



# update

Developments of interest to Aboriginal people

AUTUMN 2002



Photo: Tessa Macintosh

## The Canada We Want

- To support **families and children**. Early childhood development programs will be set up and Aboriginal Headstart expanded. Communities will get help addressing fetal alcohol syndrome and its effects.
- To help children do better in **school**. Work will begin with the new National Working Group on Education and immediate steps will be taken to help First Nations children with special learning needs.
- To increase **business** development and **job** creation. Support will increase for Aboriginal Business Canada. Targeted training programs will make sure there is Aboriginal participation in resource development projects throughout Canada.
- To break the cycle of poverty for **urban** Aboriginal people.
- To support **democratic principles** and improve the quality of public administration in First Nations communities. The First Nations Governance legislation has been reintroduced.
- To expand **community-based justice** approaches to help Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal people living in the North.
- To preserve and enhance Aboriginal **languages** and **cultures**.

You can read the Speech from the Throne at [www.sft-ddt.gc.ca](http://www.sft-ddt.gc.ca). You can call **1-800-0-Canada** (1-800-622-6232) to order a copy.



In September 30, the Government of Canada announced that the Canada we all want includes a higher quality of life for Aboriginal people. This is a critical step to building a better future for this country.

The Government laid out a number of its commitments specific to Aboriginal people in its Speech from the Throne.

- To improve **health**, and health care delivery. A First Nations Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Strategy will be developed.

### WATCH FOR IT IN YOUR MAIL:

#### A GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

This new guide will make it easier to learn where to find more information about many useful government programs and services, such as health care, education and job training. Check it out in the new year.

## SUSTAINING THE FOREST

**F**our years ago, Catherine Johnson, the newly hired Director of Economic Development for the Gesgapegiag Band, saw a clear-cut forest for the first time.

"The earth looked absolutely ravaged," she says as she recalls her flight over the Baldwin Territory in the Haute Gaspésie in Quebec, home to the community of 1,500 Micmac.

"I couldn't believe it. I was near tears. I asked myself how it could have happened."

She vowed to find a way for her community, the government and the forest companies to all benefit from a healthy forest. Johnson knew that her people could protect the land, and profit from it just like the bigger forestry companies who held the contracts. She also knew that forestry work would provide much needed training and jobs for the people in her community.

Johnson's work to develop a place for the people of Gesgapegiag in the local forestry industry has paid off. Training remains key to the success of the Gesgapegiag's

economic development. Local forestry companies all established training programs, creating 15 jobs in the sector where once only 3 existed. Over a dozen people, half of them women, are in training. Now community members feel confident about future work in the industry.

A grant for close to \$600,000 from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has also helped. With the money, the Band bought a "Menzi Muck," a tree-harvesting machine that can work on a steep slope without tearing up the soil.

Forestry led to environmental work. Many young people have worked during summers on a wildlife inventory, a riverbed clean-up and the construction of a visitor reception centre. Some are now interested in eco-tourism as a way to share the beauty of the territory.



## NEW BUSINESSES

**O**ver 25,000 Aboriginal businesses are now in operation in Canada — 863 started in 2001 alone. The Government of Canada has several programs to support initiatives in Aboriginal communities that help start new

businesses, create jobs, build partnerships and attract additional resources from the private sector.

You can find out more in the publication *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Economic Development Program Information*. Visit [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/ecd/edp\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/ecd/edp_e.html) for a complete list of programs.

## A NEW VENTURE CAPITAL FUND

**F**or many Aboriginal communities, successful small businesses like grocery stores and guide services are an important part of the local economy. But a new venture capital fund that's geared to meeting the needs of Aboriginal entrepreneurs will make it possible for them to grow beyond small, family-run businesses.

The Quebec Native Venture Capital Partnership (better known as SOCARIAQ, the acronym of its French-language name, Société de capital de risque autochtone du Québec) is the first fund of its kind in Canada. Five founding partners, including the federal and provincial governments, have put a total of \$6 million into the investment capital pool.

The fund can be used to buy part of a company outright or it can be used to provide various types of loans, especially during a company's early years when it usually makes less money.

The fund's ultimate goal is to create strong self-sustaining communities. SOCARIAQ will make it easier for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to dream bigger dreams of larger-scale businesses and create smaller spin-off companies.

For further information about SOCARIAQ, contact Pierre Pinsonneault at 1 (418) 843-7070 or by e-mail at [adm@socariaq.ca](mailto:adm@socariaq.ca) or visit [www.socariaq.ca](http://www.socariaq.ca).

### Of Interest to You...

Aboriginal Canada Portal  
[www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca)

Aboriginal Business Canada (Industry)  
[www.abc-eac.ic.gc.ca](http://www.abc-eac.ic.gc.ca)

Aboriginal Business Programs  
(Business Development Bank) 1-800-INFO-BDC or  
[www.bdc.ca](http://www.bdc.ca)

Building Aboriginal Economies publication  
[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/nwltr/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/nwltr/index_e.html)

## ACOA: PROGRESS FOR ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS

**T**he Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and its federal and provincial partners are making good progress in supporting the development of Atlantic First Nations communities.

Dozens of projects that have stimulated economic growth in Aboriginal communities in New Brunswick have been identified and helped by the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI). This program involves federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments, as well as Aboriginal organizations and individuals. The three-way process has also become a model for co-operation and collaboration in its seven years of existence.

The same can be said for the Economic Development Subcommittee of the Nova Scotia Tripartite Forum. Like JEDI, this is a community-based enterprise carried out by First Nations communities and the federal and provincial governments. It identifies and encourages projects designed to promote growth where it counts — on the ground, where people live and work, where people build futures.

Through the Regional Economic Development Agreement with the Province of New Brunswick, ACOA is helping to enhance First Nations participation in resource-based economies, aquaculture, entrepreneurship development and business management skills development.

Recent business initiatives across Atlantic Canada have included tourism projects such as the Wagmatcook Cultural and Heritage Centre and Chapel Island, and the Aboriginal Business Service Network, a resource that

Photo of Andrew Walmsley



improves access to customized business information for First Nations' private enterprises.

As well, ACOA provides support for projects launched by Aboriginal youth throughout Atlantic Canada through the SEED ConneXion Program. This program is administered by provincial Community Business Development Corporations, which receive their core funding from the Agency.

Taken together, all of these initiatives have been grounded in the federal economic agenda for Atlantic Canada. They reflect ACOA's mandate to help the people of this region chart their own courses to economic prosperity. They support the objective of creating and maintaining new and better jobs, and of raising income levels.

For more information about ACOA, visit [www.acoa.ca](http://www.acoa.ca).

## KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING!

Thanks for filling out the comment cards. Many of you asked for information on economic development and we've provided some of that here. A special thanks to Nunavut Youth Consulting who wrote to tell us about their community work. You can find out more at [www.nunavutyouth.com](http://www.nunavutyouth.com).

Thanks also to Noah Matt from Akulivik, Quebec, who wrote to say that like Jordin Tootoo, the Inuk hockey player featured in our last edition, he also played in the NHL. Since he played in the 1980s, Noah may well have been the first Inuk in the NHL.

So fill out the comment card — your ideas will help shape future issues of *Update*.



**We would like to receive your comments and suggestions.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find this issue informative?  yes  no

What other important topics would you like to see covered in future issues?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Send Government of Canada information to my e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Send *Update* to my friend at this address: \_\_\_\_\_

It's okay to use my name and address for other government updates.

I would like to be kept informed on Government of Canada initiatives by:

community television  mail to my home  band office

community radio  Internet

community newspaper  friendship centre

## FIRST NATIONS VETERANS: ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

If you served with the Canadian Armed Forces in the First World War, Second World War or Korean War, and settled on a reserve after the wars, you may be able to receive up to \$20,000 from the Government of Canada.

Surviving spouses or common-law partners may also be eligible for the First Nations Veterans Package. Their estates may also be eligible if the Veteran, surviving spouse or common-law partner passed away after February 1, 2000.

Applications must be submitted by **February 15, 2003**. To find out more about who is eligible, or to request an application form, call toll-free: **1-800-818-3286**. For the Hearing Impaired call **1-800-465-7735**

Or write:

Veterans Affairs Canada  
First Nations Veterans Project  
PO Box 7700  
Charlottetown, PEI CIA 8M9  
[www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)



Photo of Chuck and Bertha Williams

## FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE LEGISLATION

The proposed First Nations Governance Act will give First Nations people power to make sure their communities work better for them.

The bill is now before Parliament. It reflects the views of thousands of First Nations people who took part in its development. There is still time for you to get involved.

One way to participate is by arranging an information-sharing session in your community. Visit the First Nations Governance website ([www.fng-gpn.gc.ca](http://www.fng-gpn.gc.ca)), or call **1-800-550-1540** to find out more.

Or you can write to the Parliamentary committee, which will review the bill this fall. The committee will accept written submissions and hold public hearings on the proposed legislation. Here's how to contact the committee:

Clerk  
Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources  
Room 632, Wellington Building  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Phone: (613) 996-1173

Fax: (613) 996-1962

E-mail: [aanr@parl.gc.ca](mailto:aanr@parl.gc.ca)

For updated information about the governance initiative and links to relevant websites, visit [www.fng-gpn.gc.ca](http://www.fng-gpn.gc.ca) or call **1-800-550-1540**.



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Complete the reply card, clip it out and send it in (postage is already paid) or call INAC General Enquiries at **(819) 997-0380**. You can also send us a fax at **(819) 953-2305**, or drop us an e-mail message at [Update@inac.gc.ca](mailto:Update@inac.gc.ca).

For information on Government of Canada programs and services, call toll-free **1-800-0-Canada (1-800-622-6232)**; TTY/TDD: **1-800-465-7735**; or visit [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca).

You can also read the *Update* at [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/index_e.html).

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