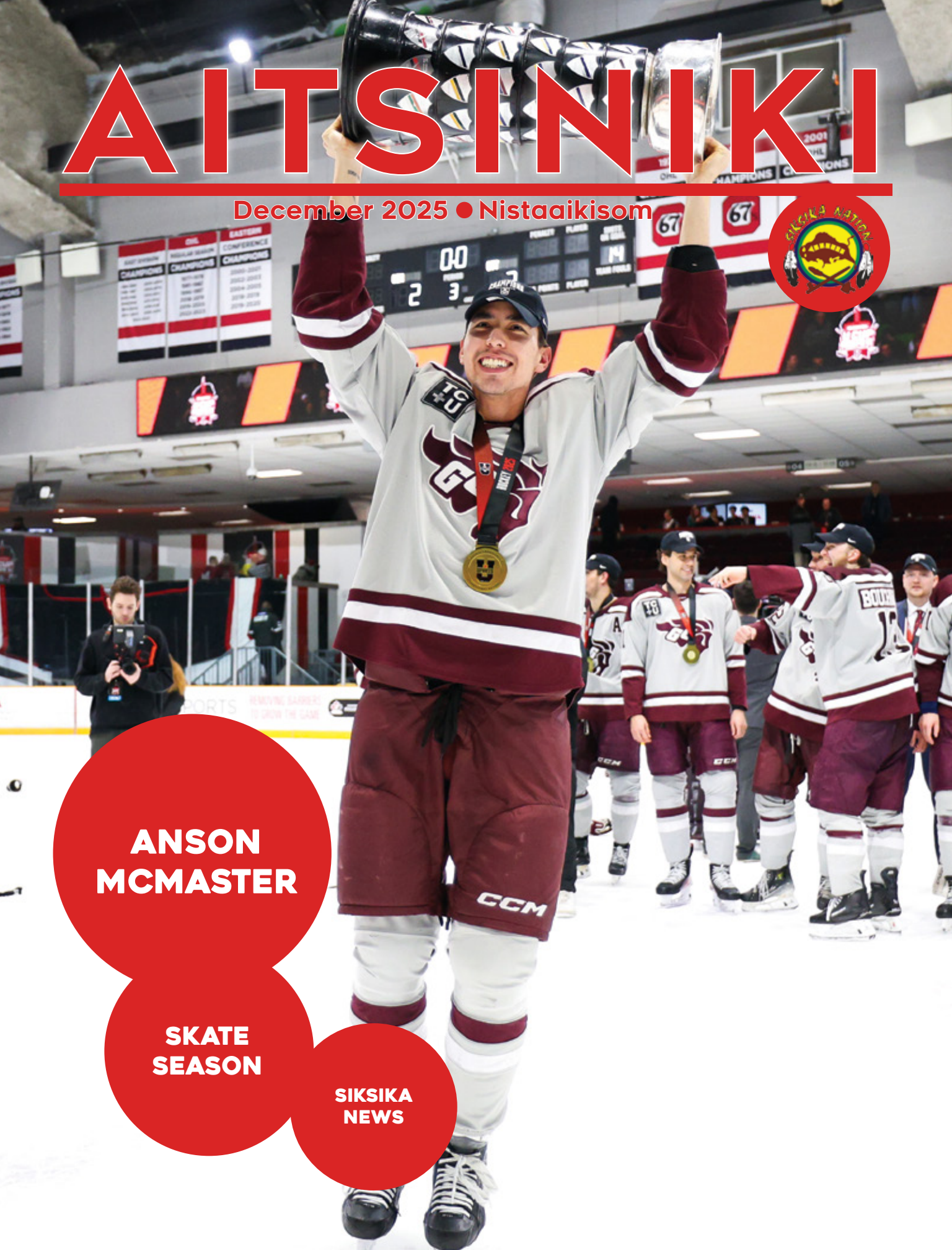


AITSINIKI

December 2025 • Nistaaisom



**ANSON
MCMASTER**

**SKATE
SEASON**

**SIKSIKA
NEWS**

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WELCOME

Welcome to the December issue of Aitsiniki! As we come to the end of another year, we are proud to share a special edition celebrating the achievements, talents, and stories of our Nation.

This month, we are honoured to feature a spotlight story on Anson McMaster, a dedicated Nation member whose hard work and passion have led to remarkable accomplishments in his hockey career. His journey continues to inspire youth and community members alike.

Following his story, you'll find hockey bios from various youth across the Nation—young athletes who are carving their own paths in the sport and showing tremendous heart,

skill, and determination.

We are also proud to highlight Frankie Wright, who recently received an award for his outstanding performance in football. His achievement is another shining example of the strength and talent within our community.

To our entire community, we wish you a very Merry Christmas. May this season bring warmth, joy, and time shared with family and friends. As the winter weather settles in, please remember to stay warm, stay safe, and take care of one another.

Thank you for reading and for being part of Aitsiniki. Enjoy the issue!

Office of Ohkinniinaa Ninaaiks Government of Siksika Nation

“Carney Government Reaches New Low on First Nation Safe Drinking Water”

PRESS RELEASE:

Siksika Nation, AB - In December 2021 the Government of Canada entered into a legal binding agreement to settle a lawsuit over First Nations' unsafe drinking water, with two key obligations: 1) \$6 billion over 10 years for First Nation water treatment systems and 2) new legislation to confirm, finally - once and for all, that First Nations people have a right to safe drinking water. The Carney government has successfully undermined both of those legal binding commitments.

Bill C -61, the First Nations Clean Water Act, died when the election

was called. The Bill confirmed that First Nations people have a human right to safe drinking water, specifically that there must be “substantive equality” between First Nation water systems with those enjoyed by all Canadians. Prime Minister Carney and Minister Gull-Masty, who is also a former Chief, committed to reintroduce the Bill in the current fall sitting of Parliament. With 12 days remaining in the fall sitting, there appears to be no intention by the Prime Minister or his government to honour that commitment.

The Carney governments' budget cut Indigenous Services Canada budget by \$2.3 billion reducing critical funding of First Nations' health, education and housing and other programs to pay for Canada's legally binding obligation under the First Nations

Safe Drinking Water Settlement Agreement to fund \$2.3 billion for First Nation water systems.

Speaking directly to the Prime Minister, (former) Chief Ouray Crowfoot said: “Canada's record on First Nations' safe drinking water is a national shame and an on-going violation of the most basic of human rights. It's hard to imagine how this could get worse, but Prime Minister Carney's government seems to have achieved a new low by denying our human right to safe drinking water and taking money from First Nations' essential services to pay for Canada's own liabilities under the settlement agreement. Is this what you meant in the throne speech when you said your government will be reliable partner to First Nations and ensure our well-being and prosperity?”

CONTACT Siksika Nation Communications - communications@siksikanation.com

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Email: david.bexte@parl.gc.ca
Website: www.davidbextemp.ca
Toll Free: 1-844-241-0020

David Bexte, MP
Bow River

PUBLIC NOTICE

Siksika Nation Public Works Snow Event Response

From: Siksika Nation Public Works Department

Winter is near, and Siksika Nation Infrastructure and Public Works would like to remind community members to prepare for changing conditions. As we move through the early stages of the season, here are a few helpful guidelines and safety tips to keep our roads, equipment, and community members safe during winter weather, and major snow events.

WHAT TRIGGERS A PUBLIC WORKS SNOW RESPONSE

Public Works may activate a snow response when any of the following conditions occur:

A severe weather warning is issued by Siksika Public Safety
Snowfall exceeds 20 cm, or there are strong winds over 40 km/h
Extreme cold is forecasted at -30°C or colder, including windchill
An Emergency Alert is issued by the Government of Alberta
Public Works or Ohkinniinaa ki Ninaaiks deems it necessary for community safety

OUR SERVICE PRIORITIES DURING SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

When Public Works deploys, our priorities are:
High medical needs - Ensuring access for homes and facilities with vulnerable Community Members or high medical needs.
Elders - Clearing roads and driveways used by Elders to ensure access and wellness checks can continue.
Community Support - Assisting other service areas such as Health, Public Safety, and Administration to maintain essential operations.

SAFETY AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION

We kindly ask all Siksika'i'koan and Community Members to:
Avoid unnecessary travel during heavy snowfall or blizzard conditions.
Keep vehicles and equipment off access routes to allow plows and graders to operate safely.
Report emergency after hour calls to 403-734-3815

EMERGENCY AND CONTACT INFORMATION

FORMATION

Infrastructure and Public Works Office (Business Hours): 403-734-4388
Public Safety After Hours Emergency (24/7): 403-734-3815
Public Works will continue to provide updates through Siksika Nation media, including social media and radio, throughout snow events.
Thank you for your cooperation as we work to keep Siksika roads safe for everyone.

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SIKSIKA NATION SWEARS IN NEW OHKINNIINAA KI NINAAIKS

By Jayson Black Kettle

Samuel Crowfoot and 12 elected councillors were sworn in as Siksika Nation's new Ohkinniinaa ki Ninaiiks (Chief and Council) during an inauguration ceremony on Nov. 27, 2025 at the Siksika Sportsplex.

Crowfoot's win comes after he spent two terms serving as a councillor for Siksika nation. He will lead the nation for the 2025-28 term.

Among those re-elected is Kendall Panther Bone, who will serve his ninth term. Panther Bone has served multiple terms previously and is on his third consecutive term since 2019. Also returning to council are Ike Solway, re-elected for his fourth term, and Tracy McHugh, re-elected for her third term.

Candace Backfat returns for her second term, as does Owen Cranebear.

Newly elected councillors joining Siksika's leadership are Carlon Big Snake, Romeo Crow Chief, Darrell Daniels, Jamie Spring Chief, Louise Doore, Dr. Lenora Rabbit Carrier and Stephen Yellow Old Woman.

Honour songs were sung for each councillor and for Chief Crowfoot, a callback to tradition.



This current Ohkinniinaa ki Ninaiiks will serve until the next election in 2028.
Chief:

Samuel Crowfoot

Councillors:

Candace Backfat
Carlon Big Snake
Owen Cranebear
Romeo Crowchief
Darrell Daniels
Louise Doore
Tracy McHugh
Kendall Panther Bone
Dr. Lenora Rabbit Carrier
Ike Solway
Jamie Spring Chief
Stephen Yellow Old Woman

**MERRY
Christmas**

David Bexte, MP
Bow River

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MEET YOUR OHKINNINAAKI NINAAIKS

By Siksika Nation Tribal Administration

Chief Samuel Crowfoot Nistoo an-nokook, Siipi-inaomahka. Nito-homoto Siksika Samuel Crowfoot leads Siksika Nation as its newly elected chief. Born to Ellen and Strater Crowfoot, he grew up on Siksika Nation before pursuing higher education in the United States. He earned an associate of science from Utah Valley University and a bachelor of arts in political science from Brigham

Young University. Crowfoot later received a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he specialized in trial advocacy and Indigenous law, and obtained his juris doctor degree. As a law student, Crowfoot worked in the Oneida Nation legal office and the state public defender's office. Before joining council, he served as a substitute teacher, judicial clerk and chief prosecutor for several organizations and tribal agencies. He later became chief judge for the Pueblo of Zuni Tribal Court.

Crowfoot returned home to Siksika



and was elected councillor in 2019, winning re-election in 2022. He played a key role in negotiations for the 1910 land claim settlement and chaired the legal task force. He speaks at events for Siksika Public Safety and the Police Commission and worked on major initiatives, including implementing Bill C-92 and drafting the first version of the Children's Law. He also contributed to programs in health, off-reserve affordable housing and children's and family services.

Councillor Romeo Crow Chief
Romeo Crow Chief is a member of Siksika Nation. Before working as a mentor and consultant, he spent 29

years with Siksika Nation in various financial and management roles. During that time, he also served a term as a councillor for the community.

Crow Chief was executive director and chair of the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Alberta for

eight years. His expertise includes finance, governance, administrative management, strategic planning, conflict resolution and community development.

Crow Chief also played a key role in building Natoyikiman Lodge, a home for single men in the Siksika community. During the 2013 flood, he raised \$36,000 for evacuees. He has and continues to serve on several boards and committees, including the Siksika Food Bank Society, RCMP COO's Aboriginal Advisory, Financial Management Board of Canada, Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada,

AFOA Alberta (which he helped establish), Siksika Economic Development Corporation and the Indian Business Corporation.

Councillor Louise Doore, Ahsopitisoowo (Safely Crossing Over) Louise Doore is married to Jason Doore, and together they have a blended family of four daughters and four sons, who have blessed them with six grandchildren. She is the youngest daughter of the late Chief Leo and Alma Pretty Young Man Sr.

Doore graduated from the University of Calgary with a bachelor of social work and a master of social work, specializing in leadership in human services with a focus on policy, organizational analysis and assessment, frameworks, partnerships and service structures. She is also a sessional instructor for the IBSW and SK programs at Natosapi Community College and a certified addictions counsellor with credentials from the Nechi Institute.

Councillor Jamie Spring Chief, Miisamoh'posskina'ki (Time Painted Face Woman)

Jamie Spring Chief grew up in Siksika, living in the Shouldice, South Camp, and Muskrat communities, and has also lived off-Nation in Cold Lake, Calgary, Strathmore, and Gleichen.

She is a graduate of Siksika Nation High School (Class of 2001) and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, along with a professional badge in Community and Economic Development from the University of Calgary.

Jamie's vision for Siksika is a strong and flourishing Nation with increased Blackfoot language speakers, employment opportunities, economic prosperity, and robust

social and health programs. She emphasizes respect and inclusion—not just consultation—in government and industry processes, ensuring meaningful engagement in economic development opportunities and funding negotiations. She also advocates for expanded sports, leisure, and extracurricular activities for youth.

Councillor Dr. Lenora Rabbit Carrier (née Ayoungman), Ed.D Lenora's parents were the late Rosella Ayoungman and Floyd Runner. Her grandparents were the late Arthur and Nora Ayoungman Sr., and George and Rose Runner. She is from the Sayiiks Clan and grew up alongside her immediate and extended family in Siksika. Lenora and her husband, Elroy, moved away for post-secondary studies to further their education and training, and later returned home to Siksika, where they raised their family and continued to work.

Lenora pursued post-secondary studies in a variety of disciplines. She earned a Bachelor of General Studies and a Bachelor of Education degree. While working as a permanent certified teacher, she completed a Master of Education degree specializing in curriculum and instruction and special education, and a second Master of Education degree specializing in educational leadership. Lenora also earned a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree from the University of Calgary, specializing in leadership, policy and governance. Among other certifications, she earned a Certificate of Indigenous Leadership, Governance and Management Excellence.

Councillor Candace Backfat, Natstihkasim Aakomianiista'paaki (Many Nations Woman) is honoured to continue serving Siksika Nation with a commitment to building a healthier, more equitable community

where every family can thrive. She was raised on the west end by her late grandparents, Philip and Jean Backfat, and supported by a strong circle of Blackfoot women, including her aunts Julia, the late Aldina, Esther and Elsie, who helped shape her into the woman she is today. Backfat and her partner, Natasha Calf Robe, have six children and care for their niece. Her family is actively involved in leadership and school activities – her son is the current elected chief at Chief Old Sun School, her younger son serves on school council, her niece was recently crowned Natosapi School Princess, and her daughter was elected to the school council at Siksika Outreach.

"I look forward to seeing each and everyone of you in our community. Don't be afraid to say hi."

Councillor Darrell Daniels Hello, Mi'ksstamik (Iron Bull) Darrell Daniels, Mi'ksstamik (Iron Bull), is honoured to serve as a newly elected member of Siksika Nation Chief and Council. He brings a strong educational background, board governance experience and deep roots in community engagement to his role. Daniels is committed to working hard for the betterment of Siksika Nation and its people.

He is the son of Cheryl Sitting Eagle and Dion Daniels. Daniels extends his gratitude to his wife, Jami, and daughter, Jayla, for their unwavering support throughout his professional journey.

Daniels looks forward to working with the community to build a stronger future for Siksika Nation. "I am excited to be on this journey and work the betterment of our Nation and our people. Together we will continue to build a stronger future for Siksika."

Councillor Carlon Big Snake

Carlon Big Snake is a family-oriented leader who has been married for 37 years. He takes pride in giving back to the community through sports, cultural involvement and business. Known for his commitment, determination and strong work ethic, Big Snake brings leadership qualities that inspire and mentor effective teams. Over the years, he has played a key role in successful community developments, earning respect from First Nations across Canada.

Big Snake holds a land resource management diploma from Olds College and completed the Indigenous Business Management Program affiliated with Mount Royal University. He also studied Aboriginal management and negotiation at the Banff Centre for Arts.

With more than 30 years of management experience in First Nation organizations, Big Snake has developed and managed \$200 million in assets for Siksika Nation and supervised more than 50 employees. He remains active in community activities, including sports and cultural events, and is passionate about youth development.

Councillor Kendall Panther Bone, Kistsiponista (Spotted Calf)

Kendall Panther Bone was born at the Blackfoot Hospital and raised by his grandparents, Emma and Christie Red Gun. Growing up on the Siksika reserve, he learned the values of community, resilience, empathy and compassion under their guidance. Education was a cornerstone of his upbringing. He attended local schools in Siksika and graduated from Cluny Bow Valley High.

After high school, Panther Bone began his career in carpentry before

moving into the oil and gas industry, where he worked in technical and coordination roles within land management. He earned a journeyman certificate (Red and Blue Seal) in carpentry and certifications in petroleum administration, land management, safety codes and applied management. Equipped with these qualifications, he stepped into leadership roles with a commitment to meaningful change.

Councillor Owen Crane Bear, Mii-stapainihki (Faraway Singer) Terms: 2022-2025, 2025-2028.

Owen Crane Bear was first elected as a member of Ohkinniinaa & Ninaaiks for Siksika Nation in December 2022 and re-elected for a second term in 2025. Born and raised in Blackfoot Country, he divides his time between Calgary and Siksika. Crane Bear's core focus is financial stewardship, aimed at improving the quality of life for all Siksika Nation members.

Councillor Tracy McHugh, Ksistsikomia'ki (Thunder Woman)

Councillor Tracy McHugh is serving her third term as councillor for Siksika Nation. She is the daughter of Kathleen McHugh and the granddaughter of the late Myrtle Schout (Kainai) and the late Clarence Sr. and Victoria McHugh.

Raised in Siksika, McHugh combines her community roots with education and experience in politics and international relations. Her background keeps her at the forefront of governance, policy development, disability awareness and community initiatives.

She serves on numerous committees and boards within Siksika Nation's departments and organizations. McHugh is committed to building a sustainable community and works with partners from

Siksika and beyond to achieve this goal. Her proactive approach to enhancing services and addressing local issues reflects her dedication to fostering a resilient and inclusive environment for all members.

Councillor Ike Solway, Ikinakitawoo (Slowly Crossing)

Ike Solway was born and raised on Siksika Nation. He has served the Nation for four terms from 2016 to 2028.

Solway is known for his strong connection with community members and his clear communication. Those values have helped him serve on the board of directors for all Nation entities and related bodies, as well as on numerous task teams, including Public Safety and Land Use Plan.

He maintains a strong connection to the traditional and cultural Siksika way of life as a member of the Brave Dog Society and as a provider of traditional wellness in the community. Solway says he is honoured to continue serving Siksika Nation as a member of Ohkinniinaa & Ninaaiks.

Councillor Stephen Yellow Old Woman, Ahnokiiduhpii

Stephen Yellow Old Woman grew up in Calgary and moved to Siksika 25 years ago, where he has lived since. He earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in business administration.

Yellow Old Woman brings 25 years of management experience on and off the reserve, working with various First Nation entities. He is also active in Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) advocacy within the motorcycle community.



SIKSIKA COUPLE OPENS PROSHOP IN SIKSIKA

Story and photos by Tyrone Sitting Eagle

On November 24th, Siksika Nation members Kyle Royal and Tess Little Chief—who are also husband and wife—celebrated the opening of their new business, War Pony Pro Shop. The shop offers a wide range of sports essentials, including hydration drinks, skate sharpening, and hockey supplies such as stick tape, mouth guards, and sports apparel.

The opening of War Pony Pro Shop marks a significant milestone for the community. It has already become a popular spot among local hockey players, from U7 to U18, and is also used regularly by the Siksika Buffalos. The idea for the shop was inspired by seeing similar pro shops in arenas throughout other communities. Kyle shared in an interview with Siksika Media, “Going to every other rink, and just thinking, why can’t we have this?”—a question that motivated him and his wife to

pursue this opportunity.

With this motivation, they began searching for grants and other funding options to launch the project. In the end, it was Siksika Nation that provided the start-up support, offering a total of \$10,000 to help get everything underway. This foundational support allowed their business to begin.

In their own words, Kyle and Tess shared an important message about the purpose behind War Pony Pro Shop:

“We want our vision to be clear for the people of Siksika. While we’ve seen pro shops in arenas outside the community, our intention has always been to provide a much-needed service here at home. Our true inspiration comes from seeing Siksika kids play in their own arena, representing their home with pride.”

They emphasized their commitment to strengthening the SMHA program by providing essential services locally for families.

“We wanted to be part of the solution by supporting and strengthening the SMHA program. By offering these services locally, we hope to make it easier for families to access the equipment, sharpening, and support their players need without having to leave the nation.

They also have long-term goals that include helping fund skating clinics, stick-handling clinics, and other development opportunities aimed at uplifting the next generation of Siksika Nation players.

“Our long-term goal is to grow enough to give back – to help fund skating clinics, stick-handling clinics, and other opportunities that support the development of



our young athletes. This is about building something positive for our people and uplifting the next generation of Siksika players.” Said Kyle and Tess.

Looking ahead, and with the early success of the pro shop, Kyle also mentioned plans to expand their services to support other sports. This includes offering items such as knee pads for volleyball, basketballs, sweatbands, wrist wraps for boxing, and more—broadening their reach to athletes beyond hockey. Community member and equipment manager for the Siksika Buffalos, Marcus Smith, expressed his excitement, noting how helpful the shop will be for him. He explained that he will no longer have to travel to Calgary to purchase supplies for the Buffalos, as he can now get what he needs locally. He said, “Now I

don’t have to worry—everything’s right here. It was time-consuming to

Our true inspiration comes from seeing Siksika kids play in their own arena, representing their home with pride

travel to get supplies, and now I can just come here and stay in the rink, not only saving time but making it more convenient for myself and other players.”

War Pony Pro Shop is also tailoring its schedule to align with hockey practices and game hours. By checking their Facebook page, community members can view their sports drink menu, see what products are available, and find updated operating hours. In conclusion, this initiative is a positive and exciting development for Siksika. Essential items and services—such as skate sharpening—are now available within the community, ensuring that Nation members no longer need to travel for their hockey needs. War Pony Pro Shop is not only filling a gap in local services but also investing in the growth and success of Siksika’s young athletes for years to come.

PROSPECTS

Phoenix Big Snake

Phoenix Big Snake began her hockey journey at just four years old with Siksika Minor Hockey, laying the foundation for what would become a distinguished youth career. As she developed, she continued her progression with the Strathmore Storm before advancing to Elite Girls U15 with the Okotoks Raiders, where her skill and competitiveness flourished.

Currently, Phoenix is in her third and final season of U18 AAA Elite Female hockey with the St. Albert Slash—one of the top-ranked teams in the nation, currently sitting 2nd in Canada. Her commitment, work ethic, and consistency have established her as a key contributor on a highly competitive roster.

Phoenix has proudly represented Team Alberta at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship since the age of 14. Her leadership qualities have been recognized throughout her career, highlighted by serving as an alternate captain

at last year's championship. She will compete in her final National Aboriginal Championship this May in Regina, where she looks forward to closing this chapter with the same dedication and pride that have defined her journey so far.

Off the ice, Phoenix is preparing for the next stage of her academic and athletic career. She plans to attend college in the fall, pursuing a future in the health field. With multiple collegiate hockey opportunities available to her, she will soon decide where she will continue to develop both academically and athletically.

Phoenix Big Snake's career to this point reflects exceptional drive, leadership, and passion, qualities that will undoubtedly continue to shape her future in the game and beyond.

Phoenix leaves a message for all youth "With hard work and determination anything is possible".



SIKSIKA YOUTH HOCKEY PLAYERS ON THE RISE

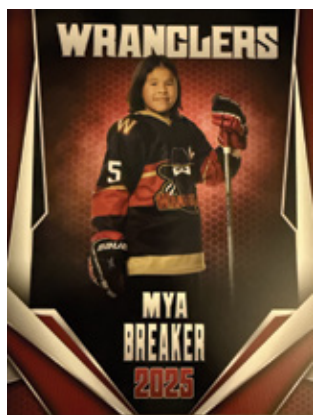


Kaiza Weasel Child

Kaiza Weasel Child (Siipistaipoy-aakii) talking owl woman is 5 years old attending Chief Old Sun School she is in her second year of playing in u7 her she really loves to skate, dance powwow (jingle dress) loves school and enjoys her classmates.

She enjoys participating in all round athletic activities. She really loves to make people laugh with her silliness and she is always ready to learn something new. She's very kind & helpful and is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Mya Breaker



Mya Breaker is 11 years old. Her parents are Margie Waterchief and Marshall Breaker. She resides with her Grandmother Tracy Waterchief, her little brother Guy Medicine Shield and her cousin Santana Waterchief who she takes as a sister.

Mya's first time on the ice was two years ago. When she went to her first hockey practice she didn't know how to skate, but within the first few practices everyone could see that she had a natural talent. She quickly made the ice her home and was sad when she had to get off. From the beginning, Mya's greatest supporters of hockey are her Godmother/Auntie Hannah Breaker and Uncle Laval Jerry. They have attended almost all her games, have taken her to practices, and continuously teach and train her

to be her best in hockey, Mya calls their home her second home and they truly are her second parents.

Last year the late Mick Breaker, who was her busdriver, saw her talent and commented that she had a natural talent and encouraged her to enhance her skills. He was very proud of her when she let him know she would be playing for the Wranglers this year.

Currently Mya is #5 and plays forward for the Wheatland Wranglers U13B team. Her highlight of the year will be travelling to Florida to Walt Disney World before Christmas with her second parents.

Mya would like to encourage anyone that wants to try to play hockey to "just do it, it's fun" she says.



INSPIRING ON AND OFF THE ICE

Kale Running Rabbit



Kale Laine Running Rabbit is the son of Dawn Spring Chief and the late Horton Running Rabbit Jr. He is a 15-year-old high school student in grade 10. He currently attends Bassano High School, and his goal is to complete high school and earn his diploma.

At 2 years of age, Kale was introduced to the hockey arena, and it was then that he put on his first pair of skates and took to the ice. From then on, Kale naturally developed a great passion and interest in the sport of hockey. The following year, he had his own hockey equipment and registered for the Siksika Pre-Novice team. Kale has played defenseman for most of his hockey years; however, within the last 4 years, he has played both defense

and forward positions. This year, he is playing with the Siksika U18-A team and is currently the first-line centre.

Because of Kale's desire and passion for hockey, his aspiration is to go as far as he can in the sport. His next realistic goal is to play at the Junior or College level. In the meantime, his family supports him by helping him stay focused on his schooling, his hockey games, and being a respectful person both on and off the ice and in the community.

His love of hockey was greatly inspired by his late dad's love for the sport. Through this inspiration, he hopes to inspire younger athletes as well.

Lyman Running Rabbit



Lyman Running Rabbit, age 16, carries the Blackfoot name "Thunder and Lightning" (Aai-Paa-Poom), given to him by his Grandma Eulalia. (I am not sure if that is the right spelling.)

He is the oldest son of Kyle Running Rabbit and Charmayne Black. Lyman has been on skates since he could walk. At age five, his uncles Kaiden Healy and Colman Black began taking him public skating. Kaiden, who played elite-level hockey, spent countless hours with Lyman both on and off the ice, teaching him stickhandling and helping him develop his shot. Lyman always looked up to him as a role model. His late Grandpa Rick put him in his first year of pre-novice hockey in Strathmore. Grandpa Rick was one of Lyman's biggest supporters, proud of him every step of the way

before he passed. Today, Lyman plays for his grandpa, carrying his memory with him every time he steps on the ice.

Lyman also carries his Blackfoot name with pride in life and on the ice—"Thunder and Lightning"—reflecting his speed and intensity as a player. He truly lives up to the meaning of his name.

His dad, Kyle, is also one of his strongest supporters. They talk before his games, and after his games Lyman always asks, "How did I do?" Lyman loves to make his dad proud of him.

And through all of it, Lyman's mom has been his biggest fan, rarely missing a game and supporting him through every moment of his journey.



Frankie Wright is 12 years old and a proud member of Siksika. His grandparents are Lucille Wright and Ted Ayoungman. Recently, Frankie discovered that he is a natural-born football player. Standing at an impressive 6'2", he has already proven himself to be one of the best, earning the Best O-Line-man of the Year award—an honor given to players who demonstrate outstanding skill and dedication throughout the season. Frankie received this award in late November at the Strathmore Civic Centre. He is strongly supported by his family, especially his grandmother, Lucille (Lucy) Wright.

Frankie began playing football about two years ago after one of his cousins encouraged him to try out. Curious, he decided to see what the sport was like. After making the team, he quickly realized he wanted to continue. Over time, he became the left guard on offense and the nose guard on defense.

"I play both offense and nose guard, so I play both offense and defence," said Frankie in an interview with Siksika Media.

Frankie's coach, Daniel Bouchard—head coach of the Pee wee Badgers football team, an instructor at SAIT, and part of the Badgers organization for the past two years—shared how rewarding it has been to watch Frankie grow. Daniel explained that when Frankie first joined, he was just learning the game, but now he has become an essential part of the team, bringing both personality and grit. He also expressed his deep appreciation and pride in coaching not only a strong team, but also Frankie.

"What Frankie does, is he adds so much personality into our whole organization... being the personality



NEXT GENERATION: FRANKIE WRIGHT LIGHTS UP THE FIELD

By Tyrone Sitting Eagle

in the locker room," added Daniel.

As both a left guard and nose guard, Frankie has proven to be a major asset. Known as one of the toughest players on the field, he often intimidates opposing players simply through his presence.

"I put him in the centre one time, on our defensive line, the front-line guys, for the first half of any game players wouldn't even try anything," said Daniel.

Frankie's grandmother, Lucille Wright, continues to be one of his biggest supporters. She is extremely proud to see how far he has come since his very first year with the Badgers. She shared how loved and supported he is by his team and coaches, saying, "I really support my grandson, it's because right from

year one, when they first met him, they've just embraced and developed his skill level, to where now he is an asset to the team."

The parents of the team also support him greatly, and this has contributed to his growth. "He is an amazing kid—we are so lucky to have him."

Although Frankie is only 12 and in grade 7, he has already shown that taking a chance on something new can be incredibly rewarding. He has worked hard to reach his goals. In his interview, he expressed gratitude for the people who support him, saying, "I like to thank my Friends, grandma, and coaches." In doing so, Frankie has brought inspiration to Siksika and is already becoming a role model within the community.



STANDING TALL: ANSON McMASTER'S PATH FROM SIKSIKA NATION TO GEE-GEES HISTORY

By Lynn Calf Robe

At just 23 years old, University of Ottawa defenceman Anson McMaster has already built a hockey journey that stretches far beyond the blue line. From his beginnings in Siksika Nation to the high-calibre competition of the WHL and BCHL, and now to the heart of U SPORTS—one of the highest levels of amateur hockey in the world—McMaster has steadily emerged as a calm, reliable presence for the Gee-Gees both on and off the ice.

Standing 6-foot-5 and weighing 210 pounds, the third-year defenceman brings a commanding presence to

the ice, but it's his quiet leadership and the journey that carried him from Siksika Nation through the WHL and BCHL to the nation's capital that have made him one of the Gee-Gees' most respected voices.

McMaster arrived in Ottawa after five seasons in the WHL with Kootenay, Winnipeg and Victoria, where he played 129 games, followed by a strong final junior year in Vernon, getting 16 points in 41 games and adding five assists in 11 playoff appearances. Even with all that experience, nothing could have prepared him for what came next: helping

the University of Ottawa clinch its first-ever national championship on March 23, 2025, a 3-2 victory over Concordia on home ice. "It was a special moment," he says. "Crazy at the time, and even better to do it on home ice."

McMaster's path began almost too early to remember. "My mom threw skates on me before I could even walk," he laughs. Growing up in Siksika, AB, he played minor hockey with the Wheatland Warriors, Rocky Mountain Raiders, and Okotoks Oilers. Hockey didn't fully take over until age nine, when scheduling



conflicts forced him to choose between it and Taekwondo. “We went with hockey and haven’t looked back since.”

By fourteen, after a transformative summer in the gym and a breakout season, he realized hockey could take him somewhere special. That same year, he was drafted by Kootenay in the second round of the WHL Draft—an achievement his mother, Mandi Running Rabbit, recalls with sentiment. “He was the first from Siksika to be drafted and we were very proud parents,” she says. “Another proud moment was last year at the U SPORTS National Championships... they went in as the 8th seed and came out national champions.” For her, the pride comes not only from milestones but from who he is: “He is a hard worker, respectful, and very caring. He stays focused and continues to live a healthy lifestyle.”

Now in his third year of Management studies at Telfer, McMaster wears an “A” on his jersey—a responsibility he carries with quiet confidence. “It’s an accomplishment for sure,” he says. “But it won’t change how I go about my day.”

His head coach, Patrick Grandmaître, sees the depth of his influence. “Anson is a leader in all spheres with our team,” he says. “He has a strong, calm presence. He leads by example and isn’t shy to voice his leadership. He’s disciplined, maintains a high level of fitness, and can always be relied upon when coaches need someone of trust.”

McMaster sees his own leadership style as approachable and talkative, especially for first-year players adjusting to university life. “It was an adjustment for me too,” he says. “I just want to be someone they can lean on.”

Daily life as a student-athlete requires discipline. His typical day starts with an 8:30 a.m. workout, followed by practice, then two or three classes, and finishing with dedicated study time at night. It’s a demanding routine, but he’s learned how to manage it. “It’s making sure you’re not focusing only on hockey or only on school,” he explains. “Setting little goals—get your hours of study done, make time for hockey, and make time for yourself.” His academic path has also shaped his future ambitions. “Management has given me perspectives I never had,” he says. “Eventually, I want to help create opportunities and programs for my people back home in Siksika.”

Representing his Nation at this level is something he carries with profound pride. “It’s everything,” he says. “The support I’ve gotten from home has been huge. I’ll always be grateful.” Being far from home has become easier with a strong support network—and a major life milestone. “I just got married this past August, so that helps a lot,” he says proudly. FaceTime calls with family and friends fill in the gaps.

One of the most defining moments of his personal growth came at seventeen, when his best friend passed away. “It shifted my mindset. We’re not guaranteed tomorrow. You’ve got to take today as your last,” he says. “My mom always told me that. It made me grateful for where I am.”

His on-ice progression with the Gee-Gees reflects that same maturity. In his first season, McMaster got six assists in 21 games and added two points in the playoffs, including his first U SPORTS goal. His second year brought continued progress: 22 regular-season games, seven points, and an assist on the opening goal in the national championship final. Entering this season, he has one clear priority: consistency. “Be



consistent every game,” he says. “Keep it simple, do my part, give the team a chance to succeed.”

The team’s motivation is equally focused. “There’s fire there for sure,” he says of their goal to repeat as national champions. “Especially with new faces in the lineup.”

Looking beyond university, he hopes to play professionally—whether in North America or overseas. But he emphasizes how important education has become to him. “School wasn’t my first choice,” he admits. “But after talking to guys like Wacey Rabbit and Colton Yellowhorn, I realized hockey won’t always be there. I’m grateful I took the school route.”

To young Siksika and other Indigenous athletes, McMaster’s advice is grounded in optimism and personal pride. “Be proud of who you are and where you come from,” he says. “Every day you have a choice—good day or bad day. Be optimistic about your opportunities. Never stop learning.” And for students navigating exam season, he offers a practical reminder: “Don’t leave it to the last minute. Do a bit every day—two or three hours. It makes all the difference.”

To see McMaster and the University of Ottawa men’s hockey team in action this season, visit the Gee-Gees website for their full schedule.

Building a Stronger Future: Indigenous Nursing Program Empowers Students

Story and photos by Shilo Clark

Old Sun Community College in partnership with the University of Calgary's Faculty of Nursing is continuing to make significant strides in supporting Indigenous learners through the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Indigenous Community Route, a program that is already changing lives and strengthening healthcare in Siksika Nation and beyond.

The initiative welcomed its first cohort in Fall 2022. According to Kim Halliday, Indigenous Student Liaison for the Faculty of Nursing, the program was designed to create space for Indigenous students to pursue nursing education close to home while receiving culturally grounded support.

"We see many applications every year," Halliday explained. "Each cohort can only take eight or nine students because of licensing requirements, but if we ever reach a point where we have many fully prepared students, that would be a wonderful problem to have."

One of those students is Lesley Black, a member of the second cohort that began in 2023. After completing her prerequisites at Old Sun Community College, she successfully entered the program, an achievement she describes as life-changing.



Lesley shared how the curriculum at Old Sun, including courses in Indigenous studies and history, helped her reconnect with her culture while preparing her academically. "I was very limited in my cultural knowledge," she said. "Taking those courses, hearing from knowledge keepers and Elders, really opened my eyes. It even led me to research my own family history."

As she moved into the program's clinical and long-term care components, Lesley began to see firsthand the inequities faced by Indigenous patients. She noted how vital it is for Indigenous nurses to understand cultural traditions, community protocols, and the and the everyday

factors that affect the health of Indigenous people.

Her lived experience, she said, directly informs how she plans to serve her community in the future. "When I bring a patient to the hospital as an EMS, and they see I'm Indigenous, there's this sense of comfort and safety. Programmes like this help break down stereotypes and teach others in health-care why cultural practices matter."

Lesley also emphasized the essential academic and cultural support she received along the way. "There were times I cried, times I struggled, and times I celebrated," she said with a laugh. "Kim was always



there to help us find the resources we needed, but students also have to speak up. You have to put in the work, you have to sacrifice, but it's worth it."

Halliday agrees, noting that the heart of this program is creating trusted, humble, culturally informed nurses who can uplift Indigenous health. "This partnership is about supporting Indigenous nursing students so they can go out and serve the Nation," she said. "It's about shifting the narrative from Indigenous sickness to Indigenous health & wellness."

Both Halliday and Lesley hope the program inspires younger generations, showing them that not only is nursing possible, but opportunities extend far beyond graduation. Lesley already has her sights set on eventually becoming a Nurse Practitioner. The Indigenous Community Route

continues to stand as a powerful example of what can be achieved when universities and Nations work

together, creating space for excellence, cultural pride, and a stronger future for Indigenous healthcare.

"NURSING DOESN'T STOP HERE, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM TO GROW."



CALGARY ZOO HOSTS BUFFALO NAMING CEREMONY



Story and photos by Mase Scarlet

On November 19th, Siksika Media was honoured to attend a very special buffalo naming ceremony at the Calgary Zoo. This meaningful event celebrated the young male bison born last spring, now officially named “Ok’takii” and “A-pom” - beautiful names chosen by students from the Siksika Board of Education.

These young bulls will be joining the older female bison, “Keewatin” and “Taiga”.

A big thank you to the Calgary zoo wilder institute for allowing SBOE to participate in naming the Buffalo calves.

It was a big honour for the students. We hope that this collaboration will continue our

siksika’powasin/ siksikakaisitapi way of life.. special an acknowledgment to our Siksika elder, Rod Scout for carrying out the ceremony.

Moments like these remind us of the lasting connection between our people, our language, our future generations, and the buffalo who continue to teach us strength and resilience.

Our Sincere Thanks



Our family would like to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude for all the kindness, love, compassion and support shown by everyone in the passing of our dear daughter, God-daughter, sister, mother, God-mother, aunt, niece and friend Jacey Lee Margaret (Waterchief) Whitney on September 3, 2025.

We will be forever grateful for the people from Siksika as well as Tsuu T'ina who provided food, refreshments, firewood along with the fire keepers who stayed up all night and kept the fire going for four days. She definitely brought the two First Nations together. Thank you to all the people and departments who provided financial donations and most importantly prayers, love and hope. Thank you to all the singers at the wake and funeral including the drummers. Thank you to all her sisters in Christ who sang their theme song from their Cursillo, "How Great

Thou Art".

A special thank you to the clergy who officiated the funeral, Deacon Jacqui Durand and Archbishop Gregg Kerr-Wilson. The amount of people who came to show their support was overwhelming to say the least. We never realized how loved she was and it showed by the hundreds of people who came out to offer their support at the wake, funeral and the days following her passing.

In times like this it is comforting to know how much love still exists in this world. The love we were showered with are a testament to the power of our belief in Jesus who provides for our every need. Jacey was a shining star who lit up the world wherever she went. She was a true Christian who showed her love and encouragement to everyone she came in contact with. Her smile would brighten up every room she entered and her hugs were the best.

She has left a lasting impression on us all and will remain in our hearts forever.

Jacey would want us to continue enjoying life and spreading love and kindness like she always did. She would not want us to be sad and although we will mourn her loss we will carry on her legacy by being good to people and continue our faith in our Lord Jesus who now holds her in his loving arms. We love you Jacey! Your spark and energy will live on in your children and family forever. If we can all be half the person you were, we will be amazing. You were always our shining star, and now you're our angel who will watch over us from above.

Our prayers go out to all those who are grieving at this time and to remember to celebrate this holy season and the birth of our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ. Hope is everlasting.

COMMUNITY IS THE CORNERSTONE

By Lexington ManyHeads

Since tenth grade, hip-hop and rap artist Luke Little Chief from Siksika Nation has been writing poetry and lyrics. Shyness kept him off stage for years, but the loss of a close friend three years ago sparked a turning point leading him to sobriety, community, and performance. Influenced by foundational acts like Dead Prez and inspired by Calgary's rising talent, Luke draws strength from local creativity. "Community is the cornerstone to being in anything worthwhile," he said. Now nearing three years sober, Luke channels lived experience into high-energy hip-hop, blending storytelling with Indigenous pride.

Luke got his first start when he began performing with the YYC Cypher Club, a local hip-hop collective and where he met DJ Nasty G who introduced him to the Tribe Artist Society (TAS). At that time, Luke almost quit rapping. He had a black trash bag filled with all his written verses and booklets that he kept in his sister's basement. "I was like 'I'm not rapping, it's never going to happen. Then DJ Nasty G was like 'come hang out and spit some verses.' So, I went over to his

house and spit verses. I had this trash bag, and he was like 'you gotta get organised', because it was just all like napkins or whatever I had written on." Luke laughed. TAS soon became a foundational support system, functioning almost like a sobriety group, but grounded in hip-hop, collaboration, and community. The supportive environment uplifted rather than discouraged, offering resources and mentorship that helped Luke flourish as an artist and opened many doors for him.

Preparing for shows has become a ritual grounded in emotional and physical readiness. For Luke, nerves are not the enemy, but a tool. "There has to be a level of nervousness with a mix of preparedness that just culminates into energy that you hold within yourself," he explained. "I need to be nervous to remember my lyrics. If I'm too calm on stage, I'll start slipping up and forgetting my lyrics." Luke described performance as an exchange of energy, like a game of basketball or volleyball where you pass the ball and have to keep it up in the air. This approach fuels both his live presence and his connection to audiences.

Since his first performance, Luke has had several notable shows—one being an opening act for a major rap artist. It began with local hip-hop veteran Ricca Razor Sharp, who was asked to open a show at the Cowboys Music Festival during the 2025 Calgary Stampede. Ricca then brought TAS along, giving them the opportunity to open for Grammy Award-winning rapper T-Pain. "That was one of the nice ones. It was really cool!" Luke shared. Another highlight was co-curating the TD Amplify Origins: Spirit showcase, an hour-long show presented by Arts Commons—now Werklund Centre—that received strong audience reception and featured artists such as Kenna Burima, Mx Jendr, Eazy G, and Kelly. "I had 4 after parties that I did throughout the year that coincided with TD Amplify Origins, so I got to see all of the performances and it was good," he said. He also shared deep admiration for the Calgary Folk Fest, where he and TAS perform annually. "I love the warmth of the folk fest and how they treat their artists. It's phenomenal, they treat you like kings."

When speaking about what he



hopes listeners take from his music, Luke is clear: “I just want people to know that we can have a level of versatility and experience and a pro-level of lyricism that can come out of this Blackfoot man that’s just spitting verses.” His message extends to Indigenous youth and communities everywhere: “For so long we’ve been taught or shown that we are just on the back burner. We should be unapologetically native and take that into our own self. We’re the next thing that’s gonna happen and people are gonna follow us and what we do. We have a voice.”

Looking ahead, TAS is preparing for a Block Heater showcase at The Confluence from February 5-7. Another project in development is a mini-series titled Into the Box, which will feature Calgary rappers alongside beatboxer Eazy G. The artist and Eazy G also perform together

as Tribe Beatz, an offshoot of TAS known for tracks such as True Love, Stand Indigenous, and a signature beatboxing introduction.

Beyond music, Luke is also a visual creator and designer reviving his mom’s company, Eagle Rib Clothing. With mentorship from CAB City, Luke has navigated the challenges of entrepreneurship, design, and production. Recently, Luke has released a shirt with a design that features a grass dancer and a medicine wheel on it. He expressed that “It’s kind of like my representation of how Mohkinstsisis is represented to me.” The shirt is now being sold at The Confluence gift shop in Calgary.

Words of encouragement from Luke Little Chief: “Take inventory of the things that you have in your life and

be grateful for those things because the universe will only give you more if you are grateful for what you already have—it opens the door for more receiving. Also, see your potential to maximise the things you don’t have. Utilize your life like a game, almost, to see your inventory and see what you need more of. And assume the best for yourself. If you’re not assuming the best for yourself then you’re assuming the worst and that’s going to be your whole life.”

To follow along on Luke Little Chief’s artistic journey, find him on Instagram at @lukelittlechief.



CFXX 104.7 FM

SIKSIKA RADIO STATION

**NEW SCHEDULE HOURS
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH**

MONDAY – FRIDAY

8AM – 12PM: TYRONE SITTING EAGLE

12PM – 3PM: SHILO CLARK (MON-WED, FRI)
MASE SCARLET (TUE-THU)

3PM – 6PM: JASMINE MAJOROS (MON, WED, FRI)
LEXXINGTON MANY HEADS (TUE-THU)

6PM – 9PM: ANDREW BREAKER (TUE-THU)

FRIDAY – SATURDAY

9PM – 12AM: MARCUS SMITH

SATURDAY – SUNDAY

3PM – 6PM: JAYSON BLACK KETTLE



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photos by Siksika Media

people, places and faces





SIKSIKA PREVENTION-EARLY INTERVENTION HOSTS FAMILY FUN NIGHT SOBER DANCE

Story and photo by Mase Scarlet

On November 25th, 2025, the community came together for an evening filled with music, laughter, movement, and good energy. Families enjoyed RnR Entertainment, light snacks & drinks, dancing, and exciting door prizes – all in a safe, sober space celebrating wellness and connection.

A huge thank you to Elizabeth Red Gun for her support and contributions to making this event possible.

And thank you to everyone who joined in and helped create such a fun and uplifting night for our Nation.

“IT WAS A FUN EVENING,
AND IT WAS GOOD SEEING THE FAMILIES COME OUT.”
–KIANA DOORE



CLASSIFIEDS

Employment Opportunity
Siksika Health Services
Advanced Care Paramedic/Primary Care Paramedics
Siksika Nation Emergency Services is seeking dedicated and compassionate Advanced Care Paramedics and Primary Care Paramedics for casual positions. Join a community-focused emergency services team committed to delivering high-quality pre-hospital care and culturally grounded support to the Siksika Community.
For more information:
siksikahealth.com
recruitment@siksikahealth.com

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

Employment Opportunity
Office Manager
Siksika Nation Tribal Administration
Competition Number:
EASOM-01-1-07-25
Knowledge of PIPEDA, and other related governmental legislation pertaining to records management. Strong organizational and time management skills, with the ability to prioritize and multitask effectively.
Contact:
recruitment@siksikanation.com
403-734-5567 or 403-734-5579 to learn more

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

Employment Opportunity
Siksika Health Services
Registered Nurse/Project Lead
Responsible for implementing and managing programs and projects focused on primary preventative care. This role involves a collaborative approach to improving the health and well-being of individuals within the Siksika Nation.
For more information:
siksikahealth.com
recruitment@siksikahealth.com

Ok! Siksika
Siksika Nation Tribal Administration

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENT POLICY

Ok! Siksika,
Our social media platforms are here to keep Siksika Nation members and residents informed about programs, services, and important updates. They also help connect our community with the supports you may need.

WE WELCOME RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT – HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE:
These channels are **not** intended for public commentary.

For all users:

- Racist, sensationalist, or derogatory comments will **not** be tolerated. Such comments will be removed, and users may be banned.
- Misinformation, or attempts to spread misinformation, will also **not** be tolerated.

Please remember to be **kind, respectful, and considerate** when engaging with Siksika content and with others across our social media channels.

THANK YOU!

Employment Opportunity
Siksika Health Services
Vehicle Fleet Coordinator
Responsible for the acquisition, negotiating, purchasing, inventory control and effective management, scheduling and maintenance of Siksika Health Services' vehicle fleet.
For more information:
siksikahealth.com
recruitment@siksikahealth.com

Siksika Nation Tribal Administration
PUBLIC WORKS

Public Service Announcement

Siksika Nation - Holiday Solid Waste Pick-Up Schedule
The Siksika Nation Public Works Department would like to inform all residents of the holiday solid waste collection schedule. Please have your waste ready for pick-up by 9:00 AM on the scheduled day for your area.

Reminders:

- Place bins where accessible to establish timely collection.
- Ensure aggressive dogs are secured
- Ensure all garbage is bagged as the operators will be fined for loose debris.

Holiday Pick-Up Dates:

- Monday, December 22 - West End
- Tuesday, December 23 - East End
- Monday, December 29 - West End
- Tuesday, December 30 - East End

Important Notice - Operational Limitations

- Due to operational limitations, any households that do not bring their totes to the roadside will not be serviced until the following week. Please ensure your totes are accessible on the scheduled day to avoid delays.

For questions, please contact Siksika Nation Public Works Department at 403-734-4388.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN KEEPING SIKSIKA NATION CLEAN DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

**HAVE AN EVENT COMING UP?
JOB POSTING YOU'D LIKE TO ADVERTISE?
SEND IT TO US
MEDIA@SIKSIKANATION.COM**

ADVERTISE WITH US

OUR PLATFORMS ▶▶▶
Siksika Media Communications
Radio, Magazine, and Website

REACH STATS ▶▶▶
Aitsiniki.com – 26,633 views
Online Radio Stream – 24,244 listeners

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES ▶▶▶
Tyrone Sitting Eagle (Media Coordinator)
tyronese@siksikanation.com
Siksika Media
media@siksikanation.com | 403-734-5339
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