

Eeyou Eenou

NEWSLETTER

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE) / CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

「「「プロン・トー」 MAY 2024

ISSUE 2

In this issue:

CASEY POLSON

Interview with Patrol Officer Casey Polson from the Cree Nation of Waswanipi



Eeyou Eenou Newsletter

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What's in this

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Event Highlights

Learn more about the Climate Change Forum, UNPFI and the Eeyou Istchee Research Institute Session that were held last month/

Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper

Learn about the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers and their message to everyone who will be heading out on the land during this goose break and summer months.

05

Goose Break Message

First Snowshow Walk

Goose break has finally arrived! On behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees/ Cree Nation Government we wish you a happy and safe goose break.

Protecting your Camp this Summer

With warmer weather comes an increase risk of forest fires in Eeyou Istchee. Learn how you can prepare and take precautions that reduce risk to your camp during the fire season.

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06

Nelson Wapachee from Nemaska, Eeyou Istchee shared with us his perspective on the First Snowshoe walk and the importance of this rite of passage.

Youth Profile: Casey Polson

This newsletter features Casey Polson, a 22 year patrol officer working for the Eeyou Eenou Police Force in Chisasibi. Learn more about his career and what it means to him to work to keep our communities safe.

COVER:

Thank you to Raymond Jolly for providing the image for this issue's cover

WRITER AND INTERVIEWS

Jamie Pashagumskum

EDITOR

Joanne Ottereyes

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Brendan Forward

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS MONTHS ISSUE:

Casey Polson Eeyou Eenou Police Force

Olivier Komel Manager of Climate Change

Sarah Mudrosky Communications Officer, Environment and Remedial Works

Please send feedback to:

Cree Nation Government 2 Lakeshore Road Nemaska, Quebec JOY 3B0 communications@cngov.ca

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LATEST ISSUES



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PAST AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Climate Change Forum

The 2024 Cree Regional Climate Forum (CRCF24), hosted by the Cree Nation Government's Climate Change Unit, was held in Ouje-Bougoumou from April 9 to 11, 2024, and brought together over 150 stakeholders from ten Cree First Nations, external partners and guests including academics, federal and provincial government representatives.

The key themes of community engagement, adaptation planning, and climate leadership dominated discussions, yielding tangible results such as a forthcoming climate declaration for the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), a call for a permanent regional advisory committee, and invaluable information for developing a regional climate adaptation plan. The program started with a panel on forest fires, and quickly moved into action through adaptation workshops.

The event also included a tour of the upcoming Ouje-Bougoumou Eco-Center, the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, and an evening talent show. Inspired by Cree culture, the CRCF24 three-day climate action event emphasized resilience and collaboration in the face of climate change. All presentations and recordings are available on the Cree Nation Government's website, allowing for greater access to essential information.

Thank you to all participants, panelists, and volunteers, particularly keynote speakers Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee, and Chief Gaston Cooper, for their contributions to this important discussion.

Congratulations to the talent show winners Josée Berner, Walter Jolly, and Hunter Anjo-Le, as well as Ouje-Bougoumou's Deputy Chief Angel Louisa Mianscum, who won the solar kit lottery prize (courtesy of the Cree Trappers' Association).







L Δ"DNPσ·Δι EVENTS

Forum on the Creation of a Cree Nation Research Institute

Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee and the Cree Nation Research Institute Working Group hosted a forum March 19-20, 2024 at the Aanishchaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute in Ouje-Bougoumou with other Cree community representatives to discuss the creation of the Cree Nation Research Institute.





The Cree Nation Research Institute (CNRI) project was conceived as a tool for self-determination to help us make better informed decisions on development projects in Eeyou Istchee. Where historically, research in Eeyou territory was conducted by forces outside of Eeyou Istchee without Cree consent, the CNRI will help to reappropriate the management of research and development strategies with the benefits of Eeyouch in mind while addressing the concerns and needs of Cree communities and Cree organizations.

The CNRI working group was created by Deputy Grand Chief Norman A. Wapachee to plan the creation of the institute and consists of Cree Nation Government directors and one Cree Health Board representative. As part of its functions, the working group is to consult with communities to define the institute's core objectives and mandates.

The CNRI forum provided a unique opportunity to assemble representatives from Cree communities and organizations to collectively plan the next steps towards the establishment of the Institute.

For more information about the creation to the Cree Nation Research Institute, contact CNRI Project Coordinator Vincent Gautier-Doucet (v.gautier-doucet@cngov.ca).















Reclaiming Indigenous Rights at the UN



The twenty-third session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues took place from April 15-26, 2024 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City and representatives of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) attended part of the session.

The theme of the session was "Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth."

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) hosted a side-event at the forum entitled "Paving the Way for Future Generations: Reclaiming Indigenous Rights and Collaborating with State Governments for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Relations."

The panelists included Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, Grand Chief Constant Awashish from the Council of the Atikamekw Nation, Grand Chief Savanna McGregor from the Algonquin-Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council, and Regional Chief Ghislain Picard from the Assembly of First Nation Quebec-Labrador. The discussion was moderated by Donald Nicholls, our Director of Justice (International Relations).

The topics of discussion tapped into the Grand Chiefs' knowledge and experience covering important themes on Indigenous rights, collaboration, enhanced participation, climate change in a sustainable development while discussing best ways forward for future generations.

"The freedom and strength we have as Nations is in our collaboration. It is important we share the stage and speak about our Nations with different governing systems and know that we have a common approach in what we are seeking, protection of our identity, land and language. Although we come from different histories and different approaches, we are united in the position that we take. That is really the key message for all nations across Canada."

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty



Commenting on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' recognition of the importance on Indigenous Self-Determination, Ghislain Picard of the AFN said "sustainable development is conditioned by sustainable relations," in reference to Indigenous relations with the province of Quebec.

Picard said even in the face of opposition by Quebec, calling them "totally off-track" referring to the province's opposition to Bill C-92 on Indigenous child and family services, he is hopeful for the future as he sees the younger generation stepping up, determined and asserting their rights for the future of their nations.

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty stressed the importance of a Nation's ability to freely determine its future and referenced the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement and how the Crees were forced into an agreement and how we used our influence, enhancing and amending the agreement to our advantage.

She sees the way forward is now in partnership with other strong nations across the country.

About the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFI)

The Forum was established on 28 July 2000 by resolution 2000/22, with the mandate to deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

This is the marks the twenty-third session, hosting seven different dialogues recognizing indigenous perspectives and issues from diverse regions of the world. You can learn more about the session at: https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/unpfii/23rd-session







"We are now reclaiming our place and our voice and working in partnership and collaboration with governments to uphold their responsibilities to affirm, promote and implement the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to take action to address issues affecting us. Together, we can build a better world for future generations with stronger and healthier communities and sustainable development that protects our collective relationship with our planet."

Regional Chief Ghislain Picard



UPCOMING **EVENTS**

Stay connected through www.cngov.ca



BOARD COUNCIL NEMASKA

MAY 29-30, 2024

Meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Nemaska, Eeyou Istchee.



EEYOU ISTCHEE SUMMER GAMES

JULY 14-21, 2024

Meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Chibougamau, Quebec. You can join us online through our Vimeo stream, or listen online through the James Bay Cree Communication Society.

https://www.creegames.ca/



PLACEHOLDER

APRIL 9 -11, 2024

The Environment and Remedial Works Department is excited to host participants in Ouje-Bougoumou for three days of Cree climate action!

With diverse participation from land users, Youth, Elders, community representatives, local organizations and government entities, discussions between the 150 expected participants are sure to be empowering and productive.

Learn more: Cree Regional Climate Forum 2024 | Cree Nation Government (cngov.ca)

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CULTURE

2024 GOOSE BREAK MESSAGE

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Spring is in the air, and like the flocks of geese returning home, Goose Break is upon us. Our annual spring goose hunting season is fast approaching and people across Eeyou Istchee are preparing for this Eeyou Eenou tradition.

As we gather for the goose hunt this year, we would also like to acknowledge all the Cree land users who were affected by the recent forest fires of the summer of 2023. These fires not only affected the land and wildlife, but also our cultural activities. Let us be mindful that many of us will have a clean-up to do, some repairs and for some, to rebuild what has been lost.

Although it may seem like a daunting task, we will rebuild but what will forever remain strong is our identity, culture and language and our connection to the land which is the source of our survival and cultural practices. The spring goose hunt is our time-honored tradition and provides us with a chance to reconnect with the land and with our family and friends.

Goose Break not only marks the beginning of spring but the reawakening of Eeyou Istchee. May it provide an opportunity for families and community members to come together and all share in the harvest.

The Cree Nation Government wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable Goose Break.



03

GOVERNANCE

CABIN FIRE SAFETY AND PREPARING FOR THE FOREST FIRE SEASON

Lee-Roy Blacksmith, Fire Marshal and George Cox, Fire Prevention Administrator



Spring is here and as people are getting ready to go back to their camps, there are some things to know ahead of time in preparation for the upcoming summer and fire season.

The first thing people need to know is that this year's fire season forecast is not positive and we are calling for everyone to be prepared. What we all need to ask ourselves is: 'Are we ready? Have we taken all the necessary precautions? What have we learned from last year?'

Last summer was one of the worst fire seasons on record which saw many of our communities evacuated due to smoke. Evacuations started with the elderly, babies and patients but quickly escalated. The air quality meters installed in each community were of great help to indicate to Cree Board of Health officials when air levels are unsafe so they can recommend people to stay indoors.

As the fires raged throughout the Cree Nation, an emergency request came from the Grand Chief's Office for Cree firefighters to join forces with SOPFEU Quebec in battling the blazes. Unfortunately, this was not immediately possible as Cree firefighters did not possess the same training required to work alongside SOPFEU firefighters. Immediate training efforts were undertaken and Crees received the proper training by SOPFEU personnel. Additional firefighting equipment was also purchased with the help of federal funds to make each community forest fire ready.

As Eeyouch, there are steps we can take to get our camps

As Eeyouch, there are steps we can take to get our camps fire safety ready. Simple steps like clearing all dead wood and other possible fire fuel around your camp can go a long way in preventing forest fire damage. Clearing trees around your camp is also a good idea, cutting off ways fire can travel. It is not necessary to cut down all the trees around your cabin but reducing the density can protect your cabin from 'radial heat' which comes from the combination of a group of trees burning and damaging your cabin by causing extreme heat.

We should also be aware of possible nearby water sources in case of emergency like a river, stream or lake. People can purchase a small water pump for around \$500 and a hose to keep at the camp for emergencies. If there is no close water source a 45-gallon drum or 1000-gallon container can be used to collect rainwater.

Inside the cabin there should always be an accessible second exit and working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are suggested.

More SOPFEU community training will begin in June with the goal of having 25 trained individuals in each community and the communities that received training last year will receive refresher courses.

One way we can all become fire safe is through the online FireSmart program. Developed by Alberta and Quebec forest firefighters, FireSmart is a free one-hour course that can be taken by anyone who would like to receive the certification.

We would like to wish everyone in the Cree Nation a safe summer and remind them to keep open fires small, while respecting guidelines and fire warnings and always keep a bucket of water on hand to put out bonfires.





GOVERNANCE

Message from the Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers



The Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers are Cree land protectors and experts who work alongside Cree tallymen and Quebec wildlife protection officers to manage and monitor protected areas of Eeyou Istchee honouring long-term sustainability while drawing on Cree traditional knowledge.

The Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper program is under the Environment and Remedial Works Department of the Cree Nation Government.

Benoit Longchap is the Coordinator of Operations for the Eeyou Istchee Land Keeper Program and William Loon is the Wildlife Protection Assistant. Having recently attended the Cree Regional Climate Forum in Ouje-Bougoumou this April, one of the topics of discussion were ice conditions with Elders preaching caution to all those venturing on the ice this Goose Break. The feeling is thick ice is melting faster and proper precautions should be taken.

With the recent forest fire disasters of this past summer, many people will understandably be undertaking clean up and repair projects on their bush camps. We urge people to collect and keep access wood and scrap lumber for burning in the fall. as is customary after the dry forest fire season. Burning of garbage is also not recommended and it is best to take as much of it back to town for proper disposal.

Part of a Land Keeper's job is not only protecting Eeyou Istchee but also the animals that call it home. Keeping our camps clean is one way we can protect animals like small game from coming into contact with harmful substances. There have been instances in the past where discarded jerry can fuel containers, unproperly stored 45-gallon drums and even old rotten freezers were deserted leaving opportunities for contamination. We ask that everyone respects the environment and properly store their equipment such as generators and snowmobiles and leave camps as clean as possible.

As in previous years, we would also like to stress the importance of using steel shot over lead. Steel shot is better for everyone as lead is toxic.

In closing, we would like to wish everyone a safe Goose Break. Practice good gun safety, always double check if there is a round in your gun and follow the instruction of the paaschichaauchimaau.



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GOVERNANCE STRATEGIC ENHANCEMENT OF THE EEYOU EENOU ECONOMY

Anthony Macleod, Director of Commerce and Industry presented to members of Board Council the 2024 year of Strategic Enhancement of the Eeyou Eenou Economy in partnership with the Chairperson of the Cree School Board, Dr. Sarah Pash and Chairperson of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services Bertie Wapachee



Since time immemorial we have been in control of our own destinies, but that power was interrupted through colonization when we, like all First Nations across Canada, were excluded from being full and active participants in the economy.

The Cree Nation Government (CNG), the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) and the Cree School Board are calling on all entities in Eeyou Istchee to join in a collaborated union to strengthen the Cree Nation by promoting strategic economic development in Eeyou Istchee.

The CNG, CBHSSJB and CSB are again combining forces by declaring 2024 as the Year of Strategic Enhancement of the Eeyou Eenou Economy.

A resolution affirming these efforts was passed at a Cree Nation Government Board Council meeting in January.

As stewards of this land, the resolution affirms it is paramount that we be strong active participants in all aspects of economic development on our traditional lands as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Cree decision-making in all commercial activities in our land is required if we are to preserve and enhance the resilience of our language and Cree way of life.

Since time immemorial we have been in control of our own

destinies, but that power was interrupted through colonization when we, like all First Nations across Canada, were excluded from being full and active participants in the economy. This was due to laws and policies designed to assimilate First Nation peoples and erode our territories.

Social determinants like education, revenue and employment levels can account for between 30-55% of health challenges meaning that individuals with limited income are more likely to experience difficulties such as a higher prevalence of acute and chronic diseases and mental health issues.

Strategic efforts with all the entities of Eeyou Istchee will be combined to address the maximization of Cree spending authority, emerging Cree markets, enhancing Cree supply chains and other aspects of a strong resilient Cree economy.

Keep an eye out this year for further information and news of upcoming events and activities related to the Year of Strategic Enhancement of the Eeyou Eenou Economy.

"The strength of the Cree economy lies not just in the richness of our natural resources, but in the wisdom to balance sustainable development with cultural integrity, creating a resilient and harmonious prosperity for generations to come."

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty

MAP OF IDEAS



EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Sectoral Opportunities
Cree Owned Infrastructure
Real-estate and market housing
Economic Prioritization of Cree
Businesses



ENTREPRENEURSHIP PRIVATE SECTOR

Program Improvements
Local Equity Funds
Training and Mentorship
Professional Strategic Partnerships with
CSB and CHBSSJB



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mining critical and strategic minerals
Forestry & Non-commercial products
Renewable Energy
Eco-Cultural Tourism



SOCIAL ECONOMY

Education, promotion and assistance
Platform for governance
Community markets
Circular Economy
Partnering with not-for-profits
Special interest groups: women, elders, land-users



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Business Scholarships
Youth Entrepreneurial Case-Study
International Cultural Forum
Exchange/C2MTL
Buy-Eeyou Istchee Campaign



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Community Economic Plans
Working with Economic
Development Departments
Buy-Local Campaigns
Promotion of Local Cree Business

"As the organization responsible for the health and wellbeing in Eeyou Istchee, we are looking forward to bring our knowledge and expertise to the work ahead for the upcoming year aiming to enhance the Eeyou Eenou economy. With our teams and partners, we are committed to working towards the same goals so that individuals, families and communities achieve Miyupimaatisiiun, reflective of Nishiiyuu."

Bertie Wapachee, Chairperson Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay "The Cree School Board's role in capacity development, through education and training, is key to the future of our young people, our communities, and our nation. We strive to develop knowledge and skills that will enable students to benefit from economic development initiatives within our communities and to manage their own economic future. We also work to empower students with knowledge of our traditional economy and the strength of our economic history as a Nation, while ensuring that they are able to make decisions about future economic development from an Eeyou perspective and based in Eeyou Values."

Dr. Sarah Pashagumskum, Chairperson Cree School Board



CREE NATION GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR CREE BUSINESS STARTUPS



Gilles Matoush, Business Services Officer

Gilles out of the department's head office in Mistissini. He says the three main funding programs offered are the CSERT (Cree Social Economy Round Table) for non-profits, the RDF (Regional Development Fund) for regional projects and, the most popular, Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF), funding Cree businesses.

The Department of Commerce and Industry is supporting Cree entrepreneurs starting up new businesses and helping them grow contributing to build stronger local and regional economies.

Funding Overview

The CEAF is a grant awarded to Cree businesses and covers 25% of a project up to \$100,000.

Program funds are non-transferable and must go towards costs for equipment purchases, expansion, business acquisition or business start-ups including start up inventory.

Funds can also be used to pay consultants if needed but some requirements do come with the money.

The Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund (CEAF) is intended to help and assist Cree entrepreneurs to start up, diversify and contribute to the economic growth of Eeyou Istchee.

First of all, those applying must be willing to prove with documents a 10% personal contribution to the business plan. Proof, for example, could be a bank statement or written approval of a loan.

But before any of that the department suggests taking certain necessary steps to get the business rolling.

To start, potential entrepreneurs interested in starting a business should first see the economic development officer (EDO) in their community.

The first key element is getting a band resolution. The EDO can help with the letter of intent to start the business which would then be submitted to the economic development review board. If approved, the board would then pass the recommendation to the chief and council who can grant the potential business a resolution.

Development officers can help find and suggest consultants who can aid in the development of a business plan.

Gilles recommends also checking with local bands as some may cover business plan costs.

"Once you have your business plan that is when you can start knocking on doors for funding."

When applying for funding under Commerce and Industry, the department prefers applicants are prepared to bring all documentation for funding including loan approvals, quotations on any planned purchases, and proof of equity. Once the application is complete and all the necessary documents have been reviewed, the project proposal is sent to a review board who will, based on the recommendation of the department, potentially approve the application.

The successful applicants would then sign a funding agreement stating amounts and dates of payments and the grant funds would be released to the business.

If it happens that a business proposal is not approved, the applicants are sent a letter from the director explaining why. The department makes suggestions to the applicant to make their proposal more appealing and successful and welcomes them to submit their request again once the issues have been resolved.

"We hope to see the application again and welcome them to re-apply."



APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT RELAUNCHES THEIR WEBSITE



www.apatisiiwin.ca is the best online location to find tools and information specifically designed to help the people of Eeyou Istchee increase their employability and advance their careers. You will find detailed information on our programs and services, contact information for our employment counselors, and the largest Job Board in the entire territory.

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Programs

ASD offers programs that cater to the needs of employers, employees, and those who are just entering the workforce. From funding for science and technology engagement programs to career advancement training and support for entrepreneurs starting their own businesses, you can find all the detailed information and requirements on ASD's site. Simply use the menu at the top of the website to browse all of the many programs offered. You will be able to download all relevant forms and documents and contact our knowledgeable staff, who will help guide you through the application process.



Services

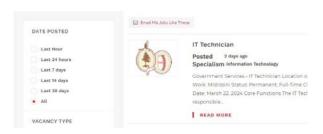
With offices in each of the ten communities, ASD offers employment counseling services to everyone looking to find meaningful and sustainable employment. Employment counselors have an excellent understanding of the opportunities available in your community because they are also a part of those communities. ASD staff is always ready to help you customize a personal career plan, offer inhouse seminars and workshops, and get you in touch with the local and territorial employers looking to recruit from the amazing pool of talented community members. You will also likely meet ASD counselors at local job fairs and trade shows or host training sessions with different community organizations.



Job Board

If you want new or better employment opportunities, look no further than ASD's online Job Board! Click "Find a Job" from the home page in the main menu and see how many positions that are available for motivated and talented job seekers. You can find it all here, from cooks to coordinators and directors to drivers. We have listings for those looking for part-time jobs or full-time careers, and listings for every level of skill and education. Use the filters on the left-hand side to search by community, vacancy type, education level, and more!







GOVERNANCE

BILL C-92 regarding jurisdiction over child welfare for Indigenous Peoples

The Canadian Supreme Court's recent decision is upholding the force of Bill C-92, reaffirming the law does function within the rules of the Canadian Constitution.



Bill C-92, An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Children, Youth and Families, came into effect January 1, 2020. It was enacted by Parliament to address the mass overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child welfare systems across the country and to establish national standards regarding Indigenous child and family services.

The Cree Nation Government was pleased with this decision as it affirms what we have always known as a nation, that we are most qualified to care for our own children by delivering culturally appropriate child and family services.

The Act is also in line with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and directly addresses one of the main calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Call to action 1 on Child Welfare states: "1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by: ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside."

This is a step towards advancing reconciliation with non-Indigenous peoples in Canada by recognizing that keeping Indigenous children with their Indigenous families and culture is essential to our self-government and the recognition of our distinctiveness.

This judgement is a victory not only for our children in care in the Cree Nation but for Indigenous children and families across the country giving force of law to Indigenous laws. It reaffirms Indigenous jurisdiction over our rights and future as a nation and validates our initiative to develop a distinctively Cree youth protection system adapted to our values, culture and realities and based on our treaty rights under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Although the province of Quebec agreed with the fact that the improvements would lead to greater autonomy for Indigenous peoples in the province, it did not agree with the federal government unilaterally imposing the law on them, arguing all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada that Bill C-92 was unconstitutional.

The ruling recognized the constitutionality of the Act as an inherent right to self-government over child and family services, under section 35 of the Constitution. It may validly affirm that any laws we chose to enact will take precedence over laws currently in place by the government of Canada or the province of Quebec.





PEOPLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATOR OF EEYOU ISTCHEE LIFESTYLE

Raymond Jolly



In line with this year's theme of Strategic Enhancement of the Eeyou Eenou Economy, we will be featuring inspirational entrepreneurs and offering insight into successful businesses in the nation. We recently spoke with Cree entrepreneur Raymond Jolly to discuss his clothing retail business, Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle.

Not only is he a businessman, but Raymond is also his community representative on the Board Council of the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government. He is 24 years old from the community of Waskaganish.

Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle is a clothing brand business Raymond started on May 24, 2021. He owns a retail shop in Waskaganish but also provides 'pop-up shops' in communities and has a website for online orders.



What prompted you to start Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle?

I always wanted to start a business, but I wasn't sure what. I wanted to do something I was passionate about. Something I loved. I came up with an idea about embracing who we are as an Indigenous people. That is what my brand is about. Being proud of who we are and we try to showcase that through clothing and social media.

PEOPLE ΔΑΑΔ









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How did the business get started?

I invested around \$5,000 just for inventory and a laptop and I kept re-investing the revenue created back into buying more inventory and it just grew from there.

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Did you have help?

I had friends and family that volunteered modeling, picking up inventory, driving inventory to places and they also helped with the pop-up shops.

04

Were you provided any grants?

In the beginning, no. But I did get a \$10,000 grant from the band and I actually won \$10,000 at a business event. So all of that went into my business.

I also get assistance from Apatisiiwin Skills Development that allows me to work on my business full-time and it helps pay the salary of one employee.

Raymond works with Cree models, and photographers from across Eeyou Istchee to build his distinct brand. Eeyou Istchee lifestyle offers clothing that reflects pride in the Cree way of life and empowerment.

-Photo Credit: Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle





Do something they love or are passionate about. It's important because it forces you to be further motivated and persistent.

05

You have been in business almost three years now, how is it going?

Right now, we are in the process of moving the store to a new spot because we have outgrown our current retail space. It will still be at the same location, at the Waskaganish mini mall, but in a larger unit that we are busy renovating.



What would you say to other perspective youth entrepreneurs in Eeyou Istchee?

My advice to youth wanting to start a business is to do something they love or are passionate about. It's important because it forces you to be further motivated and persistent.

You will have extra knowledge and expertise and you will love what you do even more.



Learning More About Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle

At the time of this interview, Raymond's next pop-up shop destination was Chisasibi for the Annual Senior Hockey and Broomball tournament.

Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle shops have so far been to the communities of Chisasibi, Wemindji, Nemaska and Mistissini.

Congratulations to Raymond on his successful business venture and be sure to watch out in the near future for an Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle pop-up shop coming to your community.





EEYOU EENOU

NEXT ISSUE: MAY 2024



י בְּׁסְעְּׁלְבְּׁלְּיִ בְּׁיִרְוֹיִם בְּּׁלְבְּׁלִי לְּיִרְ בְּׁבְּׁלְבִּׁלְיִי לְיִרְ בְּּׁבְּׁלְבִּּלִי לְיִרְ בְּּׁבְּּׁלִם לְּיִר לְּיִבְּלִי לְיִרְ בְּּּׁבְּּׁלִם לְּיִר לְּיִבְּלִי לְיִרְ בְּּבְּּּׁלִם (בְּּיִלְם וֹאַבּרָהָים)

Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

∆בי וואיירול Cree Nation Government Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

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