construction boom projected for northern Manitoba over the next 20 years.

"This gives young people the opportunity to expand their skills and train right at home. That's a big thing for us," says Chief Jerry Primrose, adding, "This has taken a lot of dedication and commitment from Nelson House, the federal government, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro."

Construction began last August and the \$8.1 million centre is slated to open next summer.

Primrose says his dream is to see the centre eventually expand into other industries. He'd also like high school students to get a head start on trades skills so they can learn what careers may be suited to them.

"I think we're blazing a trail with this centre. It's going to receive long-term funding so it will be around for a very long time," says Coun. Elvis Thomas.

Primrose and Thomas both say training skilled tradespeople is crucial to the community's future. The

proposed 200-megawatt Wuskwatim Generating Station will be built on the Burntwood River at Taskinigup Falls in NCN territory, about 40 kilometres southeast of Nelson House.

ATEC is a non-profit, community-based, fully-accredited, post-secondary training facility. The 28,000-square-foot building, which will have a 100-student capacity, will include a dormitory, day care centre, Internet café, three classrooms, a science lab and a computer lab. It will also have a machine shop, metal shop, welding shop and woodworking area for hands-on training.

Training programs will include skilled trades, heavy equipment operating, labour and rebar work, literacy and clerical skills, security and catering, and women in trades and technology.

The entrepreneurial or business incubation services include accounting, business plan writing,

computer services, graphic design, market analysis, human resource support and legal assistance.

A director, Ezra Bogle, was hired in early 2003 and approximately 90 NCN and South Indian Lake residents have already passed various levels of training in ATEC's temporary class rooms. The province brought forward the construction date of the 10-kilometre access road to Nelson House in order to provide valuable experience for those trainees.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provided \$3.2 million towards the \$8.1 million project, with additional funds provided by the First Nation and other partners.

Questions?

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Northern Light

University College

A new kind of learning facility has opened its classrooms to Manitoba's north - after years of discussions and hard work, University College of the North came into existence in September 2004.

"It's something that, for over a decade, has been wished for. To have it a reality now is extremely exciting and rewarding," says Tony Bos, president of the University College of the North.

UCN is taking education into northern communities and tailoring that education to suit Aboriginal and northern students.

Northern Manitoba has long struggled to train and keep educated professionals but UCN represents an investment in the future of Manitoba's growth - an institution which provides education and training opportunities as open and vast as the landscape itself.

UCN formally absorbed Keewatin Community College last July and now operates out of its former campuses in The Pas and Thompson. UCN also has 10 newly established, permanent regional centres in Churchill, Cross Lake, Easterville, Flin Flon, Swan River, Split Lake, Nelson House, Island Lake, Norway House and Pukatawagan. In addition, UCN is working on a distance education initiative that will bring programs and courses into approximately 25 communities in total.

UCN has 200 staff members and serves 3,500 students annually. It integrates university and college courses and programs, giving students the opportunity to take a two-year diploma that could lead directly into a four-year degree program. The school offers a comprehensive range of education options including trade, career, technical and undergraduate degree programs. It will grant bachelor degrees and honorary degrees as well as certificates and diplomas.

Bos says much of UCN's focus is on delivering education that is relevant and culturally sensitive to aboriginals, who make up 70 per cent of northern Manitoba's student population.

To that end, a council of elders will work with the school's governing council and learning council. The governing council will manage the affairs of the university college, the learning council will be responsible for academic matters and the council of elders will provide guidance based on Aboriginal culture.

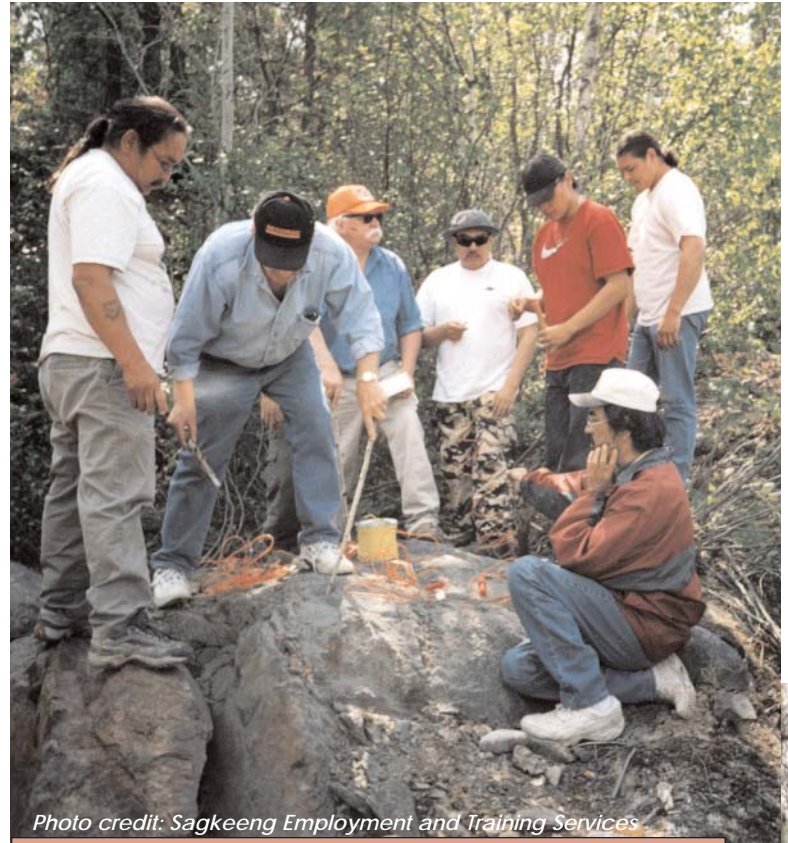


Photo credit: Sagkeeng Employment and Training Services

Above: students at Sagkeeng First Nation learn how to set explosives for blasting. Right: a Sagkeeng student cuts a corner post, the first step in the preparation of a mining claim.

"Elders have a formal role and function within UCN. Their wisdom is heard," says Bos, adding the council of elders should be functioning this school year.

Another unique aspect is the Centre for Aboriginal Studies and Research. A framework is now being developed for the centre, which will ensure Aboriginal knowledge and traditional practices are an important part of the school. Bos says Aboriginal and northern research will also play a large role at the centre.

UCN offers all the programs previously available at Keewatin

Community College, but is also developing new degrees. The first of those new degrees, a Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal and Northern Studies, will be offered beginning September 2005.

"Elders have a formal role and function within UCN. Their wisdom is heard."

- Tony Bos



of the North harnesses the power of Northern Manitobans

Northern Prospects

Mining exploration is booming in Manitoba's north, a land home to mineral riches such as nickel and copper, and possibly even diamonds. Now University College of the North and its partners are turning those resources into employment opportunities for those who live in the north.

Doug Lauvstad, director of marketing for UCN, says the opportunities are definitely there. "Exploration companies are quite active in Manitoba and like to hire from the local communities. But you need the skills to get the jobs."

To give people those skills UCN will offer a unique 10-week Prospector Training Program beginning in spring 2005. It will provide training, education and support to individuals or communities interested in working in the mineral exploration sector.

"Exploration companies are quite active in Manitoba and like to hire from the local communities. But you need the skills to get the jobs."

- Doug Lauvstad

include some class room time. The classroom work will take place in the most central and convenient UCN location for students who sign up. Lauvstad added the program can be based in northern communities where there is enough interest. Course content can also be adapted to the needs of a specific community.

The Prospector Training Program combines more traditional wilderness and prospecting skills with innovative technology, such as global positioning systems and geophysical instruments, to locate potential ore deposits.

"In some ways the prospecting industry hasn't changed much. You still have to be out in the field, digging and trenching and drilling, discovering what's there and claim staking. But on the other hand, it's very high tech now," says Lauvstad.

The 10-week program is divided into three sections. Based on input from industry representatives, the first section comprises of three weeks focused on wilderness safety training. It includes first aid, wilderness survival, boat operation, ATV or snowmobile operation, chainsaw safety, use of compass and global positioning system for navigation and mapping, use of topographic maps and air photos for navigation, and camp construction.

The second section, prospector training, is five weeks long and covers prospecting techniques, rock and mineral identification, claim staking procedures and rules, surveying and sampling, geophysical surveys, and writing assessment reports.

The third and final section, the business of prospecting, consists of two weeks. It teaches record keeping, financing exploration and development, marketing of properties, and regulatory considerations.

Lauvstad says graduates will have all the skills needed for jobs in the industry, or could opt to start their own business in prospecting and mineral exploration. The program is a joint initiative with UCN, the provincial government, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Mining Association of Manitoba, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.



"You can't have a mine unless somebody finds it," says Lauvstad, explaining prospecting as the crucial first step in the overall mining process.

The program will teach technical, theoretical and practical skills, and instructors include academic faculty, experts in indigenous and local knowledge, prospectors, entrepreneurs and other industry and government experts.

The program will be taught mostly through field work conducted throughout northern Manitoba, but does

Did you know?

Traditionally, First Nations people have held the highest regard for eagles. It is an honour to be awarded an eagle's feather. It recognizes an accomplishment that serves one's community.



Manitoba Hosts the 2004 National Science Camp



For 55 First Nation and Inuit youth aged 12-16, it won't be difficult to write that essay on what they did for their summer vacation.

The third annual National First Nation and Inuit Science Camp took them on a week-long adventure through the province of Manitoba.

From the "Touch the Universe" exhibit at the Manitoba Museum, to Manitoba Hydro generating stations in Gillam and beluga whales in Churchill, the campers from across Canada spent a week learning first-hand how science applies to our everyday lives.

"The thing I like best? Probably the whole thing," says Donald Bear, 13, of Muskoday First Nation in Saskatchewan. "I like stuff where you can actually relate every day because it's always there. I probably want to be an engineer because I like building."

"I hope to go somewhere with this - learn more and further my education," he says.

Each region used a different method to select their participants - from an essay and video competition to a science fair, kids with an interest in science were invited to the camp.

"I want to work as a scientist, in the woods and in labs in the far North - Nunavut, stuff like that," says Andrew Gros-Louis Germain, 13, of Wendake First Nation in Québec.

"It's one of my dreams - I will do it," he says.

This year's national science camp was hosted by the Black River First Nation and supported by the First Nation Inuit Youth Employment Strategy.

"Everything has been good: meeting new people, hearing about their culture and language," says Kaylynn Kusugak, 16, of Rankin Inlet, Nunavut.

"I'm really into the outdoors and meeting new people. I really enjoy science, especially animals and their habitats. We dissected frogs this year and we learned about trees and how they grow. When I get older I want to be a forensic scientist," she says.



This year's First Nation and Inuit National Science Camp in Manitoba included a tour of the Kettle Hydroelectric Generating Station in Gillam, whale-watching in Churchill, a tour of the Northern Research Centre, cultural sharing circle for National Aboriginal Day, building popsicle stick bridges at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Engineering, tour of Boeing Aerospace and Stevenson Aviation in Winnipeg, visit to the Manitoba Model Forest and Black River First Nation, and tour of the Forks National Historic Site and Touch the Universe at Manitoba Museum.

Riding the Circuit

Mentors ensure safe water flows to First Nations



Few things are more important to a community's health and future than water - and an innovative program ensures the stewards of First Nations' drinking water have all the training and support they need.

The Circuit Rider Training Program is providing on-site training to First Nation communities on the operation and maintenance of water and sewage treatment facilities.

"We have videos and chalkboards but primarily it's hands-on training. We're working in their plants on their equipment," says Ken Mattes, senior instructor for the program in Manitoba.

Mattes worked on the Circuit Rider Training Program in Ontario from 1994 to 1996 and was lured to Manitoba to start the program here in 1997. He says being part of the program has been the most rewarding job of his career.

Students in the program are taught how to safely run a plant. This includes how to mix chemicals, what chemicals do and how they work, how to work all the controls, how to start and stop their plant, cleaning of equipment and preventative maintenance, emergency procedures, and filling out daily logs and testing reports.

"I believe water and wastewater is the number one health concern in a community. It affects every single person," Mattes says.

Awareness of the potential hazards of contaminated water is much higher since the incidents in Walkerton, Ont. and North Battleford, Sask. Mattes says people now understand the importance of water and sewage treatment plants and their operators, making the program's job a little easier in recent years.

About two-thirds of Manitoba's 62 First Nations have water and wastewater infrastructure (most of the remaining have agreements in place with nearby municipalities). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has a goal of ensuring each water and wastewater plant on a First Nation is run by a certified operator by April 2006.

Mattes says Manitoba is leading the country and he's confident there will be at least one certified operator at every First Nation plant in the province by then.

In Manitoba the Circuit Rider Training Program has four instructors, including Mattes, who each travel on a circuit of seven First Nations, on average. They train operators, preparing them for their certification exam, then continue to visit each plant every seven weeks to offer support. As operators become more confident, instructors' visits become less frequent, though they can visit more often again if there are problems or someone new starts. The regular 'refresher' visits usually last about

three days, but instructors are also always available by phone. If a plant operator is having a problem that can't be solved with phone consultation, the instructor goes in person.

"This mentoring projects confidence, learning, professionalism and accountability. These are the key things," says Barry Wasik, who manages the program in Manitoba.

Wasik says it's successful because

it's face-to-face and usually one-on-one between mentor and student.

Larry Duncan is one of the program's instructors and also a former student. He was an operator at the water treatment plant in Norway House for 12 years, and was mentored by Mattes over the last two years.

Duncan knew how to run his plant, but he says having Mattes as a mentor made him realize there was still much he could learn about how it worked.

"My grandpa said there's always room to learn," he says.

Maybe so, but in a few years Duncan went from star student to instructor. He says he's thrilled to be able to see other First Nation communities and meet so many new people. He also says being a former student - knowing the challenges and how it feels to be an operator fine-tuning his knowledge - has made him a better teacher.

"When I go out as an instructor, I let them speak. I'm there to be a support person. That communication is important," Duncan says.

"My grandpa said there's always room to learn."

- Larry Duncan

Taking Part

Employers look to tap in to growing Aboriginal workforce

Canada's economic future depends on a diverse, skilled workforce. A big part of our future will be built with the hard work and participation of Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people are currently an underutilized resource in this country; increasingly educated but under-represented in the labour force.

The Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) exists to change this. It aims to increase the participation of Aboriginals in the workforce by informing potential employers about the advantages of hiring Aboriginals.

"The most rewarding thing is knowing that the work I'm doing is for all Aboriginal people, and that we're creating a more positive work environment for the future workforce," says Cleo Holness-Big Eagle, Manitoba co-ordinator for the AWPI.

The initiative is ambitious, but increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy is going to be crucial for the economic future of not just Aboriginals but all Canadians.

Today, Aboriginals are an economic power and make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the population. Between 1991 and 2016 the Aboriginal population is expected to increase by as much as 56 per cent, according to Statistics Canada. As a group, they are a relatively young, readily available workforce - and a rapidly growing and significant consumer market.

The AWPI has broken its mission into three main goals; to raise awareness of Aboriginal employment issues, to help employers recruit, promote and retain Aboriginal employees, and to promote information sharing and networking among all the stakeholders.

The initiative provides its resources to private businesses, large corporations, other levels of government, unions, associations and educational institutions. In Manitoba no one industry has been targeted because the response from various business



"We're creating a more positive work environment for the future workforce."

- Cleo Holness-Big Eagle

sectors has been so strong. In fact, says Holness-Big Eagle, positive word-of-mouth has made AWPI presentations and workshops so popular her schedule is often quite hectic.

Demand continues to increase as more employers realize the advantages of hiring Aboriginal people.

"Aboriginal employees help reach the growing Aboriginal consumer market. Aboriginals are a stable and dedicated local workforce. The turnover rate for Aboriginal employees at workplaces near Aboriginal communities is well below the national average.

"Aboriginal people introduce diversity to a workplace, bringing special skills and new perspectives. Aboriginal employment also helps companies find new market opportunities and form positive relationships with a future workforce. Providing job opportunities facilitates joint ventures with Aboriginal communities," she says.

Holness-Big Eagle co-ordinates various AWPI activities, such as conferences, seminars and workshops. She also helps develop and distribute awareness-building materials and other resources. Interested employers are shown how to create their own Aboriginal recruitment and retention initiatives.

Holness says the biggest challenge the initiative faces is changing some preconceived attitudes towards Aboriginals.

"What surprises me is that the stereotypes and myths are still around. But I do see changes in that area," she says.

Holness is encouraged enough by the changes she's seen to hope Aboriginals will in her lifetime play a larger role in Canada's economy.