

Kwanlin Dän Ch'a

A newsletter for and about the Kwanlin Dün people.



Issue 6



Message from Chief and Council

Our First Nation government has been working hard for the last five years to put self-government into practice and to implement our Land Claim Agreement.

Work has started on the construction of our Cultural Centre. In addition to KDFN people working on the building itself, over the next two years we will be busy hiring and training staff for the centre, and planning and designing the programs that will happen there.

Through a joint venture with Dominion Construction, we are doing important work on the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. KDFN's construction company is earning a reputation for high-quality Super Green buildings in the new Ingram subdivision and is training KDFN citizens in leading edge building techniques. We are making progress on developing our people's skills, pride and prospects.

Our land claim and self-government agreements, and our constitution, have

set the foundation and started us on this path to a brighter future for our people – ourselves today and our children tomorrow.

To help keep us moving forward to the future we want, we need to map out a clear path. We are developing a strategic plan that will map out the journey our government will take over the next five years. We will be inviting all KDFN people to take part in planning our way.

We are also making important changes to how we manage our lands and invest our money. We need all KDFN beneficiaries to vote in the upcoming referendum in order for us to move forward on these vital issues.

We need your support and your participation to make self-government work. Together, we can continue on the path to the bright future we all want.

Chief Mike Smith

Tax Reminder for Settlement Land

Spring is tax time! This is an important reminder to everyone who was living on settlement land on December 31, 2009. When you complete your 2009 income tax returns you must make sure that you fill in the area on your tax form that says you were living on Kwanlin Dün First Nation settlement land. This will ensure that we receive all taxes payable to us, otherwise they go to the federal government and do not support our programs and services. If you forgot to do this in the past, you can go back and correct this on your older claims.

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Strategic Planning Process Begins

KDFN has begun a strategic planning process to help create a map that will guide our government for the next five years.

When completed, the plan will describe a vision of where we want to go, give us values to follow in our work, and will identify the actions to carry out. A strategic plan does not spell out every step along the path, but instead it outlines the priorities and broad strategies we can follow like tree blazes along our route.

Over the past six months, leadership and senior staff started out on this strategic planning process by considering our First Nation's experience over the last five years of governing ourselves and implementing our agreements.

We also want to draw on the knowledge and experience of our citizens to chart the course for our government for the next five years.

Over the next months, we will be providing a variety of ways for citizens to participate in developing the vision and values that will guide our government. We will also invite



your input on making sure our government priorities and strategies reflect the vision and values we define together.

For more information on the strategic plan, contact Gillian McKee, Policy Analyst at 633-7884 or gmckee@kwanlindun.com.



Indian Status Laws Changing

If you are a non-status Indian you may be able to get your Indian status after July 2010.

Indians Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl is introducing federal legislation that will extend Indian status to the grandchildren of First Nations women who married non-First Nations men.

These changes to the law are in response to a 2009 court case in British Columbia. The court ruled that the Indian Act was discriminatory because it denied Indian status to the grandchildren of such women.

Before 1985, First Nations women who married non-First Nations lost their Indian status. That changed in 1985, but these First Nations women could only pass their Indian status to their children. The new federal law will extend Indian status to the grandchildren of First Nations women who married non-First Nations men before 1985.

If you believe this change affects you, please contact the local INAC office at 667-3888 for information on applying for status. You can also find more information online at: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/br/is/mci-eng.asp

Income Verification for Housing Tenants

Chief and Council have asked the housing office to collect income verification from tenants for the 2008-09 tax year. This information is necessary for KDFN to continue to receive a housing subsidy from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; a subsidy that is critical to ensure that we can keep our housing program operating.

If you have received a letter asking for income verification, Chief and Council are asking for your help to provide the information in a timely manner. Proof of income can include your income tax return, notice of assessment or social assistance payment history.

If people do not submit this information, KDFN will be forced to increase rents on our properties to reflect market values. In many cases, this would almost double what we are currently charging. A three-bedroom house, for example, would go up to \$765/month.

Information can be dropped off at the housing office at 77 Mclennan Road, mailed to the band office or faxed to (867) 633-7848. All information will be kept confidential. Please contact Lorna Sands, Property Manager, with any questions.

Bring in Your Income Verification and WIN!

KDFN Housing will be hosting an event where everyone who brings their income verification for 2007, 2008 and 2009 to the Natwataku Potlach House will receive Bingo Bucks and will be entered into a draw for a \$250 gift certificate at Superstore. Refreshments will be served. Get your information ready, a date will be posted soon for your chance to win!

New Spaces and New Faces at Economic Development

The KDFN Economic Development Department have moved their office location. Saskia, Peter and Martin can now be found in the office trailers behind the main band offices, across the parking lot from the Health Centre front doors.

Please note that the telephone numbers have changed:

- Saskia Bunichich: 633-7877
- Peter Turner: 633-7880
- Martin Crill: 633-7879

For any citizens looking to update their resume or contact information in the job skills database, or inquire about construction employment at projects this coming Spring, please stop by and see Peter Turner at his new office location.

Economic Development Welcomes Martin Crill

Martin Crill has joined the KDFN Economic Development as the new Economic Development Officer.

Martin was born and raised on the small British island of Jersey. He holds Masters' degrees in Environmental Management and Social Development. For over 25 years, Martin was a Program Director and project management consultant for major humanitarian relief and development agencies, working in Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

Martin and his wife Maureen made Yukon their home in 1998. You may know Maureen already – she works as a Public Health Nurse at Kwanlin Dün's Health Centre.

Before coming to KDFN, Martin continued to work as a project management consultant overseas on short assignments for part of the year, while the summers were spent undertaking environmental field work in the Yukon. He brings to the team many years of experience in project design, management and evaluation.

Martin can be reached at 876-633-7879 or martincrill@kwanlindun.com



Beneficiaries' Referendum Upcoming in June

All Kwanlin Dün beneficiaries who will be 18 or older on referendum day are encouraged to vote on June 15, 2010 on three important policies which will enable Kwanlin Dün to move forward with developing its lands, managing its money and ensuring the interests of its beneficiaries are protected.

Over the past two years, these three policies – the Settlement Land Policy, the Investment Governance Policy and the Consultation Policy Statement – have been developed by special committees made up of Kwanlin Dün beneficiaries. The wording of the policies was subsequently approved at beneficiary meetings. The KDFN constitution says beneficiaries must now vote on these policies before they can be fully approved.

If approved, Kwanlin Dün will be able to develop its own laws that will help the community move forward in very important ways:

1. Right now Kwanlin Dün can only authorize the use of Settlement Land for three years at a time until the Settlement Land Policy is approved. The approval of the Settlement Land Policy will allow for the long-term use of Kwanlin Dün lands.
2. Currently, the monies that were paid to Kwanlin Dün under the Final Agreement are unable to be invested and are growing very slowly. Kwanlin Dün can not invest in business opportunities or use these funds to provide financial assistance to its beneficiaries.

If the Investment Governance Policy is approved then a Trust Fund can be set up to ensure the Final Agreement monies are carefully managed for the benefit of all Kwanlin Dün beneficiaries, and it will enable Kwanlin Dün to develop laws allowing for the investment of the Final Agreement monies.

3. Presently, Kwanlin Dün has no consultation policy in place to guide how Kwanlin Dün should consult with its beneficiaries if the Final Agreement were to be amended. If the Consultation Policy Statement is approved beneficiaries will be able to participate in a consultation and approval process whenever their interests are affected by a proposed amendment to the Final Agreement.

Once these three policies are approved, Kwanlin Dün will talk with its beneficiaries as it develops new laws on land, monies and consultation. There will be future opportunities for Kwanlin Dün beneficiaries to participate in deciding how Kwanlin Dün will manage its lands and invest its monies. However, this discussion can not happen if the beneficiaries' policies are not approved.

The KDFN constitution requires that for the referendum to be passed, a majority of all beneficiaries entitled to vote in the referendum must vote yes. This means that if less than a majority of the eligible beneficiaries vote, the policies can not be approved, even if everyone who voted said yes.

It is very important for every eligible beneficiary to vote in this referendum. If less than the majority of the eligible beneficiaries vote, then the policies will not be approved and another referendum will need to be held in the future. This would cost Kwanlin Dün a lot of money and Kwanlin Dün will not be able to allow the long-term use of Settlement Land or invest its Settlement monies until another referendum was held and the policies approved.

Please Vote in the Referendum

The referendum voting date is **Tuesday, June 15th, 2010**. People in Whitehorse will vote at the NaKwaTaKu Potlatch House.

Mail-in ballots will be sent to all eligible beneficiaries. If you didn't receive a referendum information sheet in the mail in December 2009 please contact us to make sure we have your current address.

In early May a community education campaign for the referendum will get underway involving door to door visits and phone calls to beneficiaries. For further information on the referendum please visit the website www.kwanlindun.com/referendum/

If you have any questions on the referendum, please contact:

Jacqueline Shorty
Referendum Coordinator
In Whitehorse: 633-7883
Toll free 1-877-633-7870

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Kwanlin Dän Ch'a means Kwanlin people of Whitehorse, how are you?