



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

## **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 Nation 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."



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

- 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.



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

- 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 schools. 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.



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

## 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



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

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,

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

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



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

## **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.



# Office of Chief and Council Government of Siksika Nation

**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:

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

Deadline: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Friday) at 4 pm

For more information contact Siksika Nation Chief and Council Liaison Ola Koleoso at [Olak@siksikanation.com](mailto: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**

Address: P.O. Box 1100 Siksika, AB T0J 3W0

Phone: (403) 734 5109

Toll free: 1-800-551-5724

Email: [sncc@siksikanation.com](mailto:sncc@siksikanation.com)