

Eeyou Eenou

NEWSLETTER

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EEYOU ISTCHEE) / CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

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ISSUE 11

In this issue:

ANTHONY MACLEOD

We got an opportunity to interview the newest Executive Director of Cree Nation Government, Anthony Macleod.

FUNDING HUB

Learn about the latest funding opportunities available in Cree Nation Government.

YOUTH COUNCIL SUMMIT

We interviewed the Deputy Youth Grand Chief to highlight the upcoming event in April



What's in this ISSUE

FEBUARY ISSUE

01 04

Stronger Together Symposium

Highlights of the 2nd Stronger Together Symposium focusing on special needs support in Eeyou Istchee, hosted by the Cree School Board

Waswanipi Economic Prioritization Agreement

With the Signing of the Economic Prioritization Agreement in January, Waswanipi becomes the 3rd community to join the agreement in Eeyou Istchee.

02 05

2nd CNYC Youth Summit

On January 20, 2026, the Cree Nation Youth Council officially announced the Youth Councils of Eeyou Istchee Summit that will return for its 2nd Edition. The event will be taking place from April 4 to 6, 2026, in Quebec City.

Cree Nation Government Funding Hub

Explore funding opportunities available through Apatisiwin Skills Development, Social and Cultural Development, and Environment and Wildlife that are open for applications.

03 06

Preserving Legacy Residential School Recordings

Learn about an important initiative to record and preserve the stories of Residential School Survivors in Eeyou Istchee, and how you can contribute.

A Conversation with Anthony Macleod

We had the opportunity to sit with Anthony Macleod, to discuss the role of Executive Director, the legacy of those that came before him and his vision for how Cree Nation Government can support the Cree economy and people.



YOUTH COUNCILS OF EYEU ISTCHEE SUMMIT



✦ **SAVE THE DATE** ✦

APRIL 4-5-6, 2026
QUEBEC CITY

Reach out to your local youth chief for sign up details!

20 spots per community

Priority: Youth Councillors & Development Coordinators
+ remaining open spots for local delegates

For general inquiries or Entities

interested to have a booth or present,
please reach out to **CNYC@CNGOV.CA**

Preserving Legacy

A Call to Indian Residential School Survivors

To the Indian Residential School Survivor (IRSS) who has a story to share, now is the time.

Goals of the project

- Truth about residential schools
- Help bear witness to events of residential schools
- Foster healing and reconciliation
- Create a source for education material
- Create a narrative on how these events shaped Eeyou Istchee

What kind of stories?

Any stories that will contribute to the education on the truth about what happened at residential schools. Stories that may contribute to our healing and community healing, such as happy stories and sad stories.

A Conversation with Anthony MacLeod, Executive Director

In December 2025, the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) / Cree Nation Government welcomed Anthony MacLeod as its new Executive Director. His appointment follows the untimely passing of Davey Bobbish in October 2025—a loss felt deeply across all Cree communities. Davey’s decades of service, his belief in connecting government to the people, and his tireless commitment to nation building left an enduring mark on the Cree Nation.

As Executive Director, Anthony leads the operations and administration of the Cree Nation Government—the body responsible for implementing the rights, programs, and services secured under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and its subsequent agreements. The Executive Director supports the Grand Chief, Deputy Grand Chief, and the Board of Directors / Council in their policy and political initiatives. He coordinates the work of the Cree Nation Government’s departments spanning justice, health, education, economic and development, environment, and community infrastructure across all Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee.

Anthony brings a rare combination of private-sector experience and public-policy leadership to the role. From building one of Canada’s fastest-growing Indigenous companies to reshaping the Department of Commerce and Industry, his career has been defined by a commitment to keeping the benefits of development in Cree hands. We sat down with Anthony to learn more about his vision for the Cree Nation’s next chapter.

What made you interested in being the next Executive Director of Cree Nation Government?

I’ve spent my career working within the Cree Nation’s policy, economic and administrative systems—from the private sector with Gestion ADC, to leading the Department of Commerce and Industry. Through all of that, what drove me was always the same thing: making sure that the Cree Nation enjoys all the rights and benefits provided for in our treaty, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. This includes ensuring that our people participate meaningfully in the governance and development of Eeyou Istchee to promote a sustainable Cree way of life, economy and environment.

When Davey Bobbish passed in October 2025, it was a devastating loss for all of us. He was more than a colleague—he was a friend and a leader who believed deeply in connecting our government to our communities.

At that point, I felt a responsibility to step forward. Not because I was looking for the position, but because the work we had been building together—strengthening relationships with the Cree First Nations and advancing the Business Registry, the Economic Prioritization Agreement, the whole economic sovereignty agenda—we couldn’t afford to lose momentum.



How does your experience in the private sector and as Director of Commerce and Industry lend to your role as Executive Director?

My time in the private sector, especially at Gestion ADC, taught me what it takes to compete and deliver in the real economy of the North. We were servicing mining and hydro camps with up to 2,300 workers—catering, logistics, janitorial services—and we were doing it in competition with non-native multinationals. We didn't just survive; we thrived. We became the first Canadian Indigenous company in our field to earn ISO-9001 certification, and we made the Profit 100 list of Canada's fastest-growing companies with 270% revenue growth over five years.

At Commerce and Industry, I took those private-sector skills and applied them to public policy. We launched the Cree Nation Business Registry to certify genuine Cree-owned businesses and create a more robust definition of what it means to own and operate businesses in Eeyou Istchee. We built the Economic Prioritization Agreement to keep procurement dollars local and to give substance to the JBNQA's treaty promises of Cree job and contract priority. We created the Keep It Local campaign with a mobile app to change consumer behaviour.

I know how to build policy because I've lived on both sides of it—as the business owner affected by the rules and as the regulator writing them. And I am a proud, experienced Cree, fully engaged in the traditional Cree way of life and in Cree Nation building. That combination offers a valuable set of perspectives that I am excited to bring into my role as Executive Director.

Over the past 40 years of the JBNQA we have had two Executive Directors. How do you see the Cree Nation evolving during your term, and what role does our government play in shaping the Eeyou Istchee over the next 50 years?

When I look at the past 50 years, I see a story of steady, purposeful progress built on foundational agreements based on Cree rights. Bill Namagoose dedicated nearly 35 years to the pursuit of recognizing our rights and driving them through those agreements—the JBNQA, the Paix des Braves, the New Relationship Agreement and the two Governance Agreements, one with Quebec and one with Canada. His work ensured that the Cree Nation's place within

the Canadian and Quebec political landscape was not just acknowledged but codified in binding agreements and in law. He understood that rights are not something you simply talk about—you breathe life into them and make them viable.

Davey Bobbish built on that foundation with a vision that went beyond the relationship with Ottawa and Quebec City. Davey believed deeply in Cree Nation building, but for him that meant building the strongest relationships possible—not only within our own communities but with the local governments and Cree First Nations across the territory. As a former Chief of Chisasibi, Davey understood that the strength of the Cree Nation depends on the strength of the bonds between Chisasibi and Mistissini, between Waskaganish and Whapmagoostui, and between our Cree Nation Government and every local Chief and Council.

What I take from both of those leaders is that the work of the next 50 years has to honour and sustain what they built. The rights that Bill secured and the relationships that Davey strengthened—those are the foundation. But to preserve and drive those visions into the future, we need two things: effective political governance and sustainable development for self-sufficiency. Without strong, accountable governance and a self-sustaining economy, the agreements remain words on paper and the relationships lack the resources to deliver real change in people's lives.

The JBNQA gave us the tools for self-government. The next 50 years are about using those tools to build a Nation that is not only politically recognized and internally connected, but economically self-sufficient. A Nation where the Cree way of life—the land, the language, the traditional economy—is supported by modern development, and where our young people can build meaningful futures right here in the territory. That's the challenge facing the Cree Nation, and the balance I'm committed to helping the Grand Chief to strike.

“What I take from both of those leaders is that the work of the next 50 years has to honour and sustain what they built. The rights Bill secured and the relationships Davey strengthened—those are the foundation”

You worked closely with Davey Bobbish. What is one specific lesson or priority of his that you are committed to carrying forward?

Davey had a gift for making people feel seen. As Chief Daisy House said, he graciously took people under his wing, always ready to share his extensive knowledge. His memory was impeccable—he made it look easy. He had a unique ability to find the balance between fun and seriousness. That approachability wasn't just a personality trait; it was a leadership philosophy. He believed that government should never feel distant from the people it serves.

The specific lesson I carry forward is his commitment to community connection as the foundation of everything we do. Davey understood that you can't build a nation from a boardroom in Montreal. He worked at the heart of Cree governance because he saw it as an opportunity to improve communities—that's what he said when he applied for the job.

"It's always been my dream to work for the people, and being part of the development and growth of communities."

In practical terms, that means every policy we push—whether it's the Business Registry or procurement reform—has to be measured by its impact at the community level. Not just in Nemaska or Montreal, but in Waskaganish, in Whapmagoostui, in every one of our communities. Davey's legacy will forever remain etched in the hearts and minds of his family, friends, and colleagues, as Chief House said. For me, the best way to honour that legacy is to make sure his vision of connected, thriving communities forming a strong Cree Nation becomes our everyday reality.

You've spoken about the 'Third Pillar'—the cooperative and sustainable economy. In a world of high-stakes mining and energy projects, how do you ensure the traditional and local economy doesn't get lost?

This is probably the question closest to my heart. When I restructured the Department of Commerce and Industry, I organized our work around three economic pillars: natural resources like mining, wind, and forestry; Cree-owned corporations like Creeco and the band development corporations; and the cooperative and sustainable economy—the social economy, traditional pursuits, and local entrepreneurship. I've always said that the third pillar is the most important one because it defines who we are.

The first two pillars—natural resources and the Cree corporations—are engines. They generate revenue and create opportunities. But their purpose, in my view, is to fund and support the third pillar. If mining makes us rich but our traplines are empty and our young people can't live on the land, then we've lost something that no amount of royalties can replace.

The traditional economy isn't separate from the modern economy; it's what the modern economy should be designed to protect.

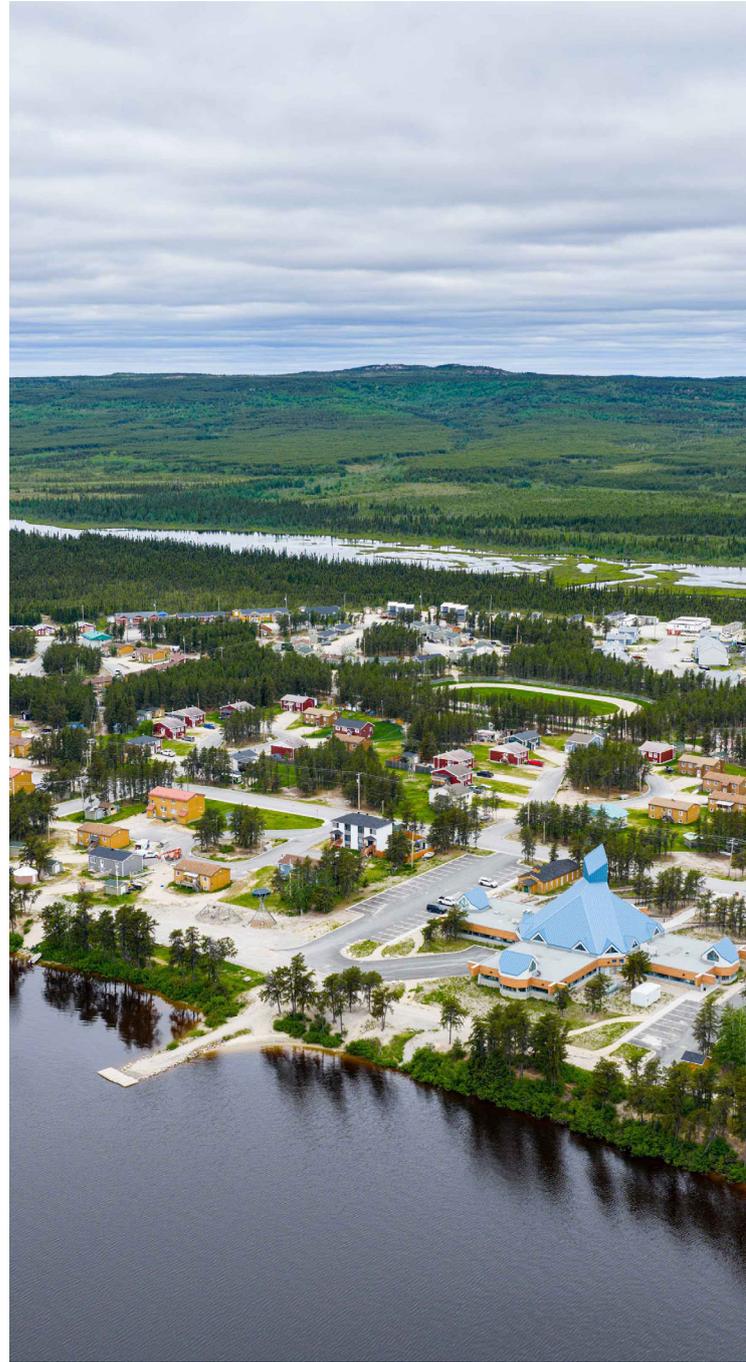


The Bear Den competition and the Cree Nation Business Summit connected with youth as future entrepreneurs. How do we build on that momentum while tackling challenges like leakage and economic prioritization?

The Business Summit and the Bear Den competition were some of the most rewarding work I've been involved in. Seeing our young people stand up and pitch real, viable business ideas—that energy was incredible. The concepts were realistic; they could actually happen. And what made it even more powerful was the mentorship component. We had veterans like former Grand Chief Abel Bosum sitting at roundtables with young entrepreneurs, bridging that generational gap. Strong connections build strong economies.

To build on that momentum, we need to do a few things. First, we need to make the Bear Den and the Summit recurring fixtures—not one-off events, but an annual ecosystem that young people can count on and prepare for. Second, we need to connect the winners and participants directly to the tools we've built: the Business Registry, the Cree Entrepreneurship Assistance Fund, and the Keep It Local platform. A great pitch is just the beginning—we need a pathway from idea to operating business.

On the issue of leakage, the data is clear: too much of our spending leaves the territory. We can change that by creating more businesses that capture that spending—and many of those businesses will come from our youth. Every new Cree-owned restaurant, construction company, or tech service is one less dollar that flows south.



We are grateful to Anthony for taking the time to share his vision with us. His deep roots in the Cree policy world and economy, his respect for the leaders who came before him, and his clear-eyed focus on self-sufficiency speak to a leader who understands that the strength of the Cree Nation is built from the ground up—in the communities, on the land, and through the entrepreneurship of its people.

As the Cree Nation enters the next chapter following the 50th anniversary of the JBNQA, Anthony's appointment represents both continuity and evolution—honouring the foundation laid by Bill Namagoose and Davey Bobbish while charting a course toward a more economically self-sufficient future. We welcome Anthony to the role and look forward to the work ahead.



EEPF

Anonymous

Tipline

A TOOL AVAILABLE 24/7 TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF) continues its commitment to community safety with the operation of a dedicated phone line: Eeyou Intelligence Drug Line, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service provides a safe and confidential way for community members in Eeyou Istchee to share information related to drug trafficking and suspicious activity in their communities.

Drug activity in our communities affects more than those directly involved. It impacts families, our youth, Elders and the well-being of everyone around. By working together and sharing information responsibly, we strengthen our collective ability to prevent harm and protect future generations.

How the EI Drug Line works

Community members can call the Eeyou Intelligence Drug Line (EI Drug Line) at any time. During regular hours, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, callers can choose to speak directly with an agent. After hours, the lines remain open with a secure voicemail system where community members can leave information confidentially. All messages are reviewed and followed up on by our team of investigators.

Callers remain completely anonymous and will not be asked to testify in court. There is no obligation to provide your name or personal details. Even small pieces of information, like unusual traffic at a residence, suspicious exchanges or activity patterns can help build a clearer picture of an ongoing investigation. This does require a lot of patience, as drug investigations can take up to six months to more than a year.

Impact so far

The EI Drug Line received 39 useful calls in 2025 and 6 so far in 2026. One tip has already led to a successful intervention, with additional investigations pending.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MATTERS!

Drug investigations rely not only on police work but also on community awareness. When community members feel safe reporting concerns, it strengthens prevention efforts and helps disrupt harmful activity before it escalates.

In Eeyou Istchee, we share a responsibility to look out for one another. The Eeyou Intelligence Drug Line is not about targeting individuals, it is about protection families, the youth, and the safety of our communities.

EEPF encourages anyone with information about drug-related activities to make use of this resource. Every call can contribute to a safer community, together we can continue to protect and strengthen Eeyou Istchee.

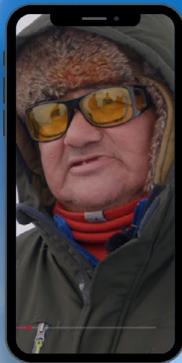
1-833-343-7847

→ See it. Report it.

ICE SAFETY

Since time immemorial, Eeyouch have used ice travel as a means of accessing the land.

Guided by longstanding traditional knowledge, communities have safely navigated iceways for generations. Now, our knowledge is challenged by climate change, which creates less predictable conditions. It is more important than ever to share ice safety teachings and take extra precautions. That's why we've spoken to some ice safety specialists from across Eeyou Istchee, to help amplify their knowledge and promote best practices tailored to different environments.



In the latest video, join Ice Monitor Ronnie Snowboy (Chisasibi) as he shares public safety advice following a rescue journey.

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Thank you to everyone that contributed to this issue's images and content.

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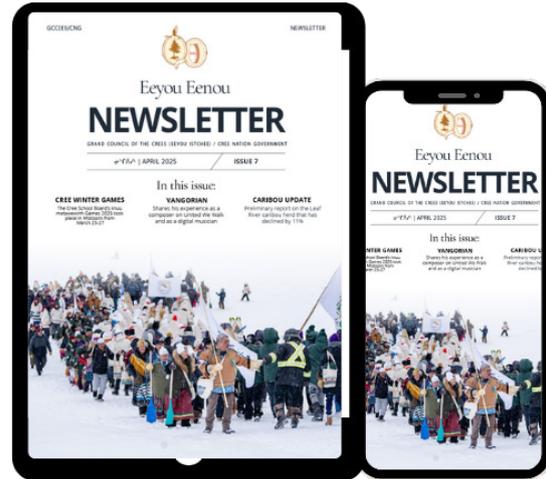
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