



Red River Current News|letter

A Fort McKay First Nation Publication

Volume 13/14: Issue 11/1 • Dec 2023/Jan 2024

Santa Ready For His Visit To Fort McKay



Fort McKay Chief and Council would like to congratulate Santa Claus on another successful year of preparations for his annual trip to bring joy around the world. Santa will take off on his journey on Christmas Eve, and he has confirmed to Chief Powder that Fort McKay will definitely be one of his stops.

Even though he has a very busy schedule, Santa made time to let Chief and Council know that the children of Fort McKay First Nation have all been very good this year, and no one is on his naughty list.

"I have a book with the names of every kid who has been naughty. Fortunately, I have an even bigger book of every kid who has been nice," said Santa. "My elves do most of the research on this. They are very good at their jobs, and I let Chief Powder know we found only nice kids in Fort McKay."

Santa also reports that Rudolph has no trouble finding Fort McKay, even when it is snowing. The bright Christmas lights on many of our homes and buildings help guide Rudolph as he leads the team of reindeers.

"Rudolph is the team captain, of

course," said Santa. "He is our Connor McDavid."

Santa also said he is looking forward to the treats left out for him. The food gives him the extra energy to get everything done in one night. Different cultures leave out different treats. Kids in Mexico leave him burritos. In Germany they leave cake with nuts.

"Bannock is one of my favourites and I like it fried or baked," said Santa. "I also like cookies, any flavour. I like broccoli, Brussel sprouts, and apples, too. I like everything."

Chief and Council will of course be keeping an eye on Santa's journey on Christmas Eve. Fort McKay's girls and boys can also track his trip by radar at **Official NORAD Tracks Santa (noradsanta.org)**. NORAD even has an app to download if moms and dads want to keep up-to-date on exactly where Santa is as he travels the entire world in just one night.

"I'm looking forward to seeing all the beautiful Christmas lights in Fort McKay," Santa said. "I wish everyone joy and peace. Merry Christmas Fort McKay!"

THE TRUTH ABOUT SANTA'S REINDEER

Everyone knows the story of Santa Claus and his reindeer. But did you know the reindeer are actually European domesticated Caribou? So we have it on good authority that Santa uses Caribou.

The proof is in the known facts:

Fact 1: Santa's home and Toyland are in the Arctic Circle in Canada. Everybody knows that.

Fact 2: There are two types of Caribou, the Boreal (Woodland) and the Barren Ground Caribou.

Fact 3: Fort McKay First Nation monitors Boreal Caribou with secret cameras to make sure there are enough for Santa to use every Christmas.

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FMFN LEADERSHIP TEAM

Raymond Powder, Chief
David Bouchier, Councillor
Crystal McDonald, Councillor
Bobby Shott, Councillor
Melinda Stewart, Councillor

Rhonda Laboucan, CEO
Alvaro Pinto, CEO Oilsands
Development and Sustainability
Stuart Randell, Director, Strategic
Portfolio Investments

ADMINISTRATION DEPT.
Dorothy McDonald Business
Centre, General Delivery,
Fort McKay, AB T0P 1C0

Phone: 780-828-2430

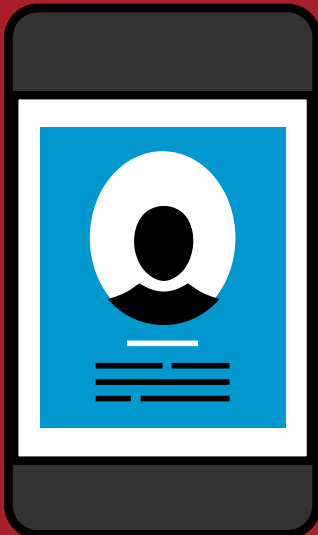
Hours of Operation:
Monday - Thursday:
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Closed daily: 12 - 1 p.m.

SUBMISSIONS
If you have any photos, stories or
ideas for the Red River Current,
please contact us via email at:
communications@fortmckay.com

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Never miss an update and
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Seasons Greetings to all from Chief and Council



Tett'eghe Yatı Dzinē chu Etets'elts'ün Dzinē

**Miyo Manito kiskanisik ekwa
Miyo ocitow kisikaw**



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CHRISTMAS IN FORT MCKAY



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Want proof?

Environmental Lead Ryan Grandjambe provided these pictures of Boreal Caribou on our Nation's land. Now, we're not saying for

definite these are the same caribou who pull Santa's sleigh and deliver toys every Christmas. But would you bet against it?

Fort McKay First Nation. Helping Santa every Christmas.



FORT MCKAY HEALTH CENTRE

Clinic Dates:

January 15th - 19th, 2024
February 5th - 9th, 2024

Please call in advance if you need to make an appointment with Dr. O'Connor or Charlene.

Immunizations

Contact the Health Centre to make an appointment with the Public Health Nurse

For more information on other services offered at the Health Centre, please contact the centre at **780.828.2450**.

FORT MCKAY EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

The Employment and Training Center is there to help you with creating/ updating resumes, searching for and applying for jobs, and offering support for employment and training.

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact the office at **780.828.2478**.

FORT MCKAY 106.3 FM



STAY up to date with the latest music and news!!

Listening to Fort McKay's community radio station!

www.fortmackayfm.com

PACE Thanksgiving for staff

Chief Powder and members of council were on hand to thank the staff at an awards lunch at the end of November.

The final PACE Awards celebration of the year took place in the Youth Centre due to the work being done in the Band Hall. As it coincided with the American Thanksgiving, the theme of the lunch was a big thank you to all staff members for their hard work in 2023. A traditional Thanksgiving meal of turkey and pumpkin pie was served.

CEO Chris Johnson handed out prizes to all the nominated members of staff, as well as the four monthly winners. Congratulations to Jane Mercredi from Capital Projects, Carlee Metchewais from Human Resources, Sammy Howe from Capital Projects, and Tara Vivian from Riverside. This month's Red River Current includes a spotlight on Tara. Each month we will feature another winner in future editions of Red River Current.

There was also a special PACE Award for our departing CEO Chris Johnson, who has accepted a job in Edmonton to be closer to his family. In presenting the award, Chief Powder thanked Chris for his dedication and hard work on behalf of FMFN.

The PACE Awards recognize exceptional people in our exceptional organization, under the categories of People, Accountability, Culture and Equity.



PACE Award winner for September Sammy Howe, receives his award from Chris Johnson.



PACE Award winner for October Carlee Metchewais, receives her award from Chris Johnson.



PACE Award winner for November Jane Mercredi, receives her award from Chris Johnson.



Councillor Stewart Raises \$7200



Councillor Melinda Stewart recently presented a donation to the Fort McMurray Northern Lights Cancer Foundation. She cut 24 inches of her hair to raise \$3600 with the support of friends and family, which was then matched by FMFN for a total of \$7200.

Way to go Councillor Stewart, for supporting this important cause!

PACE Awards Recognition, for Tara Vivian

Tara Vivian was the PACE Award winner for August 2023. A Recreational Therapist at Riverside, our aging in place facility, Tara's job is to care for the wellbeing of the residents of Riverside, and she does this in many ways.

She ensures the residents participation in all the events that the staff arrange and she sets a standard by treating the Elders as honoured guest of Riverside, not as patients.

As an example, Tara keeps a set of the good Fort McKay tablecloths at Riverside at all times so that they are available for her residents' functions.

Nothing but the best may very well be her motto. "Tara always includes all the staff to make improvements that benefit the participation and enjoyment of the residents," said Kayla Hachey, who nominated her for the award. "Her positive attitude will always lift you up. And she works really hard to maintain or improve the health of her Riverside community."

We will feature one PACE winner a month, starting in February 2024.



Tara Vivian receiving her PACE Award from Chris Johnson at the Staff Thank You Lunch in November.

MEMBER SUCCESS STORIES

Lexi Hynes-Redcrow shines in cheerleading team

Fort McKay First Nation would like to congratulate Lexi Hynes-Redcrow on her recent sporting achievements. Lexi is a level 3 All Star Cheerleader on the Ice Queens team of the Northern Cheerleading Allstars, and she and her team are having a good year.

Lexi competed with the Ice Queens earlier this year at the Pinnacle Cheer and Dance Championships in Las Vegas where they won First place in the International Championship event.

This was a proud moment for the Ice Queens. Not only did they bring home the gold – with a first-place banner as well to put on display at Norfort Gym – they created many wonderful memories that will be cherished forever. Plus, this win has also given the Ice Queens team a spot at the All-Star World Championships in April 2024 in Orlando.

As part of their preparation, the Ice Queens competed in Lloydminster on December 02 at the Battle of the Border Cheerleading Competition. It was the first competition of the season and the Ice Queens won gold as well as another first-place gym banner. Well done girls.

Lexi has been a cheerleader for 7 years and is a base for her team due to her strength and endurance. She has already mastered her tumbling skills and continues to challenge herself at higher levels. Norfort Gym only coaches to level 3 but Lexi is already working on some of her Level 4 skills. She is very confident, and self-determined making her a true asset to her team.



Lexi (top right) with her Northern Cheerleading Allstars teammates, proudly showing off their medals and 1st Place banner in Las Vegas.



Lexi (Top) with her teammates at the Battle of the Borders competition, and (above) with her medal from the same contest.

Below Lexi proudly shows off her medal from the Pinnacle Championship in Las Vegas.

FORT MCKAY ELDERS BINGO!

Date
Thursdays

Time
Noon - 2:00 pm

Location
Elders Centre

Call Peggy for cards at
780-598-3575.



CFWE RADIO BINGO

Date
Mondays and Saturdays

Time
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Location
Fort McKay Radio
Canada



Chase Fabian takes tournament by storm



Fort McKay First Nation Chief and Council would like to congratulate Chase Fabian on his recent success in the St. Paul Minor Hockey Association U15 Tournament. Playing for the Wood Buffalo Storm, Chase had a dream weekend as he helped his team to victory. The Official Results were, played four won four, but that doesn't tell the whole story. The Storm beat Spruce Grove 9-3, then Barrhead fell 16-0. In the semi-final they took down the hometown heroes the St. Paul Canadiens 7-1, then on to the finals when Edmonton were well beaten 10-4. That's a total of 42 goals for, 8 against.

Chase scored 10 of those goals, including 3 hat-tricks. "I'm always proud of my boys and their successes," says Mom Candace Fabian. "Chase tries so hard every time he plays. Ten goals is an incredible achievement." It is indeed. Well done.

Chase is on the top right of the team photo next to the well-dressed coach (Assistant Coach Brad Fabian, Chase's Dad, is the man in plaid on the left-hand side of the picture).



Chase and his team mates waiting to get back on the ice during the St. Paul Minor Hockey Association U15 Tournament.

Arctic Games Try Outs

Fort McKay Chief and Council would like to congratulate Malibu Chartrand, Savanna Dyson and Gracie Dyson for going to the Dene Games Trials for the Arctic Winter Games, held in Slave Lake over the weekend of the 2nd of December 2023. Better luck to Malibu next time, she just missed out on being selected, and congratulations to Savanna and Gracie. The top four made the Junior Girls Alberta North team. Savanna came in 4th and Gracie was second. The competition is in Mat-su, Alaska in March 2024.

The girls competed in Stick Pull, Finger Pull and Snow Snake. "I'm so very proud of them," said co-ordinator Stefany Guillen. "They have worked hard for and showed a lot of character during the trials, especially Malibu."

The Arctic Winter Games celebrate circumpolar peoples residing in

communities or countries bordering the Arctic Ocean. Team Alberta North is the southernmost team, geographically, invited to the competition. The last Arctic Winter Games took place in Fort McMurray and Fort McKay in 2023.

Tayden Shott will also be taking part in the Archery competition at the Arctic Winter Games, having represented Alberta North in 2023 as well.



Malibu, Savana, Youth Leader Stefany and Gracie.



Gracie Dyson was rocking the ACDC look in the stick pull at the Dene Games Trials.



Savana (above) in the finger pull



Malibu taking part in the Snowsnake

Chief Powder Attends Ottawa Meetings

In Ottawa in early December to participate in the Assembly of First Nations election, Chief Powder also used the visit to meet with senior federal political leaders with key files in areas related to economic development and Indigenous relations.

"This was a very productive opportunity to meet with federal decision makers to update them on the important work of Fort McKay First Nation," said Chief Powder. "It helped foster a dialogue and allowed me to brief them on our economic development plans. We were able to strengthen existing connections while building new relationships that will help support our future plans as a Nation."

Among those Chief met with was Independent Senator Karen Sorenson, who is from Alberta. She is a member of the Standing Senate Committees on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources (ENEV) and Indigenous Peoples (APPA). Ms. Sorenson is a strong advocate for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, as well as the

tourism and hospitality sector, clean and sustainable energy, conservation, and biodiversity.

Chief Powder also met with Alberta Member of Parliament Shannon Stubbs, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Lakeland, Alberta. Shannon is currently the Shadow Minister for Natural Resources, having been appointed by Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre. She is currently the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee for Natural Resources.

Chief Powder also spent time with Kyle Harrietha, Deputy Chief of Staff for Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. A former resident of the Wood Buffalo region, Harrietha moved to Ottawa in 2016 and has been involved in federal politics ever since.

The introductory meetings were very productive, with important information exchanged. Follow-ups are expected to expand on these intergovernmental relationships. Chief Powder also offered invitations to the politicians to visit Fort McKay First Nation in 2024.



Chief Powder met Alberta Member of Parliament Shannon Stubbs, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Lakeland, Alberta.



Chief Powder with Independent Senator Karen Sorenson, who is from Alberta.

Chief Powder Attends Equal Voice Foundation annual gala

As part of efforts to raise the national profile of Fort McKay First Nation, Chief Raymond Powder attended an important networking event in Ottawa at the end of November.

The nonprofit Equal Voice Foundation's annual gala brings together political leaders from all parties to support and advance women in leadership roles in politics and business.

"This was an important event to attend and show our support for advancing the role of women in leadership," said Chief Powder. "It was a valuable opportunity to connect with women, particularly our Indigenous sisters, who are doing important work at the national level. We learned first-hand about their experiences."

Seated at the FMFN table at the Nov 28 event was Leah Gazan, federal



Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre and NDP Critic for Women and Gender Equality. MP Gazan presented a motion to the House of Commons to declare the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls a Canada-wide emergency. The motion passed unanimously. Of Lakota ancestry, Ms. Gazan represented Manitoba at the



United Nations Forum on Indigenous issues.

A highlight of the evening was the interview with Canada's first Indigenous Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, by media personality Lisa Laflamme. Speakers included the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada. First Nation in 2024.

Chief Powder Attends AFN Election

Chief Raymond Powder was in Ottawa in the first week of December to take part in the election for the new national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

"I was proud to take part on behalf of our Nation in this important national event for the Indigenous People of Canada," said Chief Powder. "I am also delighted to report that I nominated Chief Cindy Woodhouse, who was ultimately elected to the position."

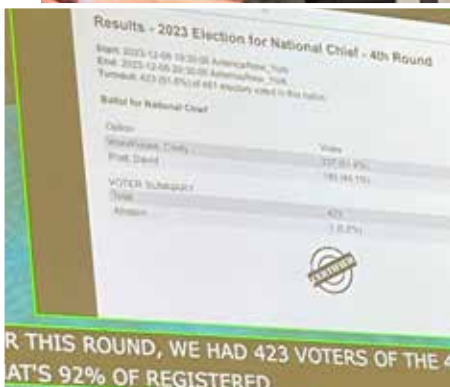
"Chief Woodhouse believes Canadians need to work with First Nations in a positive way," said Chief Powder. "That aligns with Fort McKay First Nation's well-known commitment to working towards positive relationships with government as well as industry."

AFN is a national Indigenous advocacy organization that works to influence federal government policy and budget spending for 634 communities. The national chief is elected through a voting process that allows chiefs and their proxies from across the country to choose who they prefer. The AFN represents more than 900,000 people in communities across the country.

Chief Woodhouse is from the Pinaymootang First Nation in Manitoba. She served as the AFN's regional chief for the province. In her victory speech she said she was raised to work with all people, and she intends to do so in this capacity. She said that First Nations want to work constructively with the federal government, but warned there will be problems if chiefs are not heard.

Chief Woodhouse said she and the Prime Minister spoke immediately following her election about economic development and making sure First Nations are included in the economy. "We need to be working more closely together," she said, adding this is what partners do.

Ms. Woodhouse, a 40-year-old mother and day-school survivor, served as the AFN's lead negotiator on a multibillion-dollar settlement for First Nations children over child welfare services.



FORT MCKAY CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

DANCER AND DRUMMER PERFORMANCES

- Traditional Healing Assistance
- Round Dance / Dene Dance
- Cultural Workshops
- Moose/Bufalo Lake Summer Retreat
- Moose Lake Camps & Events
- Employment Opportunities
- Community & Special Events

CREE & DENE CLASSES

Every Tuesday Cree class on Zoom.

Every Wednesday Dene class on Zoom.

To register, contact culture@fortmckay.com

DRUM PRACTICE

Every Wednesday at 6 pm in the Band Hall.

All males welcome. Drop In, no registration required!

If you would like to be a volunteer or be a Resource Worker for some of our programs or events, please submit an email, please include what events you are interested in, or what skill sets you can provide. First priority will be given to community members.

For more information about our upcoming programs, please contact:

Audrey Redcrow
Cultural and Special Events Lead
780-215-2384
Aredcrow@fortmckay.com



Wildlife Monitoring Update 2023

Fort McKay First Nation's Environmental Guardians Wildlife Monitoring Program has had another successful year, they installed more camera's in 2023 and here is just a selection of the different species caught in the wild. We think you will agree that Ryan Grandjambe and his team are doing a great job!





Rock Your Mocs Contest 2023

Fort McKay First Nation's Culture and Special Events held the annual Rock Your Mocs Week contest in mid November, the resulting entries were all brilliant. See below for a selection of some of the amazing Mocs that were sent in!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Day	Date	Event	Details
Every Mon & Thur		Adult Volleyball at the School Gym	7pm - 9pm Contact Stefany at sguillen@fortmckay.com
Mon	December 18, 2023	Influenza Inoculation - Drop in at the Health Centre	8:30am - 4:30pm, Health Centre. No appointment needed
Mon	December 18, 2023	Youth Centre BJ and Dante Drum Lessons	6pm - 7:30pm, Contact Katara White 780-972-9810.
Mon	December 18, 2023	Wellness Centre, Christmas Craft Night, ages 5+	6pm - 8:30pm, Contact Julia Soucie, 780-828-4312.
Mon	December 18, 2023	Youth Centre Mario Kart Tournament	6pm - 8pm, Contact Dylan Elias 780-799-2406.
Tues	December 19, 2023	School Christmas Concert	For More Information see The Elsie Fabian School 2023-2024 Calendar
Every Tues	Dec 19 - Jan 30	Cree Classes on Zoom with Edith Orr 6:30pm - 8pm	Register at culture@fortmckay.com
Wed	December 20, 2023	Wellness Centre Kids Christmas Party	Youth Centre, Contact Julia Soucie, 780-828-4312.
Thurs	December 21, 2023	Wellness Centre, Christmas Caroling, ages 5+	6pm - 8:30pm, Contact Julia Soucie, 780-828-4312.
Thurs	December 21, 2023	Youth Centre Art Night	6pm - 7pm Contact Sarah Callin 780-215-7118
Thurs	December 21, 2023	Youth Centre BJ and Dante Drum Lessons	6pm - 7:30pm, Contact Katara White 780-972-9810.
Friday	December 22, 2023	Youth Centre, Christmas Movie Night and Pizza Night	6pm to finish, Contact Dylan Elias 780-799-2406
Friday	December 22, 2023	No School - Non-Operational School Day - 03	For More Information see The Elsie Fabian School 2023-2024 Calendar

Continued on page 16.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Day	Date	Event	Details
Every Wed	Dec 20 - Jan 31	Dene Classes on Zoom with Janette Flett-Jones 6pm - 7:30pm	Register at culture@fortmckay.com
Mon to Fri	Dec 25, 2023 to Jan 5, 2024	No School - Christmas Break	For More Information see The Elsie Fabian School 2023-2024 Calendar
Mon	December 25, 2023	Nativity Mass, Saint Julien Church.	3pm
Mon	December 25, 2023	Christmas Day	Public Holiday
Tues	December 26, 2023	Boxing Day	Public Holiday
Wed to Fri	December 27 to 29	Christmas Hockey Camp	Contact Shay at 780-742-4622 for more Information
Sun	January 7, 2024	Holy Mass, Saint Julien Church.	3pm
Mon	January 15, 2024	Mental Health first Aid Course for Staff and Community	8:30am - 3pm Wellness Centre, Contact thowe@fortmckay.com
Tues	January 16, 2024	Mental Health first Aid Course for Staff and Community	8:30am-3pm Wellness Centre, Contact thowe@fortmckay.com
Friday	January 19, 2024	Wellness Centre Casino Fundraiser. Volunteers needed.	Contact Julia at 780-828-4312.
Sat	January 20, 2024	Wellness Centre Casino Fundraiser. Volunteers needed.	Contact Julia at 780-828-4312.
Mon to Thurs	Jan 22 to Jan 25, 2024	School Reading Café	For More Information see The Elsie Fabian School 2023-2024 Calendar
Friday	January 26, 2024	No School - Professional Learning Friday 08	For More Information see The Elsie Fabian School 2023-2024 Calendar
Every Tues	Dec 19 - Jan 30	Youth Volleyball at the School Gym	6pm - 7pm. Contact Stefany at 780-714-7094.