



# Release

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## **FIRST EXCAVATION CONTRACT ON FLOODWAY PROJECT AWARDED TO MANITOBA JOINT VENTURE**

### **Aboriginal-Owned Firm Partners on First Excavation Tender**

**Winnipeg, MB** – The Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) announced today that a joint venture between Strilkiwski Contracting Ltd. and Nelson House Forest Industries, a firm owned by Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN), has been awarded the first excavation contract on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project.

“We are very pleased that Strilkiwski Contracting and Nelson House Forest Products have taken the opportunity to build on their previous relationship to bid on the floodway project,” said Steve Ashton, Minister of Water Stewardship. “By joining together, the joint venture was successful in submitting a competitive bid on the tender. We congratulate both firms and NCN for partnering on this historic flood protection project.”

“The awarding of the first construction contract for the floodway expansion is a clear indication that the project is on schedule and underway,” said Reg Alcock, President of the Treasury Board and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. “Flooding is a serious issue in Manitoba and the expansion of the floodway is one measure that will assist in reducing damage.”

In May 2005, the MFA issued a tender for excavation of the floodway embankment east of Grande Pointe. The joint venture submitted the lowest of five bids in response to the tender. The estimated contract value is \$1.4 million.

The joint venture will be responsible for excavating a third opening in the floodway embankment which will facilitate the efficient movement of water into the floodway channel, thereby improving flood protection in the vicinity of Grande Pointe. It is estimated that the “notch” will increase inflow to the floodway channel by approximately 31,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) under peak flood events. This excavation work and the construction of a third “notch”, builds on the two notches on the floodway embankment previously constructed by Manitoba Water Stewardship after the 1997 flood.

“The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way on this historic project,” said Jerry Primrose, Chief of NCN. “While focusing on improving flood protection, we look forward to creating job opportunities for members of NCN and generating economic spin-offs for our community as work on the contract begins and the project moves forward.”

“We are very pleased to have been awarded the construction contract on this historic project,” said Gerald Strilkiwski, President of Strilkiwski Contracting Ltd./Nelson House Forest Industries. “Over the next five years, the floodway expansion project will result in significant economic opportunities for the construction industry. We look forward to getting underway with this excavation contract in the upcoming days.”

Formed in 2002, from two parent companies, each with over twenty-five years of experience working on projects throughout Manitoba, the joint venture has performed work for Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Transportation and Government Services and various private sector firms. NCN is a community of approximately 5,000 people and is located in Northern Manitoba approximately 80 kilometres (50 miles) west of Thompson.

“The awarding of the first contract will allow the successful bidder to commence their preparations for the start of construction,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the MFA. “In the upcoming days, the contractor will be mobilizing equipment and undertaking site preparation to ensure that excavation can begin as soon as possible.” Gilroy noted that the excavation work under this contract is anticipated to be completed late this fall.

In early July, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) received an environmental license from Manitoba Conservation and federal authorization from the Government of Canada to begin construction on the expansion project.

The Red River Floodway Expansion Project involves a major expansion of the existing floodway protection system including the floodway channel, bridges, the inlet and outlet control works, utilities and services and the West Dike. Once completed, the project will increase the capacity of the floodway from 60,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) to 140,000 (CFS) to be diverted around Winnipeg during major floods. This will greatly improve protection for Winnipeg from catastrophic floods greater than the 1997 flood (approximate 1-in-100 year return period), and provide Winnipeg reliable security against floods of up to the 1-in-700 year return period.

By improving flood protection to the 1-in-700 year level, it is estimated that floodway expansion will protect more than 450,000 Manitobans, over 140,000 homes, over 8,000 businesses and prevent more than \$12 billion in damages to the provincial economy. The original Floodway was constructed between 1962 and 1968 at a cost of \$63 million and since then it has saved Manitobans more than \$8 billion in potential flood damages. The project is scheduled to provide a 1-in-700 year level of flood protection for the spring of 2009 with associated bridge and related work being completed in 2010.

As part of the New Deal for Cities and Communities, \$120 million in federal contributions will come from the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF). The CSIF supports large-scale strategic infrastructure projects that improve quality of life and further sustainable growth. The Government of Manitoba is also contributing \$120 million for the first phase of the project.

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