



Ermineskin Newsletter December 16th, 2025

Neyâskwêyâhk Acimowin Pawâcakinâsîs Pîsim Nikotwâsosâp

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ECN Reindeer Lane 2025



From December 14th to 16th, 2025, the ECN Health and Wellness Department hosted its annual holiday event, known as Reindeer Lane. This year, Reindeer Lane was at Bear Park, where a dedicated team of staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to transform the Arbour with countless lights and festive ornaments. Open to families from Maskwacis, the event aimed to create a joyful atmosphere and strengthen community bonds among attendees, including those from nearby communities and Nations.

Reindeer Lane presented a wonderful opportunity to spread holiday cheer throughout Maskwacis. Families enjoyed a variety of activities,

including the distribution of goodie bags and a stunning fireworks display that lit up the night sky.

The event proved to be a tremendous success, drawing in over six hundred vehicles over the three days, highlighting its importance to our community. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Community Wellness, Events Staff, Ermineskin Recreation, Integrated Family Services, LB Health and Wellness, and Samson Community Wellness/Sports & Youth Development volunteers, along with everyone who helped make this annual celebration a reality. We truly hope all participants experienced joy and a sense of connection during the Christmas Drive-Thru.



Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations PRESS RELEASE

TREATY NO. 6 CONFEDERACY TROUBLED BY ALBERTA'S PASSING OF BILL 14

Politically motivated changes to Citizen Initiative Act "should alarm all Albertans"

December 11, 2025 (Treaty No. 6 Territory) — The Government of Alberta has passed Bill 14, making major changes to the Citizen Initiative Act. These changes raise serious concerns for First Nations and all Albertans regarding their legal rights and the democratic process. The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations rejects Bill 14, while separatists in this province are celebrating a victory.

"This is disappointing from a government that speaks often about its respect for First Nations. Serious concerns were raised earlier this year about how a citizen initiative for a referendum on Alberta separation would be against Treaty and completely illegal." says Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations Grand Chief Greg Desjarlais. "At that time, language guaranteeing Constitutional and Treaty Rights was added to the Citizen Initiative Act. It seems while we were in court defeating the separationism question the Premier was pressured by UCP members to quickly bring in Bill 14, changing the rules and removing those protections. This Bill was created on behalf of a loud minority with no respect for Albertans or the Treaty relationship and it guarantees the separationism question will be asked again."

Bill 14 removes safeguards ensuring citizen initiative petitions cannot breach sections 1-35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Bill 14 enables ballot questions that disregard Albertans' Charter and Treaty Rights. The changes enacted by this Bill remove protections for Constitutional, Treaty and human rights from the process. As well, the power to question the legality of referendum questions has been taken away from Alberta's Chief Electoral Officer, interfering with their democratic responsibilities. This should be alarming for all Albertans.

The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations stands firmly against any legislation that undermines Constitutional protections and the legal status of Treaty. Bill 14 risks silencing First Nations voices and eroding the rule of law in Alberta.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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jill@pipikwanpehtakwan.com



CREE CORNER

*Frost-Exploding
Trees Moon
December*

Pawâcakinâsi Pîsim
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**Merry
Christmas**
and happy holidays



We wish you a

*Merry Christmas
& HAPPY NEW YEAR!
From the Ermineskin Chief & Council*

From Ermineskin to the World Stage: Kaiden Roan Shirt's Journey

Ermineskin Cree Nation proudly celebrates one of its own, Kaiden Roan Shirt. A young athlete whose dedication, bravery, and passion for soccer are opening doors far beyond his community, inspiring Indigenous youth everywhere.

Kaiden recently travelled to Salou, Spain, to compete in the prestigious Surf Cup International Soccer Tournament with his academy team. This journey marked his third time being invited to train or play in Spain, and it was his first chance to face international teams on a world stage. For this young athlete, it was so much more than a tournament; it was a powerful reminder that Indigenous youth have every right to pursue their dreams, wherever they may lead.



ous African nations marched in proudly, united by their love of sport. Standing among them, Kaiden carried not just his team's colors, but also the pride of his community.

On the field, Kaiden rose to the challenge, scoring the third goal in a hard-fought 4-2 victory over Kiyami United from South Africa, helping his team secure a spot in the Silver Semi Medal Finals. Although they faced one of Spain's top academy teams in the final match and ended up losing, the players showcased heart, resilience, and skill, proving they could compete at the highest levels.

Beyond the tournament, Kaiden soaked up the excitement of professional soccer. He attended a live match between Girona and Real Madrid, captivated by the electric atmosphere created by thousands of fans, fireworks, marching bands, and powerful chants echoing throughout the stadium. A standout moment was when he watched his favourite player, Kylian Mbappé, take the field in person, a truly inspiring experience for any young athlete.

To top off this once-in-a-lifetime adventure, Kaiden's academy had the opportunity to train with Girona for two days and tour their stadium, walking the very halls that professional players navigate. For a young Indigenous athlete, these experiences serve as powerful reminders that dreams are not only valid but also achievable and worth pursuing.

Kaiden Roan Shirt's journey sends a strong message to Indigenous youth everywhere: your talent is significant, your culture is a source of strength, and your aspirations know no bounds. Through hard work, humility, and pride in his identity and heritage, Kaiden continues to make the Ermine-skin community proud.

This is just the beginning.

Article by: Kayla Cutarm

Photos provided by: Charlene Roan



Cooper Young, Awarded Open Basketball Academy Scholarship

Our community is thrilled to celebrate Cooper Young, a remarkable 10-year-old athlete from the Ermineskin Cree Nation, whose passion for basketball has earned him one of this year's EM Scholarships from the Open Basketball Academy (OBA). Each year, only four athletes are selected for this prestigious award, which offers private training sessions valued at \$500.

In his application, Cooper expressed deep gratitude for his family, community, and the Nations linked to him. As a proud Nehiyaw from Ermineskin Cree Nation, he has family ties that extend across Maskwacis, Louis Bull Tribe, Samson Cree Nation, Tsuut'ina Nation, Wetaskiwin, and Millet.

Cooper's basketball journey began at the age of eight when he joined the Swarm/SEBA Developmental program, where he learned the game's fundamentals. However, it was the Alberta Indigenous Games that truly ignited his love for basketball. Playing on an underage Maskwacis team comprised of kids who had never practiced together, he not only faced competition but also experienced the strength of community. Despite losing every game that year, he fondly describes that time as "so fun," creating lasting friendships and nurturing his passion for sport.

From that point, Cooper continued to develop his skills, competing in Swarm's U11 league and later joining the Open Basketball Academy for the spring season. He credits OBA and



his coach, Evan, for helping him make significant progress, including training alongside older junior high and high school athletes. This fall, he is taking on the challenge of playing in Division 1 with Swarm, where he currently leads his team in scoring a testament to the training and confidence he gained through OBA.

In his application essay, Cooper articulated how the EM Scholarship would enable him to enhance his skills through personalized coaching further. He hopes that the private sessions will help him improve his defence, basketball IQ, and overall gameplay, positioning him to help his team compete for the provincial title again this year.

The entire community shares in Cooper's excitement and pride. His dedication, humility, and strong connection to his culture exemplify the values we cherish in our youth. This achievement not only highlights his talent but also reflects the unwavering support from his family, coaches, and community members who inspire him on his journey.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Cooper on receiving the EM Scholarship, and we eagerly await the opportunity to witness his growth both as an athlete and as a young leader representing the Ermineskin Cree Nation with pride. Keep pushing forward, Cooper, your community stands firmly behind you every step of the way.



Article by: Kayla Cutarm

Photos by: Isaac Ginter

Walking Together, Learning Together

The World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Aotearoa (New Zealand) this year was much more than just a gathering; it served as a powerful reminder of our identity, our roots, and the responsibilities we carry for future generations. As trustees, educators, and community members, the time at WIPCE 2025 reaffirmed a profound truth: education flourishes when it is anchored in culture, language, relationships, and shared knowledge. Coming together with Indigenous educators and leaders from across the globe highlighted that, although our nations are unique, our values, challenges, and aspirations for our children are deeply interconnected.

Throughout the week, participants immersed themselves in keynote addresses, breakout sessions, cultural teachings, land-based learning experiences, and ceremonial gatherings that celebrated both ancestral wisdom and contemporary educational innovations. The conference provided a platform for sharing successful community-driven education models, strategies for language revitalization, governance approaches, and pathways to self-determination. Just as crucial were the moments of connection storytelling, ceremony, and relationship-building that reminded us that education transcends mere curriculum; it is about identity, responsibility, and belonging. WIPCE 2025 reinforced the idea that Indigenous peoples worldwide are spearheading powerful movements to reclaim education as a vital instrument for cultural survival, community resilience, and the well-being of future generations.

Maureen Ward-Caisse, EETF Board Chair, reflected on the immense care and vision shown by the conference hosts, noting that the week was filled with meaningful connections, cultural exchange, land-based learning, and knowledge sharing. One of the strongest messages she carried home was the urgent importance of protecting and revitalizing Indigenous languages and embedding them meaningfully within our education systems. Language is not simply a subject it is identity, worldview, and future. As a trustee, she emphasized the responsibility to listen carefully to the needs of our children and families, to understand their realities, and to advocate boldly for education systems that honour culture while preparing learners for higher education and livelihood. WIPCE served as both inspiration and a call to action.

For **Kyle Wolfe**, the conference highlighted the power of personal connection across nations. In a deeply moving moment, he gifted Professor Ella Henry of Auckland University of Technology with a Treaty 6/



Neyaskwéyahk medallion, sharing the history of Ermine-skin Cree Nation and Maskwacîs. Professor Henry, an internationally respected leader in Mâori education, was moved to tears and, in return, gifted the lei she was wearing to Kyle's daughter, Kenzie Wolfe. This exchange became a living example of what WIPCE represents: respect, reciprocity, and the passing of knowledge and love between generations. It demonstrated how education extends beyond institutions; it lives in relationships, stories, and shared humanity.



Professor Ella Henry & Kyle Wolfe

Reflections from WIPCE 2025



Trustee Josephine Small shared how meaningful it was to walk on the traditional homelands of the Māori people, experiencing their land, history, and culture firsthand. What made the journey especially powerful was being able to attend alongside her granddaughter, Ryland Mendoza. Experiencing WIPCE through multiple generations underscored the heart of Indigenous education: learning together, honouring the past, and preparing the next generation to walk proudly in both cultural and academic worlds.

For Tanya McDougall, the trip was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity made possible through collective effort, fundraising, and commitment.

One highlight was connecting with Māori organizers who were deeply interested in the Cree names tattooed on her skin. This connection led to a local radio interview where Tanya shared teachings about spiritual names, iskewak (womanhood), and miyo opik-inawasowin good

child rearing. Another powerful experience was participating in a medicine walk on sacred lands, learning about Māori creation stories and their land-back movement. Tanya reflected on how affirming it was to recognize shared worldviews and parallel struggles, reminding us that Indigenous peoples across the globe continue

to walk similar paths of resistance, healing, and renewal through education.

Trustee Danika Lightning described Aotearoa as a beautiful land where she felt welcomed not only by the people, but by their ancestors. Being surrounded by Indigenous peoples from many countries was initially overwhelming, yet deeply affirming. She noted that the most powerful takeaway from the many sessions was witnessing the dedication of educators and leaders who are creating successful, community-driven programs. A prevailing theme was the importance of community, family, and parental engagement—whether through parents learning their language alongside their children, or through land-based programs that teach reciprocity, responsibility, and love for the land. Danika highlighted presentations that reinforced the need for collaborative approaches to education, moving away from siloed systems toward collective, relationship-based models that see students as whole people. She also reflected on the foresight of past leaders who established the education trust decades ago, and the ongoing responsibility trustees carry to ensure it continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of students today. In closing, she reminded us of one of WIPCE's most powerful messages: the answers already live within our communities—we gather to remember them.

Together, these reflections tell one story: **when we connect, listen, and learn from one another, education becomes a tool for empowerment, healing, and self-determination.** WIPCE 2025 reminded us that Indigenous education is strongest when it is grounded in language, culture, land, and community—and when knowledge is shared across generations and nations. As trustees, we return home inspired, humbled, and committed to carrying these teachings forward, ensuring that our children not only succeed, but thrive as proud learners, leaders, and good ancestors.

Article by: Kayla Cutarm

Photo's provided by: Kyle Wolfe, Josephine Small, Tanya McDougall and Maureen Ward-Caisse.



Christmas Colouring Page



MînsaDesigns

★ Miyo Manito Kisikaw ★
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JOB OPPORTUNITIES/COMMUNITY EVENTS

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

CERTIFIED HOSPITALITY TRAINING PROGRAM

APPLY NOW! Program Starts January 2026

This grassroots, community-led program is for both new and existing employees working within the Indigenous Hospitality & Tourism industry that includes:
Food service, Hotels, Casinos, Camps, Entertainment Venues, Tourist Attractions, Stadiums, and more!

From Concessions to Front Desk, this training program will teach all learners the in-demand, transferable and necessary skills needed to be successful in this exciting industry, all while earning industry and globally recognized certifications.

This training program includes in-class learning and a mandatory 4-week work experience.

Must have a minimum of grade 10 to apply
Must be willing to commit to employment post-program completion.

For training inquiries, please call:
N.E.S.T 780-585-0191
Deadline to Apply: January 19, 2026

APPLY TODAY!



CHANNER
CONSULTING & TRAINING

PER CAPITA LIVING ALLOWANCE DISTRIBUTION

Location for Cheque

Jim Rattlesnake Building Administration Building
Wednesday Thursday and Friday
10:00 - 4:00PM 10:00 - 1:00PM

Direct Deposits will be submitted

17 DECEMBER 2025



PER CAPITA DISTRIBUTION



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Wild West Gallery
Full-Time Manager



SUMMARY

The Manager is responsible for the overall operation and performance of Wild West Gallery, ensuring exceptional customer service, efficient operations, and improved profitability. Key duties include staff scheduling, performance appraisals, budgeting, merchandising, and financial management.

The Manager will also oversee product ordering, inventory control, e-commerce sales, and daily cash handling. This position requires leadership, professionalism, and strong public relations skills when interacting with customers, vendors, and community members.

The Manager reports directly to the VP of Operations of NCGI and will play an active role in implementing company policies, procedures, and marketing strategies. Flexibility in scheduling is required to meet business needs.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Wild West Gallery is located at Wetaskiwin Mall, Wetaskiwin Alberta. This role requires a hands-on leader who can maintain a clean, organized, and welcoming retail environment while supporting Indigenous artisans and promoting local craftsmanship.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma or certificate in Retail Management, Business, or related field.
- Minimum 1 year of managerial or supervisory experience.
- Knowledge of Indigenous art, craftwork, and culture.
- Strong computer skills (Microsoft Office, Point-of-Sale systems).
- Financial and cash management experience.
- Excellent customer service and communication skills.
- Organized, dependable, and able to multitask in a fast-paced environment.
- Valid Class 5 driver's license and reliable transportation.
- Understanding of Cree language and culture is an asset.
- Must be trustworthy, reliable, and willing to sign an Oath of Confidentiality.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience in retail or business management.
- Marketing and merchandising knowledge.
- Strong community engagement and vendor relationship skills.
- Experience developing and monitoring budgets and sales targets.

WAGE SCALE

As per the established and adopted Salary Grid of Neyaskwéyahk Group of Companies Inc.

WORK HOURS

80-hour bi-weekly schedule; flexible, with possible evenings and weekends as required.

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR:

Vice-President Operations

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 5, 2025 @11:59PM

Interested people are requested to submit the following:

- Cover Letter
- Resume
- 3 Letters of Reference
- Certifications/ Diplomas
- Criminal Record Check

Submit All Documents Via:
Jewel Smallboy, Human Resource Manager
Neyaskwéyahk Group of Companies Inc.
P.O. Box 1320 Maskwacis, AB T0C 1N0
Email: jewel@ngcine.ca



ERMINESKIN CREE NATION

Christmas Holiday Closure

Closed December 18 @ 12pm
Regular office hours will resume on January 5th





 **RECREATION**

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The following programs are finished for the rest of the year:

1. AFTER SCHOOL SOCCER
2. FLOOR HOCKEY
3. ARTS & CRAFTS
4. BOXING

-Rec Staff



ECN HEALTH & WELLNESS, AND MESC PRESENT

WINTER SPORTS CAMP

DEC. 29 & 30
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
MASKWACIS HIGH SCHOOL (BASKETBALL)
ERMINESKIN ELEMENTARY (FLOOR HOCKEY)



REGISTER NOW! WITH ECN RECREATION
AT (780)585-3088

BASKETBALL

FLOOR HOCKEY

DRINKS & LIGHT SNACKS PROVIDED
INDOOR SHOES WILL BE REQUIRED
CHILDREN TO REMOVE OUTDOOR SHOES AT THE DOOR

 

**ALBERTA
TREATY
HOCKEY
ASSOCIATION**

APRIL 9-12, 2026

CALGARY, ALBERTA

IMPORTANT DATES:

- NOVEMBER 25, 2025
- RAMP REGISTRATION OPENS, \$25/PLAYER REGISTRATION FEE
- FEBRUARY 25, 2026
- RAMP REGISTRATION CLOSES
- FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 30, 2026
- LATE REGISTRATION FEE \$125/PLAYER

**PLEASE CONTACT
YOUR RESPECTED COMMUNITY REP
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

WINTER

Public Skating

**Neyaskwéyahk
Arena**

Wed, Thur, Fri

**3:30 - 4:45
PM**

Maskwacis, AB

HAVE FUN ON THE ICE! ▶

(780)-585-2273

INDIGENOUS COACHING

presented by **KENDAL NETMAKER** | **cando**

supported by: **THE STARBUCKS FOUNDATION**

OPEN TO INDIGENOUS YOUTH (FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS & INUIT) AGED 17-35
LIMITED NUMBER OF SPOTS AVAILABLE

COHORT #18 APPLY NOW!

TOPICS WILL CHANGE EACH MEETING AND INCLUDE:
THE POWER OF A PERSONAL BRAND, INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP, INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INDIGENOUS EC DEV & PROSPERITY AND MORE...

WE WILL MEET VIA ZOOM
TUES & THUR AT **6:00PM (MT)**
STARTING ON JANUARY 6th, 2026

DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 31, 2025

**INTERESTED?
EVEN MORE GREAT NEWS!
THERE IS NO REGISTRATION FEE!
THAT'S RIGHT!**

JUST TELL US WHY YOU SHOULD BE INCLUDED PLUS A COMMITMENT OF YOUR TIME AND ENERGY!

**YOUR COACH
KENDAL NETMAKER**

**YOUR HOST
MICHELLE NIEVIADOMY**

FOR FULL DETAILS VISIT: EDO.CA/YOUTH/YOUTH-COACHING

Neyaskwéyahk Human Services

**ERMINESKIN
NHS ISSUANCE FOR
JANUARY 2026**

DECEMBER 30TH, 2025

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

@ THE NHS BUILDING

Please ensure your utility bills are up-to-date, and that your 30-day bank statements have been submitted.

Issuance will be one day only
Personal pickup only
No Mailouts

Thank you for your cooperation

**NEYASKWEYAHK HUMAN SERVICES:
(780)585-3835**

HOLIDAY

Emergency Contact List

DEPARMENT	NUMBER	HOURS OF OPERATION
Maskwacis RCMP	780-585-3767	24 HOURS
Ermineskin Fire Hall	780-585-4589 / 780-312-3145	24 HOURS
Ermineskin Security	780-585-2004 / 780-335-3725	8:30AM - 4:30PM
Maskwacis Ambulance	780-585-4000	24 HOURS
Maskwacis Health Services	780-585-3830	8:30AM - 4:30PM
Maskwacis Mobile Mental Health	780-362-2150	24 HOURS
Maskwacis Victim Services	780-361-7494	8:00AM - 4:30PM
Ermineskin Women's Shelter	780-585-4444	24 HOURS
ECN Administrator	780-360-0220	On Call
Kanawemahwasowin-Kamik	780-335-1778	8:00AM - 4:30PM
ECN Food Bank	780-362-0220	On call
Neyaskwéyahk Employment Program (NEP)	780-335-8119	On call
Neyaskwéyahk Human Services (NHS)	780-360-9602	On call
Property Management Service Call	780-335-6161	On call
Public Works	780-360-1556 / 780-839-2084	8:00AM - 4:30PM
REA LTD	780-312-4211 / 780-364-2084	
Tech Services	780-340-3617	8:30AM - 4:30PM
Tribal services	780-335-2935	10AM - 4:30PM
EPCOR	780-310-4300	
Direct Energy	1-866-420-4147	
ATCO Gas	1-800-511-3447	
ATCO Electric	1-800-668-5506	