

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN MATAWA, CESO AND RISE ASSET DEVELOPMENT SET TO ROLL OUT BUSINESS WEEK IN FIRST NATIONS

THUNDER BAY, ON: Business coaches from Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) and the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) announced today that they are set to roll out Business Week from September 18 – 22 in the 9 Matawa First Nations. The focus will be ‘Igniting Entrepreneurship’ with a vision of reducing poverty.

Business coaches include Brent Edwards and Brook Mainville, Business Support Officers from MFNM and Harry Norton and Jane Underwood, CESO Volunteer Advisors. They will be teaming up to deliver *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* workshops with the support of community Economic Development Officers (EDOs). Topics will include financing strategies and learning more about obtaining business loans through Rise Asset Development and business plan writing. There will also be opportunities for one-on-one business coaching. They are hoping to raise awareness on the project and begin client management after individuals are registered. Their schedule is as follows:

- September 18 – Marten Falls First Nation
- September 18 – Webequie First Nation
- September 19 – Aroland First Nation
- September 19 – Neskantaga First Nation
- September 20 – Constance Lake First Nation
- September 20 – Nibinamik First Nation
- September 21 – Long Lake #58 First Nation
- September 21 – Ginoogaming First Nation
- September 21 – Eabametoong First Nation

In January, MFNM received provincial funding support through the *Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The strategy, announced in April 2015, supports innovative, local, community-driven solutions that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty. MFNM will be utilizing the investment to evaluate the impact of a co-created, culturally-appropriate entrepreneurship programs for First Nations in the 9 communities.

This Business Week marks the first set of coordinated workshops. Business coaches plan on hosting a similar workshop in Thunder Bay for Matawa First Nation members in the near future and additional round of workshops in the 9 Matawa communities in January 2018.

QUOTES

“There is no shame in not understanding all facets of business planning right away. We see many institutions intimidate people with planning manuals and templates without providing it in a culturally appropriate manner or in the right language. This is about reducing poverty, this is about self-employment. Our peoples have been involved in commerce since the fur trade. This is our time to balance modern ways of developing business with traditional ways of life.”

—*Brook Mainville, Business Support Officer, Matawa First Nations Management*

“Many of our remote First Nations face unique challenges that increase the cost of doing business. We are not using geographic location as an excuse to allow crippling unemployment levels of 90% to continue. We will work towards addressing barriers in the supply chain and marketing channel and bring capacity to the peoples at the community level. We are not bringing already made plans or packages, we are bringing our toolbox for individuals to access and realize their dreams.”

—*Brent Edwards, Business Support Officer, Matawa First Nations Management*

“What makes this project different than what has been tried in the past is how it is structured to ensure that the First Nations drive the process...grassroots-UP! Our EDOs play a critical role to achieving success. They understand their local economies better than anyone sitting in offices in Toronto or Ottawa. The strategic alliance with CESO and Rise Asset Development assists with addressing barriers to entrepreneurship such as access to resources that is readily made available to other Canadians in urban areas. We intend to bridge the gap, to educate, innovate and accelerate growth of local business in the 9 First Nations, while providing options and hope to the disadvantaged youth and adults who need to find a way to prosper.”

—*Jason Rasevych, Project Manager/Economic Development Advisor, Matawa First Nations Management*

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For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca.

Matawa First Nations Management is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area. Follow them on Facebook or Twitter @MatawaFN



BACKGROUNDER - Matawa Business Support Program and Partners

Matawa Business Support Program, a collaboration between Matawa First Nation Management (MFNM), Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) and Rise Asset Development (RISE), is a 36-month project to catalyze entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for members of the MFNM communities. The program will include business workshops, one-on-one business coaching, and access to affordable and flexible capital to support business growth. The program is open to MFNM community members with an interest in business, including current small business owners, as well as to community members interested in gaining knowledge about self-employment.

Program Partners

Matawa First Nation Management (MFNM)



MFNM is a tribal council with nine member Ojibway and Cree First Nations. Tribal Councils are institutions established as, “a grouping of bands with common interests who voluntarily join together to provide advisory and/or program services to member bands.”

MFNM was established in 1988. MFNM provides a variety of advisory services and program delivery to its member First Nations. MFNM is committed to quality assurance and are responsive to their communities’ needs.

Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO)



CESO is an international economic development organization with programs across Canada and in over 20 countries. CESO works internationally and throughout Canada to build strong economies and strong communities. CESO deploys Volunteer Advisors from

both private and public sectors to transfer skills and knowledge through a mentorship and advisory framework. Volunteers contribute their valuable expertise to help communities in need to achieve greater self-sufficiency and growth.

Rise Asset Development (RISE)



Rise is a registered charity providing low interest small business loans, training and mentorship to men and women who are interested in pursuing self-employment. Rise works to empower business owners with access to financing and business support. Rise recognizes the interdependency of financial well-being to one’s overall quality of life.

