



PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating the Success of Aboriginal Business 22nd Annual NADF Business Awards

THUNDER BAY, ON: On Wednesday, October 24, 2012, Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) hosted the 22nd Annual NADF Business Award, Canada's longest running Aboriginal business awards program, to celebrate Aboriginal business in northern Ontario. Eight award recipients were recognized for their achievements and contributions to local and regional economies at a gala dinner at Thunder Bay's Valhalla Inn. The event was attended by [INSERT], including First Nation and government leaders, dignitaries, partners, clients, students and and the general public.

Colleen Martin, NADF General Manager, "Aboriginal small business plays a vital role in generating employment in communities across northern Ontario, particularly in First Nations. I hope sharing the success of the individuals we have honored this evening inspires other entrepreneurs to follow their dreams."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief, Harvey Yesno, "On behalf of the 49 Chiefs and Councils of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, it is my honour to congratulate all of the 2012 NADF Business Awards recipients. This evening's award recipients are a testimony to the hard-work and effort of First Nations and individuals to participate in the economy of Northern Ontario. I encourage all members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation to assess and develop the business opportunities in their home communities, and the region. As the northern Ontario economy improves, so will the economies of First Nations, families and individuals if we begin to prepare for the challenge of entering the market place now.'

Celebrating its 22nd year, this non-profit event, also serves as a fundraiser for the Dennis Franklin Cromarty Memorial Fund: a bursary fund for post-secondary students seeking academic achievement, and the NADF Sponsorship Fund: a fund established by NADF to respond to sponsorship and donation requests, and provide humanitarian assistance to aid in disaster and crisis relief.

AWARD CATEGORIES

*Youth Entrepreneur of the Year
Businesswoman of the Year
Businessman of the Year
Building Communities*

*Corporation of the Year
Executive of the Year
Partnership of the Year
New Business of the Year*

AWARD WINNERS

BUSINESSMAN OF THE YEAR

Award Sponsored By  **RBC Royal Bank®**
Partner of the Awards

Michael Fox

Fox High Impact Consulting

Mr. Michael Fox is owner of Fox High Impact Consulting, a sole proprietorship specializing in Aboriginal process, participation, and partnerships. Michael's vision is for Aboriginal communities to become effective partners and proponents in the resource-based sectors in Canada.

Mr. Fox, a band member of Weenusk First Nation, is highly educated and professionally certified. He obtained a post-secondary education in business administration and an honours degree in political science primarily focusing on natural resource development in Ontario and Aboriginal law. Michael also earned a professional designation from the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) as an Aboriginal Economic Developer and he is an Adjunct Professor for Queen's University's Graduate Certificate in Community Relations for the Extractive Industry. Michael is well read and ever increasing his knowledge of activity within this sector.

Mr. Fox has held a variety of volunteer positions in resource development associations. Currently, he is President of the Boreal Prospectors Association and serves as a board member for the Ontario Waterpower Association, the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, and is a member of the Ministers' Mining Act Advisory Council in Ontario. Most notably, he has been actively involved in the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada both as a board member and as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Affairs Committee and member of the Corporate Social Responsibility and Lands & Regulations committees. Mr. Fox has also delivered presentations at a number of conferences, trade shows, roundtables and government lobby missions to highlight the Aboriginal economic opportunities in the resource development sectors.

Michael Fox is proud to have established Fox High Impact Consulting roots within his Nishnawbe Aski Nation homelands.

EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

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Let the Bear take you there!
Major Sponsor

Stan Kapashesit

Executive Director, Wakenagun Community Futures Development Corporation

Stan is a proud member of Moose Cree First Nation. He began his journey with Wakenagun CFDC as an Investment Officer then as a member of the Board of Directors for 2 years before becoming the Executive Director 5 years ago. For almost 10 years. He has dedicated his professional career to Wakenagun CFDC.

Wakenagun CFDC is mandated to provide investment, business support and community strategic planning services to its eligible First Nations and their members. Stan's role is to work cooperatively with various community groups, not-for-profit organizations and regional events to foster community growth and development. He has lead several initiatives within Wakenagun to provide support to the staff and Board to foster development for the organization overall. Many of these initiatives have required securing funding in order to create and maintain positive changes for the organization and its services. Since becoming Executive Director in 2007, Stan has played a key role in realizing approvals for over 1.4 million dollars in business and developmental lending in the James Bay region. This investment has created jobs in the area and provided economic stimulation and growth for the region.

Outside of his workplace, he volunteers at many events and organizations within the communities of Moose Factory and Moosonee. He is involved in minor hockey as a trainer and also assists in their fundraising initiatives. He is also the President of Wasiabin Entertainment Group, a not-for-profit organization that focuses primarily on music support for the youth.

Mr. Stan Kapashesit's actions exemplify his belief that economic and business development is the way to increased quality of life and a brighter future for Aboriginal communities and people.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Webequie First Nation

Webequie is a growing Ojibway community located on the northern peninsula of Eastwood Island on Winisk Lake, 540 km north of the city of Thunder Bay. The 600+ community members originate from all over northwestern Ontario, and enjoy a life that embraces traditional cultural practices.

The leadership of Webequie together with staff and community members has been taking a proactive approach to economic and business development in recent years. Systems are being developed to track band member demographics, by age, education and other key parameters, to assist in developing a skilled labour force able to capitalize on current and future employment opportunities. Development of physical infrastructure has been hampered by an aging, inadequate diesel powered generating station so the focus has been on identifying opportunities possible within the current infrastructure and planning for other opportunities moving forward. The First Nation managed the project to upgrade the generating plant which was completed in 2011.

The community operates a small business centre including leased space for store and post office, a 6-unit hotel, 4-unit office space and boardroom, agency bank and restaurant space. The office space is leased to Webequie First Nation businesses while the hotel is operated by the community. The plan going forward is to support a First Nation member(s) to obtain new equipment and operate the restaurant. Other businesses operated by the community include

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telecommunications (cable, internet, cell service and local radio), fuel supply, heavy equipment rentals, aggregates and trucking.

The community plans to revise its strategic plan with community input and continue to plan for future business and economic development including development of a corporate structure to monitor and manage First Nation owned businesses.

CORPORATION OF THE YEAR

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Attawapiskat Resources Inc.

Attawapiskat First Nation

Attawapiskat Resources Inc. is First Nation owned and operated. It was established in 2005 to represent the public business and economic interests of Attawapiskat First Nation and its members. The organization invests in the future of the First Nation through financial contributions to the Community Trust and donations for individual requirements. ARI's mandate supports some 2,800 Attawapiskat First Nation members, of which 1,800 live in the community located inland from the shores of James Bay, Ontario.

Significant milestones for the company since its inception include:

- Securing a contract for camp and catering services at the Victor mine site with an annual value of \$8 million with 33% of approximately 100 employees members of Attawapiskat and 75% Aboriginal the majority of whom are from the coastal First Nation communities. ARI is now working on procuring additional catering contracts for two additional 50-man camps
- Establishment of cell phone services in Attawapiskat First Nation, the only remote community along the James Bay Coast with the service, meeting the goal of ownership by ARI rather than solely third-party out sourcing
- Other joint ventures to supply the Victor Diamond Mine with Orica Canada Inc., Helicopters Transport Services (Canada) Inc., ACMS, Toromont Cat, SECURECheck, Niska Career Academy, Porcupine Engineering Services, and Panels & Pipes Mechanical Services
- In 2012, ARI assumed ownership and operation of Advanced Security & Investigations Ltd, a Timmins based business which employs 130 people in industrial and commercial security services including a partnership with Moose Cree First Nation for services at the OPG Lower Mattagami site.
- Additional partnerships currently in process with CREEWEST Airlines, Timmins Chamber of Commerce, Moose Cree Development Corporation, Ring of Fire development stakeholders, Mushkegowuk Council Employment and Training Service (METS)

From its decision to maintain its office in Attawapiskat First Nation to employ 2 community members and generate rental revenue for a community entrepreneur to its contributions of \$2.2 million to the Attawapiskat First Nation Community Trust to its support of \$100,000 to community members in need Commitment to Community is the driving force, the cornerstone of Attawapiskat Resources Inc.

NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



Rachel A. Mishenene

Rachel A. Mishenene Consulting Curriculum Development & Education

Rachel Mishenene, a band member of Eabametoong First Nation, recently began her business to fulfill its mission “to provide education and non-education sectors and organizations with support in developing resources and programs that authentically reflect Aboriginal peoples, histories, cultures, are current, relevant, and applicable and embrace effective practices.”

Rachel is a certified classroom teacher with teaching experience in the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Her educational background includes being a current PhD student, Masters of Education, Bachelors of Education and Arts, Reading Additional Qualifications Specialist, Computers in the Classroom Additional Qualifications Specialist, and a Diploma in Aboriginal Law & Advocacy. In her current PhD studies, Rachel’s research focuses on Parental Engagement in First Nation communities. She expects to graduate in 2016.

Through her role as an Aboriginal educator and project manager, Rachel has had the opportunity to work with various educational institutions and organizations, such as: Lakehead District School Board, Lakehead University, Negahneewin College, Confederation College, Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, Ontario Teachers’ Federation, Matawa First Nations Education, Ningwakwe Learning Press, and McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Rachel is very passionate about embedding Aboriginal content, perspective, culture, and presence into the curriculum and school environment. She continues to advance her education seeing the value of that investment to her future endeavors.

BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR



Michelle Derosier

Thunderstone Pictures Inc.

Michelle Derosier lives in Thunder Bay but is originally from Migisi Sahgaigan, (Eagle Lake First Nation). In addition to being an entrepreneur, Michelle is a mother to three beautiful daughters and a grandmother to two grandchildren. She is the co-owner of Thunderstone Pictures Inc., which she runs with her business partner Dave Clement. Thunderstone Pictures Inc. was founded in 2006 and has created 3 full time and nearly 30 part-time jobs. Michelle and her business partner are proud to have built their business based on ethical decisions that reflect the Anishinawbek philosophy and way of life.

The company crafts award winning, dramatic and documentary films as well as commercial and educational products. Clients have included: The Government of Ontario, The Ontario Arts Council, The Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority, Lakehead University, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Matawa, TBayTel, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ernst & Young, CBC, Skyworks, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, NAN Legal, Wilderness North and many other agencies and businesses. Thunderstone has created 18 films and won 20 international and national awards for editing, cinematography, and directing at other festivals. These include the prestigious awards of Best Film and Best Public Service Film at the 2007 and 2010 American Indian Film Festivals in San Francisco. Their work has been screened all over the world including at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC and venues in New Zealand, Germany, Nepal, the UK, and Spain.

In addition to her film work, Michelle has delivered presentations and workshops on such topics as: innovations in group therapy for youth, using art as a healing tool, parenting, suicide prevention, and violence in Aboriginal communities. She has also published on the topic of Historical and Social Influences on Violence in Aboriginal Communities.

Michelle is passionate about her work and her business, Thunderstone Pictures Inc. She and her business partner have created a business philosophy not only to create "entertainment" but to create unique cultural, social, and economic development initiatives in their community and the region.

PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

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Diane Lacourcier and Yves Vaillancourt Mountjoy Variety

Nine years ago, Diane Lacourcier and Yves Vaillancourt began searching for a business to purchase. In September 2004, Diane and Yves purchased Mountjoy Variety in Timmins, Ontario. As with any new business venture, it was challenging to put together a business plan that would demonstrate viability and qualify for financing. As the business operations were assumed, it was soon found that management advice from the former owners, as outlined in their business plan, was not a fit for these ambitious entrepreneurs. Instead, these partners took charge of their business. Investing a lot of money and energy over the first few years, they slowly renovated, experimented with new equipment and services, and built a business servicing the unique needs of their neighbourhood niche market.

Recently, having snow removed from the storefront was becoming a challenge as it was not a top priority for companies for hire due to its size. Recognizing the need to maintain timely snow removal for their clients' convenience, Yves and Diane made a decision to purchase a John Deere tractor. They expected to rent the John Deere tractor to other business people but unexpectedly people in the neighbourhood started approaching them to clear their driveways. This has resulted in another revenue centre for the business and increased the commitment of the neighbourhood to supporting this local convenience store.

Although it was challenging in the beginning, especially when faced with unforeseen obstacles, Mountjoy has come out a strong, successful partnership for Diane and Yves. They are on a first name basis with the regulars and the new

customers are greeted with smiles and friendliness like they have been coming to the store for years. Active implementation of their slogan, "Your Friendly Convenient Stop", has been a key factor in the store's success. By providing convenient products and services in a friendly, family atmosphere this dynamic duo keeps customers coming back for more.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

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Brent Edwards

Mooselegs2 (ML2)

Brent Edwards, 33, in addition to owning Mooselegs2 (known as ML2) is a member of Fort Albany First Nation, husband and father of four. His business provides training, programs and master of ceremony services all across Canada and targets First Nation workers and members, youth councils, tribal councils, friendship centres and all types of gatherings. ML2's uniqueness comes from Brent's ability to relate to both youth and the professionals who work with them as well as his willingness to travel to assist clients where they live, in their home communities. If you ever have the pleasure of attending an event where Brent is master of ceremonies, you would see how Brent's personality lights up a room and cannot help but lift your spirits. One of his support letters from Nipissing University praised Brent's commitment to and belief that all people can affect positive change in their lives.

Some of the programs Brent offers include Brent-lympics, Moose Power Youth Program, Ahyameh Program (targeting a general audience or youth specific), Corporate Retreat Facilitator, Bustin Out and Building Leaders Youth Council Training. The Ahyameh Program is a public speaking program designed to help professionals and youth, to ease them onto the stage or to improve presentation skills. Through his master of ceremonies services, Brent has had the pleasure of working with and meeting The Tragically Hip, Joseph Boyden, Bryan Adams, Susan Aglukark, Bob Cole of Hockey Night in Canada and Don Burnstick.

Brent's passion for community also leads him to support local and community events. Most recently he worked with others to organize a 'No Food Event' where 17 individuals agreed to go on a famine to raise funds to assist a youth awaiting liver transplant and her family. With a goal of \$4,000, the group was astounded with the final total of \$31,000 to assist the family. In his nomination package were support letters from CREEWEST, the Koostachin family, Grand Chief Stan Louttit, and Mushkegowuk Council.

In addition to running his business, MooseLegs2, and volunteering to assist with special initiatives, Brent is currently attending the Aboriginal Teachers Certificate Program at Nipissing University. He is scheduled to graduate in the spring of 2013 and was chosen as class valedictorian. Brent Edwards a truly inspiring young entrepreneur.

ABOUT NADF

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund is a 27 year old non-profit economic development agency providing financial assistance

(commercial loans, equipment leasing and grants), resource sector support and business counseling services to Aboriginal businesses, on and off-reserve, across northern Ontario (Treaty #9, #3, #5 (Ontario portion), and Robinson-Superior 1850 Treaties). With over 130 years of combined expertise, \$26 million in issued loans and over 500 businesses and 2,000 jobs created in the region, NADF's goal is to empower northern Ontario's growing Aboriginal population through entrepreneurship, by being a one-stop shop for all their business needs.

For all inquiries, please contact: Colleen Martin, General Manager T: (807) 623-5397 ext. 26 E: cmartin@nadf.org

For more on NADF and the 22nd Annual NADF Business Awards, visit www.nadf.org