



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**  
**Friday, October 19, 2018**

## **28th Annual NADF Business Awards: Celebrating Aboriginal Business**

**TIMMINS, ON:** On Thursday, October 18, 2018, NADF and Bearskin Airlines – A Division of Perimeter Aviation, hosted the 28th Annual NADF Award at the Senator Hotel and Conference Centre in Timmins, ON to celebrate the achievements of seven award recipients and celebrate their contributions towards strengthening Northern Ontario's economy.

The annual awards were first presented in 1991 to recognize Aboriginal achievement in NADF's service area, which encompasses the territories of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Robinson-Superior 1850 and Treaty #3. The annual event is a fundraiser for the Dennis Franklin Cromarty Memorial Fund: a bursary fund supporting Aboriginal students; and the NADF Sponsorship Fund: a fund established by NADF to respond to sponsorship and donation requests received from the communities we serve.

Brian Davey, Executive Director, "I love seeing how, every year, the nominations are different but they all pivot around the same mantra: Aboriginal Prosperity. This is definitely the highlight of our year and our Board and staff look forward to hosting the annual awards every year. Over the past 28 years, the NADF Awards have showcased 175 award recipients and provided a stage for them to share their stories. Aboriginal small business is growing and experiencing wide spread success in terms of profitability and success. They are diverse and are doing business across all industry sectors and markets. Tonight's award recipients are but a small example of how Aboriginal business is succeeding and contributing to building a strong and vibrant economy in Northern Ontario."

### **28<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NADF BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS**

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#### **BUSINESSMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Pete Beaucage Jr.**  
**Praztek Construction**

**Award Sponsored By**



For over 50 years, the Beaucage name has stood for quality, integrity, and progress in construction. Pete has followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and established Praztek Construction in 2003, and Pete and Praztek Construction have been contributing to the success and development of Timmins and Northern Ontario since. The company has grown considerably over the years by investing in a strong team dedicated to quality and service. Pete continues to grow the business even further in design-build projects, real estate developments, and property management, property maintenance, public-private partnership agreements, and property investment throughout Ontario. Praztek Construction has over \$25 million invested in property and apartment complexes, commercial leasing space and over 100 residential custom property builds for clients, recently completing 18 residential units for the Timmins Native Friendship Centre. These units are affordable housing specifically for Aboriginal People in Timmins. Pete is currently working on an expansion plan that would see his business service expand into the industrial and mining sectors and is expected to result in significant growth for Praztek Construction.

Pete is also involved in the community as a minor hockey coach where his focus is on team building and development. Through Praztek Construction, Pete also sponsors individual players so they can play minor league

hockey. In addition to working with the Timmins Minor Hockey League and the Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Praztek Construction is a member in good standing with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business.

***Presented by Arlene Meekis, NADF Board Chair on behalf of TD***

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**CORPORATION OF THE YEAR**

**Innlink Concrete Ltd.**

**Award Sponsored by**

***Fountain Tire***

Established in November 1998, Innlink Concrete Ltd. is a 100% Aboriginal owned and operated business headquartered in Moose Factory and owned by Moose Cree First Nation members Wayne Innes, President, Gary Innes, Vice-President, and Caroline Innes, Business Manager.

Over the past 20 years, the Innes Family have grown and diversified the business to include winter road construction and maintenance, gravel hauls, concrete batch plant, storm sewer repair, snow removal, transportation services, and heavy equipment rentals; and have served as sub-contractors for building construction projects.

In 2011, Innlink achieved a significant milestone when they successfully secured a sub-contract to provide concrete for the Lower Mattagami hydro development project. Innlink successfully met the stringent specifications of the project, further strengthening Innlink's reputation for quality and service in the James Bay and surrounding area.

As a major business in the Mushkegowuk region, Innlink offers full-time and seasonal employment to community members. Innlink is a strong community supporter, providing bursaries to two local high schools, supporting local sports teams, and donating jerseys and uniforms to the Little League, Minor League Hockey in Moosonee and Moose Factory, and to the annual Mushkegowuk Cup.

***Presented by Phil Archambault, Owner, Fountain Tire Timmins***

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**NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

**Foster Jane Eatery**

**Michael Yorke**

**Award Sponsored By**



Established in August 2017, Foster Jane Eatery is owned and operated by Michael Yorke, a member of Moose Factory. Michael took his love for food and cooking and established Forster Jane Eatery, a family restaurant and catering service located inside the Ramada Inn in Timmins. Michael and his small but dedicated team of professionals share their passion and love for cooking by offering family-friendly service and delicious home style meals. The menu selections put a new spin on family favorite meals and is the only restaurant in Timmins to offer fresh-baked bannock. Foster Jane Eatery is proud to support the community of Timmins and buys from local suppliers.

Timmins favorite restaurant has built a sterling reputation over its first year of business and Michael credits this to his team. Foster Jane Eatery has supported a variety of local charities and is a big supporter of local business.

***Presented by Arlene Meekis, Board Chair, NADF***

**BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR**  
**Caroline Innes, Business Manager**  
**Innlink Concrete Ltd.**

Award Sponsored By



Caroline Innes is a member of Moose Cree First Nation and is the Business Manager for Innlink Concrete Ltd. Innlink Concrete Ltd. was established in 1998 as a partnership between Caroline, her husband Wayne, and Gary Innes. Over the years, Caroline has proven to be the back bone of the company. In her role as Business Manager, Caroline oversees various aspects of the business, including financial, administration, contract procurement management, and she is also involved in the purchase and maintenance of heavy equipment.

Caroline exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit and is a true testament of her late father, Munro Linklater. Like her father, she has the same drive and grit, and is also driven by a passion to offer employment opportunities to community members to provide them with an opportunity to earn a livelihood in a region where employment opportunities are limited.

Operating a business such as Innlink Concrete Ltd. is demanding, but Caroline still finds time to volunteer at the Moosonee Anglican Church, helping with fundraisers, and lending her bookkeeping expertise to maintain the financial records of the church.

In addition to her role as Business Manager, Caroline fulfills many other roles in her life; she is a devoted wife, loving mother, a supportive grandmother, and endearing sister, an aunt, close friend, and community volunteer.

***Presented by Madora Mohshonsky, Senior Account Manager, Indigenous Banking Unit, BDC***

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**PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR**  
**Agoke Development Corporation**

Award Sponsored By



Agoke Development Corporation is a precedent setting co-operation agreement between the First Nations of Aroland, Eabametoong and Marten Falls. Over the past two years, Agoke has successfully managed and administered the provincial road funding and advocated for a new \$600,000 pilot project for bridge and road repairs to establish access blocks for the Nakina Sawmill. Agoke is the only First Nations management entity in Ontario to manage the road funding for the forest management unit they are in.

In March 2018, Agoke made headlines when it announced a historic agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to takeover the Ogoki Forest, which lies within the traditional territories of the three First Nations. For the first time ever, the three First Nations will be the stewards of the land; holding the forest resource license to harvest wood, assign harvest blocks, complete compliance and monitoring of woodland operations, prepare annual work schedules and reports. Agoke is also taking the lead on developing the next 10-year forest management plan for 2020-2030.

The Agoke Board of Directors have worked diligently to build relationships with mills in the region, and their efforts were successful in establishing another ground-breaking joint venture agreement with Nakina Lumber Inc. to restart the Nakina Sawmill. The joint venture is set to yield millions in revenue sharing, sawmill equity options, first-right-of-refusal for road building contracts, log harvesting and delivery, and exploring bio-mass and bio-fuel energy generating opportunities; and is projecting an economic impact of over \$50 million in 5 years and creating over 300 jobs.

**YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR  
Kaden Kanakakeesic**

**Award Sponsored By**



Kaden Kanakakeesic is 19-year old entrepreneur and is a member of Animbiigoo Zaagi'gan Anishinaabek. Kaden has taught himself to make hand-made knives and he has turned that skill into a small home-based business, Sioux Knives. Kaden began operating Sioux Knives while attending school and received his high school diploma in June 2018. Kaden applied for and received a grant from Summer Company to start his business. With the grant funds he was able to purchase new equipment and tools for his workshop, and for the past few years, with heat, hammering and effort, Kaden has been forging one-of-a-kind knives by hand. Kaden takes great pride in his work and each of his creations is a testament to his ability and talent.

Recently, Kaden was in front of the camera for UpRiver Media Inc. to showcase his skills and soon you will see Kaden in a Summer Company advertisement that will be released across Ontario in November 2018.

Kaden has demonstrated perseverance and commitment, key traits of an entrepreneurs, and is a great role model for all youth. Kaden is a hard worker and can often be found in his workshop crafting another unique hand-crafted knife.

Sioux Knives are proudly made, assembled, and finished in Sioux Lookout, Ontario.

***Award Presented by Brian Davey, Managing Director, Neegani Investments Management Inc.***

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**AWARD OF RECOGNITION  
Jason Batise, Executive Director  
Wabun Tribal Council**

**Award Sponsored by**



Jason started his career in economic development as the Economic Development & Technical Services Advisor to the Wabun Development Corporation. Over his 28-year career, Jason's dedication and commitment has contributed to the success of various projects within the Wabun Tribal Council (WTC) territory. Jason has assisted in the establishment and expansion of WTC member businesses. He has also overseen the negotiation and signing of Impacts and Benefits Agreements, and major resource development agreements and Treaty Land Entitlement Claims. These economic development initiatives have had a positive impact on employment levels in the Wabun Tribal communities, including a level close to 100% in the Matachewan First Nation.

Jason is a member of Matachewan First Nation and is currently the Executive Director of the Wabun Tribal Council, which represents six First Nation communities in the Timmins area. As Executive Director, Jason is responsible for all aspects of the Council's daily operations including representation at various local and regional forums that range from police services boards to Aboriginal financial institutions. Jason also represents the communities' interests in dealings with municipal, provincial and federal government programs and initiatives, such as land use planning, economic development, education, health and other issues as directed by the Chiefs of the communities. Jason also oversees the negotiation of major resource development agreements and Treaty Land Entitlement Claims.

***Presented by Ron Hell, Director Sales and Marketing, Bearskin Airlines – A Division of Perimeter Aviation***

## **ABOUT NADF**

*NADF is a non-profit wholly-owned Aboriginal organization providing financial assistance (loans, mortgages, lines of credit, and grants), business counseling services and community planning services to Aboriginal clients, on and off-reserve, across Northern Ontario (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Robinson-Superior 1850 Treaties and Treaty #3 Territories). NADF's vision is Aboriginal Prosperity and our goal is to empower Northern Ontario's growing Aboriginal population through business and economic development.*

**Please direct all media inquiries to Brian Davey, Executive Director.**

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For more about NADF, please visit [www.nadf.org](http://www.nadf.org)

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