

Aboriginal Cooperative Conference

“Putting the Collective Spirit to Work”

March 25th and 26th, 2010

Kingsway Ramada Inn & Conference Center
11834 Kingsway, Edmonton, AB

Purpose

Explore the potential the potential for multi band collaborations using the cooperative model and develop strategic development plan for the launch of Cree-operative

Objectives

- Introduce participants to successful examples of First Nations cooperatives
- Increase awareness of gathering participants on the potentials and challenges of the cooperative model
- Widen range of bands interested in participating in Cree-operative

Background

Cree-operative Arts and Artist Coop is an exciting new initiative exploring the potential for a cross nation cooperative which will support the development and marketing of First Nations art and artisan products.

Cree-operative will be structured as a multi-stakeholder coop including membership from First Nations from across Alberta (and eventually Western Canada) as well as membership to artisans selling through the cooperative. A feasibility study conducted on 2009 indicated that a coop could be self sustaining by the end of the 2nd year of operations.

Participants in the gathering will hear the story behind one of the most successful aboriginal art coops in the world - Arctic coops. Imagination The Aboriginal Gifting Company will present its successful approach to marketing native art and its new initiative for authenticating aboriginal art.

In addition to participating in developing the next steps of the Cree-operative as well as being exposed to the history, opportunities and challenges that face aboriginal coops, presentations and workshops will cover a range of successful aboriginal coops in other economic sectors – the cooperative banking services of Affinity Credit Union and Georgina Island First Nation’s wind farm - Pukwis Energy Coop.

Participants will also hear about the Canadian Cooperative Association’s plan to launch a new program in support of First Nation’s coops in Canada



Arctic Co-operatives Limited

Cree-operative draws heavily from the inspiration of Arctic Coops and its capacity to collectively produce and sell millions of dollars annually of Dene and Inuit arts. Participants in the gathering will be exposed to the history of Arctic Coops, which used initial cooperative work in selling aboriginal art as a spring board for much more comprehensive cooperative economic development activities. www.arcticco-op.com



ImagiNATION The Aboriginal Gifting Co. celebrates 10 years of offering the highest quality promotional branded gifts to Industry, Governments, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit across Canada. The company represents 30 Aboriginal artists from across Canada. With 230 images in the collection, a broad representation of Canadian Aboriginal culture is showcased. ImagiNATION has launched

Authentically Aboriginal Inc., an organization where Aboriginal culture and traditions meet technology yet which will allow Canadian Aboriginal artists to be “authenticated” based on their heritage, and provide consumers an easy way to differentiate between authentic art from non-Aboriginal created Native art.

www.imaginationcards.ca

Pukwis Energy Coop is a 54 Megawatt Wind Farm structured as a joint venture between the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and Windfall Ecology Centre. Representatives from Pukwis (which means whirlwind in Ojibwa) will explore how their structure could assist other First Nations in taking advantage of the growing potential for wind energy but also in solar biogas, hydro or other renewable energy projects. www.pukwis.ca



Affinity are leaders in delivering financial services to First Nations people and is one of the first credit unions in Canada to open an on-reserve full-service branch. Affinity’s Last Oak Branch is on the Cowessess First Nations. In addition to offering banking expertise, Affinity is taking an

active role in supporting Cowessess partnership initiatives, educational programs and community development. www.affinitycu.ca

Key Note Speakers



Pearl Calahasen was elected to her sixth term as the Member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly for Lesser Slave Lake on March 3, 2008. Since she was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1989, Ms. Calahasen has had a number of portfolios, including Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Ms. Calahasen is currently a member of the several standing committees of the Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Calahasen has been recognized by the Aboriginal community as a role model and has received many awards, including the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Public Service, and the Aboriginal Role Model Award. She will address the need for collaborative economic development projects between First Nations communities.

Ian MacPherson is an internationally recognized professor and researcher in cooperatives who has taught at numerous universities across Canada and was the founding director of the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies. He is the author/editor/co-editor of some eighteen books and the author of over 150 articles, most of them on the Canadian and international co-operative movement including *Aboriginal Co-operatives in Canada Current Situation and Potential for Growth*. Dr. MacPherson will provide an historical overview of aboriginal cooperatives in Canada.



Agenda

Thursday, March 25th, 2010

8:30 a.m.	Invocation – Grand Chief Makokis, Treaty 6 Smudge Overview of Cree-Operative and conference agenda: Winston Lapatak, EDO, Saddle Lake First Nations
9:00	Historical overview of aboriginal cooperatives in Canada – Dr. Ian MacPherson and Sherri Chisan, Blue Quills College
10:30	Break
10:45	Arctic Coops – Historical development, current opportunities and challenges - Andy Morrison, Chief Executive Office
Noon	Key note presentation: Pearl Calahasen will endorse the development of Cree-operative cooperative as well as provide an inspiring message on the need for collaborative economic development projects between first nations
1:15 - 2:45	Plenary Presentations – Participants will hear brief presentations from each of the following cooperatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pukwis Energy Cooperative• Northern Images – Art Marketing Division of Arctic Coops• Affinity Credit Union• ImagiNATION The Aboriginal Gifting Co.
2:45	Break
3:00 – 4:30	Breakout Sessions – Based on the presentation, participants choose to participate in a deeper exploration of the structure, role and challenges of coops in specific sectors described in the presentations and how it might be applied to their context.
5:30	A celebration of First Nations Art – Traditional meal and performances, displays and on site artisan development from aboriginal artists and artisans from across Alberta

Friday, March 26th, 2010

8:30	New Program supporting First Nations Coops – Canadian Cooperative Association – John Ferguson, Director of Government and Policy Affairs
9:00 a.m.	Presentations and results of the Cree Operative feasibility study and ImagiNATION's marketing and authentication process
10:30	Break
10:45	Cree-operative Art and Artisan Cooperative - Based on what you have heard in the previous day, what are the implications for the next steps for the Cree-operative Business Plan?
12:00	Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between participating nations in Cree-operative Closing Ceremony