



# Red River Current Newsletter

A Fort McKay First Nation Publication

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## Fort McKay First Nation Signs New Agreement with Suncor



Left to right: Councillor David Bouchier, Councillor Melinda Stewart, Sandy Martin - Senior Vice President Regional Execution, Suncor, Peter Zebedee - Executive Vice President at Suncor, Chief Raymond Powder, Councillor Bobby Shott, and Councillor Crystal McDonald.

Chief and Council were in Edmonton on October 24th, 2025, where they signed a new agreement with Suncor Energy related to Reserve Land 174C, North Block, a plot of FMFN Reserve Land in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Fort McKay First Nation Traditional Territory.

The new agreement builds on

the previous Memorandum of Understanding announced between Fort McKay First Nation and Suncor in March 2024. That MOU set the terms for early-stage technical and commercial feasibility assessments for the prospective oil sands development opportunity on Reserve Land 174C.

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### CCIB INDIGENOUS BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Canadian Council for Indigenous Business created a new award for 2025. Indigenous Business of the Year Award honours the achievements and contributions of an Indigenous business that significantly supports and enriches the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities.



David Bouchier and Nicole Bourke-Bouchier were honoured with this award for their work with their company, The Bouchier Group. As the first recipient of this award, it honours not just success but purpose, people, and community impact.

This award reflects Nicole and David's values, their care for community, and the people. It acknowledges the way they do business - grounded in culture, guided by community, and built by the people.

## 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.

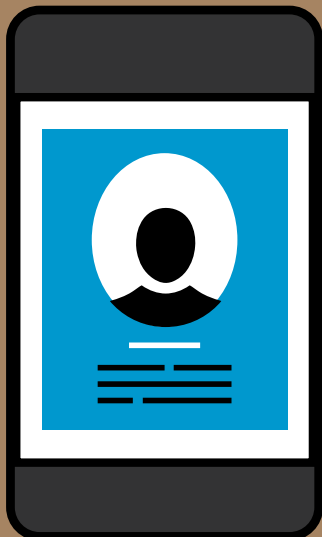
### SUBMISSIONS

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

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## CHIEF AND COUNCIL NEWS



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Reserve Land 174C was  
assigned to Fort McKay  
First Nation by the Federal  
Government as part of Treaty  
Land Entitlement for the  
exclusive purposes of oil sands  
development.

The terms of the new  
agreement grant Suncor  
permitted use of the North  
Block portion of Reserve  
Land 174C for the storage of  
overburden and reclamation  
materials from Suncor  
oil sands projects. In the  
meantime, Fort McKay First  
Nation and Suncor continue  
to explore other opportunities  
related to the South Block  
portion of Reserve Land 174C.

“At Fort McKay  
First Nation, we are  
proud of the strong  
relationships we’ve  
built with industry,  
rooted in trust and  
mutual respect,” said  
Raymond Powder,  
Chief of Fort McKay  
First Nation. “Thanks  
to those partnerships  
and our Nation’s  
commitment to hard  
work and innovation,  
we’ve built prosperity

and a positive quality of life for  
our members. With this new  
step, we’re pleased to deepen  
our partnership with Suncor  
— continuing our interest  
in responsible resource  
development that supports  
economic reconciliation,  
environmental stewardship,  
and building a brighter future  
for our community.”

The new agreement builds  
on the history of collaborative  
projects between Fort McKay  
and Suncor, including the  
previous MOU, the East Tank  
Farm project, and numerous  
other business partnerships  
involving the Fort McKay  
Group of Companies’ delivery  
of services that support various  
Suncor projects in Alberta.





## CHIEF AND COUNCIL NEWS

### Chief Powder Attends Fort McMurray Truth and Reconciliation Walk

Chief Powder was honoured to be invited to the Truth and Reconciliation Walk hosted by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). The walk symbolized strength, resilience, and the enduring spirit of Indigenous peoples. Chief Powder felt the healing and unity, and the importance of truth-telling and mutual respect on the path toward reconciliation. The legacy of residential schools, the pain endured by survivors, and the need for continued efforts to restore relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities should not be forgotten. The walk brought people together in reflection, remembrance, and hope for a future built on understanding and compassion. Chief Powder's participation emphasized the ongoing commitment to reconciliation and the shared responsibility to honour the truth while walking together toward healing and justice for all.



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## FORT MCKAY HEALTH CENTRE

### Clinic Dates:

Dr O'Connor -  
November 10th - 14th

Dr Taiwo -  
November 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

## 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.fortmckayfm.com](http://www.fortmckayfm.com)

# Nation2Nation Forum



Chief Powder joined Minister Rajan Sawney, the Government of Alberta's Minister of Indigenous Relations at the Nation2Nation Forum. The conference was held in Kitimat, BC, between October 21st and 23rd on the traditional, unceded territory of the Haisla Nation.

Chief Powder held meetings with provincial, business, industry, and First Nation leaders and attended the Nation2Nation Forum to build new relationships and seek further economic opportunities for Fort McKay First Nation.

The Nation2Nation Forum is an annual three-day event open to business, industry, government, contractors, and First Nations Leaders who are seeking to identify frameworks to help address priorities while working in partnership on resource development in First Nation territories.

## Wahkohtowin donates kit and equipment to our sports youth

The Wahkohtowin Sports Circle Foundation recently donated backpacks, sneakers, orange shirts, and goodies for our youth in our Elsie Fabian Ravens hockey academy. Hockey coach Shay Laurent was delighted, once again, with the support. "I want to acknowledge all the work they do in the Wood Buffalo region for Indigenous youth and their continued support for Fort McKay's youth."

The foundation was started by two brothers, Parker and Cruze Flett. Originally known as The Fort Mac Hockey Bros, they changed the name to Wahkohtowin (Cree for kinship, connection) to better reflect their philosophy.

The Foundation also donated \$3,800 in funds to the Nation for sports travel. Wahkohtowin Sports Circle Foundation aims to remove financial barriers and create inclusive opportunities for Indigenous youth to join organized sports. The foundation is dedicated to ensuring children can be part of a team, gain confidence, and experience the benefits of sport. By supporting youth participation, the organization encourages friendship-building, cultural awareness, and kindness through athletic activities.





# Elders Thanksgiving Lunch and Bingo

Thanksgiving lunch in the Elders centre was a very popular event. In addition to turkey with all the trimmings and plenty of desserts, there were lots of bingo prizes and Mat Cardinal on his guitar singing foot-stomping and handclapping songs. Thanks to the Elders centre staff for a great lunch and a great day.



# Elders Lunch trip to Montana's

The trip to Montana's has become a semi-annual event that everyone looks forward to, and for good reason. The Elders were transported into town where they enjoyed a great meal of steak and lobster, and, as the photos show, everyone who went seemed to have a good time. Thank you to the FMFN Elders Services team for arranging everything.





### Leanne Grandjambe, a star in the making

Congratulations to Fort McKay's Leanne Grandjambe who was a member of the Gold Medal-winning U15 BME Wood Buffalo Huskies who beat Spruce Grove Outlaws 6-0 to win the Rumble in the Jungle in early October. The pre-season tournament took place in Cold Lake and was hosted by the Lakeland Jaguars. The Fort Saskatchewan Fury were the fourth team in this invitation event.



### Mat Cardinal visits the Elders Centre

Fort McKay First Nation recently had a visit from Alberta singing star Mat Cardinal. Mat is a member of the Bigstone Cree Nation and is the lead singer/songwriter of the acclaimed country band The Prairie States. Hailing from Wabasca, Alberta, Mat's journey has been one of resilience and determination. Diagnosed with kidney disease at the age of ten, he underwent a life-saving kidney transplant, inspiring him to pursue his dreams and share his story of strength with others. These life-long health challenges have left Mat with many inspiring stories to tell, and he is on a mission to share his talents along with his story of strength and resilience to inspire youth to follow their dreams no matter what challenges or hardships they may face. Mat is a shining example that when you combine dedication, hard work and passion, you can achieve all of your goals and discover all sorts of new opportunities along the way.

A visit Mat made to Elsie Fabian school is featured on page 10. Mat also entertained the Elders at their Thanksgiving meal. Thanks for visiting, Mat.



## Erin Humphrey, Elsie Fabian School Teacher, honoured by the Prime Minister

Chief and Council are delighted to congratulate Elsie Fabian School Teacher Erin Humphrey for being recognized with the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

The official statement from the Office of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada quotes Chief Powder as follows: "Ms. Humphrey has proven to be an exceptional asset to the school. Her efforts contribute directly to the Fort McKay First Nation's efforts to preserve and transmit our traditional ways of life and holistic worldview to youth who must walk in two worlds."

The official statement of congratulations goes on to say that "Erin's dedication to decolonizing the Alberta curriculum has not only reshaped education at her school but honours the cultural traditions and histories of her students. She integrates them across every subject she teaches. The supportive and inclusive environment Erin has in her classroom creates a safe space for her students."

Erin's curriculum is tailored to the needs of the Fort McKay community by honouring Indigenous cultural knowledge and teachings. This pays respect to the students' culture, while also helping to preserve it. Erin places a strong emphasis on mental health and wellbeing by addressing the social and emotional needs of her students, ensuring they are not only academically successful, but spiritually resilient.

In the classroom, Erin has developed a land-based curriculum that connects students to cultural knowledge and teachings. She fosters a sense of pride in the Indigenous identities of her students and recognizes the unique needs and strengths of each student, creating a supportive and personalized learning environment. She also prioritizes community connection by developing trusting relationships with students and their families and takes proactive steps to include the Cree language in her teachings, including taking Cree lessons herself, to help preserve and revitalize the language.

Erin approaches challenges with empathy and patience, fostering skills like conflict resolution and emotional intelligence.

The statement also recognized Erin's work in redefining the Alberta curriculum by designing an innovative, land-based program that integrates Indigenous cultural teaching to reflect her students' heritage and to ensure they feel represented, establishing herself as a resource and leader in behavioural support, creating tools and systems for fellow teachers help foster a positive learning environment, and serving as a respected role model in the wider community by organizing extra-curricular activities and volunteering for local events. Congratulations, Erin.



### CFWE RADIO BINGO

#### Date

Mondays and Saturdays

#### Time

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

#### Location

Fort McKay Radio  
Canada



# ‘Dream of Stars’ by Frederick McDonald

Each month we are going to feature poetry by our Fort McKay members. If you would like to be featured in the Red River Current newsletter, just send your poems to us at **communications@fortmckay.com**. If you want to include any background to the poem, please send that along with your poems. This month, we are featuring ‘Dream of Stars’ another wonderful poem by Frederick McDonald. Here are a few words from Fred about the poem.

“For me, one of the things that makes it so nice to write poetry, is the idea that I get to stretch my mind! I get to think of issues and see where thoughts will take me. Sometimes a line comes to me and I get an idea for a poem and sometimes I have an idea happens and that leads to a poem. There’s a nice duality in that. So I hope this one teases your brain a little - take care and be safe out there!”

## Dream of Stars

I never thought that to dream of stars  
would lead to having the ability to coalesce with them  
a worldly endeavour, of course, life culminating with  
time spent between today and infinity

I witnessed a birch planted 40 years ago at my favourite  
golf course, remembering that day well, the sun was shining  
I’m sure I’m not the only one, but that tree holds me  
like I hold it, two old friends, always time to say hello

I know the race to the moon meant everything, for some  
it meant the world would be a better place, that the  
ideas of man would prevail over darkness, but it’s the light  
that carries us towards the edge of inevitability

I crossed the Rubicon today, just to see what would happen  
getting my feet a little wet, but thinking the world is drying up  
having done the deed, I sat on its bank till night fell  
watching stars come out one at a time, so many new beginnings

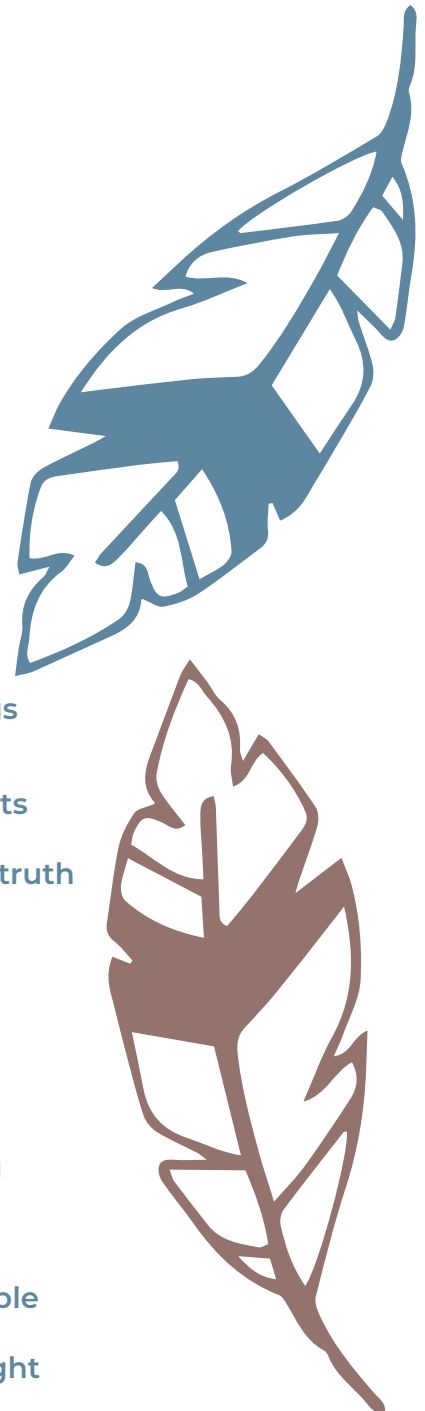
I stood near the center of the world, hearing inconceivable  
notions of restitution and reconciliation, my Indigenous thoughts  
resonating, unsure at having recognized that these were  
undistinguished atomic connections of humanity dying for the truth

I stared at the light of the new moon, always scary thinking  
about that invisible umbilical cord holding onto earth  
holding the face of creation, holding onto the Creator’s touch  
while a bolt of lightning pierces the soul of benevolence

I heard it said that we breathe the same air Jesus breathed  
there’s something magical in that, something preordained  
knowing that there are possibilities, yet not fully understanding  
the delicate migration of Monarch butterflies, a deadly balance

I never thought that touching any star was ever conceivable  
or wondered if winged Monarchs think what they do is impossible  
but like Caesar crossing that river tempting fate, I’m beginning  
to realize that eternity is but a tree held gently by the moon’s light

06.2023 & 10.2025....





# Moose call making at the Elders Centre

Thanks to Trevor Snook for coming out to help community members learn how to make a birch bark moose call. This traditional skill garnered a small but enthusiastic group in the Elders centre, and it is good that this skill is being passed on.

A moose call is used to attract moose during the hunt. Blowing air through the call makes a sound like a moose. Birchbark moose calls are so effective that they continue to be made and sold for use by moose hunters today.



# Playtime in the Band Hall with The Hub

Fort McKay children recently took part in an art and sensory play program with The Hub. Looks like everyone was having lots of fun!





# Junior Chief & Council Election at EFS!

We are thrilled to announce the results of the Junior Chief and Council (C&C) election held on October 1st! Our students showed incredible leadership, confidence, and school spirit as they campaigned for the positions of Chief, Vice Chief, and six Councillor roles. We couldn't be prouder of everyone who participated in this exciting, student-led election.

The newly elected Junior Chief and Council will meet every Monday to share ideas, plan activities, and bring fresh perspectives and fun initiatives to our school community. They are also looking forward to meeting with Fort McKay First Nation Chief and Council to discuss important school initiatives, plans for the 2025–26 school year, and the importance of youth leadership in our community.

Congratulations to our Junior Chief and Council! We're excited to see your ideas come to life and to a year full of leadership, teamwork, and positive school culture.



# Music Week with Mat Cardinal at EFS!

We were honoured to welcome Mat Cardinal back to Elsie Fabian School this year to teach our students in the music class. Throughout the week, Mat worked with students on learning to play the guitar, sharing his incredible talent, knowledge, and passion for music.

The week wrapped up with a special concert, where students and community members were treated to a private performance by Mat Cardinal. It was a wonderful celebration of music, culture, and creativity. Thank you, Mat, for inspiring our students!





# Land-Based Learning – October Activities

This month, our students participated in a memorable land-based learning trip to Maqua Lake, where they explored the importance of connecting with nature and traditional practices. During our visit, students took part in a nature walk, enjoyed storytelling about the loons, learned about rabbit snaring, and experienced canoeing alongside their peers from Division 2 and Division 3.

We were also fortunate to harvest a beaver and a moose, allowing students to take part in hands-on cultural learning. With the help of community members, we were able to share moose meat with students, families, and staff. Students had a great time learning how to make dry meat while practicing knife safety and proper handling skills.

This experience was not only educational but deeply meaningful, helping students build connections to the land, community, and traditional knowledge. We look forward to more learning adventures ahead!



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Day	Date	Event	Details
Sun	Nov 2	Holy Mass - First Sunday of each Month. 4pm in the Church.	Contact 780-791-4305.
Every Mon	Nov 3 to Nov 24	EFS Gymnasium/Track Hours, M-F, 5:30-8:30pm.	Contact Number, 780-215-5359.
Every Mon	Nov 3 to Nov 24	Fitness Centre: Fall Hours M-F 8:30am-10pm, S-S 10am-6pm.	Contact Number, 780-828-2437.
Every Mon & Wed	Nov 3 to Nov 26	Health Centre: Influenza and Covid-19 vaccinations.	Book an appointment at 780-828-4229.
Every Tues	Nov 4 to Nov 25	Dene Online Classes, 6-7:30pm, instructor Janette-Flett-Jones	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com.
Tues	Nov 4	Family Support Open House 10am-4pm, Lunch provided.	Come and have a look at the services we offer.
Every Wed	Nov 5 to Nov 26	Cree Online Classes, 6-7:30pm, instructor Edith Orr.	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com.
Wed	Nov 5	MacEwan University Information Session 5pm. Elsie Fabian School Gym.	Call 780-497-5382.
Wed	Nov 5	'Eating well on a budget' 5:30-6:30pm in the Band Hall.	Contact Number, 780-714-7094.
Thurs	Nov 6	Adult Beading Class at EFS, 5.30-7pm.	Contact Number, 780-714-7094.
Thurs	Nov 6	Beading Class, Remembrance Pins, 1-3pm and 5-7pm.	Contact Anna, 780-215-8507.
Sat	Nov 8	Community Volleyball Camp at EFS, Noon-2pm Ages 10-13. 2-4pm 14+.	Keyano coaches and players, call 780-715-7094.
Mon	Nov 10	Basic First Aid Training Course. 9am-4:30pm. Band Hall.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Wed	Nov 12	Rock your Mocs week, see our Facebook page for more details.	Email pictures to Jenica at jenica.boucher@Fortmckay.com.
Fri	Nov 14	Flag Football, Women - at MacDonald Island, 6-7pm	Contact Number, 780-714-7094.
Mon	Nov 17	National Addictions Awareness Week.	Watch our Facebook page for more details.
Mon	Nov 17	10.30-11:30am Gross motor activities for ages 0-6, with The Hub.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Wed	Nov 19	Wellness Fair in the Band Hall, details to follow.	Booths, information and Help. Guest Speaker and lunch.
Fri	Nov 21	Disney on Ice Trip and Polar Express for Junior Leaders 10+	Contact Julia for details. 780-838-1812.
Mon	Nov 24	1-2pm Messy play for ages 0-6 with The Hub.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.