



## Chief Powder meets with federal and provincial health ministers



Pictured left to right: Alberta Health Minister Adriana LaGrange, Chief Raymond Powder and Health Canada Minister Mark Holland

On Thursday, January 9, in Edmonton, Chief Raymond Powder met with Alberta Health Minister Adriana LaGrange, Health Canada Minister Mark Holland, and Chiefs from Treaties 6, 7, and 8 to discuss a wide range of health issues.

Topics discussed at the meeting included the federal/provincial bilateral health agreement; the mental health and addictions crises, and systemic racism in the health care system. Ministers LaGrange and Holland acknowledged that, though their roles are clear, funding and service delivery are not always straightforward and pledged to do better. To this end, Alberta has recently

appointed Lisa Higgerty as the Assistant Deputy Minister of Indigenous Health. She is charged with improving health service delivery to the First Nations.

In the meeting, Chief Powder raised two issues of particular importance to Fort McKay. Currently, the Nation provides on-reserve health care, including access to a primary care physician, to all members, to the neighbouring Fort McKay Métis, and to all staff, without any funding support from either government. This is not consistent with the “medicine chest” clause of the treaty, and Chief asked Minister Holland to review the Government of Canada’s

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## AHMAD KABALAN IS IN EUROPE, TAKING ON THE BEST IN THE WORLD



This month, Community Peace Officer Ahmad Kabalan will be half way round the world, competing in the European Ju-Jitsu championships in Lisbon, Portugal. Ahmad qualified in the Masters Division and will face some of the world’s finest Ju-Jitsu practitioners. Check next month’s Red River Current for news on Ahmad’s progress.

In 2021, Ahmad won Gold at the World Championships in Las Vegas. That win - a very special moment for Ahmad - was particularly rewarding after decades of training, being displaced by the 2016 wildfire, and lengthy commutes to and from Edmonton and Lac La Biche to pursue his dream. Ahmad attributed his gold medal

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FMFN LEADERSHIP TEAM

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

Alvaro Pinto, Vice President of  
Oilsands Development &  
Sustainability

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.

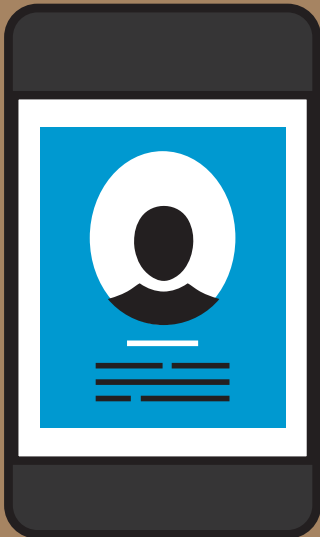
SUBMISSIONS

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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CHIEF AND COUNCIL NEWS

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commitment to First Nations  
health care.

Chief also reminded Minister  
Holland that, in 2018, the  
Parliamentary Standing  
Committee on Indigenous  
and Northern Affairs tabled a  
report titled The Challenges  
of Delivering Continuing Care  
in First Nations Communities.  
That same year, the Nation  
opened the on-reserve  
Riverside Continuing Care  
Centre and, ever since, has  
operated Riverside entirely on  
the Nation's earnings without  
any government support. The



federal government has yet  
to adopt any policy regarding  
continuing care.

Fort McKay is also working to  
negotiate a service agreement  
with Alberta Health Services  
(AHS)—or the continuing care  
agency Alberta will create  
as the government closes  
AHS—to secure funding for  
medical care and for the staff  
who deliver it. In October 2024,  
the Government of Alberta  
transferred continuing care  
to Alberta Seniors and Social  
Services.

It is hoped that positive  
developments will be  
announced soon.



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## FORT MCKAY STAFF NEWS



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success to a combination of skill, training, hard work, and family and community support.

Twenty years ago, while living in Fort McMurray, Ahmad trained in karate, occasionally competing at international tournaments. As he got older, it became harder to keep up with the younger competitors. "They don't match you up with the same age groups," he said.

Switching to Ju-Jitsu, Ahmad found his home. The foundation of most martial arts, Ju-Jitsu - the name means the "yielding art" - teaches combatants how to use their opponents own force against them. Ahmad trained under Brazilian Pedro Lott in Edmonton. His hard work and commitment paid off. In addition to his current trip to the European Championships and his win at the Worlds,

Ahmad also trains with his brother at their academy in Fort McMurray. He instructs his children and his nieces, among many other students. Combat sports have long been a Kabalan family tradition. Ahmad's father, a wrestling champion in Lebanon, trained Ahmad and his brother until 1990, when the family moved to Canada.

While continuing his pursuit of Ju-Jitsu excellence, in 2023 Ahmad also trained to be a Community Police Officer at the Lac La Biche County Law Enforcement Training Centre. Then he joined the Fort McKay First Nation as a Peace Officer, becoming part of the team looking after the safety of the community.

And as a community, Ahmad, the Fort McKay First Nation wishes you well.

## FORT MCKAY HEALTH CENTRE

### **Clinic Dates:**

Dr O'Connor - Feb 10th - 14th  
Dr Taiwo - Feb 25th - 27th  
PCN Nurse - Every Mon & Wed

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 Centre 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](http://www.fortmackayfm.com)



# Fort McKay invited to help guide development of highway 686

On January 13, Chief Raymond Powder met for the second time with Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors Devin Dreeshen at the Alberta Legislature to discuss Alberta's plan to build Highway 686. The project, which would extend from Fort McMurray to Grande Prairie, would be Alberta's first entirely new highway in decades.

Other attendees included the Chiefs of Bigstone Cree, Peerless Trout, and Loon River First Nations. These three Nations, all of which are on the proposed route alignment across north-central Alberta, are members of a joint venture that is helping Alberta to finalize the alignment, and to address environmental and Treaty rights concerns.

Following a meeting with Minister Dreeshen in December, Chiefs Alook, Okemow, and Sawan invited Fort McKay First Nation to join their partnership in recognition of the Nation's "insights and demonstrated expertise in managing business opportunities." The Chiefs said it was inspiring to learn more about the work being done to advance Fort McKay's economic interests.



Chief and Council are considering whether to join the joint venture as a means of creating additional economic opportunities for the Nation and its members, and to ensure that construction of the new highway recognizes and protects Treaty rights and Fort McKay's traditional territory.





# Cheerleading Champs do well in Edmonton

Fort McKay First Nation congratulates Abigail McClure, who won first prize in the U18 cheerleading competition at the Cold Snap Classic, which took place in Edmonton from January 20 to 22.

Congratulations also to Ayria Moses-Boucher whose team, The Renegades, took fourth place in the Prep Plus Level 1A U12 division.

Held at the Edmonton EXPO Centre, the Cold Snap Classic is one of the most hotly contested competitions in Alberta cheerleading. The event attracts participants from across Alberta and Saskatchewan who compete in age groups from Under 8 to Under 18. It is also one of the qualifying events for the Cheerleading World Championships. With over 200 teams and more than 3,000 athletes taking part, the Cold Snap Classic is one of the largest cheerleading events on the calendar, making Abigail and Ayria's results all the more impressive. Congratulations to you both.

The Cold Snap Classic is presented by Double Up Cheer Productions in conjunction with the Alberta Cheerleading Association.



Abigail and friend shown celebrating.



Ayria Moses-Bouchier with her medal.

## 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



# Stephanie Harpe honoured with King Charles III Coronation Medal

Residential School Survivor, International Advocate for Murdered, Missing and Exploited Indigenous Peoples, and award-winning singer/songwriter Stephanie Harpe has been honoured again for her work in the community. Stephanie was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of her extensive work volunteering in the larger First Nations community as well as at the YWCA in Edmonton. Stephanie has been at the forefront of work with the MMEIP -Murdered of Missing and Exploited Indigenous Peoples. This introduction, from the Downie Wenjack Fund, lists some of Stephanie's many accomplishments:

Stephanie Harpe is a proud member of Fort McKay First Nation and identifies as Cree, Dene, and Métis. Her career includes roles such as former Community Outreach Coordinator at the Institute for the Advancement of

Aboriginal Women (IAAW), where she facilitated support groups and served as National Representative for [AboriginalAlert.ca](http://AboriginalAlert.ca).

Stephanie's life experiences deeply influence her humanitarian efforts; she is a survivor of the residential school system and an attempted murder. Her mother, Ruby Anne McDonald, was murdered, and Stephanie is the niece of Historical Chief Dorothy McDonald of Fort McKay First Nations.

In 2019, Stephanie toured 31 Indigenous communities in western Canada as an advocate for Murdered, Missing, and Exploited Indigenous People with the Safety and Wellness Super Clinic.

She has spoken at the National Models United Nations International Conference and delivered a TEDx Talk titled

"Indigenous Suffering and Survival to Success."

The richly-deserved award was presented to Stephanie in front of family and friends at the YWCA on Saturday January 25. Congratulations, Stephanie.





# FORT MCKAY MEMBERS NEWS

## Noah Fitzpatrick wins the Paul Martin Award

Noah Fitzpatrick recently won the award for the top mark in the Paul Martin Program at Composite High School. Noah received the award for his work in Grade 11. The award is named after its founder, The Right Honourable Paul Martin, 21st Prime Minister of Canada. This Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program (AYEP) is built on the academic requirements of provincial business courses, supplemented with First Nations, Métis Nation, and Inuit content. Case studies and focusing on examples of successful Canadian Indigenous business leaders are also part of the program.

AYEP seeks to help Indigenous youth develop the attitudes and skills necessary to achieve success in secondary school, the workplace, during post-secondary education or training, and in daily life. The curriculum teaches students to develop entrepreneurial opportunities that can lead to business ownership. They gain an introduction to business that will help them prepare for the working world regardless of their choice of career.

Students are mentored by established business people, including Indigenous business owners, throughout the business planning process.

Congratulations to Noah for all his hard work and dedication in getting the top mark in the program.



## FORT MCKAY CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### DANCER AND DRUMMER PERFORMANCES

- Traditional Healing Assistance
- Round Dance / Dene Dance
- Cultural Workshops
- Moose Lake Camps & Events
- Casual employment Opportunities

### CREE & DENE CLASSES

Every Tuesday Cree class on Zoom.

Every Wednesday Dene class on Zoom.

To register, contact [culture@fortmckay.com](mailto:culture@fortmckay.com)

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**  
Fort McKay First Nation  
Cultural Advisor  
**780-215-1458**  
[culture@fortmckay.com](mailto:culture@fortmckay.com)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Day	Date	Event	Details
Every Mon	Feb 3 to Feb 26	Drop in Workout at the Youth Centre 4:30pm - 9pm	Ages 12-18. Contact Dylan at 780-799-2406
Every Tues	Feb 4 to Jan 25	AA Support Group, every Tuesday at the Family Support Centre	8:30pm - 10pm, Doors Open at 8pm
Every Tues	Feb 4 to Jan 25	Cree Online Classes, 6pm - 7:30pm, Instructor Edith Orr	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com
Every Tues	Feb 4 to Jan 25	Youth Sports, 5:30pm - 7pm at Elsie Fabian School	Contact Katara, 780-972-9810
Every Wed	Feb 5 to Feb 26	Dene Online Classes, 6pm - 7:30pm, Instructor Janette Flett-Jones	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com
Every Wed	Feb 5 to Feb 26	Light Exercise Program - Rest, Stretch and Relax, 1pm	Transport Provided. Call Trinda 780-215-0478
Every Thur	Feb 6 to Feb 27	Open Gym at the School Gym - Enter through the Side Door	7:15pm - 9:15pm Contact Number is 780-215-5276
Mon & Wed	Feb 3 to Feb 26	Influenza and Covid Vaccines in the Health Centre	Call 780-828-4229 for information
Every Fri	Feb 7 to Feb 28	NA Support Group, every Friday at the Family Support Centre	8pm - 9pm, Doors Open at 7:30pm
Tues	Feb 4	Video Game Night 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Thurs	Feb 6 & Feb 20	Art Club with Brace 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Wed	Feb 5	Tie Dye Night 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Mon	Feb 10	Collage Vision Board 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Wed	Feb 12	Valentines cupcake decorating 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Thurs	Feb 13	Valentines Day Supper 6pm - 8pm	All Ages. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Fri	Feb 14	Valentines Slime Making 6pm - 8pm - Get slimed and shine	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Fri	Feb 21	Candle Making 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Tues	Feb 25	Youth Basketball Tournament 6pm - 7:30pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Thurs	Feb 27	Movie Night 6pm - 8pm	12-18 years. Youth Centre, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810
Fri	Feb 28	Outdoor sliding and other activities 1pm - 4pm at the Amphitheatre	All Ages. Hot Chocolate and snacks, Contact Katara at 780-972-9810