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## Update on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry

### *Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI)*

In August 2000, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), Manitoba Keewatinowî Okimakanak (MKO) and the province of Manitoba began working on a plan to restructure the child and family services system. It was agreed to collaborate on a plan that included:

- The First Nations and Métis peoples have a right to control the delivery of child and family services province-wide for their respective community members;
- Child and family services for First Nations and Métis people within Manitoba must occur in a manner which respects their unique status, as well as their culture and linguistic heritage;
- The understanding that family is sacred and the first resource for the well-being of children; and
- Solutions developed locally with respect to both the delivery of child and family services, as well as adoption services, are the most effective and practical approach towards ensuring self-determination and healthy communities

A press conference was held August 9, 2001, in conjunction with the AJI-CWI to launch the release of *Promise of Hope: Commitment to Change*, a vision document based on planning that has occurred to date and to introduce a public feedback process.

Over the next two months this initiative will undertake an extensive public feedback process. Public feedback will be sought at Town Hall Meetings throughout the province, on the AJI-CWI Web site, through written submissions and through a Central Information Line.

In addition, focus groups are being held in various communities across the province. These sessions will include youth in care, adults who have been in care, birth family members of children in care, foster parents and women's organizations.

Those interested in learning more about the AJI-CWI are encouraged to visit the AJI-CWI Web site at [www.aji-cwi.mb.ca](http://www.aji-cwi.mb.ca). The Web site contains, among other information, a copy of the vision document and information regarding Town Hall Meetings. Alternatively, the Family Services and Housing contact for this initiative is Patrick Falconer at (204) 945-6731.

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# “Building Consensus”

## *Northern Housing Forum*

Housing in northern Manitoba, particularly in remote northern and Aboriginal communities, represents one of the most critical areas of community need. It has also been identified and confirmed as a priority by the northern MLAs in the development of a strategy for northern development.

“Building Consensus” was a two-day forum that was held in Thompson last May. The Forum is part of a planning process being undertaken by the Government of Manitoba, along with northern Manitoba communities and stakeholders as part of a northern housing strategy to maintain and improve housing conditions in northern Manitoba.

The two-day event was planned by the Manitoba Family Services and Housing and representatives from the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and Northern Urban Industrial Communities.

The discussion at the Forum focused around the themes of the “best house for the best price” and “community capacity building”. Topics discussed included:

- research and innovation in building techniques;
- quality and supply of northern housing stocks
- administration of northern housing programs
- potential partnerships to address northern housing needs
- education and training strategies to meet northern housing needs
- cooperation between existing stakeholders
- the use of locally produced goods and services for the northern housing industry
- an holistic approach to addressing housing needs

Stakeholders were represented by 15 voting delegates each from the NACC and the MMF, 30 delegates shared between the MKO and the AMC, and 20 delegates from the urban industrial communities for a total of 80 delegates. Non-voting participants included representatives from industry and the federal and provincial governments.

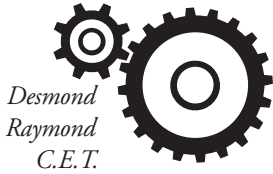
The main output of the Forum was resolutions developed in small group sessions and later voted on and passed by the delegates. Key themes identified from the Forum were:

- Interconnected Nature Of Housing And Community Health
- Local Economic Development from Housing Maintenance, Repair, and Construction
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Education and Training
- Access to Funding
- Government Policies and Standards
- Increased Local Involvement

A final report has been prepared summarizing the two-day event. It has been provided to the delegates as well as those organizations in attendance at the forum and various federal and provincial government departments.

A technical committee, consisting of representatives from the Manitoba Family Services and Housing and the 5 organizations noted above, has begun the process of developing an action plan stemming from the final report and the resolutions from the Forum. It is anticipated the joint action plan will be brought forward to the leaders in the fall of 2001.

**“technically speaking”**



# Protection of Treated Water

*Communities put more emphasis on finding a good source of raw water, treating and storing it, that they overlook one very important thing – protecting treated water.*

*The importance of protecting treated water was recently highlighted by the contamination of a treated water reservoir in Ladysmith, B.C.*

*Fortunately, the contamination was minimal and was discovered before it endangered the community.*

*However, it reminds us how easily stored water can be tampered with.*

**Protection of treated water involves several factors:**

- ensuring the reservoir is physically protected from possible sabotage
- ensuring minimum horizontal and vertical distance determined by the appropriate governing bodies separates water and sewer mains, in case there is a break in either of the mains
- ensure distribution reservoirs, treatment plants and any related structures are inaccessible to the general public.
- ensuring standpipes are covered and protected against surface drainage
- ensuring reservoirs are covered and properly lined
- preventing the possibility of cross connections, particularly in the design stages
- ensuring mains are properly sized and interconnected in the design stage, to promote circulation, minimize dead ends and prevent water stagnation
- locating cleanouts properly to ensure adequate flushing of the mains
- installing air-relief and vacuum-release valves, where appropriate, to prevent the introduction of pollution
- locating blowoff valves, where applicable, at low points to permit the removal of accumulated sediment
- providing and locating isolation valves on a system to allow individual line segments to be isolated
- selecting corrosive-resistant pipe materials that won't affect water quality (taste, colour, turbidity, toxicity)
- ensuring, during system construction, that any potential for pollution is eliminated
- properly disinfecting and cleaning the water treatment system before it is used
- having regulatory personnel approve and record any additions or alterations to the system after it has been put into use
- ensuring operators carry out all regular maintenance on the system to maintain the integrity of the water supply.

These issues need to be addressed in the design, construction and operation of a water distribution system. However, the need for a proper source of raw water, proper treatment processes, disinfection and proper daily monitoring of the water quality.

Vigilance is key when it comes to public water supplies. Operators, engineers and public health inspectors must monitor the situation at all times to ensure that the final product meets or exceeds Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines.

# Local Government Leadership Survey

## *Preliminary Results*

The Local Government Leadership Survey for 2001 was conducted in July and August to identify community priorities. This survey was based on a national survey used by the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. Jackie Weenusk and Chris Bignell, summer students employed with Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, revised the original survey, under the guidance of analysts Ray Irvine and Roger Stagg.

The survey shows that priorities differ between regions and community status in each of the four categories:

- Governance
- Community
- Organization
- Aboriginal and Northern Affairs community support services topics

Survey analysis based on regional location identified local priorities.

### **Northern Region:**

- determining community needs
- ensuring effective management of solid and liquid waste
- dealing with sensitive issues in a timely manner and maximizing employee performance and excellence
- new regulations for waste sites

### **East/West Region:**

- accountability for funding and financial reporting

- dealing with community safety concerns
- maximizing employee performance and excellence
- planning five-year community infrastructure maintenance
- Analysis based on community status indicated community priorities.

### **Trust Communities:**

- determining community needs
- ensuring effective management of solid and liquid waste
- dealing with sensitive issues in a timely manner
- Planning five-year community infrastructure maintenance

### **Self-Administered Communities:**

- managing natural resources use in a sustainable manner
- dealing with sensitive issues in a timely manner
- facilitate community capital program

### **LGSA Communities:**

- exploring creative revenue generating opportunities
- supporting community development and growth
- designing and implementing action plans
- implementing and updating accounting systems



Does your community have surplus equipment or materials they want to dispose with?

If so, send the editors detailed information about the equipment or materials and give us a selling price. We'll post your info in our classified section.

Our deadline for all such classified information is the first week of the month to have it appear in the following month's issue.

### **Other Communities:**

- accepting accountability for funding and financial reporting
- maximizing employee performance and excellence
- training public works employees

Councils that have not yet completed the survey are encouraged to do so quickly. The more information we have, the better we are at allocating to resources to ensure your priorities are reflected in the final results.



# LEGAL-EASE

## Understanding Regulations and Legislation

The question for this issue is:

### **“What is conflict of interest?”**

*If you have a general question about a Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs-related regulation, submit it to us and we'll consider answering it in this newsletter. Questions of a specific, personal or private nature will be re-directed to appropriate legal counsel or departmental authority.*

Conflict of interest is the result of a member of council receiving a benefit that others do not receive because of a council decision. Many people have a different understanding of the term and these differences often result in misunderstanding, hard feelings and cross words.

A member of a council is supposed to declare a conflict of interest when the member, a family member or others living in the same household would likely benefit from a council decision. The member making the declaration should then abstain from discussing and voting on the decision. The member should not even be present when the discussion or voting are going on.

Some council decisions may benefit all members of a community. For example, a decision to institute a garbage pick-up service benefits every-

one. Council members are not in conflict with this type of issue, as they will not benefit any more than any one else.

If a council member is bidding on a contract to provide a service to the community, he or she is permitted to present their proposal, answer questions from other members of council and then leave the room. The Manitoba Elections regulation 43/93 has more details on what council members may do in this area, and how much they may earn without the matter becoming a conflict of interest.

For a copy of the Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs' policy guidelines on this issue, contact your regional office.

# Recreation *Wellness*

## *North American Indigenous Games come to Winnipeg*



The 2002 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) are coming to Winnipeg next summer. It's the largest sports and cultural event of its kind in North America. The games provide a special opportunity for athletes and coaches to represent their communities and Team Manitoba.

Building on experience gained at the 1999 Pan American Games, leaders and organizers from Metis and First Nation communities have formed a partnership to host the games.

Because of the importance of sport and recreation to individual and community health and wellness, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has committed funds to support athletes' participation in NAIG's qualifying events and participation in the games themselves.

Details on the sports involved, funding, applications and guidelines were sent out recently to all community councils and contacts. Community councils are providing funding for

athletes, coaches and games officials to attend training clinic. Councils are also funding registration for qualifying events and related costs for transportation and accommodation.

Funding for equipment is also available for councils or community groups that commit to maintain the equipment for on-going use in their communities. Registration, transportation and accommodation costs for athletes, coaches and officials who have qualified for NAIG are also eligible.

Time is short. Some qualifying events are already over and others will take place in the next six months.

For more information contact:

**Aboriginal and Northern Affairs**

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Phone: (204) 677-6874

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Stew Sabiston in Dauphin  
Phone: (204) 622-2148

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# Introducing...

## *Mike Thomas*

Our department has a new recreation and wellness consultant who is promoting active living in Manitoba's Aboriginal and northern communities. Mike Thomas, who joined the department this past April is promoting active living and community and individual health and wellness through community-based and community-driven recreation programs. Thomas is also a member of several local boards and committees, including the Northern Manitoba Recreation Association, the Norman Regional Sport Association, the Keewatin Community College Recreation and Community Leadership Program Advisory Committee and the Coalition for Safer Water.

Born and raised in Thompson, Thomas graduated from R.D. Parker Collegiate in '89 and received his Bachelor of Education from the University of Brandon in '94. He taught phys ed at Peguis Central School until '96 when he went to the U.S. to play professional hockey for the next two years. Thomas played for the El Paso Buzzards, the Phoenix Mustangs and the Las Vegas Thunder before he returned home in '98.

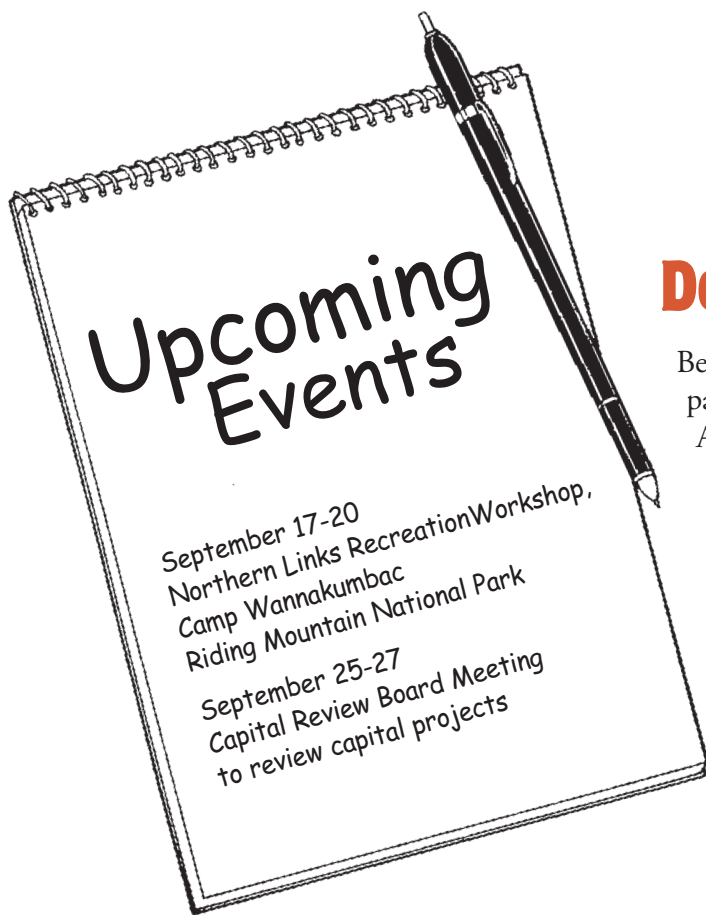
His next two years were spent with Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council Inc. as a sport development officer. He next worked as a recreation director in Easterville before joining the department.

## *Thank you*

Thank you to all our summer students: Chris Bignell, Trista Georges, Crystal Harrison, David Lavalee and Jacqueline Weenusk. Our department really appreciates all the contributions you made over the summer months and wishes you the best of luck with your education.



*Mike Thomas*



## Departmental Web Site

Be sure to check out the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs web pages on the Government of Manitoba Web site. The Aboriginal and Northern Affairs pages include information on community management, community profiles and many other issues affecting the north. There are also links to external sites like Canada's Aboriginal Portal and the Community Access Program Web site. Check it out at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/>



### ***Congratulations***

to Harold and Pauline Smith on their new baby girl, Abby, born June 24.

### ***Goodbye and good luck***

to Bev Shlachetka, who returned to work at the Cormorant Community Council.

### ***Congratulations***

to Karen Barker on graduating from the Aboriginal Management Development Program.

### ***Congratulations***

to the Community of Wabowden on its display and pamphlets showcasing the community at the recent NACC conference in Winnipeg.

### ***Reminder***

Communities should be starting their Community Management Plans by now.

## Contact Information

Community Council members and staff and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit comments, suggestions, articles and ideas to the editor.

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