

# COMMUNITY YOUR VOICE

## Voices



2704 10th Avenue ph: 306-949-4230

North Central welcomes George Gordon First Nation (GGFN) Business Centre to our neighbourhood. They purchased the former office of Partners In Motion film production company on 10th and Angus. The urban sub-office for GGFN now houses 12 offices as a business centre and shared facility.

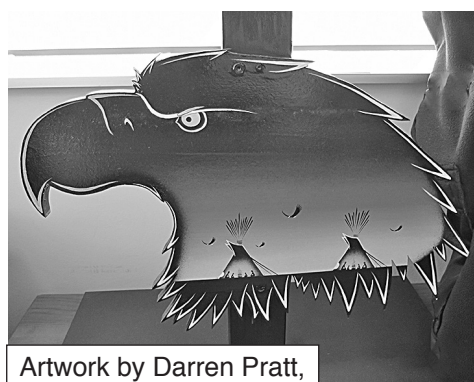
They have been in this location since August 2013, so people are really becoming aware of their presence. Mel Bitternose has been with the Off-reserve/Urban Services office since its opening. "Members can stop in to warm up or sit in air conditioned comfort," she says with a smile. "Coffee is always on and it's like a little home away from home."

The Off-reserve/Urban Services office is happy to advocate for band members. They have supports for high school students to encourage attendance. Networking can range from sports activities to housing. They will provide personal references and support letters. There can be assistance for members in emergency situations. The urban sub-office offers a fax machine, photocopying and the use of computers with internet access.

Bitternose says "GGFN has so many things going on, we really are a progressive First Nation — I'm really proud that our leadership is taking us forward, especially in business development. The relationships that GGDL CEO Kim Sinclair and our leaders are building puts us among the frontrunners in terms of partnerships, joint ventures and employment agreements with so many companies."

George Gordon Developments Ltd. (GGDL) is the economic and business development department for GGFN.

Wanda Rockthunder is the Off-reserve/Urban Services Co-ordinator. Off-reserve/Urban Services lends assistance to all off-reserve band members.



Artwork by Darren Pratt, member of GGFN.

Their toll-free number welcomes enquiries from all over Saskatchewan. The majority of the approximately 3500 band members live off-reserve, with over half of those living in Regina.

The Post-Secondary Co-ordinator works out of this facility most of the week. GGFN has its own post-secondary program around the city with 54 full time and 4 part time students at institutions all over Saskatchewan, Alberta, even a few in the US. GGFN funds their tuition and provides a living allowance based on family size. The Co-ordinator also offers students help with paperwork and counselling.

A Registry Clerk is in periodically to process paperwork for status cards for band members. The Treaty Land Entitlement Co-ordinator works out of the George Gordon Business Centre as well.

In September, 2014 GGDL launched the Wicehtowak Workforce Development Program. Chris McNab is the Workforce Development Manager collaborating with industries for workplace opportunities. Jacob Sinclair is the Career Service Co-ordinator dealing with individual clients looking for employment and training opportunities. Jacob also helps clients write or update resumes. GGDL assists members get their safety tickets, WHIMS training, work boots and equipment. "When people are given the resources, when barriers are removed, success follows." Bitternose says.

The Wicehtowak Workforce Development Program is open to all First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in Saskatchewan, not just for GG band members. The office receives calls from Esterhazy, Weyburn, Stoughton and from up north. When people register they're connected with the resources to get in with the mines and construction industries.

The bank of computers, funded by Wicehtowak Workforce Development, is a popular stop. Members can apply for jobs or take online lessons and testing.

## George Gordon First Nation Business Centre



### A First Nation Leader in Business Development



Mel Bitternose and Terry-Lynn McNab

Bitternose adds "Our members come here because it is like a band office for them. At this Off-reserve/Urban Services hub they are getting support from names and faces they recognize. I've met so many band members, people who I never knew. There may only be one household of this family living on reserve, but come to Regina and there are dozens and dozens of family members."

A new and powerful endeavour is the GGFN Women's Support Group. The circle addresses important social issues surrounding First Nation women. They've had a couple of meetings, and are anticipating much growth. They will soon have a meeting schedule posted on their Facebook page and a Naming Ceremony is forthcoming. These circles are gaining interest from women in the community and on reserve to create healing. "We want to get on every issue out there. There's a whole range of discussions, from health to Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women" says Bitternose.

Terry-Lynn McNab, GGFN Band Councillor, is the driving force behind the Women's Support Group initiative. She put it to Chief and Council and obtained funding toward its development. They're encouraging intergenerational participation in such cultural activities as crafting ribbon skirts or star blankets, and beading. Good ideas with a great group of women. Mel adds "Take the barriers away and people will rise



GGDL staff L to R: Solomon Cyr, CEO Kim Sinclair, Eleanor Pratt, Catherine Daniels

Solomon Cyr is the Communications and Marketing Officer for GGDL. He is currently developing a website and social media presence for both GGDL and GGFN.

Independent businesses operate within the GGFN Business Centre. Dr. Kim McKay-McNab PhD is a Clinical Psychologist with an office in the facility. Marlene McNab is a Wellness coach and therapist. Both of these women are GGFN Band members. Their clients meet with them in this comfortable environment, by appointment a couple of times a week.

to the top. We encourage that spirit of entrepreneurship!"

The lower level also boasts a 24-seat board room, a kitchen and an unused (as yet) sound studio, a remnant of the Partners in Motion company. There is good potential for that space. Imagine a North Central radio station?

Offices and facilities are available to rent by contacting George Gordon Developments Ltd. Now that's Networking in Motion!

Neighbours in North Central Regina are delighted with GGFN's presence. We look forward to collaborations for years to come.