

Aitsiniki

Siksika Nation's Most Trusted News Source

SFSC hold event honouring past & future



Photo by Theoron Royal
Siksika Family Services Corp. dignitaries and members of Council partook in Truth and Reconciliation event.



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Home opener win for new era Buffaloes



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Siksika Family Services Corporation event to honour IRS children



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Big Old Man couple acquire new home through FNMHF



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Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

*Submitted by Chief & Council
Communications Consultant
Lynn Calf Robe*

Siksika Nation Chief and Council Community Update: October 2021

Meeting with Ministers-To-Date

In the hopes to better engage and re-establish work relations with specific department ministries that impact all Albertans and Siksika Nation membership, Chief and Council have opened up discussion tables with key players of government, including Honorable Erin O' Toole, Leader of the Federal Conservative Party of Canada. The general theme of the discussion meetings is to voice concerns around policy and decision-making made by the various government levels, which ultimately impact Nation members on a daily basis. More meetings with various other Ministers at both levels will be established in the near future to ensure both the provincial and federal ministries are upholding their responsibilities to Albertans and Nation members. So far, the following items have been discussed:

Hon. Erin O' Toole, Leader of the Federal Conservative Party of Canada

- Chief spoke to truth and reconciliation, and highlighted that any action needs to be fair and equitable.
- Siksika's immediate need for a tribal police force, and new infrastructure within the community.
- Treaty Rights of our people and Crown-land. Reference to John Diefenbaker (serving from 1957 to 1963) and Stephen Harper (serving from 2004 to 2015).
- The significance of Section 35 of the Constitution Act (recognizes and affirms the existing Treaty Rights), and Bill C-15 (An act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) was addressed by Councillor McHugh.
- Systemic racism that continues to exist and maintain racial inequality for our people; Chief shared stories around "starlight tours," and the history of discriminatory and racist actions portrayed through the justice system.
- Councillor Crowfoot spoke about Indian Residential Schools; the discovery of the unmarked graves, the effects of residential schools, and the effect that continues with our people today. He also spoke to the topic of "Curriculum," and that the schools need to teach the history of Indigenous residential school in full context. Councillor Crowfoot said that a big part of this resolution is "accountability," which is something we do not see. We need to help our victims and hold these people that are responsible for trauma, accountable.

Honourable Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Alberta Transportation (Alberta)

- Chief and Council welcomed Minister Sawhney, whom was appointed to the Ministry in July, to continue the work started by Minister Ric McIvor.
- Council addressed the need for intersection improvements on Highway 901; most notably referring to the need for safer "turn-offs."
- Council updated the Minister on the speed limit change, highlighting the importance of safety for our pedestrians and all who utilize the Highway 901 stretch through the reserve.
- The issue of fencing concerns was brought up, and the danger of cattle/livestock that get on the highway.
- Truckers continue to avoid the weight scale on Highway 1, by travelling through Siksika.
- Chief Crowfoot pressed the need for paving roads, due to accessibility for emergency services.
- Council recently provided a letter to the Ministry, with the support of the County of Wheatland and the RCMP, to update the outdated bridges to new bridges, which would better accommodate all personal and commercial vehicles in a safe manner. This would include a new pedestrian walkway for the community members who currently walk on the bridge.
- Biggest concerns: Turnouts and Bridges.
- Minister Sawhney, accompanied by Councillor Crane Bear and Darren Many Hands, Land and Resources, visited the areas in question and a follow up meeting will be met.

Honourable Jason Luan, Minister of Community and Social Services (Alberta)

- Councillor McHugh challenged the policy that Alberta First Nation members on-reserve are not eligible to access the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program. Councillor McHugh's held the position that this gap needs to be addressed; how can both parties, along with the federal government, ensure that on-reserve members will have equal access to this program similarly to all Albertans.
- Councillor McHugh referred to Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) for Alberta First Nations.
- The need for a Women's Shelter was brought forward, and how can the province assist on this initiative. Minister Luan referred this to Indigenous Service Canada citing it is "on-reserve" jurisdiction.
- Minister Luan has agreed to look into the PDD matter and meet again.

Premier of Alberta – Hon. Jason Kenney (Alberta)

- Council spoke to the issue of PDD again; the Premier stated that he will put it on the agenda with the Prime Minister
- The need for continuing care facilities and services to support advanced care (example: Alzheimer's Disease) was presented; Treaty Right to health was reiterated.
- Chief Crowfoot informed the Minister on the updated proposal for a long-term care facility by Siksika Health- Elders lodge; Suggestion by the Premier to meet with new Health Minister Jason Copping to further discuss avenues of funding.
- Old Sun Community College also has a proposal for a new Old Sun Community College campus; suggestion by the Premier to connect with Advanced Education and Infrastructure.
- Council addressed the need for the updated K-6 curriculum of Alberta education to reference more Indigenous content, specifically Siksika language, and cultural knowledge within this territory.
- Indian Residential Schools- Councillor Crowfoot addressed the need for a RCMP independent investigation to prosecute the individuals involved with the residential school. Premier Kenney states that governments do not interfere in criminal investigations.
- Siksika is working on re-establishing the tribal police. Currently, have succeeded in establishing a Peace Officer Program. In the meantime, a satellite RCMP office will be positioned to meet the needs of the east communities of the reserve; Council is finalizing this with key players. Suggestion to meet with Minister Madu for continued support.
- More environmental protection practices of natural areas are needed within the territory and on-reserve lands; support and capacity are needed to better build up Siksika's environmental arm.
- Re-locating the Sir John A Macdonald statue to the Alberta Legislature would not be supported by Siksika because of the history of his direct involvement in the Indian Residential School policy.
- Naming of historical and integral landmarks within Blackfoot territory must include consultation process with Siksika, as original occupants.
- Water licence update; and concerns of upstream projects that impact Siksika
- Covid-19 update. Third booster shot will be available this week to all Albertans 65 and up, and Indigenous 60 and up.
- Premier Kenney agreed to another update meeting to take place sooner rather than later.

Honourable Associate Minister Mike Ellis. Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions (Alberta)

- Council focused on the on-going addictions and mental health crisis within the community.
- More funding is needed to help our Nation members who are substance dependent, for health and clinical professionals, and education and awareness.

- Councillor Susan Solway and Councillor Breaker brought forward the need for more support on Suicide prevention; currently the Nation employs 1 Suicide prevention employee; Minister Ellis will get more information on resources that the Nation can access.
- PDD Funding needs to be included for ALL First Nation members in Alberta.
- FSCD Family Supports for Children with Disabilities for Alberta First Nations.

Honourable Minister Rick Wilson – Minister of Indigenous Relations (Alberta)

- Ministers' update included: Business Investment Fund; mental health funding; broadband; tourism; Sept 30 National Truth and Reconciliation Day; K-6 education curriculum- input is still being collected, suggestion to meet with Minister LaGrange
- Council is concerned with the issue of "Consultation," the Alberta government is failing to consult with Siksika Nation, as per Alberta's legal duty to consult and accommodate policy, as found in the honour of the Crown; this further marginalizes us.
- Systematic racism is an ongoing issue; example of the Strathmore Hospital and continued reports of negative treatment by hospital staff, by our membership.
- The issue of child care for our off-reserve members; everyone should have fair and affordable access to childcare; is there any update on a federal and provincial agreement to support this? - former pilot project of Government was \$25/day childcare, this allowed parents/caregivers to participate in economy.
- Care for Elders – More sustainable funding is needed.

Update to Siksika Members regarding 1910 Settlement Referendum

On August 9, 2021 Siksika and the Government of Canada issued a news release announcing that a milestone Memorandum of Understanding was achieved in our ongoing negotiations with Canada to resolve historical claims related to our reserve lands. The most significant of these is the 1910 Claim, which relates to the lawfulness of a surrender of 115,000 acres of Siksika reserve land.

This notice provides an update to Siksika members on the status on the negotiations and some upcoming steps.

We are continuing to work hard to finalize a draft settlement agreement. This agreement will be presented to the membership for a ratification vote, which is required to be passed before the agreement is finally signed by Siksika and Canada.

We anticipate the ratification vote will take place over two days, tentatively December 16 & 17, 2021. As soon as we are able to confirm the dates, a notice of referendum will be widely posted. All members who are eligible to vote in band elections are eligible to vote in the referendum. We strongly encourage all eligible voters to participate in this important and historic vote. All members residing off reserve will receive an information package in the mail which will include a mail-in ballot for those members unable to vote at a polling station.

We are committed to ensuring that all members have the information you need to make an informed choice when you vote. In the lead-up to the referendum vote, we will be holding a series of information meetings starting in early November. The notice of referendum and mail-out packages will provide further information regarding the dates and locations of those meetings. The draft settlement agreement will be available to all members for review at the information meetings and by request.

We are also pleased to announce that the Council will be providing a Christmas distribution to all Siksika members of \$250.00 per member. Cheques will be available for pick-up at the polling stations on the voting days.

This Christmas distribution is not related to the 1910 settlement. This Christmas distribution is a bit of assistance to go towards gifts, food and other necessities during the holiday season.

Much Respect,
Chief Ouray Crowfoot, on behalf of Siksika Nation Chief & Council

(Signed copy originally published on SiksikaNation.com on October 18, 2021)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Isstowiiso'po – Chief Earl Old Person, Amskapi'Piikani (April 13, 1929 – October 13, 2021)

October 14, 2021 - Siksika sends our deepest condolences to Amskapi'Piikani and the family of Isstowiiso'po (Cold Wind), also known as honored Chief Earl Old Person. The Blackfoot Confederacy lost a great leader, mentor, elder, knowledge keeper and promoter of our Blackfoot ways.

Isstowiiso'po leaves a lasting legacy as the longest serving elected tribal official in the United States and respected leader of the Blackfeet People, the Blackfoot Confederacy, and Indian People across the U.S. and Canada.

An advocate for the advancement of the Blackfeet people, Isstowiiso'po was elected to the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council in 1952 and served for over 60 years while serving as Chairman for over 50 years. During this time, he met with many dignitaries including every U.S. President since Dwight Eisenhower, the British Royal Family, the Shah of Iran, and other world leaders.

Siksika Nation mourns the loss and will fondly remember the extraordinary life of this remarkable leader who devoted much of his life to politics and serving the Blackfeet Nation. Rest easy Chief as you make your journey to the Sandhills. You will be missed by the people of Siksika.

Much Respect,

Nioksskaistamik, Chief Ouray Crowfoot, CPA, MBA, MACC Siksika Nation

(Originally published on SiksikaNation.com on October 14, 2021)



Submitted by SNCC

Councillor Ruben Breaker and Christa Rabbit Carrier at breast cancer event



Submitted by SNCC

Long time Blackfeet Chief Earl Old Person passed away on Oct. 13.



Submitted by SNCC

The demolition of the Crowfoot School to begin soon but efforts are being made to salvage the gym.

(Continued from page 2 - C&C Update)**Culture Task Force****Chair Councillor Kent Ayoungman**

- Phase 1 of the Geophysical work around Indian Residential location have begun on September 26 - 30, the areas are: Original Old Sun school site, North Camp, Paul Little Walker Cemetery, Old Sun Community College - NW side of the campus, St. Joseph (Crowfoot School) front yard and green space between the Catholic church and Parish Hall. Old St. Joseph Cemetery and Cannon Stockton Cemetery.

The University of Alberta conducted Ground Penetrating Radar work. SAIT conducted Drone work. The drone is equipped with technology that creates "RGB" (Red Green Blue) that represents full color images that we will turn into an 'orthomosaic' map, which means that the images are stitched together and scaled to represent a full color map that can be used for engineering grade purposes. Here some additional information: <https://www.dronegenuity.com/orthomosaic-maps-explained/>

DEM stands for Digital Elevation Model and that represents a terrain model of the land's surface at that location. Here is some more on DEM's: <https://www.caliper.com/glossary/what-is-a-digital-elevation-model-dem.htm>.

The University of Alberta will provide a full report to Chief and Council in mid- November, once the team receives this information, another community information session will be provided. Hopefully we will be able to provide an in-person meeting. GPR work will be executed in phases.

- The Culture Task Force will begin working on naming communities and roads into the Blackfoot Language with the assistance of ATCO Frontec, community engagements will commence in January 2022.
- The Task Force is in the process of translating road signs into the Blackfoot Language and has initiated conversations with the Ministry of Transportation to add the Blackfoot Language onto road signs on the Provincial highways; 901, 547, 842 and 56 which travel through Siksika Nation.

Community Centre Taskforce**Chair Councillor Tracy McHugh**

- Demolition will begin on the west side of the old Crowfoot School due to the extensive damage caused by vandalism. We would like to save the gym and convert it into a community center. Stantec conducted their assessment of the gym and should have their report ready for our review next week. Depending on Stantec's assessment and feasibility study, the decision will be made to either retrofit or demolish the gym.

Public Safety Taskforce**Chair Councillor Carlin Black Rabbit****Community Engagement Policing Business Case Questionnaire**

Siksika Nation is developing a business case for a "Police Service for the Nation." Your input is valuable to this process as we begin this journey for Siksika Nation. Siksika Nation members are invited to share their ideas on this proposed service by completing a short questionnaire.

The questionnaire can be completed one of three ways:

- Member(s) can fill it out online at SiksikaNation.com
- Member(s) can fill it out in-person at the Administration building. Contact Ola Koleoso.
- Member(s) can download a copy below or request by email. Send completed copy to Olak@siksikanation.com

Deadline: November 5th, 2021 (Friday) at 4 pm

For more information contact Siksika Nation Chief and Council Liaison Ola Koleoso at Olak@siksikanation.com

Calgary Police Service meet Chief and Council to discuss the naming of the Chief Crowfoot Learning Centre (CCLC)

October 21, 2021 - Siksika Nation Chief and Council were invited by Calgary Police Services (CPS) to discuss the proper naming of the Chief Crowfoot Learning Centre (CCLC), as part of the process of reconciliation. In his opening address, Police Chief Mark Neufeld informed Chief and Council that a proper naming ceremony of the learning centre was never conducted between CPS and Siksika. CPS is now proposing to Chief and Council to work together to ensure the appropriate protocols are followed for this. A future date for this ceremony still has yet to be determined.

The event on October 21, 2021 began with a blessing by elder Clarence Wolfleg (Miiksika'am), followed by opening remarks from Councillor Samuel Crowfoot and Neufeld. Issues of racism and concerns with the policing were brought forward. It was emphasized that there is a large amount of Siksika Nation members who reside in Calgary. There is more work to be done and both parties mutually agree that there will be continuous efforts to be made to strengthen the relationship between Siksika Nation and Calgary Police Service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please visit the official website of Siksika Nation at <https://siksikanation.com> for all Siksika Nation news including Chief and Council, Administration, Related Bodies, Business and community. You can also follow Siksika Nation Administration on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for regular updates.

Siksika Nation Chief and Council

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Siksika Nation honours Residential School Survivors

By Carly Weasel Child

Earlier this year, the Canadian government announced a new statutory holiday marking September 30 as the official National Day of Truth & Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, to honour the children lost and survivors of Indian residential schools.

On Sept. 30, Siksika Nation residential school survivors and community members gathered together to mourn, heal, and support one another from the atrocities the survivors faced and current intergenerational trauma.

Events were held at the park across the Siksika administration building, all across Siksika, and surrounding areas.

Orange shirt day is named after Phyllis (Jack) Webstad from Williams Lake, BC; she shared her story with Canada of her experience in residential schools and how her brand new, bright orange shirt gifted to her from her grandmother was immediately taken from her at residential school.

The event at the park began with runners and riders arriving and

pow wow dancing, singing, and drumming, and opening prayers. The runners and horseback riders had begun their treks at the Piiksapi Memorial Arbor, Old Sun Community College, and the Elders Lodge, before arriving at the park.

Dancers, singers, and drummers also performed for the Elders Lodge residents. Guest speakers and youth gave remarks and residential school survivors shared their stories and a proclamation was signed by Siksika Leadership to acknowledge and honour the lives lost and the survivors of residential schools.

"We're still here. We're not only surviving but we're thriving. There's a lot of good things in the future for Siksika. Residential Schools shifted our normal way, or at least they tried to, but events like today remind us of how strong we are," said Chief Ouray Crowfoot.

"We're proud to be Blackfoot, proud to be Native, and proud to be from Siksika. Today is a great day of recognition and working towards bettering our people and bettering our way of life. I encourage and support everyone to keep moving forward. The future is the reason that we have to keep striving."

Honorary Doctorate of Law Degrees awarded to Dr. Tyler White and Dr. Kent Ayoungman

Submitted by Siksika Health Communications; Jennifer Kholhammer

On September 22, Siksika Health Services' CEO, Tyler White and Siksika Nation Councillor, Kent Ayoungman were granted honorary Doctorate of Law Degrees from Old Sun Community College, at the celebration event of the College's 50th anniversary.

The ceremony was conducted in Siksika traditional ways, through song, story, and prayer. The Degrees awarded recognize exemplary service to the community. In the words of Dr. Quintina Bearchief-Adolpho, Siksika Health Services' Mental Health Team Lead, who nominated Tyler White for this honour and offered an introduction at the ceremony [abbreviated]:

"This occasion provides opportunity to reflect and recognize the accomplishments of those among us, and to express gratitude for a life lived in sacrifice for our people, our communities and our Nation. [...]"

The symbols described in this honorary

ceremony are a double-edged sword. In one respect it is a symbol to celebrate achievement and recognition for actual labor, blood, sweat, and tears made as an offering, for the initiate to be clothed in light. Sacrifice is the price to be paid for enlightenment. [...] In another respect however, it is a charge, for any who dare to wear these ceremonial symbols, to live an enlightened life by bravely facing the dark abyss.

Being given a double-edged sword conveys a message to the candidates for them to prove their enlightenment by bearing the burden of light, descending below all darkness, and lifting others into the light. The ceremony of a double-edge sword is an occasion of bitter/sweet, or in other words light and dark. The universe declares on this day to these candidates: "Congratulations for paying the price for light! Now go out and fight the dark!"

Siksikawa, please join us in congratulating Dr. Tyler White, and Dr. Kent Ayoungman!



Submitted by Siksika Health
Dr. Kent Ayoungman; Siksika Chief Ouray Crowfoot; and Dr. Tyler White

New Era for the Siksika Buffaloes hockey team

By Carly Weasel Child

After a long-awaited return, with the COVID pandemic cancelling the 2020 season, fans, players, and staff were eager to watch live action and Siksika hockey once again.

The Siksika Buffaloes did not disappoint and returned to the ice in a thrilling 6-5 home opener against the Fort Macleod Mustangs on Oct. 22, at the Deerfoot Sportsplex.

In the game, four goals were scored by #37 Damien Kulynych, one goal by #91 Zach McNeill, and one goal by #81 Keaton White. Also with assists: two by #26 Suede Omeasoo, two by #6 Manny Yellowfly, one by #91 Zach McNeill, one by #81 Keaton White, and one by #19 Connor McCallum.

The game began with a special ceremonial puck drop as General Manager Jason Doore and Assistant Manager Louise Doore honoured long-time voice of Siksika Hockey, Mario Water Chief.

The Buffaloes organization honoured Mr. Water Chief for his many years of volunteering and support for the sport of Hockey in the Siksika community. Mr. Water Chief was the official announcer for many years in the Siksika hockey scene and had many fans from near and far.

"We wanted to honour Mario Water Chief because he used to be the announcer for the Blackfoot Miners way back in the day, in the 80s. In my generation playing for the Buffaloes, he was also the announcer," said Doore.

"He was well known in the league because he sounds exactly like the announcer from Montreal in the NHL, and he had a great voice. Even the visiting teams enjoyed hearing their name being called by him. He sounds like a real NHL announcer.

Then he got sick and had to step back. So we wanted to honour him for all of the hard work he's done over the years and we presented him with the ceremonial puck and gifts from the

team," said Doore.

The Siksika Buffaloes are a part of the Sr. Men's AA Ranchland Hockey League and rejoined the RHL in 2017.

Throughout the years, the Sr Men's hockey team tethered between the Buffaloes and the Miners. Doore and his wife Louise, made the decision to step up and bring the Buffaloes back together.

After a long process of numerous presentations, proposals, and league meetings, they gathered a board, staff, and roster together and officially brought the team back in 2017.

Doore said that they did this primarily to bring community spirit back to



Photo by Carly Weasel Child

New era Buffaloes raise sticks after game winning home opener.

Siksika, showcase role models for Nation youth, and they wanted to support their two sons Brooker and Kristian and give them a place to play the sport they love.

"There was no Sr. Hockey in Siksika since 2013, the last team was the Miners. So this team would be the third or fourth generation Buffaloes since the first Buffaloes way back.

Also a lot of factors went into bringing the team back. Our two boys were aging out, Brooker and late Kristian. We wanted to give them a place to play competitively, so we stepped forward to go to the league meetings.

We had to do a presentation and they had to vote, and we started recruiting and having tryouts. So when we

first started in 2017, what we wanted was to bring back a community spirit.

I believe hockey is so similar to pow wows in terms of community gatherings. And I say that because when you go to a game, at any level, you see babies, grandpas, uncles, aunts. You see everyone visiting and enjoying that day together," said Doore.

"We also wanted to create that role model structure for the nation again for these younger guys to look up to. I remember when I was a little kid and I'd watch the miners and you kind of imitate those players.

Then when I started playing, you'd see the little guys waving at the players

see so many fans coming in to support the team.

"Friday's game was to see what kind of players we have on the team, because we had 11 guys who didn't come back. Some retired and some decided not to come back. So we had to get some of the boys to recruit and we had more than enough interest. We have some new players, even some from SAIT.

Once they get skating more, they'll get to know each other more and we'll have a good product on the ice. We had no season last year because it was cancelled due to COVID. All the guys were glad to be back playing competitive hockey," said Doore.

"The Ranchland hockey league has implemented the mandates where everyone has to be double vaccinated. I was surprised with the amount of people there, it was a great turnout. But we still have to keep restrictions in mind and practice the COVID safety guidelines. We have to implement the mandates and N7 will be screening in the front to make sure everyone is safe at the games."

Doore is proud to be the General Manager and is excited to bring in the upcoming season for the fans. He expresses that while games can be fun, they are a competitive league and have to upkeep professionalism. As well, he is open to as much support that the team can get, especially for major sponsors.

"As the general manager, I feel honoured. I really want to develop a good product on the ice for our Nation members. Siksika is very welcoming to our visitors, and a lot of our fans are already praising our players. They're asking if the guys are committed and they're all in. We want something for the community to cheer on and to come to the games," said Doore.

Buffaloes' Nov. Schedule

November	6	Saturday	AWAY	FORT MACLEOD	730 PM
	19	Friday	HOME	NANTON	830 PM
	20	Saturday	HOME	INNISFAIL	830 PM
	27	Saturday	AWAY	LETHBRIDGE	700 PM

Siksika people, places, and faces

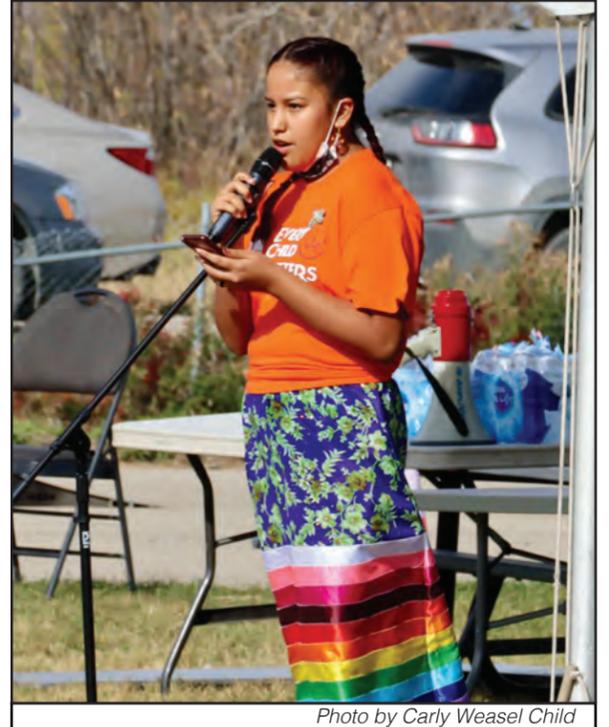


Photo by Carly Weasel Child

Photo by Carly Weasel Child

Chief and Council, RCMP representatives and dignitaries take part in Sept. 30 honour event.

Samuel Crowther chief Trinity Pretty Young Man spoke about Indian residential schools.



Photo by Louise Doore

Photo by Carly Weasel Child

Mario Waterchief is presented with puck after ceremonial puck drop.

Siksika Food Centre offers food to both on and off nation residents.



Photo by Wesley Water Chief

Jasmine Lavallee and supporters stopped at Siksika Nation on her walk to Kamloops, B.C. from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Lavallee met with Old Sun staff and discussed her walk, which is to bring attention and honour to all children, including the 215 who were discovered in Kamloops. She's carrying 215 pairs of children's moccasins to represent those found.

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-Dr. Deb Crowfoot

-Dr. Garet Herget

-Dr. Davis Fox

-Dr. Kayla Leugner-Lavallee





Photo by Carly Weasel Child
Jarret Pretty Young Man, Councillor Kent Ayoungman and Chief Ouray Crowfoot arrive at Indian Residential School Children honour ceremony.



Photo by SNHS
The Siksika Nation High School students and staff remember IRSC



Photo by Crowfoot School
Crowfoot School staff wear orange to honour residential school children.



Photo from Mona Darryl McDonald
On Oct. 22, at 1:27 a.m. the Boy Chief Trading Post was broken into and thieves made off with beaded and tobacco products. The culprits damaged the building gaining entry and left behind a black cap. RCMP are investigating the incident and video surveillance cameras captured footage of one of the suspects fleeing the scene. The trading post is offering a reward for information on who committed this crime at their family business.



Photo by Theoron Royal
Lennox Smith, Teagan Rabbit Carrier & Annie McMaster



Photo by Theoron Royal
Siksika youth at SFSC event honouring children.

The 15th Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Trot



Photo by Siksika Health
Carmen Wells and Dolly Running Rabbit finished in the prize money.



Photo by Siksika Health
The Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Trot race is growing in popularity.

Submitted by Siksika Health

On Sunday, Oct. 10, SN7 and Siksika Parks & Recreation were proud to host the 15th annual Thanksgiving Turkey Trot! The epic event is a long-time community favourite, and the categories were:

- Kiddos 9 years old & under: 1 kilometre race
- 10-11 years old: 3-kilometre race
- 12-13 years old: 3-kilometre race
- 14-15 years old: 5-kilometre race
- 16-17 years old: 5-kilometre race
- 18-39 years old: 5-kilometre race
- 40-49 years old: 5-kilometre race
- 50+ years old: 5-kilometre race

Prizes were awarded for the top 3 in each category; first place in each category received a turkey for their Thanksgiving dinner.

We look forward to all the contestants return next year in the 16th edition.

Bookings available at Blackfoot Crossing

**Submitted by Shyde Yellow Old Woman
 Blackfoot Crossing Communications**

Oki, Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park had partnered with Travel Alberta to film a segment on October 4 & 5 but was postponed due to current rise of cases in Alberta.

It was in our best hearts, that in order for people to feel safe in our environment, we would wait until the potential rise in Covid-19 has dwindled so that we may move forward cautiously and proactively.

Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park's Communications Team had recently visited various parts of Siksika Nation (Little Chicago, Cluny and Little Washington) in the hopes of capturing wonderful spectacles that roam our lands, that climb the skies above, that conquer the flows of the river.

We expect to see more spectacles and wonders of our land by our team. Winter is coming, look in your backyard, this season is the best time to harvest berries, especially after frost. Don't forget to take a look outside your backyard in case you have ripe pakipi (Choke Cherries), and rosehips (kinii).

Remember to harvest after a cold frosty day, for they are very healthy and taste best cold. Now this season may be a little warmer, we would recommend waiting until the mornings wit frost. Choke cherries "seeds" are considered poisonous, so make sure to spit out the seeds of your Pakipi.

We are currently accepting bookings by appointment only. We would like to apologize for the postponing the date of the opening as we go forward with the Covid situation. We would like to take slow and cautious steps so that the visitors may express themselves and feel safe unfiltered.

On October 13, 2021 Vincent Yellow Old Woman discussed the 94 calls to action, the first call to action and the 57th call to action. Vincent had gone in depth on the calls to action and had interpreted it to his best, conveying a message to bring enlightenment.

"So, what they're saying, to reconcile. Reconciliation, to reach out, and to have a communication, and to sit down and to learn from each other. Once we get an appreciation of each other, then we can work together and then we can move forward in a good way together..." said Vincent Yellow Old Woman.

Some people to this day, do not know of the 94 calls to action or what the 94 calls to action mean, or if the 94 calls to action affects them. These are the questions that were answered in the latest of "Residential School Stories (Our Story)".

"Hello! Nice to meet you. My name is Matt Ftchar and I have the honour of working on the Crowfoot exhibit at Blackfoot Crossing. My background is rooted in content creation for live

events and video production. I have significant experience and technical knowledge that has afforded me the privilege to work on digital storytelling for theatre productions, Canada's Walk of Fame and exciting stereoscopic Indigenous VR stories like Man and the Elk Dog. Contact me at: matt@primarchdc.com or 403-837-3364"

We are excited to announce that we are looking forward to implementing a new way to experience the ways of the Siksikaitsitapiiks at the palms of your hands. Working closely with our collaborative partners, we will soon be installing a "Siksika Digital Book" that will work at the palms of your hands and act as guidance as you visit our park.



This self-guided content will allow visitors to connect with unique stories at their own pace. Through augmented reality, attendees can scan specific icons and experience the corresponding story.

Anyone have interesting information on Siksikaitsitapiiks? Feel free to email bookings@blackfootcrossing.ca

You may also find this information on our Social Media platforms via Facebook (Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park), Twitter (@BlkftCrossing), and Instagram (blackfootcrossing).

We will be on Tik Tok soon, so stay tuned on our pages. Make sure to hit the follow button on our platforms for the latest updates.

Siksika Tech Council connect during isolation

Submitted by Siksika Health

Meet the Blackfoot Tech Council, Siksika Nation's internet networking, computer and mobile device wrangling, software troubleshooting, password reset gurus who represent the far reaches of Siksika's IT (information technologies) sector. Their ever-present (yet often behind-the-scenes) work has perhaps been more important than ever over the past year-and-a-half as the COVID-19 pandemic moved programs and services online for safety, and to accommodate public health orders.

With more than 122 years of combined IT education and experience between them, these guys and gals have joined forces to connect Siksika Nation during a pandemic of isolation, using low tech solutions to provide high impact connectivity...and they're only just getting started.

The group's next order of business? Bringing high-speed broadband internet to every single home, business, facility (and square-inch!) on Siksika Nation, and become one of Canada's first, First Nation-owned and operated fiber-to-the-premises networks.

The need to pursue high-speed broadband internet nowadays should be a thing of the past, but it's not. Despite being Canada's second largest First Nation in both land base and population, Siksika Nation has some of the most inequitable internet access and speeds in the country. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) target for internet speeds for all homes and businesses in Canada is 50 Mbps for downloads and 10 Mbps for uploads. This basic service has been deemed a human right by the United Nations. In effect, it should be no problem to stream HD video or play multiplayer online games on multiple devices at the same time, download large files at reasonably high speeds, or video call by Skype or FaceTime, like 90% of all Canadian homes and businesses can.

However, this is not the case on Siksika. In 2019, reported median download speed on Siksika Nation was 6.13 Mbps and upload speed was 1.81 Mbps. A recent community survey was completed to update these statistics; as of February 2021, residences across Siksika reported 14.38 Mbps average download speed and 6.79 Mbps average upload speed – nowhere near Canada's targets or the UN human right standards.

High-speed internet access is technically very complex, especially in rural communities, and depends on a number of factors. Unless a community is getting internet from space (i.e. via satellite), it needs to have direct access to fiberoptic cable to supply its internet from a



Submitted by Siksika Health

Siksika Nation's Blackfoot Tech Council (from L-R): Jennifer Kohlhammer, David Panther Bone, Gary Morton, Desmond Sleight, Cassius Smith, Zack Spring Chief, Daniel Spring Chief, Harlon McMaster (missing: Margaret Kargard, Darren Healy, Shannon Bear Chief, Penina Goodeagle)

nearby Internet Exchange. For Siksika Nation, the nearest Exchange is located in Calgary, almost 100km away. Internet access can then be transported from a community's core router to individual homes and businesses, either by wired connections like fiberoptic or DSL, or by wireless connections such as microwave radio links.

This kind of infrastructure is costly, and competitive. And while there are a number of internet options available on Siksika, most are not meaningfully invested in the current and future development of Siksika. A coordinated effort by Siksika for Siksika, reflective of deep community understanding, is essential for the creation of a healthy digital ecosystem that will allow Siksika to thrive. And that's exactly what the Blackfoot Tech Council is doing.

With upgraded infrastructure, Siksika Nation's own SiksikaTel, a Nation-owned internet service provider (ISP) and member of the Blackfoot Tech Council, will be equipped to offer coverage, speeds, rates, and service that rival and surpass the options available.

The Blackfoot Tech Council worked with telecommunications engineers and logical network planners to develop a blueprint for major internet upgrades for Siksika Nation:

- SiksikaTel infrastructure upgrades will include a mix of wireless and wired/fiber solutions, for comprehensive coverage of Siksika Nation.
- Competitive subscription packages for more equitable residential access, including free basic internet (5Mbps) for eligible on-reserve residents, and free VoIP phone service for Elders 65+ who live on-reserve.
- Wifi hotspots established at public facilities and throughout the community for ease of access and enhanced public safety.
- A Technology Centre, staffed by trained Siksika members, to provide technical and troubleshooting support, provide resources, and of-

fer programs to enhance digital literacy.

Once the project is complete, every single home, business, facility on Siksika Nation and in the surrounding area will have access to high-speed internet that is twice as fast as the CRTC's target, and almost 7x faster than Siksika's current average. Not to mention: the social and economic benefits are massive.

Next up, the Blackfoot Tech Council is growing Siksika's local IT sector through training and mentorship. In partnership with Computing Technology Industry Association ("CompTIA"), a global leader for advancing the tech industry and its workforce, the Blackfoot Tech Council is currently training 10 community members in advanced level Core Technology, Network, and Security skills, and 14 community members in IT Fundamentals. Eligible trainees will be offered paid practicum placements with Siksika Nation departments, to mentor alongside in-house IT experts and put their newfound skills to practice.

With leadership from Tribal Manager, Richard Sparvier and support from Siksika Nation Chief and Council, the Blackfoot Tech Council is moving forward to raise capital for the planned infrastructure upgrades, and continue growing Siksika's local IT sector. Currently awaiting approval of its application to the Government of Canada's Universal Broadband Fund, part of Canada's "High-Speed Access for All: Canada's Connectivity Strategy", which proposes to focus on remote and rural, and Indigenous communities, the Blackfoot Tech Council is confident that investors will throw their support behind this promising initiative. And stay tuned: they're only just getting started.

For more information about the Blackfoot Tech Council: - Cassius Smith, IT Manager, Siksika Nation at CassiusS@siksikanation.com - David Panther Bone, IT Lead, Siksika Health DavidPB@siksikahealth.com - Jennifer Kohlhammer, Communications, Siksika Health at JenniferK@siksikahealth.com

New Vaccine Clinic location for COVID-19

Submitted by Jennifer Kohlhammer
Siksika Health Communications

COVID-19 third doses are now available to Siksika Nation members ages 65+ on a walk-in basis at the Siksika Deerfoot Sportsplex (no appointments required). The clinic is open weekly from 10:00am-4:00pm, Monday – Friday.

First and second dose COVID-19 immunization is also available at the same location and time for Siksika Nation members 12+ (including those who will be turning 12 in 2021), and for those who live or work in Siksika or the surrounding communities.

At this time, it is advised to wait 6 months between your second dose and third dose of CO-

VID-19. Some exceptions apply for additional eligible groups:

- Immunocompromised individuals (must wait at least 8 weeks after second dose)
- Seniors in congregate living facilities (must wait at least 5 months after second dose)
- Travellers to jurisdictions that don't recognize CoviShield/AstraZeneca or mixed doses (must wait at least 4 weeks after second dose)

Information regarding third dose vaccines for additional eligible groups on Siksika Nation will be communicated when provincial guidelines are updated and available. Please stay tuned to Siksika Health Services' official communications channels.

Mobile (including in-home) immuniza-

tion is also available through Siksika Health's Aisokinakio'p Immunization Special Forces vehicle. Call Siksika Home Care at 403-734-5695 to book an in-home appointment.

NEW LOCATION
Siksika Nation COVID Vaccine Clinic

Available to Siksika Nation members, and people who live or work in surrounding communities
STARTING OCT. 12, NEW LOCATION:
SIKSIKA DEERFOOT SPORTSPLEX
HOURS OF OPERATION: 10AM-4PM, MONDAY-FRIDAY
- Walk-Ins Available -
NO APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

SFSC Hosts Community Event on First National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Submitted by Theoren Royal
SFSC Communications

A wave of orange came out to attend an event organized by Siksika Family Services Corp. (SFSC) for this year's Orange Shirt Day, and the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30 outside of the Siksika West-Daycare Building.

The event, themed "Honouring our past and celebrating our future", mirrored other events held on the Nation that honour the children who survived the residential schools and the inter-generational harm done to Indigenous children at Canada's residential schools.

SFSC offices were closed on Sept. 30 with staff spending the day volunteering in various capacities for the event. Information booths for service areas within SFSC were set up to provide program information to the community which has become an on-going challenge to ensure community safety since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was subject to current community restrictions and safeguards, with screeners managing entry numbers and screening for attendees and staff.

The agenda started with a grand entry lead by SFSC leadership and dignitaries including Siksika Nation Royalty, followed by an honour song and moment of silence to honor residential school victims and survivors. SFSC Board of Directors Chairman Samuel Crowfoot joined SFSC CEO Merlin Breaker to help welcome the crowd and spoke about hope that the official recognition of Sept. 30 would help spur greater understanding of Canada's history of residential schools, and healing for Indigenous communities.

Crowfoot also spoke about the federal government's move earlier this year to declare the day as a statutory holiday as a positive step, after the date was informally recognized as "Orange Shirt Day" for years. "the growing recognition of the abuses committed in the institutions, and the lasting impacts on First Nations, can be a powerful unburdening for some survivors. It's encouraging through the years that we come to these gatherings, that heaviness has gotten lighter," mentions Crowfoot.

Attendees, which included members from surrounding communities, were able to listen to presentation speeches from resi-



Photo by Theoren Royal

Singers and dancers took part in SFSC event "honouring our past and celebrating our future".

dential school survivors and leadership of the Nation. Keynote speakers included Former Siksika Nation Chief and Residential School survivor Vincent Yellow Old Woman, who shared some of his experiences with attendees in a moving message spoken in Blackfoot.

"It can be uncomfortable hearing the stories of survivors" Yellow Old Woman mentions. "A whole generation of our people went, It's a very important part of the history of Canada. I hope they teach that in school, and they never stop talking about it." said Yellow Old Woman. Elder Christine Sleight and SFSC Board member Francis Wolfleg both spoke on their experiences as survivors of residential schools on the Nation.

The afternoon also featured a children and youth talent showcase, with dancers and musical performances put on by Nation members. A student drum group from Crowfoot School provided songs for dancers in various categories, a welcomed sight for dancers and attendees. Musical performances included a solo-rock performance from 11-year-old Jax Running Rabbit-Big Head, a talented young singer and guitarist who has performed for various events throughout Alberta, and acoustic band Echoes, members Lexxi and Huddy Many Heads performing various songs written by the teenage sibling duo.

Local band Double Rider, formerly Third Generation, closed out the event with musical offerings from local talent Hannah Owl Child, Lennon Owl Child, and Erin Many Heads. The family trio have seen great suc-

cess – creating music since their pre-teenage years. The band opened with chicken dancer Cameron Own Chief to perform a special song which was written after news broke of the 215 unmarked graves at a Residential School in Kamloops, B.C in May 2021.

Organizers mention that the goal of the event was to honour our past and celebrating our future through showcasing our community children and youth, mentioning that that although the day can be triggering for most, it is important to also remember that the community has shown great resilience and the importance of celebrating future generations of the Nation.

"This is an opportunity to come together as a larger community to not only acknowledge but recognize and celebrate our past and future" Organizers also shared that the event was well received. "This will be an annual event, as in years prior to honour our past but also celebrating our future."

The acclaimed production New Blood, put on by Strathmore High School, was scheduled in the evening following the event but postponed due to newly announced Alberta COVID-19 restrictions. The play is inspired by the life of Elder Vincent Yellow Old Woman and his experience as a child in residential school through poetry, music, contemporary and traditional dance. A rescheduled date for the event will be communicated on the Siksika Family Services Facebook Page (@SiksikaFamilyServices) in the coming weeks.

Siksika Food Centre for all Siksikawa, on & off reserve

Siksika Health Communications

The Siksika Food Centre is open to all Siksika Nation members, both on and off reserve. All we ask is you arrange transportation to pick up your hamper.

Intake is Monday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: call 403-734-5716. It's a fast process, during which you will receive your appointment for pick up as well.

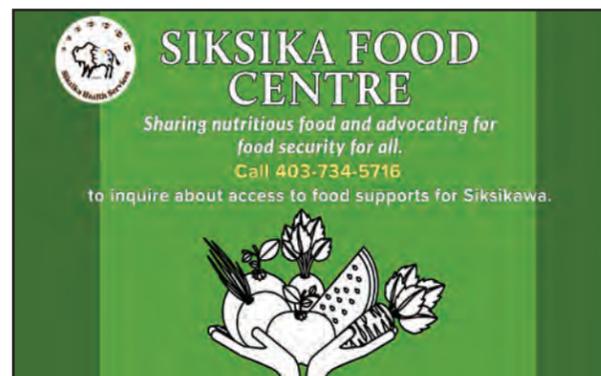
Tuesday - Friday are hamper pick up days,

from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Members can apply once every 30 days, if needed.

And a friendly reminder that the Fresh Routes Food Market is open Thursdays from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m., located at the north entrance of the Siksika Support Centre.

Fresh food baskets including fruit, vegetables, and a carton of eggs are available for only \$20. Cash, credit, and debit are accepted.



Siksika Lands and Resource Management is asking for your input into Land Use Plan

Siksika Lands and Resource Management

Building The Future

Siksika Chief and Council embarked on major undertaking to ensure our land continues to benefit the Siksika Nation people today and future generations by developing a Land Use Plan.

The Land Use Plan will promote Siksika social and economic conditions by identifying and guiding land usage by community development, industry, agriculture, and protect cultural and sacred sites, and other us

What are the benefits of a LUP?

- Increased economic development, protection of traditional and sacred sites, and maintaining a healthy environment.
- Maintain land sustainability and productivity.
- Protecting Siksika values for our future Siksika Nation Members.
- Preserving Traditional values regarding land usage.
- Give the Siksika Members an opportunity to engage in the process by providing their valuable input, and description of historic land use activities.

- Help increase community social development, such as community centers with community programs, parks, and natural environment.

Why is a Land Use Plan important?

- Long range planning helps Siksika Nation member reach economic and social prosperity.
- For example, it will identify best land use planning to accommodate population growth, and identify the future housing needs.
- Improved decision-making process on Siksika Reserve Lands, but not limited to:
 - o Residential Development
 - o Commercial Development
 - o Industrial Development
 - o Community facilities
 - o Resource extraction activities.

What will the Siksika Land Use Plan address?

- Will help regulate activities that have an environmental impact.
 - Solve communal land Issues
 - Will help in the protection and preservation of Cultural, Traditional and sacred sites.
- There are 4 stages to the Land Use Process
1. Pre-planning

2. Development of the Plan
3. Implementation of the Plan
4. Monitoring, evaluating and adapting the plan.

Siksika Lands and Resource Management are currently in the pre-planning stage. Your participation is crucial to developing a plan that will reflect the needs of the Siksika Nation today and provide a secure and prosperous future for generations to come.

Siksika Lands & Resources Community Engagement will reach out to the Siksika Nation community to arrange meetings in the coming months. In an effort to keep our people safe during the pandemic, community meetings must adhere to Restriction Exemption Program guidelines. Posters will advertise meeting times and places.

In addition, the engagement team will meet with family and community groups. If you decide to form such a group, please contact the Community Engagement team:

Paul Melting Tallow, Community Engagement Coordinator: 403-499-8389

Crystallee Melting Tallow, Field Technician: 403-734-5332

You also contact the team through their Facebook page, Siksika Lands.

Taking advantage of FNMHF housing program

By Wesley Water Chief

Joni and Blaine Big Old Man are the latest Siksika Nation members to take advantage of the First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF) to purchase their own home. They are excited to move into their new home and are just waiting to have the gas line hooked up and a final inspection before the big day.

The couple admit it can be a daunting experience but encourage others to stick to their goals and you will eventually arrive at your destination.

"Just follow your dreams, if you want something you go get it and it takes a lot of support from other people. And don't give up. You have to keep going no matter what. There is also something that you are going to run into. You just have to push through and you will get it," said Joni.

The 1438 square foot house they decided to purchase was built by Nelson Homes in High River and was delivered by truck to Siksika Nation. Joni said they decided to purchase their home, and to go through the ownership program, because they couldn't get approval for on reserve housing.

"I thought it was time and we needed to do something and find something on our own because we tried with Siksika Housing but we were always denied application. So, I thought there has to be another way. I did some online research and Nelson Homes came up," said Joni.

"We have been waiting 10 years, even over 10 years to even qualify for a house through Housing; we never met the requirements or we have always been at the bottom of the list. So, we thought we need to think of something else and we thought of those other units where you are basically repairing a home. But we thought we might as well go brand new if we are going to go



Photo by Wesley Water Chief

Blaine and Joni Big Old Man and Nelson Breaker outside new home.

that way," said Blaine.

The FNMHF program is a partnership with the Bank of Montreal (BMO) and was approved by Siksika Nation Chief and Council in 2012 as an alternative for Siksika Nation members, who qualify, to acquire a home on the nation through a mortgage.

Nelson Breaker is a senior accountant for the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration and is the Market Housing Administrator for the FNMHF at Siksika Nation. He has 25 years of experience in finances and was the first person in Alberta to get a house built and backed by the program back in 2015.

Breaker said through the program applicants can apply for financial backing to build a new home on the First Nation or have renovations completed to their existing homes. To date 114 have applied for financial backing at Siksika Nation and 10 applicants have been accepted.

"The other people did not qualify

because they weren't ready. They weren't ready with their budgeting, their credit check, and their job. These are the kind of things that we have to work on. Through credit counselling we work with them for a whole year to get their credit score back up there, to the levels that BMO wants so they can qualify for a mortgage," said Breaker.

Because he has been through the process, Breaker said he knows it can seem like a lot of red tape, but they are looking at ways improve and streamline the process for new applicants.

"We are trying to speed up the process through BMO, see where all the gaps are through the First Nation Market Housing. We are getting feedback from our nation members to see where the red tape is so others can have a smooth process," said Breaker.

The Big Old Mans say the process hasn't been easy and are thankful to Breaker for assisting them through the process.

"It has been up and down because most of the time you are doing things on your own, but Nelson was there to guide us, 'okay this what you need to do' so it was just basic step by step of trying to... cause you have to phone the power and the natural gas and utility companies. You have to request for a new service and that is what takes really long too," said Joni.

The Big Old Mans are currently residing with Joni's grandmother and the site they chose for their new home is located nearby and in the area where they grew up. The location also allows them to save money in the long run by being a spot that is accessible to the community water system, and a spot that doesn't require a lot of power poles to reach. Cost savings in the mortgage.

They look forward to the future when their mortgage is paid off and they can retire in comfort. But for now, they have a 25-year mortgage that they hope to pay it off sooner by taking advantage of times they will be allowed to make accelerated payments or make lump sums while avoiding a higher interest rate.

Joni said they see this as an investment and encourage others to consider going this route to get a home as well. They estimate that a one month mortgage payment is equal to what they would be paying rent somewhere else. "We thought of renting in Strathmore but why rent when you can use that money towards your own home, pay off your own home?" said Joni.

"I encourage nation members to look into your own home, I mean you have to have great credit and good references and I think this is the best way. Because this is your own; you paid it off and it is your own, it's yours to keep. And it is good for these younger ones to see that you could have your own home in the future, work for it," said Joni.



**SIKSIKA NATION
CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTION
\$250.00 PER PERSON**

Minor children will be receiving the full amount

**DECEMBER 16, 2021
Siksika Deerfoot Sportsplex
Siksika Nation, Alberta
9:00am – 8:00pm**

**DECEMBER 17, 2021
Siksika Calgary Office
60 Sunpark Plaza S.E
Calgary, Alberta
9:00 am – 8:00 pm**

**EVERY ONE MUST PICK UP THEIR OWN CHEQUE
NO EXCEPTIONS!**

THERE WILL BE NO DIRECT DEPOSIT

**COURT ORDERS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR CHILDREN
THAT ARE IN QUESTION
PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER CHILDREN
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

“COVID RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE”

For More Information Please Contact The
Membership Department
734-5135 or 1-877-734-5135