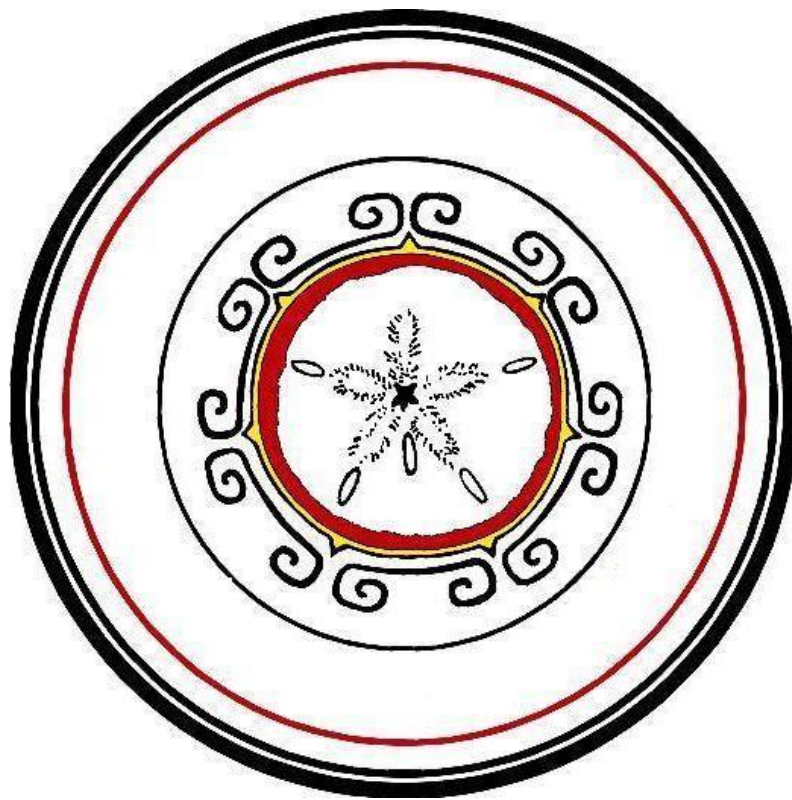


2013

Acadia First Nation

Rachel Pictou



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The economic development department has had another busy year. We have been working on a number of projects including new building development, business development and training projects. Below is a list of projects I am currently working on:

1. **Acadia First Nation Community Center/Bingo Hall** – Last fall we broke ground on an 8000 sq/ft building which is scheduled to open in the coming weeks. This building will provide a space for community meetings, bingo, hall rentals and much more. This is a huge milestone for the Band as the need for space to gather and hold functions has been identified in all of our communities. A feasibility study and business plan were developed last year which identified bingo (as well as hall rentals) as a key revenue generator to ensure the building remains sustainable. This project has also served as a training project for our carpentry crews, as this is the largest commercial building they have built and were trained on using new energy efficient materials during construction.

A section of this building will house the VLT machines that are currently in operation at Winner's Corner. This business and their staff will relocate to the new building once opened. Postings for part time positions in the bingo hall will be on the job bank in the coming week and staff training has been scheduled. A grand opening date will soon be announced.

2. **AFN Business Opportunity Exploration Project** – With the Winner's Corner property soon to be vacant, we have applied for and received funding to conduct a market study to explore new business opportunities for the Starr's Rd. property. Once this process has been completed funding will be sought after to develop the building accordingly. A community meeting in Yarmouth will soon take place to gather community ideas and input for the project.
3. **Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fishery Initiative** – We have been working with Department of Fisheries and Oceans over the last 5 years by participating in the Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fishery Initiative funding program. This year we received \$91,000 to put towards wages, meeting expenses and training. In March we also received \$250,000 to use towards the purchase of 3 new scallop licenses for the fishery. The economic development department has been working in collaboration with the fisheries coordinator to assist in the development and submission of these proposals to DFO.

4. **GED Prep Course** – We are now into our second year of the GED prep program. Funding was once again received from Department of Labour and Advanced Education to provide a GED prep course here at the Band office in Yarmouth. Last year we had 3 participants complete the program and receive their GEDs with the other participants all making significant progress in the program. GED Prep runs from October to March, 4 days a week. We still have space in the program this year and would welcome any interested Band or Community members! We have formed a partnership with the Yarmouth Learning Network and they have assisted in the delivery of this project.

5. **AFN Sawmill** – This year we have received funding from Career Connections Centre to put towards wages and from AANDC to develop a new business plan for the mill. The development of the business plan will be completed next month. The sawmill currently produces rough lumber and firewood.

6. **Acadia First Nation Geomatics Project** – This project is in the final stage. The purpose is to develop our own geomatics system that will aide in areas of economic development and land management. AANDC had provided funding towards this project. We have partnered with Membertou Geomatics to assist in developing our GIS system. Project deliverables include: needs assessment, gap analysis, data collection, training, model development and system rollout, system support and maintenance.

7. **AFN Website Development** – The new website has now been completed! This is part of an overall corporate development strategy which was developed last year. The website will be re-designed and better organized to assist Band members in staying informed on important issues, as well as giving the corporate side of business relevant and up to date info.

8. **Gardner's Mill Land Use & Development Plan** – This project has been completed. Funding was received from AANDC to develop a strategic land use and development plan for the Gardner's Mill area. The plan consists of recommendations for residential and commercial zones. It explores economic development opportunities that could be explored in the future and focuses on developing infrastructure. This planning is crucial to ensure that this land is developed to achieve its full potential.

These projects are what I have been currently focusing my time on as well as staying informed with current funding opportunities that come available. I am a member of the Kespuwick Advisory Committee, Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Developers Network, CANDO (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) and participate in the Employment Readiness Committee through CMM.

I am available to meet with Band members anytime to discuss any business ideas or start up projects they may need assistance with.

Sincerely,

Rachel Pictou, PAED
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