



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

## **Siksika Nation Chief and Council Update: March 2021**

### **General Business:**

- Siksika Nation COVID-19 video update provided by Chief Ouray Crowfoot for March 4th, 2021
- Press release: Siksika Nation & The Town of Strathmore Resume Talks March 7th, 2021 - Siksika Nation & the Town of Strathmore Councils are back to the table March 8th to continue the work established by a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the communities in 2019 to address the topic of racism and building community relations between the neighboring communities.
- The Town of Drumheller invited Siksika Nation to participate in the blessing of the land on March 13<sup>th</sup>, before work begins on a flood mitigation project. Siksika Nation Chief and Council rep Councillor Rueben Breaker and Elder and former Councillor Francis Wolfleg were on hand for the occasion. (photo)
- Siksika Nation Chief and Council tour the Siksika Shelter today. Great work to the staff and volunteers. (photo)
- The official website of Siksika Nation is now online. This new design features current information on Siksika Nation programs and services for members and visitors. We invite you to check back for regular updates and share this great community resource with your networks. <https://siksikanation.com>
- Siksika Nation Chief and Council participated in Media Training with Stu Adams on March 23-24, 2021 (photo)
- March 26: Siksika Nation Chief Ouray Crowfoot receives his COVID-19 vaccine in Siksika. (photo)

### **Siksika Women's Day 2021**

Siksika Nation Chief and Council celebrated Siksika and International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> with a virtual presentation featuring leadership, royalty and women from Siksika. The presentation began with a welcome address by Siksika Nation Chief Ouray Crowfoot and Councillors Susan Solway, Jenny Goodin and Tracy McHugh. Miss Teen Siksika Annie McMaster was among the group of women who provided a positive message of empowerment in the Siksika language to commemorate the occasion.

Virtual participants also included; Martel McHugh, Kathleen McHugh with grandchildren, Cynthia Big Tobacco/Sitting Eagle, Leanne Sleigh, Diana Sparvier-Red Old Man, Shanay Sleigh & baby, Serenity Calf Robe, Francine and Nova Charlie, Karalie Red Old Man, Lorie Calf Robe and Naomi Solway. The virtual presentation kicked off Siksika Nation's Unsung Heroes Project which will recognize 40 outstanding women from Siksika who go above and beyond for their loved ones and/or colleagues. Selected by family, friends and colleagues, one Siksika Nation Unsung Hero will be recognized a day on our website and social media platforms beginning March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will run until April 16th.



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Siksika Nation Chief and Council would like to thank everyone who was involved in putting the virtual presentation together including those who nominated Siksika Nation's Unsung Heroes. Attention Unsung Hero Nominees: For your hard work and commitment to your family and friends, a gift card is available to you as our way of saying THANK YOU for all that you do to help keep our community thriving and healthy. Kii stik skoona taaps spoowa – You are powerful. Please contact [sncc@siksikanation.com](mailto:sncc@siksikanation.com) to arrange for mail out by April 2, 2021. From Siksika Nation Chief & Council

## **Community Outreach/Charities/Communications – Community Relations**

Chief and Council appointments to taskforce; Chair Wade Healy, Carlin Black Rabbit, Jenny Goodin, Ruben Breaker and Susan Solway.

- Met with Leaderships from neighbouring communities have begun working on relationships with surrounding communities. The goals are to build strong working relationships which will result in reduction in racism, increased economic opportunities, develop mutual beneficial political strategies, and many more mutual beneficial initiatives. The communities include:
  - Town of Strathmore
  - Town of Brooks
  - Town of Bassano
  - Town of Airdrie
  - Town of Drumheller
  - Town of Okotoks
  - Town of Banff & Banff National Park
  - City of Calgary
  - Wheatland County
  - Vulcan County
- The new website [SiksikaNation.com](http://SiksikaNation.com) is now complete and online for members and visitors to view.
- Community Digital Event- Siksika Women's Day March 8, 2021
- Community initiative – Winter Clothing Drive March 5, 2021
- Letter of Understanding with RCMP- Safe Transport March 2021
- Planning and preparation for Live Stream Chief & Council General Meetings
- Community monthly updates- Social Media, website and Aitsiniki

## **Consultations/Culture**

Chief and Council appointments to taskforce; Kent Ayoungman, Leon Crane Bear, Armond Duck Chief, Kendall Panther Bone and Ike Solway.

- Inventory of Language programs from: Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, Old Sun Community College, Siksika Health Services, Siksika Family Services Corporation, Siksika Board of Education.
  - Culture Task Force is in the process of working on an inventory of Aitsipoyiiks.



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- Working on a business plan that entails a thorough study of the state of the Blackfoot language.
- Participate in meetings with Sara Korajian Rankin from the office of the Minister of Heritage regarding Blackfoot Language Initiatives.
- Connected with the Kootenay for future cultural protocol meeting.
  - The Culture Task Force are prepared to open discussions with the Ktunaxa Nation in order to “re-strengthen our relationship”. April 15<sup>th</sup> has been tentatively set to meet virtually between our and the Ktunaxa ceremonial elders/knowledge holders.
- Identified historic cultural grave sites on the Nation.
  - Nato’saapi ki Otahkaapiotaasi resting sites have been surveyed via Ground Penetration Radar by the University of Calgary and Old Sun Community College. UofC has provided recommendations on buffer zones to help protect these two burial sites.
- The Culture Task Force (CTF) is scheduled to meet April 15<sup>th</sup>, many of these items will be discussed and action plans will be formulated to execute our goals.
- The following are some priorities that the CTF has in the forecast:
  - The CTF has had discussion’s regarding gathering Aitsipoyiiks but remain cognisant of Siksika Heath Service’s recommendations.
  - As the vaccine roll out continues, we hope that we could achieve tasks such as naming communities, roads, engage Aitsipoyiiks and so on, as soon as it is safe to do so.
  - To execute some of these tasks we may have to hold a joint meeting with the Community Outreach Task Force as some of these tasks overlap ie. gathering Aitsipoyiiks to provide Siksika names for the many communities and roads.
  - Our main goal is to improve fluency.

Prepared by Kent Ayoungman

## **Funding Agreement**

Chief and Council appointments to taskforce; Chief Ouray Crowfoot, Council Representatives Tracy McHugh, Wade Healy, Leon Crane Bear, Jenny Goodin and Susan Solway.

- Chief Crowfoot is working with Crown Indigenous Relations to finalize a MOU to negotiate mandates for new funding arrangements. These funding arrangements will replace the outdated Federal Transfer Agreements (FTA) which currently dictates Siksika Nations funding.

## **Public Safety/Policing/Security/Legal**

Chief and Council appointments to taskforce; Councillor Carlin Black Rabbit (Chairperson), Reuben Breaker (RCMP Liaison), Samuel Crowfoot, Kent Ayoungman, Armond Duck Chief, Kendall Panther Bone and Susan Solway.

- The Public Safety Task Force continues to ensure the safety of all Nation members in the community. The task force has been working diligently to create working



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relationships with the RCMP, Siksika Security Services and other areas within the administration and related bodies. The team is working towards re-establishing a police force back on the nation, with the guidance from the Chief and stakeholders, this goal is looking more and more realistic with the continued work with municipal, provincial and federal governing bodies. The main priority is to help provide the best of quality of life for our nation members.

- Created a sustainable Peace Officer program as a forerunner to obtaining our own Police Force. Three Nation members successfully completed a Peace Officer Program from October 2021-December 2021.
- Task Force members Susan Solway and Reuben Breaker participated in Anti-Racism campaign in partnership with the Town of Strathmore that included two billboards displayed along highway 1.
- Emergency Curfew Bylaw passed and enforced by RCMP. Currently developing communication strategy to get sufficient notice out to the community through social media, radio advertisements, and physical copies of the bylaw given to the community.
- Support the enforcement of the Livestock bylaw. Task force members met with Blood Tribe to observe how the impound for livestock functions.
- Finalizing a taxi voucher program with the Town of Strathmore for Nation members who are released from custody during inclement weather to return to the Nation.
- Successfully advocated and lobbied for a significant speed reduction on highway 901 in less than two months (typical process takes approximately a year to complete). Actively lobbying for the Province of Alberta to build turn-outs that go into our communities off the highway.

Thank you, Councillor Carlin Black Rabbit (Chair of Public Safety)

## **Agreements**

Chief and Council appointments to taskforce; Chief Ouray Crowfoot, Kendall Panther Bone, Samuel Crowfoot, Carlin Black Rabbit, Tracy McHugh, Susan Solway, Wade Healy.

- Task force have been reviewing agreements such as Castle Mountain, Bassano Dam as well as consultation agreements to ensure we take full advantage of opportunities for our People.
- Currently working with Banff National Park to promote Miistukskoowa area (Castle Mountain). Some of these initiatives include signage in Siksika as well as updating our protocol agreement with the park.
- Task force is working with Province and legal counsel to determine ways Siksika can best benefit from the 35,000 foot-acre water license agreement options, as outlined in Bassano Agreement.
- Siksika filed an injunction with the Province of Alberta to ensure the Alberta Coal Policies were reinstated & that made sure Siksika Nation would be properly consulted whenever any activities occurred within Blackfoot Confederacy territory.



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## **Siksika Family Services Corporation**

Council Representatives appointed to Siksika Family Services; Chair Samuel Crowfoot and Carlin Black Rabbit.

Update: Siksika Family Services Corporation (SFSC) has seen a flurry of activity and progress in 2021. Currently, technicians and SFSC staff have been renegotiating our Children Services Master Agreement with the province. The goal is to insert language that reaffirms our sovereignty, incorporate language from UNDRIP and the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action and increase our geographical jurisdiction in an effort to be able to protect our children wherever they may be, and not just within the Calgary area. We will be signing a one-year extension with the province for our current agreement while our negotiations take place.

Last month the Shareholders for the corporation, along with the Board of Directors initiated an Organizational review to be conducted by the firm MNP. An organizational review is the process of collecting, organizing, analyzing, interpreting and sharing relevant information to enable the strengthening of the organization. The purpose of an organizational review is to enhance organizational success through the development of insight and intelligence about the organization. There are three main purposes for an organizational assessment or review:

- 1 **Strategic**: Providing critical insights needed to develop and launch new directions, goals, objectives, and priorities.
- 2 **Foundational**: Ideal for launching new projects or initiatives, this type of assessment collects and analyzes information needed about the goals, stakeholders, expected benefits, impacts, and other related information. Key to success of project and change management efforts.
- 3 **Improvement**: Focused on identifying ways to improve organizational performance, governance and results. Results often lead to improvements in processes, structure, skill development, and cost reduction initiatives.

Typically, organizational reviews should happen every three to five years. The last time an organizational review was conducted for SFSC was in 2011.

In March, the SFSC finalized the following committees: Children Services Committee, Finance Committee, Social Development Committee and Governance/Executive Committee. Each of SFSC's suborganizations and core functions falls under one of these committees. Additionally, and in accordance with our Articles and Bylaws, the following officers for the Board of Directors were confirmed and appointed on March 9, 2021:

- |                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 – Chair:      | Samuel Crowfoot         |
| 2 – Vice Chair: | Fred Rabbit Carrier     |
| 3 – Secretary:  | Carol Manyheads         |
| 4 – Treasurer:  | Francis “Butch” Wolfleg |



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In January 2020, the Federal government put into effect Bill C-92, a piece of legislation aimed at reducing the number of Indigenous children in care. This legislation was co-developed with Indigenous, provincial, and territorial partners with the goal of keeping Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, communities, and culture. Bill C-92 recognizes that one size does not fit all when it comes to Indigenous child and family services. Under Bill C-92, Indigenous communities and groups will be free to develop policies and laws based on their particular histories, cultures, and circumstances. SFSC is rising to the challenge Bill C-92 presents to First Nations. On March 10, 2021, SFSC, along with its technicians officially began the process of developing Siksika specific legislation aimed at cultural preservation and preventive services for our children in care. When passed, this will be one of the first of its kind in Canada. Siksika has always been a leader in this area, and SFSC continues to strive to be an example to all other First Nations in Canada who wish to follow after us.

Through our Siksika-specific children and family legislation, established principles such as the best interests of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality will be outlined to help guide the delivery of services to Siksika children and families. A first draft of our legislation is expected in the very near future. As such, SFSC will be looking to form a working group of individuals to help steer the direction of this legislation to ensure adherence to cultural practices and that the needs of our Nation members are met. Further details on the working group will be forthcoming.

SFSC has begun the process of investigating new locations for its Calgary and Strathmore offices. For years the community has expressed concerns over its current locations and the Board is currently examining potential locations that will better serve our Nation members. We are new in this process and more information will be communicated once it's available. SFSC is also currently pursuing and applying for grants for other projects such as a Women's shelter, transitional housing and program development. While we have experienced some setbacks in being denied for funding, SFSC is still moving forward in seeking out grants and other funding opportunities.

SFSC is excited to announce that the Homeless shelter is now under the direction of Trevor Peltier. We thank Kim Wolfleg for her dedicated service to the homeless shelter and wish her all the best in her new endeavors. Since early 2020, the Homeless shelter has undergone an impressive transformation and we are now in a better position to provide essential services to patrons who utilize the shelter with dignity and respect. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges and obstacles that many organizations around the world are struggling to address. Notwithstanding the pandemic, SFSC has made positive progress during this difficult time and we are excited for what lay ahead for the organization and the Nation.

On behalf of Siksika Family Services Corporation  
Samuel Crowfoot J.D.  
Chair – SFSC Board of Directors