

AITSIMINIKI

May 2025 • litainsimopi



**LEADING
BY
EXAMPLE**

**SPRING
INTO
SUMMER**

**SIKSIKA
NEWS**

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Bringing movement and fitness to all



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AITSINIKI MAGAZINE

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WELCOME

Oki, and welcome to the latest edition of Aitsiniki Magazine!

We are proud to bring you another issue filled with powerful stories, community highlights, and important updates from across Siksika Nation. This edition reflects the strength, resilience, and unity of our people as we continue to uplift and support one another through shared experiences and accomplishments.

One of the major highlights in this issue is the Red Road Reclamation Relay Run, a deeply inspiring event facilitated by Dustin Dick, a dedicated Siksika Nation community member who is walking his own path of sobriety—and encouraging others to do the same. His commitment to recovery and community healing has sparked meaningful conversations and ignited hope across our Nation. His story is one you won't want to miss.

We've also attended and covered numerous events throughout the Nation—each one a testament to the strength of our

culture, the passion of our people, and the importance of coming together in unity. Inside this issue, you'll find features on recent community gatherings, upcoming event dates, and important notices from the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration to help keep you informed and engaged.

We're also excited to welcome two new members to our team this summer: Lexxington Many Heads and Syrianna Running Rabbit, our post-secondary summer students. We look forward to their fresh perspectives, creativity, and contributions to Aitsiniki Magazine as they begin their journey with us. Be sure to watch for their work in this and upcoming issues!

There are many more stories waiting for you within these pages—stories of perseverance, celebration, remembrance, and future goals. We invite you to explore them all and join us in recognizing the voices, visions, and victories of our Nation.

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Denounce Bill 54 and Reaffirm Treaty Sovereignty

Submitted by the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council

On May 1, 2025, the Chiefs of the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy)—representing the Nations of Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and Aamskapi Piikani—formally denounced Alberta’s proposed Bill 54, the Citizen-Led Referendum Act. They stated that the bill is incompatible with the Canadian constitutional framework and undermines the legal obligations established through foundational treaty agreements.

The Chiefs emphasized that the 1877 Blackfoot Treaty 7, alongside Treaties 6 (1876) and 8 (1899), was negotiated as a nation-to-nation agreement grounded in mutual recognition, peaceful coexistence, and shared stewardship of territory. These treaties were not instruments of land surrender and remain binding legal frameworks within Canada’s constitutional structure.

The Chiefs reaffirmed that Blackfoot sovereignty predates Alberta’s entry into Confederation and is anchored in Nitsitapii natural law, further reinforced by the 1855 Lane Bull Treaty. This sovereignty extends across the imposed Canada-U.S. border, encompassing traditional territories in both Alberta and Montana. As such, the Chiefs argued that provincial referendums—especially those addressing constitutional questions such as separation—lack the jurisdiction to alter, override, or reinterpret treaty rights, which are protected under both domestic and international law.

Today, the Siksikaitsitapi Confederacy governs over 25,000 members and exercises stewardship over approximately 2,500 square kilometers of land in southern Alberta. This governance is enacted through Indigenous

legal orders transmitted through generations and remains active in areas including land management, cultural revitalization, and intergovernmental relations. The Confederacy’s responsibilities are grounded in ancestral law and actively uphold Blackfoot nationhood.

The Chiefs called on Premier Danielle Smith to withdraw Bill 54 and redirect provincial focus toward treaty education, reconciliation, and the fulfillment of Alberta’s constitutional and legal obligations to First Nations. They concluded by affirming that the Blackfoot Treaty remains a living, sacred covenant that must continue to guide relationships between governments - “as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow.”

Mentorship and Trade Program Tradeshow

Siksika Nation is pleased to announce the launch of the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration Mentorship and Trade Program, a key initiative designed to meet the growing needs of our community.

To support the successful development and delivery of Siksika Nation Tribal Administration Mentorship and Training Program, SNES, Siksika Employment and Training Services (SETS) and the Siksika Communications Department are hosting a con-

struction tradeshow. This event aims to gather information on available local labor and provide a platform for community members to meet with businesses.

The tradeshow will be held at the Siksika Piiksapi Memorial Arbour, on June 4th 2025, from 10.00 AM - 3.00 PM. We invite community members to attend and share their resumes. Information collected during the tradeshow will be used as the Memorial Park

Buildings Program progresses. If you are interested, please RSVP. Should you have any questions or need further details, please contact engineering@siksikanation.com, blaines@siksikanation.com or carson.brennen@hatch.com.

We look forward to your participation and the opportunity to work together to strengthen our community through the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration Mentorship and Trade Program.

Siksika Nation Direct Deposit Intake

Siksika Membership is hitting the road this May and June to help you complete your Direct Deposit forms – making it easier than ever to get signed up! Whether you're in Siksika, Calgary, Lethbridge, Kainai, or Edmonton, we've got a stop near you!

PLEASE NOTE: If your banking info has not changed since the last distribution, you will not need to submit these forms again. However,

you will need to submit a parent receipt form(s) if you are collecting distribution for your minor child(ren).

Here's where we'll be:

JUNE 2025 LOCATIONS

June 3 - Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park - 10AM-3PM

June 4 - Siksika Calgary Office, 60

Sunpark Plaza SE - 10AM-3PM

June 5 - Wingate by Wyndham, Edmonton - 10AM-3PM

Can't make it in person? No worries! You can still email your forms to: membership@siksikanation.com - it's fast, easy, and accepted! Questions? Call Siksika Membership at 403.734.5135.

Tree Seedling Giveaway!



Wednesday, June 18th from 10:00am-4:00pm, Project Forest will be giving away **free tree seedlings** to Siksika Nation Members! Join us at the Deerfoot Sportsplex to receive 5 seedlings per household and a **complimentary community barbeque** at noon.

The seedlings include:

- Raspberry
- Saskatoon
- Silver Buffalo Berry

Project Forest is planting 1,000,000 trees as part of your community shelterbelt program. Meet the team, stay for the food and grow the future!



Project Forest



AITSINIKI SUMMER STUDENT



○ ki my name is Ikinapaki (Gentle Woman), my English name is Lexington Manyheads and I am from Siksika Nation. My parents are Andrea ManyHeads and the late Frank Medicine Shield; maternal grandparents are Carol and the late Matthew ManyHeads; and paternal grandparents are Evangeline and Joe Leather. Currently, I am a summer student working with Siksika Media and a student at SAIT in Calgary, Alberta. At SAIT, I am in the business administration program, majoring in marketing and I am excited to be starting a summer position at Siksika Media

for the next 3 months. Eventually, after I complete my program at SAIT, I hope to land a marketing position and I would also like to open my own animal rescue & clinic, on or near the reserve, after receiving my doctor in Veterinary Medicine. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with family and outside, reading, beading, and writing/playing music - I'm in a band called Ekkohs with my brother (@ekkohsband, check us out!!). I am really looking forward to what my experiences with Siksika media will bring me and learning from my new colleagues! Kakiitahmatsiin!

NOW ONLINE



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Siksika Nation News



REVIVING OUR VOICE: THE SIKSIKATSIIPOWAHSIN LEARNING JOURNEY

By Shilo Clark

The Siksikatsiipowahsin Program brings together individuals of all ages from Siksika to learn the basic fundamentals and grammatical functions of the Blackfoot language in a non-academic fashion. This is a unique approach without the stress of assignments and exams. The participants sign up to sincerely learn Siksikatsiipowahsin and walk away with a grasp of the writing system and broadens their Blackfoot vocabulary. The program is offered two days per week, Tuesdays Dr. Vivian Ayoungman instructs the writing



system and Wednesdays Aitsipoyiiks (Blackfoot speakers) are invited to help provide an immersive environment. The participants are utilizing the skills acquired from day one to grasp the writing system and conversational aspects while Aitsipoyiiks are encouraged to share in the language their life experiences, stories or reminiscence of the old people from their childhood.

Since the program's inception in the Fall of 2024, approximately 40 Nation members have been inspired to continue building their foundational understanding of Siksikatsiipowahsin. Other activities the Siksikatsiipowahsin Program participated in are Beaver Bundle Ceremony, Big Smoke, Holy Hand Game and Buffalo Harvest. Fluent speakers are present to provide an immersive environment which is much needed to help establish the sounds of the language and to become familiar with what they are learning in the program.

The Siksikatsiipowahsin program would like to thank the Blackfoot speakers who have shared our beautiful language:

Allan Stevens, Dale Lowhorn, Martin Heavy Head,

Mildred Three Suns, Roanna Axe, Leanna Sleigh, Eugene Yellow Fly, Myrna Youngman, Faron Melting Tallow, Gwendora Bear Chief, Clement Leather, Eldon Weasel Child, Clayton Cutter, Angeline Ayoungman, Rufus Red Gun, Berry Yellowfly, Robert Big Tobacco, Randy Doore, Jenny Solway, Patrica Yellow Sun, Catherine Sleigh.

As the coordinator of the Siksikatsiipowahsin Program the goal is to invite a variety of Aitsipoyiiks to help with an immersive environment to the participants in ongoing sessions.

Kayihitsipimiohkitopi (Kent Ayoungman), Siksikatsiipowahsin Program Coordinator.

ITAI'SAKOPII'A "CHILDREN IN A GOOD HOME"



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Honoring THE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND MEN

A Powerful Walk by Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun College

Story and photos by Andrew Brecker

In a profound display of solidarity and remembrance, Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun Community College organized a powerful walk today to honor the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Men (M.M.I.W.M). This walk brought together students, staff, and community members to reflect on the ongoing epidemic of violence faced by Indigenous peoples across Canada, while also spreading awareness about the urgent need for justice and action.

The event began with a solemn gathering at both the Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun Community College campuses. The students, many of whom belong to the Siksika Nation, were not only walking for those they have lost, but also for

those still missing, with the message that every life matters. As the group began their walk around the College grounds, the atmosphere was charged with a sense of purpose and respect. Many of the participants painted their faces, an act that symbolized their commitment to the cause. The face paint, a tradition in many Indigenous cultures, became a powerful tool to express solidarity and resilience. Each stroke of paint conveyed not only a sense of mourning for the lost lives, but also a promise to continue the fight for justice and accountability.

The walk was not just a physical journey, but an emotional one. It brought attention to the widespread crisis that affects Indigenous communities in Canada, particularly the ongoing tragedy of Missing and

Murdered Indigenous Women and Men. Many of the students carried signs, each one displaying messages that ranged from personal tributes to calls for systemic change. The signs were visible, loud, and clear in their demand for justice. This walk also served as a reminder of the strength of Indigenous peoples and the need for unity in the fight against violence.

The students involvement in this event showed a new generation's dedication to ensuring that the voices of Indigenous people are heard, their stories told, and their experiences acknowledged. As the participants made their way around the College, their presence sent a strong message to those in attendance and beyond. It drew attention to the crisis of M.M.I.W.M not just



within the community, but also on a broader scale across Canada. The walk sparked discussions, brought about shared grief, and allowed participants to share their own stories and experiences in an open and safe environment.

This event highlights the importance of raising awareness on issues that are often overlooked or misunderstood. By engaging young people in such meaningful activities, Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun Community College are not only honoring those lost but also empowering the next generation to become vocal advocates for change.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Men epidemic remains one of Canada's most pressing social issues. The walk organized by Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun College is just one of many actions that need to take place to bring attention to this national crisis. The more people who stand together, the more likely it is that real change will come. In the days and years to come, it is crucial that we continue to listen, support, and advocate for the missing and mur-

dered, as well as their families and communities. Events like this walk are part of a larger movement that seeks justice, healing, and peace for all Indigenous peoples.

The message from today's walk was loud and clear: We will not forget. We will continue to fight for justice.

By honoring the lost lives and supporting the ongoing efforts for justice, Siksika Nation High School and Old Sun Community College have reminded us of the power of collective action and the importance of staying united in the fight for equality and recognition.



FIRE SEASON GETS AN EARLY START ON SIKSIKA

By Mase Crowchief



The month of May started with a wildfire igniting in the Map 8 area of Siksika, near Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park. It started on May 6th and subsided a few weeks later. Community members were able to donate supplies to the Siksika Fire Department, Siksika Peace Officers, and Siksika Public Safety, who were keeping control of the fire and keeping homes and people safe.

Mariah Crowchief, a community member who lives with her auntie—a mother to twin girls Zeria and Zariah—arrived home from school and picked her daughters up from

daycare. She started smelling fire, which her auntie dismissed at first, until Mariah couldn't bear the smell anymore. That's when she looked outside and saw flames and smoke.

“My siblings came flying down to come get us as we were taking stuff out the house. I ran back in to save my cousin's animals and eventually we managed to get out safe and in time. I was most worried for my daughter's first belongings, I worried that the house my auntie kept safe when it became hers would be gone, but I had hope cause through the thick smoke I could still see it was safe. Rushing out little kids in

seconds gave me a rush of panic trying to catch my breath.” Mariah Crowchief said.

Wildfires can affect everything—like people's mental health, safety, and can knock out power to water treatment plants and production plants. People from the east side were without water for a while. It's important to have empathy during times like this for the Siksika Fire Department, Siksika Peace Officers, Siksika Public Safety, and community members. Thank you to everyone who helped keep our community safe!

ROOTS AND RESILIENCE A FAMILY JOURNEY



By Mase Crowchief

On May 20th, 2025, Dustin Dick and Jennifer Calf Robe from Siksika Family Services and White Buffalo held their program Roots and Resilience: A Family Journey.

Participants took part in activities like creating crafts such as medicine pouches and miniature tipis, as well as engaging in trust-building games and group discussions about their family dynamics. Dustin and Jennifer were able to create a safe and trusting environment where parents and kids felt comfortable enough to admit they mostly spend time on their screens rather than with each other. One participant bravely spoke about breaking generational trauma by getting to know her kids, siblings, and her own parents.

Both parents and kids were able to connect in a game where they

guessed each other's answers on whiteout boards. A particular parent-kid duo guessed each other's answers right—when asked, “What does mom always say?” the mom wrote down her response, and the child guessed: “Clean the cat litter.”

The environment was safe, friendly, and filled with laughter and vulnerability. Dustin and Jennifer also provided snacks and drinks. We at Siksika Media and Communications wish Dustin and Jennifer the best with this incredible program!

“Roots & Resilience: A family journey is a unique family-based program that brings parents and children closer together through meaningful, hands-on activities rooted in Blackfoot culture. Led by us, Dustin Dick and Jennifer Calfrobe, the program runs once a week and focuses on reconnecting

families in a fun, supportive, and culturally grounded space. Designed to shift families away from screens and towards shared experiences, roots & resilience encourages parents and children to learn-side by-side—creating moccasins, medicine pouches, and miniature tipis, playing trust building games, and engaging in group discussions about emotions, teamwork, and values. Each session also weaves in Blackfoot language, teachings from elders, and community storytelling to help families deepen their cultural identity. This is not just a program for kids or adults—it's a shared journey. It's about finding common ground, exploring interests together, and building strong family's bonds through time, creativity and culture.” A statement from Dustin Dick and Jennifer Calfrobe.



By Shilo Clark

Lead by Example

When Melodie Ayoungman-Hunt speaks, her words carry the weight of love, resilience, and generational wisdom. As the founder of the Lead by Example Powwow, Melodie has turned personal tragedy into powerful community transformation. The powwow, she explains, was born from both tragedy and inspiration. Her son, Kristian, was murdered—a loss that changed her life forever. “The phrase ‘lead by example’ came from Kristian himself,” she remembers. “He wrote those words on my niece’s chalk wall. After we lost him, I knew I had to do something meaningful for the generations still to come.”

What followed was more than a memorial—it was a movement. “Our communities needed to come together,” she says. “Because there’s not enough education out there on First Nations, and that’s where racism stems from. So I thought:

let’s host a huge powwow, bring the finest dancers, and showcase our resilience and our beautiful way of life.” The Lead by Example Powwow, now entering its third year with the tireless help of Astokomii Smith as well as Steve Hunt, Melodie’s husband, returns to Strathmore from June 6th to 8th. “My biggest thing is to end racism. I know that’s a big dream, a big goal, but it has to start somewhere.”

Since its start, the Lead by Example Powwow has become a gathering where Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities meet—not just to witness cultural expression, but to participate in it. “We’ve had so many people say they’ve always wanted to go to a powwow, but weren’t sure if they were allowed,” Melodie says. “By bringing it into town and saying ‘everyone’s welcome,’ we’re showing just how needed this is.”

The third annual powwow promises

even more: three days of dancing, drumming, crafts, food, and connection. Visitors will experience firsthand—the beauty of Blackfoot traditions—the beauty of regalia, and the vibrancy of Indigenous culture. “It’s not just a show,” Melodie emphasizes. “It’s a time of coming together in a good way.”

But Melodie’s work doesn’t stop at the arena. She also founded a Cultural Sharing Day, which last year welcomed over 500 students from schools across the region. Through storytelling, plant teachings, dance, and teepee demonstrations, students are introduced to Indigenous ways of knowing—by Indigenous youth themselves. “Our students from Siksika shared about residential schools, about Blackfoot science and culture,” she says. “And that day is part of their healing, too.”

As a teacher, Melodie is reshaping education from within. “I get to



HOW ONE POWWOW IS CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS

teach our true history, about the treaties, even before students learn about the provinces and cities,” she explains. “I created a land-based learning program where we go to sites significant to our Blackfoot people. It’s beautiful. And it’s what’s missing in mainstream education.”

Melodie’s passion is palpable, but so is the burden. “Some days it’s tough,” she admits. “But when I hear my students say, ‘Yes, Mrs. Hunt, you have to keep going,’ that keeps me going.” Her work has already begun to ripple outward—leading to conferences, speaking engagements, and inquiries from towns and schools who want to replicate the model.

“This could have turned into anger,” she reflects. “It could have been a protest, a fight. But instead, I turned

to my teachings—my grandparents, our smudges, our ceremonies. And that’s what helps me continue.”

For those who attend this year’s powwow —or the Cultural Sharing Day on May 14th—Melodie hopes they leave not just with a memory, but a shift in perspective. “This is who we are. We’ve always been here. And now we’re leading by example.”

For more information about the Lead by Example Powwow, June 6-8 in Strathmore, AB, and the Cultural Sharing Day on May 14 at the Strathmore Motor Products Sports Centre, please check out www.leadbyexamplepowwow.ca



As the 2024-2025 season wrapped up, the Siksika Minor Hockey community came together for a well-deserved celebration at the Year-End BBQ & Awards Night. It was an evening filled with laughter, great food, and heartfelt recognition of the hard work and heart shown by every player, coach, and volunteer throughout the season.

This event wasn't just about the wins and losses, it was about the journey. It celebrated growth, teamwork, and the love of hockey that brings our community together each winter.

Awards were handed out to players who stood out for their skill, dedication, leadership, and sportsmanship.

Coach Rapuano: "Most of the key factors would be dedication all of the boys showing up to every practice and every game. Everybody on my coaching staff contributed. A lot of the kids who play elite hockey were also at practices helping out. It was a community effort, not just one guy. Winning Coach of the Year, for me, means my whole team shares that."

Q: Were there any pivotal moments that defined your season as a whole?

Coach Rapuano: "One that stands out was when we were down 3/0 in Red Deer. They scored three quick goals in about two and a half

I'm not originally from here, so to be welcomed in and trusted to coach and mentor these boys, and to have a season without any drama, made it one of the best years I've had in hockey. Playing, watching, and coaching this award is the biggest honour I've ever received."

Q: Now that you're in the offseason, what are your goals for next season, and what advice would you give to aspiring hockey coaches working with youth or junior players?

Coach Rapuano: "My goal is to stop finishing second and win that first-place title. We'll be focusing on more detailed aspects of the game: power plays, special plays,

By Marcus Smith

SIKSIKA MINOR HOCKEY

SEASON WRAP UP

From our youngest skaters to our most seasoned players, every athlete had something to be proud of. Coaches and volunteers were also recognized for their tireless efforts and commitment not just to building hockey players, but to shaping strong, respectful individuals both on and off the ice.

Interview with U18 Head Coach Matt Rapuano

This season, U18 Head Coach Matt Rapuano was awarded Coach of the Year, and for good reason. We caught up with him to reflect on the team's journey and his perspective on coaching in Siksika.

Q: What were some key factors that led to your team's success this season?

minutes. We only had about eight guys on the bench, half the team was late but we came back and won that game. After that, we were just rolling."

Q: What values or habits do you emphasize in your team?

Coach Rapuano: "Right from the start of the season, I preached along with the rest of the coaching staff that we don't care about wins or losses. What matters most is compete level, effort, and teamwork. Teamwork was our main focus this year, and it's what helped us reach the final."

Q: What does winning Coach of the Year mean to you personally?

Coach Rapuano: "It's a huge honour, especially winning it here in Siksika.

penalty kills since we spent most of this season learning our system. To other coaches: today, you have to coach every player differently. You need to understand how to approach each individual. But above all it's about teamwork and effort. If your players are willing to go to war for each other, then wins and losses won't matter. That's the main goal as a coach."

As we head into the off-season, we carry with us memories of hard-fought games, early morning practices, and friendships that make the sport so special.

Congratulations to all players, coaches, families, and volunteers for another unforgettable season. Here's to another great year ahead and to the bright future of hockey in Siksika!

I.S.H.O.W BRINGS ADAPTIVE SPORTS TO INDIGENOUS YOUTH

By Andrew Breaker

Jason Bishop is the founder of I.S.H.O.W, which stands for Indigenous Shooting Hoops on Wheels. Through this inspiring program, Jason travels to various communities and settlements across Alberta, including places like Crowfoot Elementary School, to introduce and promote adaptive sports, with a primary focus on wheelchair basketball.

I.S.H.O.W is more than just a demonstration. It serves as a recruitment platform to identify potential Indigenous athletes interested in competing on an all-Indigenous wheelchair basketball team. The vision is

for this team to travel across Alberta and potentially represent Indigenous talent throughout Canada and even North America.

The program was born out of Jason's personal journey. After undergoing surgery for a right knee amputation and facing challenges as a transplant patient, Jason found it difficult to return to the workforce or participate in his former sport of swimming due to ongoing healing. Seeking a new path, he turned to wheelchair basketball, a sport he has now embraced for the past three years.

"It's an excellent showcase program," Jason shared, "It helps kids develop empathy for those around them, and also provides an outlet for students and community members living with physical disabilities. It brings people together; families, siblings, and entire communities, to support and uplift those who are differently abled."

Jason Bishop's story and the I.S.H.O.W program are a testament to resilience, inclusion, and the power of sport to unite and empower communities.



SIKSIKA PUBLIC WORKS AND ARCADIS PLANS FOR CROWFOOT CEMETERY

By Tyrone Sitting Eagle

Siksika Public Works is collaborating with Arcadis on a pilot project aimed at upgrading gravesites across Siksika Nation. Many of these sites are currently over capacity, and this initiative seeks to restore and maintain them with the dignity they deserve. The project will begin with Crowfoot Cemetery, one of the oldest and most historically significant cemeteries on the Nation. This work is a direct response to community feedback, as a recent survey identified gravesite care as one of the top priorities for Siksika Nation members.

On May 13th, Siksika Public Works Supervisor Lyle Breaker, along with Ernie Webster and Adam Haimour from Arcadis, visited the gravesite to assess the scale of the upcoming project.

The purpose of the visit was to gain a better understanding of the site's conditions and to begin identifying key tasks that will need to be addressed. This includes tasks such as locating existing graves that may be outside the premises, and identifying them as well, which was a common interest of Members who participated the Cemetery Project Questionnaire survey.

Lyle Breaker emphasized the importance of accurately locating the graves and noted that the necessary equipment is readily available to carry out this task without disturbing the burial sites.

"Now today, we have the equipment to perform sonars, without disturbing the ground" said Lyle, in an interview with Siksika Media.

While the team is eager to move forward, the project is still in its early stages. Taking the time to visit the site is a critical step, allowing the team—and architect Ernie Webster in particular—to begin planning and



laying the groundwork for successful implementation.

Following the initial site visit, architect Ernie Webster shared that he will begin drafting sketches and developing ideas inspired by the gravesite and informed by input from Elders and community members. For Webster, it was essential to physically visit and connect with the land where he will be doing the design work. The next steps will include conducting another site survey and gathering further feedback from the community before proceeding. Both Siksika Public

Works and Arcadis recognize the importance of ensuring the project reflects the values and wishes of the community.

"For myself, it is important I be able to visit and touch the land physically for designs that I craft" said Webster.

Adam Haimour, Principal Senior Practice Lead in Civil Engineering, spoke about the deep respect Arcadis holds for Blackfoot culture and the land on which they will be working. Over the past several months, the team has been dedicated to learning proper protocols and taking the necessary steps to move forward responsibly. Guided by Elders and Lyle Breaker, they are ensuring that the design and implementation of their work aligns

with and honors Blackfoot cultural values and beliefs. This commitment to understanding is why they are taking the time to listen and learn before beginning the project.

This project is being carefully planned with strong consideration for community input. It is shaped by feedback from the community, and moving forward, additional information will be shared with the public before any next steps are taken. The goal is to ensure that the project is implemented in ways that reflect the community's needs and priorities.



Photo provided by Dustin Dick

By Jasmine Majoros

The road to recovery isn't an easy one. Each road is unique to the individual, and just like grief, everyone takes it differently. This holds especially true for Dustin Dick, whose story began at the age of fourteen when he had his first drink—a habit that eventually carried into his adult years. His recovery also started on a day just like any persons: contemplating whether to seek treatment or not. For the most part, it was “wake up from a blackout and do it all over again,” as he summarizes it. But on this day, he ran into a friend who helped him realize he had a choice to make. By doing so, this friend took him to different skate parks in hopes it would influence his decision to seek treatment.

“Being alone with your thoughts is actually a scary thing. I used my addiction for everything. When I was down and out, I used it. I was depressed; I used it. If I was happy and needed to celebrate, I used it. Alcohol was always there. But in my

or move forward. He then stumbled across the Recovery Capital Summit in Calgary, which became the most influential turning point in his journey. Although it was tough figuring out how he was going to get there, being someone with very little means, he managed to make it. Arriving at the event with no idea what to expect, to his surprise, the summit became the building blocks of his recovery journey.

He was so moved by hearing everyone's stories of addiction and recovery that he realized recovery isn't done only one way. Seeing everyone come together showed him that it was also about community support. This event left such a profound imprint on his journey that he was eager to take this knowledge with him. He left with one question: how was he going to take this back to the place where his addictions had started? With a bit of soul-searching, he reconnected with his family and Blackfoot roots, which was something he never considered while in his addiction. Shortly thereafter, the

first year in recovery, I was introduced to all these programs that Siksika has to offer.”

As Dustin reflects on his first year of recovery, he describes it as “hitting a wall,” meaning he didn't know which direction to take—whether to stay where he was and wait to “fall off”

slogan “One goal, many journeys” for Red Road Reclamation was born.

“As nomadic Blackfoots, we moved as a clan. We followed the buffalo; we followed the seasons. Nobody was left behind. That is the kind of mentality that I wanted to bring to-day, because addiction is a community problem. I feel like we need to come up with a community solution, which is helping each other. You don't need to be in active addiction to be affected by it, and that one-size-fits-all approach with addiction just does not work,” Dustin explains.

Since then, he has remained focused on community engagement, having hosted a few events such as ‘Finding Your Path to Recovery’ on May 25th, 2024, and ‘Steps Towards Healing’ on November 25th, 2024. Most recently, he held his first relay run on May 16th, 2025. The run began at 8 a.m. on the 901-highway heading west as the starting point, finishing at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park.

With the help of contributing outlets, he wants to acknowledge and thank those who stood beside him through his events—especially Yolanda Big Old Man, Buck Breaker, and Camille Big Old Man. Dustin continues to bring inspiration to Siksika and beyond, to other surrounding communities, through his story, his dedication to his people, and lastly, his journey. With all this support and personal effort, he has remained sober since October 10th, 2021.

RED ROAD RECLAMATION

RESTORING BALANCE: SIKSIKA STUDENTS AND IINII (BISON) CONSERVATION



Submitted by Stephen Hart & Theresa McDonnell

At Siksika Board of Education (SBE), a unique collaboration is taking shape, united by wildlife stewardship and rooted in Siksika ways of knowing, being and learning. Building upon a 2022 shared Memorandum of Understanding, SBE Board Chair Carlin Black Rabbit initiated a student-centered, educational relationship with the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo for the 2024-25 school year.

Backed by generational knowledge and the guidance of Siksika Language and Culture educators, SBE students accepted the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo's invitation to suggest Blackfoot names for the soon-to-be-born bison calves. The ensuing project embraces Siksika children as knowledge-holders who are well-positioned to help protect and sustain local lands and animals.

In Siksika culture, names are more than labels—they are gifts rooted in powerful teachings of protection and growth. Names can carry strength, shielding the

one who receives it, as well as potentially helping them grow into their purpose. The bison-naming project provided students and staff with many opportunities to engage in authentic conversations about Siksika language and bison knowledge. In late April, a group of students and staff representing each of our school sites visited the zoo to view two pregnant bison, Keewatin and Taiga. In the conversations that followed, potential names were generated and debated. Guided by their esteemed Siksika Language and Culture teachers, students' shortlist of possible calf names reflect hope, resilience, and reconnection.

At the time of submission of this article, Taiga's healthy calf was born Monday, May 12, 2025 and we eagerly await the arrival of Keewatin's calf. Students and staff look forward to receiving updates from the Zoo. As we continue to foster this meaningful relationship, unique opportunities for learning and wildlife conservation thrive.



CELEBRATING MOTHER'S DAY WITH LOVE AND COMMUNITY

By Andrew Breaker

On May 9th, Chief Old Sun Elementary School hosted a Mother's Day Tea event, a beautiful and heartwarming event that brought together the students, parents, and staff to celebrate the incredible mothers and caregivers who play a vital role in the lives of the children. The event not only honoured these wonderful women but also created a memorable experience filled with joy, entertainment, and community spirit.

As a part of the event, each mother and caregiver in attendance was presented with a rose symbolizing the love and appreciation that staff and students have for the mothers and caregivers who nurture and support them. This small but meaningful gesture set the tone for the entire celebration, where gratitude was shared throughout the event.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the live performance by the Natosapi singers from Chief Old Sun Elementary School. The group's

performers gave the celebration a unique touch.



In addition to the entertainment, several vendors were set up at the event, offering a variety of Mother's Day gifts for those who were looking for the perfect



present. From handmade jewelry to personalized trinkets, the marketplace provided a wonderful opportunity for attendees to find something special for the mothers and caregivers in their lives.

A particularly sweet moment of the day occurred when we were invited to witness the Grade 1 students making cookies for their mothers and caregivers. The children worked hard, mixing, rolling, and shaping the dough with smiles on their faces, eager to create a sweet treat for the mothers and caregivers they hold dear. The laughter and excitement from the students added an extra layer of warmth to the event, leaving everyone with memories that will surely last a lifetime.

The Mother's Day Tea event at Chief Old Sun Elementary School was a success filled with moments of joy, reflection and togetherness. It was a celebration not only for the mothers but also for the vibrant community that makes the school such a special place.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone that helped make this event a success from the organizers to the drummers, vendors, and of course, the mothers and caregivers who continue to inspire and care for the next generation.



people, place





es and faces

photos by Siksika Media



CLASSIFIEDS

Fresh Routes market
Every Tuesday 12.00 - 2.00 PM
Fresh, healthy and affordable fruits and vegetables and other grocery items
For more information: freshroutes.ca

Training Opportunity
Siksika Employment and Training Services is seeking individuals interesting in Security Guard training.
Contact: 403.734.5136
Samantha Wolf Child 825.733.7265
or Jeffrey Water Chief 403.404.4389

Anxiety Management Support Group
Every Tuesday 5.00 PM - 6.00 PM
Health & Wellness Service Area
Deerfoot Sportsplex
A welcoming space for anyone wanting to learn practical skills for handling anxiety. Come join us in a supportive environment where you can learn, share, and grow together.
No registration required - just drop in!
Everyone welcome.

Siksika Addictions Program
NA Meeting
Thursdays from 7.00 PM to 8.00 PM
Siksika Health & Wellness Centre
Contact: 403.734.5687

Kimmapiyitssini Grief & Loss Support Group
Every second Tuesday at the Siksika Health & Wellness Centre
Call Home Care at 403-734-5695 to register, and to request transportation in advance



Interested?

Alumni are now being individually contacted. If you feel we may not have your contact info, please email us at www@csb.ca. With your Name and Year/In Name & Year of your loved one who represented this princess title, in case is possible.

It is our goal to celebrate the strong Indigenous women of the Alumni's past and future.

Did you know this year is the 50th anniversary of the Calgary Stampede First Nations Princess title?

With the Calgary Stampede beginning this July 4th, we would like to acknowledge all Calgary Stampede First Nations Alumni.

If you or someone you know is an Alumni, please contact us as soon as possible so that we may be able to celebrate the achievements of each and every Calgary Stampede First Nations Princess.

**HAVE AN EVENT COMING UP?
JOB POSTING YOU'D LIKE TO ADVERTISE?
SEND IT TO US
[MEDIA@SIKSIKANATION.COM](mailto:media@siksikanation.com)**



Siksika Addictions Program
AA Meeting
Thursdays from 7.00 PM to 8.00 PM
Siksika Health & Wellness Centre
Contact: 403.734.5687

Post Secondary Student Support Program
Deadline for Applications:
June 15 - Fall Start (September)
Application available at Old Sun Community College
403.734.3862
email: alisa.bullbear@oldsuncollege.ca
amie.sittingeagle@oldsuncollege.ca





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2025 SIKSIKA NATION FAIR POWWOW

JUNE 27-29

**SIKSIKA,
ALBERTA**

Grand Entry

Specials, Giveaways, & Honour Dances

Dance Contest

Friday 7pm
Saturday 1 & 7
Sunday 1pm

**Specials - TBA
Host Drum**

Ho-Chunk Station -
Lydon Station, Wisconsin

MC's

Bart Powaukee - Fort Duchesne, UT
Tony Delaney - Kainai, AB

Arena Directors

Rusty Gillette - Bismark, ND
Skunkie Scabby Robe - Tacoma, WA

Head Dance Judges

Patrick Mitsuing - Loon Lake, SK
Sophia Turning Robe - Spokane, WA

Head Drum Judge

Patrick Armstrong - Browning, MT

- SIKSIKA NATION IS NOT
RESPONSIBLE FOR SHORT FUNDED
TRAVELLERS, THEFT, OR
VANDALISM -

Pow wow committee reserves the right to
remove saved seating to ensure
equitable access for all visitors.

Chief and Council Giveaway

Post Secondary Awards & Honor Dance

Elders Lodge Staff Honor Dance

Khloe Watson - Initiation

**Outgoing Tiny Tot Princess
Tiny Tot Special**

**Outgoing Miss Kookona
Jr. Girls Contemporary Jingle Special**

**Outgoing Miss Siksika
Iron Woman's Fancy**

**Richard Sparvier & Family
Men's Chicken Dance Special**

**Shirley Bull Bear Memorial
Ladies Golden age**

**Crow Chief Family
18+ Ladies Contemporary Jingle Special**

Cota Big Snake Chicken Dance Special

**Garrett Alexander Memorial Chicken
Dance Special**

1st 2nd 3rd 4th

Men's Buckskin 18+
\$1,400 \$1,200 \$1,000 \$800

Golden age 55+
\$1,400 \$1,200 \$1,000 \$800

Sr. Adults 40-54
\$1,400 \$1,200 \$1,000 \$800

Jr. Adult 18-39
\$1,400 \$1,200 \$1,000 \$800

Teen Categories 13 - 17
\$700 \$600 \$500 \$400

Junior Categories 7-12
\$500 \$400 \$300 \$200

Contacts:

Powwow - Chris Bull Bear 403-634-7825

Vendors - Maryann BP 403-324-2677

Maryannbp@siksikafamilyservices.com

Hand Games - Kenn Many Heads 403-361-4285

Rodeo - Ida Duck Chief 403-901-5572

*Arbour will open 1 hour before grand entry
but will be open for showers for visitors.*

SIKSIKANATIONFAIR.COM

