

Lands Department Monthly Newsletter

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OUR WEBSITE FOR ENERGY
EFFICIENCY

**JUNE
2-4**

Energy Audit Training

The Youth Energy Champions worked with Paul Chateau from LEAP and another Youth Energy Champion from Sandy Bay to do energy audits on selected buildings in our community, such as the Veteran's Hall, Community Center, Security building, Early Years School building, and the Governance office.

And on June 2nd, another Youth joined our department!



New Youth Energy Champion



"Hello everyone! I hope you are doing good. My name is Tiara Bell. I am 19 years old, and I am the newest Youth Energy Champion here in the Lands Department. I am very grateful to get this opportunity to be a part of this team and so far I am enjoying all the work we are doing. I hope that with the work we do, we can make a difference in our community."



**JUNE
16-18**

Brandon IRS Site Clean-up

The Youth Energy Champions helped the Brandon IRS Missing Children Investigation team clean up at a search site at the Residential School Site. We spent our days mowing, weed whacking, chopping dead branches, removing old farm fencing, and marking the perimeter with the RTK Machine. We wrapped up the week with a drone flight to capture aerial photos of the newly cleaned site; we also found one vole, two green snakes, and three woodpeckers!



Electricity Generation

Approximately 40% of energy from all-natural resources is spent in the generation of electricity.

JUNE
21

National Indigenous Peoples Day



Proud to be Dakota!

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday that honours the histories, cultures, and contributions of Native and Indigenous peoples. The holiday was created to recognize the historical mistreatment of Indigenous peoples and to celebrate their resilience, cultures, and contributions to society. It serves as a counter-celebration to Columbus Day, highlighting the negative impacts of European colonization, including displacement, violence, and cultural erasure.

A celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day was held Friday, June 19, at Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. They included live entertainment, games, sports and a barbecue supper, among other festivities.

JUNE
26

GPR & GNSS at the Pratt Cemetery



This work is part of the SVDN Cemeteries Project, which documents both marked and unmarked graves across our cemeteries and brings them together into one community map. Many of our relatives were laid to rest under wooden crosses. Where a cross burned in a grass fire or weathered away over the years, the surface record of that grave went with it, even though the burial remains.

GPR gives us a way to find those graves again. The survey covers the ground in tight, evenly spaced lines, and the results show up as patterns in the soil that mark where the earth was once opened. We then compare those patterns against headstones, older cemetery records, aerial imagery and the knowledge families carry, so every grave we identify is backed by more than one source.

We take our time at the cemetery. Tobacco is offered, and permission is asked before the equipment comes out. The crew pauses to walk the grounds and notice the sage, prairie roses, berries and grasses growing over the graves. Elders share what they remember, youth walk with them, and the land sets the pace of the work.

Once the mapping is complete, families and Council will have an accurate record of who rests where. That record supports care of the grounds, planning for future burials, and the simple act of visiting a relative and knowing you are standing in the right place.



Pride Month



Celebrating Pride

Pride Month is an annual celebration honouring the LGBTQ+ community, raising awareness of LGBTQ+ rights, and promoting acceptance and equality. Pride Month provides an opportunity to remember the struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community and the progress made toward equality.

In our work environment, we support & accept each other for who they are. Happy Pride!

The core goals of Pride Month include:

- **Celebrating LGBTQ+ identities** and fostering a sense of community and pride.
- **Raising awareness** about issues affecting LGBTQ+ people, including discrimination and legal inequalities.
- **Promoting visibility and acceptance**, helping society recognize the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.
- **Honoring history and activism**, acknowledging the contributions of individuals and organizations that have fought for LGBTQ+ rights.



JULY 3 Drone Unboxing

We now have DJI Matrice 400 drone with a Zenmuse L3 payload. So far, we have used it to map ground and water elevations during the flood. We will use it this summer (after the flood) to map the floodplains and drainage in all of Sioux Valley to make preparations for the future. It can also support agriculture, cemeteries, search and rescue and many other things!



Flood Monitoring & Community Resilience



When the Assiniboine River began to climb this July, our crew went to work. We combined what our community already knows about where the creeks run and where the dykes hold with survey-grade GPS and drones. That let us measure how high the water was getting and where it was headed next.

Our main tool was a real-time kinematic (RTK) receiver, a survey-grade GPS that reads elevations accurate to within about an inch. That precision matters because an inch of difference along the top of a dyke or at a culvert can decide whether a home stays dry. We walked and drove the river and the creek, logging point after point along the ditches and dyke crests.



From the air, our drones filled in the bigger picture. Lidar and high-resolution photos let us map ground and water elevations across wide areas, then build 3D models that show which way water would flow across the landscape.

Our Youth Energy Champions hold basic drone certification, and were out flying, marking points and recording data alongside the rest of the Drone team while also helping with sandbagging.

We would like to give thanks to Peguis First Nation, The BIRS Team and Paul Chateau from LEAP for coming out and helping us with the sandbagging as their help was greatly appreciated along with our own community members who put in many hours of their hard work. Pidamaye/do

The work continues now that the water has dropped. With the same drone and RTK gear, we are mapping the flood plains and drainages across all of Sioux Valley, so that when the river rises again, we already know where the water will go.



Transportation of natural gas is sensitive

Methane is the main element of natural gas, which is a greenhouse gas. Therefore, the transportation of natural gas is a very sensitive issue since undetected leaks can lead to climate change.

**JULY
14**

APTN Interview

On July 14th, APTN News came out to do a story on our flood. Meadow, alongside Chris Mancuso & Darby Essie, were able to share some things about what we do, the flood reports, and how we helped our community during the state of emergency.

“At the start of the flood, I actually wasn’t in Sioux Valley, I was in Saskatoon for University. I saw pictures of the 21 being flooded over, and I thought to myself, ‘Okay, it’s time to come home and help sandbag.’” - Meadow Leaming

“Seeing the community come together, that’s what is really nice to see, not from just my age or the elders but from the youth. They really got into it and when they got the word that we were going to peak, they were really excited. To see that also brought hope to our community.” - Darby Essie



We are very grateful that we got to speak and share our story with APTN!



SVDN Powwow

**JULY
17-19**

On July 17 - 19, our community hosted their annual powwow. The only difference this time was that it was the 80th anniversary of the powwow. Many people from all over came to enjoy the weekend with us. Although it was hot, our dancers persevered and danced their hearts out.

**JULY
21-23**

IYECA Summer meeting



From July 21st-23rd the Youth Energy Champions attended an IYECA (Indigenous Youth Energy Champion Accelerator) workshop. We learned about all the different kinds of energy: renewable, non-renewable, and clean energy. As well as how to conserve and store energy and how we can be more efficient with our energy use.

The workshop was held at Brandon University in McMaster Hall for all 3 days. Day one was an introduction to the other Youth Energy Champions, then we learned energy basics like where our energy comes from, how to use it responsibly and ways to conserve energy in our everyday lives. We learned that even “small” things can make a big difference!

On day two, we planned out our Zines. A Zine is a maga(zine) that isn’t widely produced and usually covers niche topics. A Zine happens to be a deliverable in our contracts as Youth Energy Champions. Our Zine topic is going to be about energy and how we hope for a sustainable, energy-efficient future for the generations to come. We also talked about communication skills to help get more outreach from our community.

On day three, certified energy auditor Paul Chateau gave us an energy audit demonstration and showed us some drone flying. We got to walk around the Brandon University campus and do a mock energy audit. We even found a problem with the building’s HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system, just by walking around with a thermal camera and some detective skills.



**JULY
27**

Wipazoka Wakpa Survivors: Voices and Memories Project

The Wipazoka Wakpa Survivors: Voices and Memories Project is creating a commemorative book featuring life stories (biographies) for each Sioux Valley Dakota Nation member who attended Residential School anywhere in Canada.

Each life story becomes a profile page in the book, detailing the person's childhood, family, culture, work, accomplishments, humour and the teachings that they would like to be carried forward in one or two pages. What would you like your great-grandchildren and future generations to know about you?

This is not a testimony-gathering project. No one is required to write about their time at IRS, and the personal biographies can focus entirely on life before, outside, or after it. This project is for both Survivors and the families of Survivors who have passed on, who are invited to share a story or write a biography.

You can write the story yourself, sit down with staff who will help you put it into words, or submit one online. We also are looking for photos if you'd like to include them with the stories/biographies. Participants receive an honorarium, a care kit, and a free copy of the book. You decide what to share, and you approve your page before it is printed.

Our next engagement session is Friday, August 14th, from 2 to 3PM at the Community Center.

To learn more, contact Misty Wasteste at 204-855-2690, Michelle Rosmus at 204-922-0118 or visit www.birsinvestigation.com

Internet Searches



People around the world perform around 40,000 searches every second on Google. Google's data centres spend enough energy that can power 200,000 homes. It's assumed that 10 Google searches cost energy that's enough to power a 60-Watt lightbulb for an hour.



Traditional Tobacco Seeds



A photo of one of the flooded garden plots

JUNE & JULY Updates in Our Community Gardens

In June, the Gardens team focused on planting cabbage, tomatoes, corn, sunflowers, marigolds, peppers, potatoes, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, onions, and herbs. Their main priorities for growing this year is a pumpkin patch and tobacco.

They have a tractor that is operated by Sean Hawkins and are implementing a dripline to water the plants more efficiently. They now have Seasonal workers and Youth workers in the team, they are starting a native seed orchard.

Due to the recent flood in the community, a lot of the garden plots have flooded, which took a toll on their plants & crop yield.

Thank you to all the members of the community who support us! It truly means a lot.

