



A Publication of Alberta's Ministry of Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations (IIAR)

Red Deer MLA is new Minister of Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations



▲ Minister Cal Dallas addresses the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs on October 24, 2011.

Cal Dallas, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Red Deer-South, was sworn in as Minister of Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations (IIAR) on October 12, 2011. Prior to being appointed by Premier Alison

Redford, Minister Dallas served as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment.

His first time at the Cabinet table, the Minister says he is excited about his new

duties and looks forward to building positive relationships with Aboriginal leaders and communities in the province.

"I am eager to familiarize myself with the issues, aspirations and challenges of the 48 First Nations and 8 Metis Settlements, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Aboriginal people who call Alberta home," said Minister Dallas. "I look forward to getting to know and working in close collaboration with Aboriginal leaders and communities."

"I think the new Ministry makes good strategic sense. Many issues facing Aboriginal communities involve multiple levels of government so we will be well-positioned to make the important connections."

Before his political career, Minister Dallas

was executive director of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce; and before that, he worked in the printing and publishing industry for 25 years. That included nine years as publisher of the Red Deer Express weekly newspaper.

Minister Dallas has been active in a wide range of organizations including the Red Deer Rotary Club, United Way, Red Deer College, STARS, and Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness. His extensive community involvement earned him the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year in 2002 and a Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2003. Minister Dallas also received the Bill Draayer Award from the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association in 2004 and the Alberta Centennial Medal in 2005.

Bigstone TLE signing marks new beginning for First Nations

A ceremony was held September 12, 2011 at Oski Pasikoniwew Kamik School in Wabasca to celebrate the conclusion of the Bigstone Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claim. Len Webber, former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada attended the event together with Bigstone Cree Nation Chief Gordon Auger, Peerless Trout First Nation Chief James Alook and many community members.

Alberta has been involved in the Bigstone negotiations since 1998 when the claim was accepted by Canada for negotiation. The parties reached an Agreement in Principle in 2007 and final agreement in 2010. The end result is two agreements: one between Canada and Bigstone, and one between Canada and Alberta.

Under the terms of the agreements:

- New reserves totaling 140,000 acres will be set aside for Bigstone (including Chipewyan Lake and Calling Lake) and for the new Peerless Trout First Nation.

- Alberta provided \$28 million and a commitment to construct two new elementary schools in Peerless Lake and Trout Lake.
- Canada agreed to create a new First Nation, Peerless Trout First Nation, and will contribute \$220 million which includes funds for catch-up infrastructure, in addition to a commitment to construct a new high school and health centre for the new Peerless Trout First Nation.

This agreement helps better position Bigstone and the new Peerless Trout First Nation to create new business opportunities, build a skilled workforce, and partner with resource developers for greater economic development.

The Bigstone Cree Nation was an original signatory to Treaty 8 in 1899. The federal government set aside reserve land based on population surveys. In 1981 Bigstone asserted a claim citing that insufficient land was provided based on the surveys of 1913 and 1937.

Land claims are a federal responsibility, but Alberta has a constitutional obligation under the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (Constitution Act, 1930) to transfer back to Canada unoccupied Crown lands necessary to allow Canada to settle claims with First Nations.

Alberta has played a key role in successfully settling 13 land claims since 1986. Bigstone is the largest TLE claim in the province's history.



▲ Chief James Alook and Chief Gordon Auger

Supreme Court upholds Alberta's Métis legislation



On July 21, 2011, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously against a decision by the Alberta Court of Appeal that had struck down two sections of the *Metis Settlements Act* relating to membership on Metis Settlements.

The case—*Alberta (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development) v. Cunningham*—arose when the Council of the Peavine Metis Settlement near High Prairie had eight members of the Cunningham family removed from the Settlement membership list after they had registered as Status Indians. The move was in accordance with sections 75 and 90 of the Act, which exclude Status Indians from Settlement membership in all but very rare cases. The former members filed a lawsuit against the Alberta government, claiming their loss of membership violated the guarantee of equity, association and liberty of section

15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench had initially dismissed the claim, but the Court of Appeal overturned the decision and restored the family's membership. The Government of Alberta appealed this ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada, which reversed the Court of Appeal's decision.

The Government of Alberta continues to review the possible implications of the ruling. In the meantime, the Supreme Court decision is another important step in the ongoing preservation of Métis culture, Métis land and Metis self-governance in the province. It supports Alberta's original goal in establishing the Metis Settlements as a land base exclusively for use by Métis people in the province.

Alternative process in Metis Settlement resource development

The Co-Management Agreement between Alberta Energy and the Metis Settlements General Council (MSGC) establishes the rules for sub-surface mineral exploration on the Metis Settlements and has provided the Settlements with a significant revenue stream since 1990.

On August 30, 2011, the CMA was amended to allow for the Minister of Energy to consider an alternative procedure for issuing a resource agreement with the Settlements. With this ability in place, Gift Lake Metis Settlement will undertake a pilot project that will enable them to acquire mineral leases through a private direct sale rather than the usual public auction process. Based on the success of the pilot, the new process may be expanded to all 8 Metis Settlements, potentially leading to renewed oil and gas development – and increased revenue – for these communities.

To learn more, visit: <http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/973.cfm>

Toward a national approach on Aboriginal issues

On April 19, 2011, former Minister Len Webber joined his ministerial colleagues and leaders from five National Aboriginal Organizations from across Canada in Toronto for a third meeting of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG).

Discussions focused on a coordinated national approach to close the socio-economic gap between First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and other Canadians. Ministers and Leaders are moving forward on a plan to address the unique challenges and opportunities of Aboriginal peoples. The plan focuses on three key goals:

- Improving educational attainment for Aboriginal students;

- Supporting economic development in Aboriginal communities; and
- Ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

Outcomes of the meeting included a continued call for the federal government to join the AAWG's discussions and agreement to pursue a formalized relationship with the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) on shared priorities.

The working group also launched a new website highlighting Aboriginal economic development success stories: <http://www.aawgeconomicdevelopment.ca/main.html>

Nominate an outstanding Aboriginal woman entrepreneur



Do you know an outstanding Aboriginal woman entrepreneur? Nominate them for an Aboriginal Woman Entrepreneur Award of Distinction! Sponsored by Alberta Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations, this award recognizes leadership and innovation in business.

Awards will be presented at a ceremony in Edmonton in March 2012. To make a nomination, visit www.abbusinessawards.com (click on Learn More) or e-mail Tracy Eloffson at the Alberta Chambers of Commerce at telofson@abchamber.ca by end of day **November 25**.

Aboriginal Relations 2010/2011 Annual Report

The Aboriginal Relations' 2010/2011 Annual Report is now available. The report highlights the significant progress made on business plan goals and strategies over the year.

To view a copy of the report, visit: <http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/920.cfm>

Connecting the Dots for Aboriginal workers

The Alberta government has released its response to a report from the MLA Committee on the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Workforce Planning Initiative. Released on May 6, 2011, the *Government of Alberta Response to Connecting the Dots: Aboriginal Workforce and Economic Development in Alberta* outlines a plan to work with the Aboriginal communities to better connect people to the job market.

As Alberta's economy recovers and the province forecasts a shortage of workers, working with Aboriginal people to ensure they are included in Alberta's workforce is a key priority for the Alberta government.

Over an 18-month period, a four-member MLA committee travelled to communities across Alberta. They met with Aboriginal leaders, businesses, schools and community organizations to gather information and discuss local needs and priorities. Over the course of its

dialogue, the committee heard about successful businesses and training programs while identifying areas that still need improvement. Their *Connecting the Dots* report outlines 30 recommendations to support relationship-building and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. These include:

- improving the coordination of employment and training programs;
- creating employment and training programs that connect Aboriginal people and communities to local industries;
- developing better labour market information in Aboriginal communities; and
- improving internet access on First Nation reserves and Aboriginal communities.

The MLA report also called on the Alberta government to develop an



Aboriginal Workforce Strategy to address the workforce and skills training needs, and goals of Aboriginal people in the province. Government accepted this recommendation, and several government ministries will spend the next two years focusing on nine strategic priorities, including issues related to collaboration, coordination and commitment; education, learning and community; urban Aboriginal people; capacity building; and improving communication and awareness.

To view *Connecting the Dots* and the Alberta government's response, visit employment.alberta.ca/betw.

Aboriginal Economic Partnerships Annual Results



The Aboriginal Economic Partnerships Annual Results 2009/2010 summarizes the Ministry's key initiatives supporting Aboriginal

economic development in Alberta and highlights some of the success stories that are part of the growing economic strength of Aboriginal communities.

The 2009/2010 year marked a new focus on collaboration and partnerships, and the Ministry has expanded its role beyond simple funding.

The First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative (FNEPI) program continues to be an important component of the Government of Alberta's commitment to increase Aboriginal participation in the province's economy. Developed in 2005, FNEPI works directly with industry and First Nations communities to create new business projects by encouraging industry partnerships,

strengthening economic capacity and providing entrepreneurial support.

Since its inception, FNEPI has supported more than 100 new projects, and in 2009/2010, a total of \$5.6 million (combined funding from Aboriginal Relations and Employment and Immigration) was invested through the program. Work is underway on the 2010/2011 report.

To view the Aboriginal Economic Partnerships Annual Results 2009/2010, visit www.aboriginal.alberta.ca

Work on FNMI education gains momentum

Education is the key to unleashing the potential of Aboriginal young people and is a building block for future success. Together with other Ministries, IAR works with Aboriginal leaders, communities and the federal government on policies to support and increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement.

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Partnership Council was established in October 2009 and has been working since to guide the future direction of FNMI education in Alberta.

At their most recent meeting on September 19, 2011, Council members heard an update from the working group about progress in implementing the Year One Action Plan. Among others, highlights included completion of an e-scan to identify gaps

in early childhood, literacy and parent support programs for FNMI communities and work on teacher education as it relates to enhancing teacher FNMI knowledge. Alberta Education has also provided financial support that enabled 28 First Nation and Métis parents from Treaties 6, 7 and 8, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council to take part in the March 2011 *Learning Together for Success Conference* in Edmonton. The annual conference is an opportunity for participants to learn about the latest research on FNMI education and hear first hand from First Nations, Métis and Inuit community educators and leaders.

The goal of the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on First Nations Education* is to improve education

outcomes for First Nations students. Signed in February 2010, the MOU is a long-term framework for collaboration among the three parties (federal-provincial-First Nations) to support a range of education-related issues. These include parental and community engagement, Treaty and cultural awareness, and on-going work on tuition and education service agreements. Since the signing, four sub-tables continue to make progress on several commitments under the MOU, including establishment of the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (IKWC), a comparative funding and program analysis, identifying and addressing issues related to tuition agreements; and development of a data sharing protocol as it relates to First Nation student information. View the MOU at <http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/997.cfm>.

Protocol Agreement: The commitment continues



On May 31, 2011, former Premier Ed Stelmach joined Grand Chief Charles Weasel Head (Treaty 7) and Grand Chief Arthur Noskey (Treaty 8) for their annual meeting under the Protocol Agreement on Government to Government Relations.

Chaired by former Minister Len Webber, the agenda included an update on the consultation sub-table, environmental

issues, revenue sharing, a proposed MOU on First Nations Children and Youth, and sustainable resource development topics. Then Ministers Rob Renner, Minister of Environment, Mel Knight, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, and Yvonne Fritz, Minister of Children and Youth Services, were also on

hand for the meeting.

The former Premier, Grand Chiefs and Ministers had some candid discussions and reaffirmed their governments' commitment to working together on important matters.

The gathering marked former Premier Stelmach's final meeting with Grand

Chiefs under the Protocol Agreement. It was a time to reflect on achievements of the last three years and to pay tribute to Premier Stelmach's commitment to the vision and goals of the Protocol Agreement.

To view the Protocol Agreement visit:
<http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/534.cfm>

The Premier, Minister of Aboriginal Relations, and the Grand Chiefs and Vice-Chiefs of Treaties, 6, 7 and 8 signed the Protocol Agreement on Government to Government Relations on May 22, 2008. Since that historic day, government leaders have met several times to build relationships and discuss issues of mutual concern.

Celebrating National Aboriginal Day



On June 16, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations helped kick-off celebrations across Canada by hosting its annual noon-hour gathering at Edmonton City Centre Mall.

Festivities were led by traditional dancer and cultural facilitator Adrian LaChance and featured performances by the Blackstone Singers, the Running Thunder Dancers, Little Jiggers Métis dance troupe, and First Nations singer-songwriter Akina Shirt.

Former Aboriginal Relations Minister Len Webber welcomed the crowd and announced a new Safe Communities Innovation Fund project: the New in Town Aboriginal Welcome Service. Coordinated by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society in partnership with Boyle Street Community Services and Boyle Street Aboriginal Services, the three-year pilot supports Aboriginal people and their families who have recently moved to Edmonton.

For more photos visit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/albertaaboriginalrelations/sets/72157626906679759/>

To view the video, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/user/aralberta>

Consultation Policy Review

Alberta was the first province to implement a First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development. The Policy ensures resource development is done in a way that respects Treaty rights, while supporting a confident investment environment for industry. Led by IIAR, the Government of Alberta is nearing completion of receiving input for its scheduled review of the Consultation Policy. The review process included more than a year spent gathering important input from First Nations, industry and municipalities. This comprehensive feedback process ensures that all parties had the opportunity to provide their views, and that we are working together to continue strengthening the consultation process. It is expected that the revised Consultation Policy will be released in 2012.

Letter of Intent supports collaboration on Fort McKay health study

A Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed by former Health Minister Gene Zwozdesky, former Minister Len Webber, Fort McKay First Nation Acting Chief Raymond Powder and Métis Nation Local #63 President Ron Quintal. The LOI was drafted collaboratively with Fort McKay First Nation and outlines a shared commitment to work together on a community health assessment in the community of Fort McKay. With funding support from Alberta Health and Wellness, the assessment will be community-driven and supported by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. André Corriveau. The study will examine multiple factors affecting health and supports the Alberta government's efforts to meet health, environmental, economic and social objectives.

Updated Ministry resources

IIAR has released updated versions of the following:

- *Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in Alberta*
- *Metis Settlements and First Nations in Alberta: Community Profiles*

Fact Cards

- *Aboriginal Economic Development*

- *Aboriginal People and the Oil Sands*
- *Land Claims*

To request copies of any of these materials, call 780-422-2462. PDF versions are also available online under the Resources section of the IIAR website @ <http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/818.cfm>.

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The Orator is also available online as a PDF document at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca
ISSN 1920-3381 PRINT
ISSN 1920-339X WEB

Government of Alberta