

## **Aboriginal Cooperative Conference**

### **“Putting the Collective Spirit to Work”**

**March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Kingsway Ramada Inn & Conference Center  
11834 Kingsway, Edmonton, AB

#### **Purpose**

Explore the potential for multi band collaborations using the cooperative model and develop strategic development plan for the launch of the artist co-operative

#### **Objectives**

- Introduce participants to successful examples of first nations cooperatives
- Increase awareness of gathering participants on the potentials and challenges of the cooperative model
- Widen range of bands interested in participating in Cree-operative

#### **Background**

Cree-operative Arts and Artist Coop is an exciting new initiative exploring the potential for a cross nation cooperative which will support the development and marketing of First Nations art and artisan products.

Cree-operative will be structured as a multi-stakeholder coop including membership from First Nations from across Alberta (and eventually Western Canada) as well as membership to artisans selling through the cooperative. Feasibility study indicated that a self sustaining coop could happen by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operations.

Participant in the gathering will be invited to participate in the developing the next steps fo the Cree-operative as well as being be exposed to the history, opportunities and challenges that face aboriginal coops, including presentations and workshops by the following aboriginal cooperatives:

Cree-operative draws heavily from the inspiration of Arctic Coops and its capacity to collectively produce and sell millions of dollars annually of Dene and Inuit arts. Participant in the gathering will be exposed to the history of Arctic Coops, which used initial cooperative work in selling aboriginal art as a spring board for much more comprehensive cooperative economic development activities. [www.arcticcoop.com/](http://www.arcticcoop.com/)



A 54 Megawatt Wind Farm structured as a joint venture between the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and Windfall Ecology Centre. Representatives from Pukwis (which means whirlwind in Ojibwa) will explore how their structure could assist other first nations in taking advantage of the growing potential for wind energy but also in solar biogas, hydro or other renewable energy projects. [www.pukwis.ca](http://www.pukwis.ca)

### Key Note Speakers



**Pearl Calahasen** was elected to her sixth term as the Member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly for Lesser Slave Lake on March 3, 2008. Since she was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1989, Ms. Calahasen has had a number of portfolios, including Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Ms. Calahasen is currently a member of the several standing committees of the Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Calahasen has been recognized by the Aboriginal community as a role model and has received many awards, including the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Public Service, and the Aboriginal Role Model Award. She will be asked to endorse the development of Cree-operative cooperative as well as provide an inspiring message on the need for collaborative economic development projects between first nations

**Ian MacPherson** is an internationally recognized professor and researcher in cooperatives who has taught at numerous universities across Canada and is the founding director of the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies. He is the author/editor/co-editor of some eighteen books and the author of over 150 articles, most of them on the Canadian and international co-operative movement and including **Aboriginal Co-operatives in Canada Current Situation and Potential for Growth**. Dr. MacPherson will provide an historical overview of aboriginal cooperatives in Canada.



### Day 1 – March 25, 2010

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| 8:30 a.m.   | Invocation – Elder<br>Opening remarks- Grand Chief Eddy Makokis<br>Overview of Cree-Operative and conference agenda: Winston Lapatak, EDO, Saddle Lake Cree Nation.  |
| 9:00        | Historical overview of aboriginal cooperatives in Canada – Dr. Ian MacPherson  |
| 10:30       | Break  |
| 10:45       | Arctic Coops – Historical development, current opportunities and challenges  |
| Noon        | Key note presentation: Pearl Calahasen will be asked to endorse the the development of Cree-operative cooperative as well as provide an inspiring message on the need for collaborative economic development projects between first nations                    |
| 1:15 - 2:45 | Plenary Presentations – Participants will hear brief presentations from each of the following cooperatives - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pukwis Energy Cooperative</li> <li>• Northern Images – Art Marketing Division of Arctic Coops</li> </ul> |
| 2:45        | Break  |
| 3:00 – 4:30 | Breakout Sessions - Based on the presentation, participants choose to participate in a deeper explorations of the structure, role and challenges of coops in specific sectors described in the presentations and how it might be applied to their context.     |
| 5:30        | A celebration of First Nations Art – Traditional meal and performances, displays and on site artisan development from aboriginal artists and artisans from across Alberta  |

### Day 2 –March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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| 9:00 a.m. | Presentations and results of the Cree Operative feasibility study – questions and answer period   |
| 10:30     | Break   |
| 11:00     | Cree-operative Art and Artisan Cooperative - <b>Based on what you have heard in the previous day, what are the implications for the next steps for the Creeoperative Business Plan?</b> |
| 12:00     | Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between participating nations in Cree-operative  |