



Release

For Immediate Release
March 21, 2007

Room 200, 155 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3H8
Phone: (204) 945-4900
Fax: (204) 948-2462

2007 ABORIGINAL SET-ASIDE INITIATIVE TENDERS ANNOUNCED

Initiative Builds on the Success of 2006 Program

Winnipeg, MB – As part of its ongoing commitment to address potential skilled labour shortages, build capacity and generate economic opportunities for the Aboriginal community, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) today announced that ten tenders will be issued for part of the West Dike construction under the 2007 Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project.

“Last year’s Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative on the West Dike proved to be a tremendous success,” said Ron Lemieux, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. “As a result, this year’s initiative will provide more opportunities for the Aboriginal workers and construction companies. By working with the Aboriginal construction industry to increase the pool of workers and contractors, we are building capacity and developing the resources that will benefit the construction industry and the province as other major construction projects get underway.”

“There are many First Nations construction companies throughout the province that are interested in working on the floodway and other major construction projects,” said Ron Evans, Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “This initiative provides one mechanism for some of those firms to build capacity and gain further experience, which will help them to be in a better position to bid on larger contract work in the future. We value our relationship with the MFA, and appreciate their hard work which has made them a leader in Manitoba regarding Aboriginal Procurement and Employment Equity. We look forward to continuing our work with the MFA to ensure employment opportunities and strengthen the Aboriginal construction industry in the years to come.”

“The floodway’s Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative has provided important opportunities for Métis construction firms,” said David Chartrand, President of the Manitoba Métis Federation. “The work that will be undertaken this year will continue to provide valuable experience and opportunities for Métis workers and companies. We look forward to working with the floodway authority as the project moves forward to ensure that partnerships continue to be built in both the private and public sectors.”

In the upcoming weeks, the MFA will be advertising ten contracts for work on a section of the West Dike from the Inlet Control Structure to PR 330. The work will consist of the dike construction, ditch grading, culvert installation, traffic control, temporary detours, traffic signage, silt fencing and other temporary erosion control measures, granular road surfacing, and revegetation. As construction on the West Dike proceeds, MFA will issue additional tenders for the supply and installation of rock rip rap. Pending the outcome of all of the work on this year’s section, additional sections may be tendered as part of the Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative in subsequent years.

-more-

To qualify as an Aboriginal firm to bid for work on the Aboriginal set-aside, a contractor must be at least:

- 51% Aboriginal-owned; and
- 1/3 of its employees must be Aboriginal persons

The West Dike, which is currently approximately 45 km (28 miles) in length and located southwest of Winnipeg, will be extended between 10 km (6 miles) and 15 km (9 miles) and raised in height in varying amounts to 1.5 metres (6 feet) to increase the flood protection safety factor. These improvements will provide increased protection against wind and wave action during major flood events.

During the 2006 construction season, the MFA tendered one section of the West Dike as a pilot project for the Set-Aside Initiative to the following contractors:

- W1 - Camster Construction Ltd. from St. Laurent;
- W2 - Skownan/Dyck Joint Venture Construction Company from Skownan First Nation;
- W3 - H. Baudry Construction from Ste. Agathe; and
- W4 - L. Chabot Enterprises Ltd. from Winnipeg.

Over the past two years, the MFA has been working with the Aboriginal community to develop the Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative. This process has included ongoing dialogue with First Nation and Metis contractors, community representatives, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Métis Federation, and the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce.

“Packaging the construction tenders in a variety of sizes will mean more competition by firms of various sizes,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the MFA. “This provides opportunities for smaller contractors while providing more competitive bids for the floodway project. In the long run, this means that the construction industry is strengthened and better able to meet the needs of a growing economy.”

Tenders under this year’s Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative are scheduled to be posted on the MERX electronic tendering service (www.merx.ca) in April.

-30-

Contact:

Colin Lemoine, Manitoba Cabinet Communications, (204) 945-1494

Sandra Ducharme, Communications, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, (204) 797-6326

Nhu Hong, Manitoba Métis Federation, (204) 586-8474 ext. 399

Ronuk Modha, Manitoba Floodway Authority, (204) 945-4178, (204) 945-4900, or (204) 793-3969 (cell)

2007 ABORIGINAL SET-ASIDE INITIATIVE

WEST DIKE CONSTRUCTION TENDERS

1. **Tender W5** - 2.2 km of dike construction involving approximately 194,000 cubic metres of excavation;
2. **Tender W6** - 2.0 kms of dike construction involving approximately 160,000 cubic metres of excavation;
3. **Tender W7** - 1.5 kms of dike construction involving approximately 87,000 cubic metres of excavation;
4. **Tender W8** - 1.2 kms of dike construction involving approximately 78,000 cubic metres of excavation;
5. **Tender W9** - 1.0 kms of dike construction and granular road surfacing involving approximately 63,000 cubic metres of excavation;
6. **Tender W10** - 1.7 kms of dike construction and granular road surfacing involving approximately 70,000 cubic metres of excavation;
7. **Tender W11** - 9.4 kms of granular road surfacing involving approximately 17,000 tonnes of granular;
8. **Tender W12** - 4.2 kms of dike construction and granular road surfacing involving approximately 84,000 cubic metres of excavation;
9. **Tender W13** - 3.2 km of dike construction and granular road surfacing involving approximately 214,000 cubic metres of excavation;
10. **Tender W14** - 3.4 kms of dike construction and granular road surfacing involving approximately 278,000 cubic metres of excavation;