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COMMISSION DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS DU QUÉBEC ET DU LABRADOR (CDEPNQL)
FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (FNQLEDC)

Special features

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- Success Story of Pikogan
- Aboriginal Tourism in Quebec!

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CEDOs and Entrepreneurs of the Cree Nation respond to the appeal!

Officers and representatives of the Community Economic Development (CEDO) of the Cree Nation invited the entrepreneurs of their communities to participate in the training sessions offered by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC), under the theme The Negotiation, in Val d'Or, on March 4, 2004.

There are an increasing number of participants who attend the training sessions developed by the FNQLEDC and École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP). At the last training session held in Val-d'Or, over twenty participants, including the entrepreneurs of the Cree Nation who were invited at the request of their CEDOs, requested the training on negotiation. To the FNQLEDC, it is a first, but with the contribution of Canada Economic Development, the main sponsor, the Commission is hoping to reach more and more entrepreneurs via the CEDOs.

According to Pierre Bastien, General Director of the FNQLEDC, CEDOs' contacts with the entrepreneurs of their community are steadily increasing, and this will enable them to achieve a more comprehensive planning of their community. "Entrepreneurs create jobs and they are kind of role models to the Aboriginal youth, they have a key role to play in the development of the community" stated Mr. Bastien following the Val-d'Or training.

Also, employees from *Corporation de Développement Économique Montagnaise*, from Eeyou New Economy Group and from the *Société d'Habitation du Québec* took an active part in one or the other of the training sessions offered since June 2003. As explained by Pierre Bastien, the training sessions are meant for the officers and representatives who are members of the FNQLEDC. "It appears that the employees of different sectors linked to the Aboriginal socio-economic develop-

ment, wish to benefit from our training, therefore there is a need that requires a quick answer from many interveners".

Since the creation of this training plan, the FNQLEDC received phone calls from employees of different tribal councils and non-Aboriginal organizations, such as *Conseils Régionaux de Développement (CRD)*. Many were hoping to join forces with the Aboriginal communities and become familiar with their needs in order to develop partnerships via the training sponsored by the FNQLEDC.

According to Mr. Bastien, it is out of the question to create training sessions for all these sectors, but one thing is clear: the need for the interveners to pull together has become blatant. "With the agreements concluded by the Quebec and Canadian governments with the First Nation governments, it is obvious that the regions and the organizations working for the development, wish to join forces with the Aboriginal

communities so that everybody works towards the same goal: offer a promising future to the youth of the area", added Mr. Bastien.

The series of training sessions for the year 2003-2004 is now terminated, but the FNQLEDC is hoping to pursue its activities with the assistance of its main sponsor in this file: Canada Economic Development. The assessments made by ENAP are conclusive and allow the FNQLEDC to believe in the success of the 2004-2005 training plan.



Photo : Pierre Bastien

The officers, the representatives and community entrepreneurs of the Cree and Algonquin Nations participated in the training session offered by the FNQLEDC in Val d'Or.

A Note from the Director General of the FNQLEDC

First Peoples Economic Development and Entrepreneurship Steering Committee

Mr. Pierre Bastien, General Director of the FNQLEDC

"The First Peoples Economic Development and Entrepreneurship Steering Committee", is a file that many of you have heard about. Therefore, we thought it was the right time to explain the approach taken by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC) regarding the establishment of this Committee and to introduce the current results.

The mandate of this Committee comes directly from the Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL), Mr. Ghislain Picard. The mandate consists in identifying the stakes of aboriginal economic development and in developing a strategic action to favor the improvement of socio-economic conditions in the First Peoples communities, keeping in mind the respect of cultural values.

With the financial support of Canada Economic Development (CED) in the course of 2003, the FNQLEDC, which is considered as the delegated representative in this file, agreed with that Department to develop terms of reference and an action plan to be used as tools for the establishment of this Committee.

So far, the FNQLEDC undertook various initiatives, including the establishment of a working committee selected from a list of 35 First Peoples organizations emerging from some twelve sectors that are more or less involved in the First Peoples socio-economic development.

This committee promoted the following objectives:

- Develop terms of reference for the operation of the Committee;
- Establish the broad orientations of the Committee in order to create an action plan;
- Ensure that this project materializes in the fall of 2004.

Two meetings of the working committee took place, specifically on January 27 and March 23 2004. Interveners from the Quebec First Nations Human Resources Development Commission, from the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Corporation, from the Quebec Native Women, from the FNQLEDC, from the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, from Eeyou New Economy Group, from the Kahnawake Economic Development Commission, from the Native Friendship Centers Grouping, from Lands Insight and AFNQL's fiscal adviser participated and put forward constructive comments regarding the recommended objectives.

The FNQLEDC must now complete the drafting of the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee before the end of April 2004, and from there, it will be possible to develop an action plan that includes the vision and the broad strategic orientations. This document will be submitted to CED to sound out their interest in the project. If the FNQLEDC gets the financial support of CED, the project will finally be submitted to the AFNQL Chiefs for approval. If the Chiefs approve it through a resolution, it will then be possible to call for tenders in order to establish the Steering Committee that regroups representatives of the identified sectors.

Therefore, I invite you to get in touch with me if you wish to receive more information on this issue, which we all hope, will ensure the socio-economic development of First Peoples members."

Tel. : (418) 843-1488

Pilot Project

Aboriginal Business Service Network

In January of 2004, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC) set up a pilot project aimed at reestablishing the Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN) and at promoting its Web site, with a financial contribution from Canada Economic Development and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

As everyone knows, the mission of the FNQLEDC consists among other things, in playing a role of advice and support in the assessment of the communities' comprehensive economic situation. The FNQLEDC must also assume a role of liaison, communication and information, in such a way as to support the community economic development officers and representatives CEDO.

The visit of sixteen communities will be an opportunity for the FNQLEDC to fulfill several of its mandates: by identifying the specific needs of the CEDOs as far as new information technologies and working conditions of employees of that sector, are concerned. This will also enable the Commission to draw the overall picture of economic development that prevails in the community being visited and to promote, on the field, the Aboriginal Business Services Network and its Web site.

Ms Julie Picard, Economic Development Advisor for the FNQLEDC, ensures the follow-up of this file by visiting the communities that have

been selected: Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Betsiamites, Mashteuiatsh, Odanak, Pikogan, Kitigan Zibi, Chisabi, Waswanipi, Eastman, Wendake, Viger, Gesgapegiag, Kanesatake and Kawawachikamach.

Ms Picard has already visited eight communities. She will be completing this series of meetings in April 2004. Already, she is in a position to identify those communities that will eventually be able to properly utilize the ABSN. She also witnessed that ABSN is not known nor used by the CEDOs and the entrepreneurs that she met in the communities.

The Economic Development Advisor was greeted with warmth by all participating CEDOs. She then delivered a clear message to all of them: The FNQLEDC is there to assist the CEDOs in the achievement of their tasks and in the long term planning of activities pertaining to the socio-economic development of Aboriginal communities.

For more information on ABSN, you are welcome to visit the following Web site address:
www.infoentrepreneurs.org/rsea/english/index.cfm

You can also communicate with the Economic Development Advisor of the FNQLEDC: Ms Julie Picard at (418) 843-1488.



Canada Economic Development

Développement économique Canada



Canada

Bercé par l'Harricana

In search of the Anishinabe

By Caroline Nepton-Hotte

Bercé par l'Harricana (Rocked by the Harricana) is much more than a project of Pikogan's Amik Economic Development Service (SDEA), an Algonquin community situated north of Amos. It is an encounter with culture, with a Nation's history. It is a contact with the Anishinabe (Algonquin) of yesteryears and today's.

Bercé par l'Harricana, proposes several expeditions in white water canoeing on the Harricana, the river being used for times immemorial by the Anishinabeg to reach their hunting territories. When you listen to André Mowatt, a SDEA tourism officer and well trained guide, you have the impression of hearing the crackling of a fire. His manner of telling the stories about his community's elders, his canoe-camping expeditions and most of all, his typical laugh contribute in making the atmosphere vivid. He is a passionate man capable of captivating the visitors' attention during their outdoors vacation. "I have lived in the forest for quite some time, either for work or just for the pleasure of living. This is the place where I feel good, explains André. To the elders of the community, such as my uncle, the forest is a home".

Keeping this spirit in mind, SDEA has developed in 1998, a 200 kilometers trail, including a dozen of camping sites and 17 portages on as many rapids. *Bercé par l'Harricana* offers one-day and/or week-ends packages, or three days expeditions or more. There is something to please everyone: for those who are more experienced or for people who wish to live a new adventure.

The package comes almost complete. The nights under the tent (teepee or prospector tents) where the aromas of fir beds and traditional meals blend together, will take the visitors into an immersion of ancient culture history. Canoe fanatics will also have the opportunity to practice their sport accompanied by Pikogan's Algonquin guides from the Abitibiwinni Nation, who will make them discover exquisite sceneries and a vast universe of background sounds. An open invitation is made to outdoor fans with a spirit of adventure.

According to Major Kistabish, the SDEA coordinator, this is a project that really worked its way up in the tourism business of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. "We had a distinction at the provincial level at a tourism galadby the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Association (STAQ), in 2000, we were awarded a prize at the provincial level within the scope of the "Grands prix du tourisme Québécois" and in 2001, we won another award at the local level in the Tourism sector at the "Amos Chamber of Commerce Gala".

Bercé par l'Harricana has now joined the membership of the *Association touristique régionale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, of the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Corporation and soon the *Aventure Écotourisme Québec*. *Bercé par l'Harricana* created a network to improve



its visibility, its credibility. To make sure that a sustained rate of profitable economic growth is maintained, it provides professional training to its team. "Added to their personal forestry life experience, our Algonquin guides have a first responder training for remote areas, first-aid and cardio-respiratory reanimation (RCR) skills", added Mr. Kistabish.

As stated by these two interveners, it is not their intention to disguise their people and make them dance around a busload of tourists! The real personality of the Anishinabe must be the spearhead of any project. *Bercé par l'Harricana* respects this philosophy, the spirit of development of the Anishinabe and promotes the tourists' awareness to the realities of the First Nations. "I talk about simple things dealing with animals, portages, communication means used by the Elders, explains André. I ask them to respect the silence of the forest and I encourage them to discover the pleasure of making time to enjoy life."

The Amik Economic Development Service

SDEA is an economic development organization constituted as a non-profit corporation. It must "promote and support activities and initiatives susceptible to contribute to the socio-economic and sustainable community development that meets the expectations and aspirations of the Abitibiwinni First Nation and its members". The organization has its own Board of Directors, but remains under the structure of the Abitibiwinni First Nation Council. To SDEA, tourism is one of the areas that carry a lot of potential, development wise.

According to Mr. Kistabish, the potential of recreational tourism development has barely been touched. Packages of dog sled rides were offered in winter with families of Anishinabeg trappers, but "we intend to put an emphasis on this type of experience in the future!". In closing, *Bercé par l'Harricana* allowed the SDEA to establish its reputation by respecting the traditions, the forests and the strengths of this small community populated by some 500 residents. It is therefore a meeting place for all, young and old, an adventure for all the senses.



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The First Nations and the Harmonization Measures in Forestry Quite a Success!

Contribution of Marie Gosselin, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute and Maxime Vollant, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Youth Council.

From March 9 to 11, 2004, the Innu community of Essipit, which is situated at some 40 kilometers west of Tadoussac, welcomed some 62 persons from 30 different organizations who came to attend a symposium under the theme "The First Nations and the Harmonization Measures in Forestry". This participation was a record high.

Although the event was intended first and foremost for the representatives of Aboriginal Communities, it nevertheless drew the interest of some fifteen representatives of environmental groups added to university and governmental circles. Except for the Cree and Naskapi Nations, all Nations from Quebec and Labrador were represented. The symposium was highlighted by the presence of Ms Valérie Courtois, a forestry engineer from the Innu Nation of Mashteuiatsh, also a member of the Sustainable Development Institute Forestry Committee, who accepted to chair the event.

The symposium aimed at the following objectives :

- To share experiences and approaches of territorial management developed by the different Nations and communities;
- To develop common principles aiming at the harmonization of activities performed on the territory;
- To disseminate specific applications, and
- To lead the elaboration of a guide for the establishment of viable harmonization processes acknowledged by the First Nations.

The first part of the symposium was an opportunity to become aware of the different approaches of territorial management and of the communities' involvement in the implementation of the harmonization measures. These conferences focused on the approach of the Atikamekw and Innu Nations of Labrador, and on the specific initiatives of the Essipit Montagnais, of the Atikamekw of Wemotaci, of Pekuakamiulnuatsh and of the Algonquins of Barrière Lake. These various conferences provided a first hand view of the diversity of managerial orientations and of the First Nations' levels of involvement. Communities pursue the same objective of sustainable territorial management, but the approaches are specific to each community.

The second part of the conference was an occasion to develop a common vision of what the participants call " the viable harmonization processes ", rather than the harmonization measures. A representative of the Quebec Government came to deliver the vision of harmonization measures advocated by the ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Parks. Subsequently, the participants were invited to exchange on the different questions which resulted in the elaboration of a common vision and orientations for the First Nations.



A working group attending the meeting of "Forestry Harmonization Measures ".

Credit : Maxime Vollant

Consequently, it was specified that, for the First Nations, the "viable harmonization processes", which aim at protecting the territory, are defined as follows: "the collective concrete actions producing significant results on the territory, which respect first and foremost, the rights of the First Nations, then integrate the interests, the knowledge, the activities and the needs of all users without however trespassing the capacity of support of ecosystems."

Certification and Training

The third and last part updated the participants on the forestry certification and on the inquiry commission on public forests management, topics that were chosen for their pertinence and close links to the conference framework. A representative from Eagle Village and a participant from Wemotaci each shared their experience in their community within the scope of implementation of the certification process by forest companies who intervene on their community's territory. In closing, a commissioner from the inquiry commission on public forests management introduced the mandate and the expectations of the commission. The communities were then invited to come forward and express their point of view to the commission.

In conclusion, all the participants acknowledge that a lot remains to be done to ensure the concrete participation of communities in the processes of protecting and managing the territory. Nevertheless, the sharing of these experiences and exchanges enabled the participants to realize that there is a definite need to get involved and the tools are there. The First Nations must take their rightful place in the management of the territory.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute at 418-843-9999 or by Internet at www.iddpnql.ca

Joint Table on Taxation (JTT)

Mr. Michael Benedict, Fiscal Advisor for the AFNQL

If you recall, in the Nikan bulletin of April 2003 (Volume 1, issue 3), I wrote an article entitled "Double Standards (Tawich Case)" informing you that the federal government grants an exemption to corporations, commissions and associations owned by First Nations performing a function of government where the Quebec government does not. Quebec has since agreed to revise its position in this file and may announce an amendment to section 985 of the Quebec Income Tax Act to allow an exemption equivalent to the one granted by the federal government.

At its meeting of February 5, 2004, the Joint Council of Elected Representatives (JCER) made a decision to set up a Joint Table on Taxation (JTT). This table is comprised of high level Quebec government officials from the ministries of Finance, Revenue and the Native Affairs Secretariat and a political attaché from the Minister of Revenue's cabinet as well as representatives from the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL).

This Joint Table on Taxation is mandated to identify the fiscal irritants that compromise the maintenance of harmonious relations between the First Nations governments and the government of Quebec and to propose to the Chiefs, the concerned ministers and the JCER potential solutions to the identified irritants.

This Table met for the first time on Wednesday, February 18, 2004 at the AFNQL offices in Wendake. Subsequent meetings are planned for March 17 and April 14, 2004. The participants drafted a list of three subjects on which the JTT shall concentrate during the first phase of discussion, which shall terminate on April 30, 2004. The three identified subjects are:

- 1- The perception of the Quebec Sales Tax (QST) on insurance premiums pertaining to automobiles sold to Indians living on a reserve;
- 2- An amendment to the "Loi sur le Régime des rentes du Québec" (Quebec Pension Plan Act) that would enable First Nation members having earned a tax-exempt salary on a reserve to contribute to the QPP;

- 3- An amendment to section 985 of the Quebec Income Tax Act that would allow a tax exemption for corporations, commissions and associations owned by a First Nation performing a function of government.

I urge all First Nation governments, employers, organizations, commissions and associations to closely follow the developments of the JCER and the JTT as the results of our work at the political and administrative levels will have an impact on the way we do business in the future.

For more information on the JTT, please feel free to contact Mr. Michael Benedict, Fiscal Advisor for the AFNQL Secretariat, at (819) 294-6190.



Michael Benedict,
Fiscal adviser for
AFNQL

Credit: Michael Benedict



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Economic Study on Aboriginal Tourism in Quebec: A major issue for the future of QATC

A special contribution of Roger Wylde, Director General of the Quebec Aboriginal
Tourism Corporation (QATC)

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" Aboriginal tourism ventures carry a significant influence in their community, as much on the economic level, as on the cultural and social levels. Their power of attraction with the European Tourist clientele is well established. On the other hand, they are not very visible in the neighboring markets". Extract of *L'Étude économique sur le tourisme autochtone*, commissioned by the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Corporation from Desjardins marketing stratégique inc.).

These statements of fact emerge from a survey conducted among 56 Aboriginal tourist businesses spread out across the province, from November 2003 to February 2004.

The first part of this survey included the following objectives:

- draft a realistic economic picture of the Quebec Aboriginal tourist businesses, as a whole;
- analyze the results and compare it to the overall tourism situation in Quebec;
- assess the current economic impacts;
- evaluate the social impacts of businesses, qualitatively speaking, within their respective community.

Key elements of the first portion of the survey

Over the recent years, the tourism trade has known a significant growth, of which Aboriginal tourist ventures seem to have benefited: 71% of business owners vouch for increased sales over the past three years.

In general, Aboriginal tourist businesses are very small in size (10 employees or less) and two thirds of them operate on a seasonal basis.

Aboriginal tourist establishments represent less than 1% of the overall Quebec tourist ventures; combined together they have a penetration rate of 1,6% of the tourism market in Quebec; on the other hand, they have a penetration rate of 14,1% of the tourism market of other countries. By comparison to the average of the Quebec

tourism industry, their clientele is clearly more international; Europeans count for an average of 30% of their patrons.

These businesses are significant employers in their respective communities. Two thirds of these employees are Native.

In these businesses, close to half of these employees (47%) speak their mother tongue fluently; this situation is a reflection of the phenomenon that took place within the Quebec Aboriginal population, where 45% speak their mother tongue.

Entrepreneurs anticipate a positive future: 87% forecast an increase of their sales, which are moderate for the most part.

Finally, the greatest challenge for these businesses is by far, the access to funding: two thirds of the administrators are raising this issue.

The remainder of the survey, whose results will be known in the upcoming weeks, will enable us to identify the areas where Aboriginal tourist market is growing and provide us with the means to ensure its progress.

Comparative analyses will be drawn up with other sectors and the evolution perspectives will be evaluated. Furthermore, discussion groups and interviews with experts will facilitate the enhancement of the analysis, while identifying the best perspectives of development for the Aboriginal tourism industry.

To follow!

