



# NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2019 EDITION

### **Message from Chief and Council**



Dear Band Members:

We want to open this message by stating that Chief Virginia (Martha) Gladue, Councillor Irvin Knott, Jr., and Councillor Keith Lawrence continue to move forward with making changes to how we govern the Nation's business. In 2016, as you are very much aware, we inherited serious debt, which almost placed this Band into 3<sup>rd</sup> party management. Today, we are at a surplus and moving onto the next stage of proposing to the Community the establishment of a Corporate Structure for Economic Development revenues, and a Legacy Trust Fund that will save for the future, and improve the livelihood of Duncan's Members.

Your DFN Government continues to be fiscally responsible and provide for the people with a caring heart. To be clear,

we continue to operate with change in mind, and Duncan's is changing. By "change," we mean the use of knowledge and ideas developed and evolved as a way to better understand and transform our community.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind members that we are one family; it should not be an "us" against "them" mentality. Our ancestors worked together respectfully to move our Nation forward. We have no interest in getting drawn into finger pointing or shaming & blaming. Our vision remains committed to ending poverty, and improving quality of life with compassion, empathy & respect.

As Chief & Council, we work hard for every single one of the Nation's Members. Honouring our cultures and ancestors is more than words; it is how we live our everyday lives through dignity and humility. We encourage all members to think about how the greatest living example of both dignity and humility is through simple acts of kindness for others.

Finally, until the circle of last-name politics is broken, we will remain a

divided people. We have sacrificed lives and livelihoods to serve on Council; all we ask is that criticism and dialogue be respectful and without blaming, framing, naming or shaming.

We, as Council, are deeply honoured to serve you, and want to thank you for your kindness and patience.

Now, on with the news. Yes, it has been awhile since our last newsletter, and to be sure we need to provide faster turnarounds on updates.

Since 2016, we have accomplished the following:

- Agriculture Benefits (2018)
- Reduced Unemployment (ongoing)
- Strong Elders Group (ongoing)
- Spending Under Control (2017)
- Improved Employee Standards (ongoing)
- Water and Garbage Trucks (2018)
- Built Garage (2019)
- Installed Street Lights (2018)
- Increased Ec-Dev Revenue (ongoing)
- Formed New Joint Ventures (2018-2019)
- Keeping Members Informed (ongoing)
- Created DFN Website (Current)

What Members Can Expect Next:

- Re-Build Infrastructure (2019-2021)
- Extra Education Training Support (2019)
- Establish Legacy Trust Fund (2019)
- Ec-Dev Corporate Structure (2019)
- Open the Store (2019)
- Renovate Old Band Office (2019)
- Revise Election Code (2019)
- Draft New Membership Code (2019)
- Build New Houses (2019-2021)
- Water Plant Upgrade (2021)

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Duncan's First Nation Economic Development Accomplishments Since 2016

Since 2016, Duncan's First Nation has accomplished the following:

#### Agreements:

- LA Prairie—The Nation received approximately \$40,000 from La Prairie, as well as 7% gross for all work La Prairie conducted in Duncan's traditional territory.
- Weaver Construction—The Nation receives 6% of the revenue for work performed in Duncan's First Nation traditional territory.
- Machine Works—The Nation has 12.5% ownership in the company. The company is currently appraised at \$5.7 million dollars with projected company growth to \$20 million within two years. The agreement with Machine Works includes employment and apprenticeship training opportunities for Band members.
- Avenge Oilfield Services—The Nation receives over \$300,000 a year from Avenge directed toward Elder and Youth programs. Avenge also provided the Nation ownership of two trucks with the opportunity of employment and training.
- Northern Mats—The Nation receives approximately \$30,000 a month, which goes towards various needs of Community.
- TCPL (TransCanada)—The Nation has signed a 3-year agreement with TCPL on helping the Nation create its long-term maintenance companies and waste hauling. TCPL is committed to helping build a seniors lodge in the community as part of the agreement. In addition, the Nation received about \$500,000 for Community Studies.
- Civeo—The Nation has received tremendous support from Civeo for Treaty Day and other Band functions.

**Duncan's will generate about \$2.5 million in 2019 and will probably double the amount next year.**



#### Negotiations:

- Nautical—Western Cree Tribal Council and its Three Members Nations have acquired 7.5% ownership, which allocates 2.5% for each Nation. The 2.5% ownership will work out to approximately \$7,000,000 a year per Nation.
- Sharpe Trucking—The Nation is currently negotiating a 10% ownership stake in the company. In addition to this negotiation, the Nation is hoping to acquire two pipeline-hauling trailers for the projects taking place over the next three years.
- Onyx Medical is another new partner that has over 15 units in our traditional territory and continues to grow daily. They offer revenue sharing, employment and training to band members.
- In addition to the above Joint Ventures, the Nation has been developing relationships with Full Throttle Inspectors and ICE Inspections in support of pipeline and facility projects.
- The Nation is also negotiating with Keyera, Tide Water, SemCAMS, and Encana to provide a brighter future for the Nation.

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Dear Band Members:

Although Band Management has been around for years—historically, the role of Band Manager evolved from the reviled Indian Agent and the residue still informs perceptions—it is still emerging as a professional discipline. Currently, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) is in process of its New Fiscal Relationship, and it looks a rightful mess, which is impacting on the administration and governance of First Nations. From the Indigenous Rights Framework to the proposed 10-year Funding Agreement, First Nations are once again placed in a position of instability; it is nothing new. Since the creation of the Indian Act in 1876, we Indians have been subject to experimentation, injustice, and ultimately Genocide.

Increasingly, I find it difficult to reconcile my own humanity with the concept of Band Management. Much of it is counterintuitive, with compliances, regulations and rules that often make little or no sense, and funding that is barely adequate enough to function let alone address anything profound. Therefore, instead of trying to highlight what I have been up to, indeed it hasn't been all tapping on the laptop and smoking cigars (aah, to extoll the virtue of a voluptuous Vegueros), I want to share some emotions, ideas, and thoughts about the condition of your Nation, the state of your administration, the changing nature of Duncan's program and service delivery, the relationship between Governance and Administration, and the absolute need for intelligent and sound leadership to carry on with changes being made by your Chief and Council.

As I am writing this, three books have been much on my mind—they have been guiding the critical reflection of my experience(s) in Duncan's: (1) *The Age of Violence* by Alain Bertho—a meditation on people and power relations; (2) *Liberating Learning: Educational Change as Social Movement* by Santiago Rincon-Gallardo—the logic of operating social movement for cultural change; (3) *How To Run A Government: So That Citizens Benefit and Tax Payers Don't Go Crazy* by Michael Barber—a method for governing and administering. There is a theme that runs through these books: change in community must be shaped less by spasm and more by harmony.

#### **Condition of the Nation**

What is the condition of your Nation? Duncan's First Nation is in the midst of a bold and exciting new era of economic and social development. But we are also at a crossroads with respect to family politics, health challenges, and youth supports. There is much promise with moving forward; there is much risk of becoming stuck in the same-old, same-old. I arrived at Duncan's in 2018, and continue to be amazed by the Progressive Nature of your Community (embodied by the vigor of the Nation's women, the inclusivity of Elders in Decision-Making, the vision of Chief and Council, and the embrace of New Ideas). These conditions do not simultaneously exist in most First Nations—they are often bound by the clichés of First Nation Governing and the compliances of federal and provincial authorities. Right now, Duncan's is striving to break loose of clichés and force compliances into a new paradigm of First Nation/Crown Relations. This is exemplified by how Duncan's has been quietly using ALCES to culturally and scientifically measures impacts on your Land and Territory, and building a case that may change the legal landscape in Alberta; it can be only achieved by Duncan's Community, Leadership, Elders, Staff, Consultants, and Lawyers working in commonality toward an achievable result. It is also a model or best practice for other Nations and Programs to follow.

#### **State of Administration**

With respect to administration, Chief and Council have assigned my office to restructure the organization, align and revise policy, create plain job descriptions, operate with contracts, and evaluate staff. We are approximately 60% into the mission, and expect to complete by the end of 2019.

### **The Changing Nature of Duncan's Program and Service Delivery**

I am very proud of our Staff. We continue to blend experience and inexperience, skilled staff and new staff, to great effect—with an emphasis on finding the best people to staff positions. For the sake of fairness, I will refrain from singling out individuals. The primary challenge of program and service is moving away from vertical management to horizontal teamwork. Such movement(s) cannot be artificially created; it must evolve by necessity and organically. Over the last three or four decades, Indian Affairs, through its bureaucratic mechanisms, created a 'silo' mentality where program delivery has been restricted to inflexible and unpredictable funding arrangements, excessive administrative and reporting burdens, and over focus on compliance rather than results. It is a toxic mix that discourages First Nation administrative decision-making.

Breaking down silos (and developing horizontal teamwork) allows employees to reach outside their specific program areas to other complementary departments—through cross-boundary collaboration—and create their own conditions for innovative service delivery. For example, Social Development, Education, and Health have enough commonalities to foster interdisciplinary cooperation. This has the potential to transform the entire administration of Duncan's.

If our future task is rebuilding a Nation, then we will need to bring together architects, educators, engineers, planners, environmental experts, social thinkers, economists, political scientists, along with community, leadership and staff to help integrate expertise in a carefully crafted learning process that allows us to see the world through others' eyes.

### **The Relationship Between Governance and Administration**

First Nations governance and administration continue to face the complexity of blending the traditional values of our respective First Nations with the modern reality of running a government; in effect, traditional values have been impacted by three centuries of colonial rule, and the modern reality of governing has been built on colonial rule of law. The challenge is how to blend in the face of complexity without imposing upon those that have already been imposed upon.

To give some dimension to the difficulty, we must acknowledge the scope of First Nations governance. The Centre for First Nations Governance identifies the following pillars and principles of governing: People (*Strategic Vision, Meaningful Information Sharing, Participating in Decision Making*); Land (*Territorial Integrity, Economic Realization, Respect for the Spirit of the Land*); Laws and Jurisdiction (*Expansion of Jurisdiction, Rule of Law*); Institution (*Transparency and Fairness, Results Based Organizations, Cultural Alignment of Institutions, Effective Inter-Governmental Relations*) and; Resources (*Human Resource Capacity, Financial Management Capacity, Performance Evaluation, Accountability and Reporting, Diversity of Revenue Resources*).

The Centre "believes that all First Nations have the ability to enact all or some of these principles no matter where they sit on the path to self-governance...Therefore, we must engage with these principles – our long term success depends on it."

In an article on First Nations Governance and Administration (2012), John Graham identifies three ingredients that are necessary for First Nations to develop effective governments:

1. Inspired and sustained community-level leadership
2. Community support
3. Competent set of managers.

He goes on to write that these “ingredients will have to be in place for decades if lasting progress is to be made. Only when leadership and community support are present can assistance from outside parties make a critical difference. Even then, progress may be fragile”.

Whatever path taken by Duncan’s leadership, the community must recognize the breadth and scope of governance, the complexities that underpin the challenges of governance, and the need for community and leadership to work in harmony when building an effective government.

### On Duncan’s Leadership

When the current leadership stepped into office in 2016, Duncan’s First Nation was in a state of deficit and hovering near remedial management. Through diligent cost savings, accountability measures, financial controls, careful decision-making, and a more disciplined approach to economic development, Chief and Council (by working closely with Economic Development and Finance Department) managed to improve Duncan’s administrative and financial health. Without delving too deeply in economics, there are seven signs that identify whether a company or government is in good financial health—Duncan’s First Nation is in good financial health:

1. Revenue Is Growing
2. Expenses Are Staying Within Reasonable Limits relative to revenue growth
3. Cash Balance Supports Long-Term Growth
4. Debt Ratios are Relatively Low
5. Activity Ratios (meaning Assets and Inventory) Are In-Line
6. Profitability thru Economic Development Partnerships Is On The Healthy Side
7. The Nation is Working With Solid Partners and Taking On New Partnerships Sustainably



Consistently strong leadership is the foundation upon which governments sustain financial health—and Duncan’s First Nation currently has strong leadership. Chief and Council have managed to shape a VISION of revenue growth, involve Elders (and Community) in DECISION-MAKING (and remember, your Chief and Council have held meetings and shared information on key decision making), develop STRATEGY about what actions to take, and what actions not to take, RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND REWARD a TEAM of GREAT STAFF to CARRY OUT STRATEGY, advance MEASURABLE RESULTS (which Council is proceeding with based on better DATA ACCUMULATION AND ANALYSIS), foster INNOVATION (by sustaining Duncan’s Administration with better financial tools and instruments).

Compare this to 2015, when Duncan’s:

1. Revenue was in free fall due to questionable (and unaccountable) decision making
2. Expenses had far outpaced revenue growth thru profligate spending
3. There was very little cash on hand
4. Debt was outpacing income
5. Inventory was aging out (including the Band’s Infrastructure)
6. Economic Development had grown dysfunctional
7. Partners were abandoning Duncan’s at break-neck speed.

I wanted to add a couple of words about the nature of leadership in First Nations. It has been my experience that Chiefs and Councils must work by consensus and shared vision—if there is no consensus or shared vision, there is no real leadership. There is no school or manual for how a Chief and Council can work together; in many ways, it is the unquantifiable stuff, the “magic” that makes things work—and right now, you have a combination of Chief and Council that works. Your Nation is one of the most progressive Band’s I have ever encountered, and I am amazed that your Chief and Council were able to turn things around in three years, when others have taken decades to even begin grappling with their challenges and problems. It will be a shame if the magic disappears and the Nation reverts back to retrograde politics.

## DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES – KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The following report/s briefly highlight key activities of each department

### EDUCATION

Since opening its doors on February 14 2019, the Culture N' Wellness Room has welcomed various activities and opportunities such as the women's circle, traditional medicines, vision board making, dream work, yoga, individual sessions, smudging, aroma- therapy, tea time, and nutrition.

Education is in process of working with Western Cree Tribal Council to take over the Education Service Agreements (ESAs) with the School Divisions. To date such agreements have been largely financial mechanisms—driven by Indian Affairs—with no accountability measures about the quality of education or its impacts on our children.



Further, Education and Chief and Council are currently reviewing and revising Post Secondary Program Policy.

Contact: Joanna Gladue, Education Director

### FINANCE

Currently, Finance is in process of updating its Financial Administration Software. The Department is also actively looking for a Financial Controller, which we hope to have in place by the end of summer 2019. Considering the volume of financial activity in public and business administration, Finance continues to evolve its approaches to administration and reporting.

Contact: Cheryl Frank, Director Finance



### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development is in a period of transition, but continues to evolve its programs and services to better meet the needs of community. Further, Social Development and Health have been working in partnership on the Community Garden, which is starting to take root and grow.

Acting Contact: Amanda Evans, Social Director

### HEALTH

Health is in active reform with the Band Manager in process of reviewing the Community Health Plan, which will proceed to Community Consultations. We continue to face challenges with prescription, legal and illegal drug abuse in the community, requiring the Nation to do some soul searching about impacts and preventions—especially on the Nation's children & youth.

Contact: Myrna Alexander, Acting Health Director

### OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

O&M is one of our most challenging department areas. The Band Manager has placed the department under review, with some new and exciting changes to come in 2019/2020 including a Work Order System and Inventory Management. To date, O&M has been meeting its challenges admirably with the Nation's deteriorating infrastructure. Chief and Council are looking closely at ways to fix infrastructure, and are in active negotiations with the Chancellery of Indigenous Services Canada (ChISC) to access funding for water pipe testing and upgrades.

Contact: Mark Goulet, O&M Manager

## HOUSING

Although Housing is a challenging portfolio, we would like to acknowledge that the program continues to take incremental steps toward building cohesive service delivery. In taking those small steps, we have met with some success with renovations: two houses have been completed, with another two in progress.

There is still a high demand for new housing, and Chief and Council are currently working on a Strategic Plan to finance new housing in 2019-2021. Further, the Band has retained consultative services to re-develop its Housing Policies to better meet the requirements of CMHC. During this time of transition, we thank you for your input and patience.

Contact: Norman Champagne, Band Manager (Strategic Direction); Raven Campbell, Housing Coordinator (Day-to-Day)

## LANDS

The Land Department is in process of restructuring, which we hope to complete by the end of 2019. Currently, the department continues to innovate with the Band's ALCES project. The department is complex with many moving parts—Chief and Council continues to lead and support innovative changes with land protection based on Treaty Rights and the pursuit of Economic Development.

Contact: Tom Green (Treaty), Delvin Mooswah (Culture), Andreeanne Lawrence (Monitoring), and Tim Barker (Forests)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As stated earlier in this newsletter, Economic Development continues to grow the Nation's financial position by leaps and bounds. The department continues to sustain existing and pursue new lines of business partnerships through Joint Venture and Shareholder Agreements with revenues projected to increase by 50%-100% in 2020.

Contact: Ken Rich, Director Economic Development

## RECREATION

Renovations were recently completed on "Gerald's Little Gym" at the JTM. The design of the fitness centre is innovative, which will provide fitness activities for all Nation members. Recreation is in process of evolving the Gym's business model, including plans for logoed apparel and gear.

Contact: Vanessa Testawich, Recreation Director



## PROPOSAL PROJECTS AND FUNDING

The following highlights key proposal driven projects that have been accomplished or are in state of progress

Program	Project	Amount	Year	Complete/Ongoing
O&M	Water Truck	\$190,000	2018	Complete
O&M	Garbage Truck	\$135,000	2019	Complete
O&M	Garage (New, Old Reno)	\$350,000	2019	Complete (June 2019)
O&M	Water Treatment Plant	\$600,000 (for design)	2019	Ongoing
HOUSING	Planning and Dev.	\$100,000	2019	Ongoing
GOVERNANCE	Policy Dev.	\$55,000	2019	Ongoing
FACILITY	Solar Panel Project	\$200,000	2019	Ongoing
BUSINESS	NIKAN Store and Gas	\$350,000	2019	Ongoing

The above is a snapshot of proposal driven projects. In the next newsletter, we will be providing updates about future projects that are in the pre-planning stages including housing and water line upgrades. It is important to note that all program and special projects have been support by Chief and Council as part of their Governance Strategic Planning.

