



Metis Settlements General Council

MSGC-SPI Open Entrepreneurship graduates the first of many small business developers

For Immediate Release

Edmonton – January 20, 2022: “There are many wonderful things that will never be done if you don’t do them,” said Harley Poitras, after completing her business plan for Miss Chief Farms. Harley is part of an Indigenous learner’s group coordinated by the Metis Settlements General Council. She’s the first learner to complete a forty-hour training path on LinkedIn Learning, and table a business plan for a \$1,000 award. The award is open to all Metis Settlement Members. “This grant goes towards the working capital of my business – and I’m ready to go to market this summer. I have great partners and a business geared towards serving my community.” Miss Chief Farms engages in food production, artisan wood products, and commercial tourism accommodation on the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement. Harley selected a business in horticulture to take advantage of other grant supports from Agriculture Agri-food Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Indigenous Services Canada, the funders in the Strategic Partnership Initiative. Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement Council and Administration support the initiative with labour, coordination, equipment operation, and assistance in set-up.

“We’re looking forward to working with the MSGC on food production because its important to all our people. We see this as a great way for seniors to pass on their knowledge to the youth, and for everyone to learn about sustainable business development”, said Bobby Ghostkeeper, Chair of the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement. “The goal of this program is to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of our Settlements”, said MSGC President Herb Lehr. “We’re bringing the basics of marketing, and accounting to anyone that wants it, in an easy online channel. This program is geared to help entrepreneurs access markets directly.”

“We support the Metis Settlements Entrepreneurial spirit as it will help grow the local economies of our communities,” said Dot Anderson, Elected Secretary of MSGC. “The online training path gives us a common language of business development, and we help each site find funders and markets”, she continued.

The project goal is to transform individual households across the Metis Settlements into net food exporters, generating approximately \$10,000 in fresh produce sales per site, on 1/8th of an acre. The pilot in 2021 at Fishing Lake Metis Settlement set standards and provided lessons to the entrepreneurs and project managers. It tabled several thousand plates of nutritious fruits and vegetables at fair market prices.

Bradley Scott Henry is a project advisor with Canada. “We’re leveraging labour and land against some modest taxpayer investments”, he said. “Many of our sites are bringing matching capital, when they realize the great opportunity of fresh and local food sales.”

Darcy Dupas is the project coordinator. “We’re helping one family at a time and are grateful for all our learner contributions. These farming start-ups will contribute to our nation wide goal of becoming a net food exporter. The model ensures food access and security for participants, their families, and their local and regional customers.”

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SUITE 101 10335-172 ST Edmonton, AB T5S 1K9

Ph: 780.822.4096 Fax 780.489.9558 Toll Free 1.888.213.4400 www.msgc.ca



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For Media Inquiries

Catherine Keill, MSGC Media Relations

Keill & Company Inc.

780 690 5283

catherine@keill.ca

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