

“MEMBERTOU ALWAYS WANTED TO SUCCEED” *The Membertou Business Model*

.....

K. Brown, M. Finney, M. Doucette,
J.E. Tulk, N. Bernard, Y.I. Yuan
ABORIGINAL BUSINESS STUDIES, CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY

Membertou First Nation, an urban reserve located within the city limits of Sydney, Nova Scotia, has experienced a transformation unmatched by other Canadian First Nations communities as a result of the establishment of a new governance structure and approach to economic development.¹ Studies of Indigenous entrepreneurship and cultural tourism in the Canadian context have highlighted this Mi'kmaq² community and credited the “Membertou Model” as the key to its success (see for example Kayseas, Hindle & Anderson, 2006; Brown, Pyke & Johnson, 2008; Johnstone, 2008; Kayseas, 2009). Following early research on the model by Thayer Scott (2004), authors have attempted to identify key components or “critical events” that moved the community away from the status quo (Johnstone, 2008, p. 142) and toward successful self-determined economic development. They variously and fragmentarily pointed to the nature of leadership, human capital development, the affirmation of treaty rights under Canadian law, ISO certification, the development of gaming, and the development of business partnerships. Drawing upon these early studies and newly conducted

qualitative research in Membertou, this paper will reflect on the forces driving two decades of transformation in the Mi'kmaq community of Membertou and describe the foundational principles that inform the Membertou Business Model.

COMMUNITY PROFILE AND HISTORY

Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia is home to five Mi'kmaq communities which are collectively known as the Unama'ki³ district. The five reserves — Membertou, Eskasoni, Wagmatcook, We'kopaq/Waycobah, and Potlotek/Chapel Island — have a combined population of more than 7,600 and encompass approximately 7.2% of the island's total population (Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, 2011; Cape Breton Regional Municipality, 2011).

Membertou First Nation spans approximately 100.5 hectares of land, is home to a population of more than 1200, and is one of the few First Nation communities in Canada that are located within an urban setting (Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office, 2010, p. 22; Mary Beth

Interview with key informant, July 28, 2011. All interviews quoted in this paper were conducted by research assistant Natasha Bernard of Membertou and Isabella Yuan between June and September of 2011. Interview participants remain anonymous to protect confidentiality.

Doucette, personal communication, January 10, 2012). From the late 1870s until the late 1920s, the reserve was located on 2.3 harbour-front acres along Sydney's main artery road, Kings Road, and was known as the "Kings Road Reserve" (Membertou Band Council, 1983). In 1916, however, the Exchequer Court of Canada ruled their removal from the area, citing it in the interest of both the reserve and the local townspeople. Despite much objection, the reserve was relocated in 1926 to its present-day location within the city and was renamed "Membertou" in honour of the Mi'kmaw Grand Chief Membertou.⁴ This event was the first time in Canadian history that a First Nations community was legally forced to relocate (Kayseas et al., 2006, p. 4).

Membertou struggled to survive for the next 70 years in a state of desolation. The reserve's forced relocation found them on unfamiliar, unfertile land, and without harbour-front water and fishing access (York, 1990; Brown & Pyke, 2006). Despite its proximity to the city's urban centre, the reserve fought extreme levels of poverty such as inadequate housing conditions, high unemployment rates, and until the 1960s, restricted access to municipal services such as sewer and garbage collection (Membertou Band Council, 1983). The benign relationship between Membertou and the local non-Aboriginal community left the reserve in social isolation and suggestions of substantial business and community development simply unfathomable.

In the mid-1990s, however, Membertou began to experience an economic and socio-cultural renaissance. Since the mid-1990s, Membertou has successfully implemented a community based development plan that enables them to compete in the mainstream economy while improving the quality of life of their members (Cardinal, 2005; Cornell, Jorensen, Kalt & Splide, 2005; Thayer Scott, 2004). The reserve has journeyed from a state of financial hardship to becoming one of the most economically sound First Nation communities in Canada. Its economy has seen considerable change and, through the vision and hard work of Membertou's leaders and members, the community has pioneered a new way forward. This development approach has become known, far and wide, as the Membertou Business Model (Brown & Pyke, 2007).

THE MEMBERTOU MODEL

Bernd Christmas, former Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel for Membertou, explained the Membertou Model as "a 'First Nations progression model' (see Figure 1), based on using a business approach to government, management, and economic development to achieve social objectives" (quoted in Thayer Scott, 2004, p. 14). Conceived of in three stages—capacity building, preparation, and economic development—the model advocated the establishment of sound business practices and policies, and strategic planning, as the basis for the creation of new ventures and partnerships, and economic success.

The model is buttressed by four "value pillars ... conservation, sustainability, innovation, and success," an approach which affirms that the community's participation in the mainstream economy must be culturally sensitive and appropriate (Thayer Scott, 2004, p. 14). However, three additional operating values are central to the Membertou model and set the community apart from many other Aboriginal communities: "transparency, accountability, and legitimacy" (ibid).

From this framework, a new approach to First Nations governance and economic development emerged and evolved. The Membertou Model in its current form features seven foundational principles:

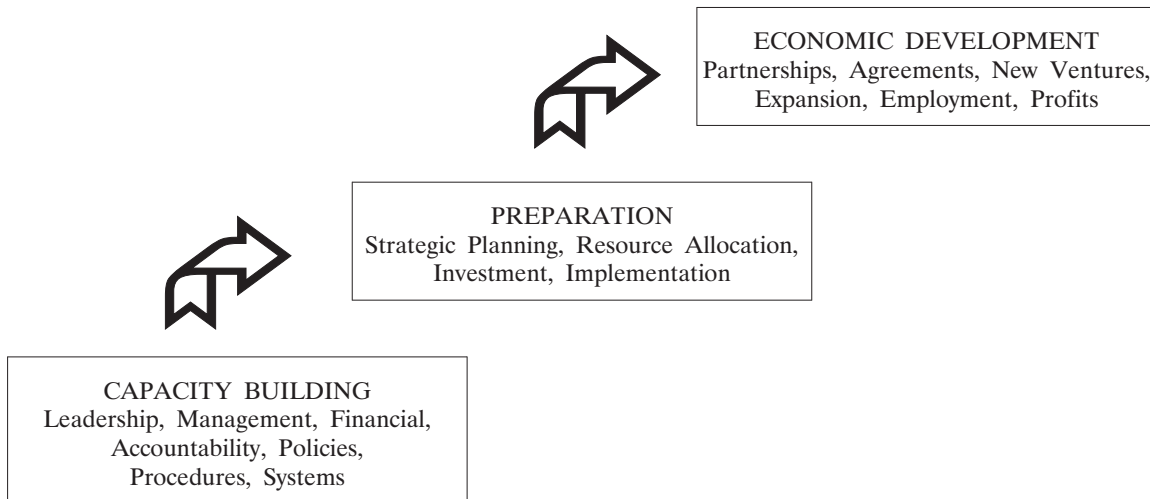
1. Visionary Leadership
2. Establishment of Operational Processes and Policies
3. Establishment of a Corporate Brand
4. Establishment of Corporate Partnerships and Joint Ventures
5. Development of Infrastructure
6. Commitment to Human Capacity Development
7. Grounding in Community Culture

Each foundational principle represents a particular orientation or set of actions that have led to the economic success of Membertou First Nation.

1. Visionary Leadership

"Membertou always wanted to succeed." This was the response of a key informant when asked about leadership in her community (interview, July 28, 2011). Visionary leadership could be

FIGURE 1
The “First Nations Progression Model”



Source: As diagrammed in the Auditor-General's presentation, March 31, 2003 (as cited in Thayer Scott 2004, 15)

seen as the most important factor undergirding the Membertou Model; without it, the other components may cease to function. It is unquestioned that the leadership of Chief Terrance Paul and his vision for the community were crucial to Membertou's success over the past twenty years. In his study, Johnstone pointed to Paul's leadership and his establishment of a "development team" as one of three "critical events" leading to self-determination (2008, p. 142). Similarly, Kayseas et al. noted that Membertou has benefitted greatly from "stable political leadership" focused on a "single vision supported by Chief and Council" (2006, pp. 11–12). It has been suggested that leadership may present a challenge in terms of succession planning (Thayer Scott, 2004); however, Membertou boasts a history of strong social and political leadership since the early twentieth century.

Owen Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office, observed, "[P]eople from all over the area are coming to Membertou, which is something that just wasn't

the case a few years ago [...] This doesn't happen by accident. It takes people who are determined, smart, well-educated and who are great leaders, and that is what Membertou has" (as cited in Miller, 2006, p. 6). Historically, the community's social leaders have been passionate and strategic thinkers, dedicated to improving their community and doing so with integrity and determination. One community member explained that while each leader had his or her own strengths and contributed to the community in different ways, "they all shared the same values, Mi'kmaw values" (interview, July 21, 2011). Though it is not possible to provide comprehensive biographies herein for all social leaders who have impacted the community, several are worthy of note. Roy Gould made significant contributions to the Membertou community "as a journalist, publisher, host co-ordinator, facilitator, entrepreneur and elected official" (Roy Anslem Gould, 2004). Gould was instrumental in the development of the Native Friendship Centre in Halifax and was one of several original founders

of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (NCNS, 2007). Chief Noel Doucette was a founding member of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians and played a pivotal role in guaranteeing the eventual closure of the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. Doucette also assisted the development of Nova Scotia's comprehensive Mi'kmaw Education Framework (NCNS, 2007). Wallace Bernard served as a Membertou Band Councillor and coached the legendary Membertou Thunderbirds fastball team to numerous championships in the 1970s and 1980s. He initiated the community's first youth hockey tournament, the title of which now bears his name: the Annual Wallace Bernard Memorial Hockey Tournament (Membertou First Nation, 2010). Sister Dorothy Moore is an acclaimed educator and activist for Mi'kmaw rights, known for her unremitting fight against racism in the Nova Scotia justice system, her dedication to the incorporation and augmentation of Mi'kmaw history in Nova Scotia curricula, and her early efforts in the development of a Mi'kmaw Studies program at Cape Breton University. She was invested into the Order of Nova Scotia in 2003 and the Order of Canada in 2005 (Governor General of Canada, 2005; Government of Nova Scotia, 2003).

Among these important community social leaders, the contributions of Donald Marshall Jr. warrant expanded consideration. The son of Membertou's Grand Chief Donald Marshall Sr., Donald Marshall Jr. championed Mi'kmaw rights during his wrongful murder conviction and following his exoneration of all charges, when it was determined that systemic racism had contributed to his wrongful imprisonment (CBC News, 2009). In 1993, after being charged for fishing and selling eels out of season and without a license, Marshall advocated the nation's 250-year-old treaty that outlined the allowance of Aboriginal people to access and utilize natural resources in the country. In 1999, it was ruled that Canadian Aboriginal people had a right to legally fish eels outside of federal government regulations. While many before him had tried and failed in winning similar court challenges, Marshall found success through his experience, perseverance, pride, legal guidance from one of Canada's top constitutional lawyers, and, most importantly, the financial and moral support of his community. His victory sparked dramatic

changes to the Nova Scotia judicial system, revolutionized the east coast fishing industry, and generated tens of millions of dollars, as a result, for impoverished First Nations reserves in the region. He became, to Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike, a hero known as one of the greatest contributors to the advancement of the Aboriginal community. Chief Lawrence Paul remarks, "It was instrumental. It was a benefit to the economy of the First Nations across Atlantic Canada, and I think right across Canada ... His name should go down in history as a sympathetic individual who had the rights of the Mi'kmaq people close to his heart" (CBC News, 2009, p. 15).

From this community also emerged political leaders equal in their efforts of change (Brown & Pyke, 2007). Ben Christmas, elected to the position of band chief at the age of 23, successfully led his people through the forced relocation of the Kings Road Reserve to its present day location and renamed the reserve in honour of the Mi'kmaw Grand Chief Membertou. In 1932, he founded the *MicMac News*, a newspaper with circulation of 5000 copies in the 1970s. It disseminated news relevant to the Mi'kmaw population through 125 venues in Cape Breton and Newfoundland (Doucette, 1972, p. 4). Chief Christmas was a renowned Mi'kmaw prayer and choir leader at religious events within the Membertou and neighbouring communities. The Mi'kmaq Association of Cultural Studies captured the essence of Chief Christmas, stating, "Chief Ben Christmas was said to be a man of great compassion, wisdom and courage, and he was always conscious of the Spiritual [sic] and other needs facing his people" (1996, p. 54).

In 1964, Donald Marshall Senior was honoured with the lifetime spiritual and leadership role of Grand Chief, successfully governing the people of Membertou for the next twenty-seven years. A kind-hearted and modest man, Grand Chief Marshall assumed a "grandfatherly" role for his people, and his peaceful way of leadership effectively and efficiently led the Membertou community through years of tumultuous political terrain and social upheaval, towards roads of future prosperity and promise (NCNS, 2007). In addition to his tireless work in overturning the wrongful conviction of his son, Donald Marshall Jr., one of Chief Marshall's greatest accomplishments was his declaration of Nova

Scotia's Treaty Day, a day which commemorates the eighteenth-century treaties signed between the British Crown and the Mi'kmaw Nation. This signing of the Declaration of Mi'kmaw Rights was the first meeting of the National Council of Mi'kmaw Chiefs in 213 years, and became a historical moment in Canadian history as Mi'kmaw people across the country came together "reunited into a strong nation" (NCNS, 2007). An inscription at the Grand Chief's resting place honours his impact on the Membertou community, stating, "Kji-saqmaw Marshall's presence was magnified a thousand fold through the efforts he pioneered in every facet of his work and office—a man who seemed to be everywhere; he had a zealous conviction of reaching out and providing a helping hand to those who needed it most" (Erskine Doucette, 2008, p. 40).

Terrance (Terry) Paul is the current (2012) Chief of Membertou and has held this position since 1984. Paul left economically depressed Membertou as a young adult and travelled to the United States in search of a promising future. While living in Boston, Massachusetts, Paul became aware of the development and economic ventures being pursued in American First Nation communities. It was this exposure that sparked his desire to make a difference in his hometown. His pursuit of this vision saw him through the ranks of Director of Finance with the Boston Indian Council, Sales and Advertising with the *MicMac News* in Membertou, Economic Development Officer and Band Manager for the Membertou Band Council, and, eventually, Band Chief of Membertou in 1984 (Membertou First Nation, 2010).

Over the past 28 years, Chief Paul's vision has led Membertou to become one of the most progressive, efficient, and sustainable native communities in the country. The economic success in Membertou is a testament to Paul's leadership—as is the confidence he has in his people, and they in him. Chief Paul's accomplishments include doubling the land base for the reserve and assisting Donald Marshall Jr. in his successful Supreme Court defence of the Mi'kmaw treaty rights to fish. In 2009, Chief Paul was inducted into the Cape Breton Business Hall of Fame for his efforts in developing the Cape Breton economy and local business community. In 2010, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, from Cape Breton Uni-

versity. It is Chief Paul's self-sufficient vision for Membertou that has "been at the core of the community's journey towards economic prosperity" (Brown & Pyke, 2006).

In 1995, Chief Paul and his Council initiated a recruitment campaign for a leader to assist in Paul's vision of change for the Membertou community. They embarked on a search for an individual whom they felt embodied the spirit and held the vision of a better Membertou in his heart. Chief Paul immediately identified and sought out Bernd Christmas, then a lawyer employed with the Bay Street law firm Lang Michener (Thayer Scott, 2004). Upon becoming the first Mi'kmaw lawyer in Canada in 1991, Bernd Christmas worked diligently to expand Aboriginal practices within the legal field. In 1995, at the request of Chief Terrence Paul, he abandoned his lucrative legal career and returned to Membertou as Chief Executive Officer where he faced a challenge of a \$1 million annual deficit, low community morale, and a severe unemployment rate (Brown & Pyke, 2007). Undeterred, Christmas forged ahead with a vision for Membertou's people. In little more than a decade, he successfully expanded all areas of economic growth by forging an innovative economic frontier, launching Membertou's Corporate Division and establishing education and skills-development programs for the community in preparation for these developments. Christmas was instrumental in the corporation's ISO certification (discussed below), the opening of the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, and the negotiation of contracts and agreements with giants such as SNC-Lavalin and Sodexo Canada (MacDonald, 2006). More than 15 years later, Christmas' vision remains stronger than ever and its success within the Membertou community and surrounding area is remarkably clear.

Christmas' efforts have been acknowledged across the board. He has received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award, was appointed by then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien to the External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation, sat as one of three Canadian commissioners to the International Commission for the Conservation of Tuna, became a member of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, sat on the executive committee for the Governor General's Conference on Leadership and Diversity, was recognized as one of Atlantic

Canada's Top 50 CEOs, and was appointed to the Board of Directors of CBC Radio Canada. However, no expressions of gratitude have been greater than those from the Membertou people and local community: "He helped people beyond the reserve communities," said Chief Paul. "He helped spark people's enthusiasm. If people work together and try hard, they can accomplish miracles. And that's what I feel we did while Bernd was here" (MacDonald, 2006, p. A2).

2. Establishment of Operational Processes and Policies

Upon arrival in Membertou, Bernd Christmas and his newly formed leadership team determined that in order for Membertou to progress in any respect, it first needed to establish a sense of financial stability, while maintaining financial transparency and accountability to its partners, stakeholders, and community members. The Membertou Band Council operates under the authority of the Indian Act of Canada and is comprised of one band chief, administrative staff, and twelve band councillors (Johnstone, 2008) who are elected every two years by the community's registered membership. The council manages government funding, regulates policies, and coordinates the delivery of community initiatives and programs in education, social assistance, alcohol and gaming counselling, justice, recreation, and health services. With the arrival of Bernd Christmas came the adoption of a commercial organizational structure and the formation of a shareholder relationship between community members and the band government (Band on a run, 2004). Federal governments were considered not "governments," but "investors," and this structure reflected Membertou's new strategic focus, which Christmas summarized as "thinking like a business but operating within the context of a government, being true to who you really are and working for your constituents" (McBride, 2002, p. 100, as cited in Kayseas, Hindle & Anderson, 2006, p. 15). This new, forward-thinking decree required moderate sacrifice in Membertou's operational processes; however, it would be this decree that sparked a renewed sense of accomplishment and trust amongst its members, as well as the eventual elimination of the community's \$1 million deficit. Membertou now had one foot in the door with this new

sense of order, and it was determined that the next critical point of action would be to become ISO compliant.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation that works to ensure consistency and quality in companies around the world. Specifically, it promotes the development of standardization to facilitate the international exchange of goods and services, and the cooperation in scientific, technological and economic activities (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010). This process includes an external audit of management processes, including an examination of links between policy decision-making and implementation, human resource and communication practices, and evaluation activities (Scott, 2004). The value of this organizational certification is immeasurable. Those that have acquired ISO designations have seen increases in business prospects and, ultimately, higher rates of confidence from their clients (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010). Reflecting on the value of this designation for the community of Membertou, one interviewee explained, ISO certification "makes us a very credible and honourable company to do business with" (interview, July 21, 2011).

In 2001, Membertou became the first Aboriginal community in the world to achieve ISO certification. This represented to the world that they were committed to good business practices such as accountability, transparency, and customer service. The designation required an extensive organizational culture transformation. Miller argues that "It makes you focus on vision and to interconnect roles within the organization — to understand others' roles so that we can do our own job better" (as cited in Thayer Scott, 2004, p. 20). The designation also required an extensive transformation of the Band's relationship with its community members. The Band became acutely cognizant of the need to remain transparent with its band members, and initiated the annual delivery of its financial statements to every home in the community. The statements are clear and concise, compare the band's present financial situation with that of previous years, and include details on honorariums to chief and council. They have also been made available on Membertou's website. These are practices that will "contribute to good relations and encourage business ventures, partnerships

and investments” (Lawrence, 2000, p. 2). Membertou was the first band in Canada to follow such procedures and, while it has received mild scrutiny from some Aboriginal councils in other regions, the gesture has cultivated a sense of trust and has maintained open lines of communication between the band and its people. Dialogue is also maintained through a weekly, online community newsletter, featuring notices from administrative divisions, reports on corporate activities, notices from Chief and Council, and notices and requests from community members (Kayseas et al., 2006, pp. 13–14).

Chief Terry Paul notes, “It is transparency that is the key to not only gaining the trust from your community but also the trust and confidence from those government agencies and financial markets that we would eventually have to approach in our quest to develop our community. Once you have the community’s confidence the rest will fall into place” (cited in National Centre for First Nations Governance, n.d., p. 2). Membertou has indeed birthed a reputation as a highly respected and valuable business partner on the regional, national, and international forefront. Chief Paul further emphasizes this, exclaiming, “This is an extremely dynamic time in our history [...] I venture to say that the community of Membertou is an exciting place to be, to live and to work. With our ISO designation, we extend our hands and say to Canada and the world, Membertou is open for business, come and join us” (Membertou, 2004, p. 41, as cited in Kayseas, Hindle & Anderson, 2006, p. 16).

Indeed, ISO certification is seen to be an essential component of Membertou’s success. Thayer Scott views it as a turning point (2004, p. 12), while Johnstone refers to it as a “critical [event]” in Membertou’s development (2008, p. 142). As Kayseas et al. have observed, the result of this certification is that “the opportunities and choices the Band and its members currently can choose from are not available in many other Canadian Indigenous communities” (2006, p. 16). With a renewed sense of financial stability and improved management capacity, Membertou was prepared to play a greater role in the mainstream economy. In 2001, the same year that Membertou received the ISO designation, they opened Membertou Corporate Division and its corporate office in the provincial capital of Halifax.

3. Establishment of Corporate Brand

The small reserve of Membertou had no qualms about playing in the big leagues. Located in Purdy’s Wharf, the waterfront, provincial powerhouse of business wheeling and dealing, the Membertou Corporate Division’s Halifax office proudly planted itself next to some of the country’s (and world’s) most influential business leaders (Kayseas et al., 2006). Its gusto was radical and it raised the spotlight to a story of an impoverished community that overturned its destitution and stepped up to the plate as a reputable and valuable contender in the game. “I like a challenge,” said Bernd Christmas. “When I hear people say things like an Indian band can’t have an office in Purdy’s Wharf ... well, it makes me want to do it even more” (cited in Toughill, 2001, p. 1).



Membertou’s slogan, “Membertou, Welcoming the World,” signifies that Membertou is open for business, and ready and able to work with government and corporate partners. The Division’s logo has a modern, corporate air and holds special significance for the community. When the logo was first designed by Dozay Christmas in the late 1980s as an image to identify the council and community, it was more elaborate in presentation, including additional motifs such as the Mi’kmaw double-curve. The stylized bird, conceived of as a thunderbird (recalling the community’s baseball team, the Membertou Thunderbirds), represented the chief (head) and council (wings) when it had eight councillors.⁵ In 2006, during a rebranding effort, the community chose to breathe new life into this logo instead of starting new. The image was refreshed and simplified, and the stylized bird was reinterpreted as an eagle (Dozay Christmas, personal communication, January 13 & 16, 2012). The revisioning of this image as an eagle is telling: in First Nations culture the eagle is revered for being able to soar above all other birds and its use in Membertou’s logo suggests that they aspire to similar heights. The Division’s brand is

unique, stating that "we are Aboriginal, and we welcome the business world" (Brown & Pyke, 2006, p. 5).

Strategic partnerships with corporate Membertou have been of great advantage to those involved. Partners of Membertou have seen increased access to Nova Scotia natural resources claimed by Mi'kmaw people, stronger and more diverse contracts, and increased opportunities to work with and employ those of Aboriginal descent. Membertou's unprecedented profile has led to the formation of many lucrative partnerships in the industries of oil and gas, engineering, mining, GIS, IT, aerospace, business management, and consulting services (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010).

4. Corporate Partnerships and Joint Ventures

The establishment of corporate partnerships and joint ventures, as well as memorandums of understanding with businesses and institutions, falls into the third stage of the progression model (Thayer Scott, 2004; Kayseas et al., 2006). Such economic development becomes possible after sound practices and strategic planning are in place. Membertou has forged partnerships with exemplars in technology, conservation, and sustainable development, each producing employment opportunities and delivering sizable profits to the Membertou community (Toughill, 2004). For example, in July 2010, Membertou announced its business partnership with GrupoGuascor of the Basque Country of Spain, establishing Anaia Global Renewable Energies. GrupoGuascor is a global giant in renewable energy technologies, specifically solar, wind, and bio-energy equipment and applications. The company holds a unique business philosophy to provide energy to remote, rural, and Indigenous communities, and its networking with North American bodies has allowed for the company to market a full range of renewable market technologies and equipment designed specifically for small rural communities and remote areas of the continent (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010).

Over the years, Membertou has entered into a number of partnerships with companies such as Fujitsu Consulting (Canada) Ltd. to create an IT services company, Grant Thornton LLP to provide expert accounting advice to native organiza-

tions across the country focused on building internal financial capacity, and SNC-Lavalin to create logistical, project management, and environmental technology opportunities. These partners also sought business opportunities in the burgeoning offshore oil and gas industry in the Maritimes (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010; see also discussion in Thayer-Scott, 2004). A partnership between Clearwater Fine Foods and Membertou First Nation resulted in a split profit margin and the opportunity for Membertou to harvest, process, and market seafood products under the Membertou brand. This partnership created several dozen full-time positions and approximately 60 seasonal positions for Mi'kmaw people, allowing them to connect to their roots and engage once again in one of their traditional activities. While many of these partnerships are not currently active, they were valuable for helping Membertou establish contacts, attain expertise in specific markets, and gain experience in a variety of industries. For example, the partnership with Clearwater Fine Foods, which started out as an agreement to sell Membertou Crab, resulted in the establishment of Membertou-owned First Fishermen's Seafood.

In 2009, Membertou became the second community in Atlantic Canada to join the Circle of Governance Excellence in their partnership with the National Centre for First Nations Governance. The NCFNG "is a national, independent, First Nations-controlled organization dedicated to supporting First Nations as they work to implement their inherent right to self-governance" (National Centre for First Nations Governance, n.d., p. 1). This alliance solidified Membertou's vision and efforts to strengthen the rights of the Mi'kmaw people and allowed Membertou to facilitate nation-building workshops and develop strong relationships with other First Nations across the country.

Membertou is also one of five Mi'kmaw communities with representation on the steering committee for the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office (UEBO), which has offices in Eskasoni, Wagmatcook, and Membertou. UEBO was established to facilitate collaborative economic development among Aboriginal communities in Cape Breton and increase Aboriginal involvement in major projects, such as the Sydney Tar Ponds Cleanup Project, which seeks to remediate the country's largest toxic waste site (Unama'ki Eco-

conomic Benefits Office, 2010, pp. 3ff; MacDonald, 2005). Similarly, Membertou has representation on the board of directors for the regional Ulnooweg Development Group, Inc, which provides loans and business services to Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada. Ulnooweg's lending services provide financial support for businesses that may not be eligible for loans through other lending institutions (Membertou First Nation, 2010).

Membertou has also forged strategic alliances with various enterprises and organizations within the community such as Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia Community College, and Cape Breton Regional Police Service (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010). Membertou strives to maintain amicable relationships with the non-Aboriginal community in Cape Breton to work in tandem toward a mutual well-being. These successful partnerships have often lead to the production of goods and services, some shining through in the drastically improved quality of life of the Membertou people and others structurally evident within the reserve. Membertou is careful, however, to ensure that the partnerships they enter into will benefit their community and are in line with their worldview and value system. This point was emphasized by an interviewee who stated, "Just because somebody knocks on our door, it doesn't mean they are our partner" (interview, July 28, 2011). All partnerships are subject to careful review and due diligence to strengthen the community.

5. Development of Infrastructure

Since achieving ISO certification, Membertou has grown its operations to include successful gaming agreements, local and international business partnerships, public and private sector investment, and economic diversification of businesses. As a corporate entity, Membertou operates over 10 businesses, in almost as many industries, and has expanded to areas such as gaming, fishing, entertainment, retail, food and beverage, and insurance. The creation of new facilities and provision of improved services is critical to continued growth and development in the community. Job-creation and the creation of cultural and health and wellness facilities are critical to community members, particularly to ensure that

youth see a future for themselves in their community. Infrastructure, such as lending services and technological experience, provide the necessary support structures to facilitate local business creation and to attract business from outside the community. Combined, these facilities and services contribute to the vision of Membertou as an attractive place to live and to do business.

Facilities

The Membertou Trade and Convention Centre opened in 2004 and has become a crown-jewel business and entertainment centre for Cape Breton Island. The forty-seven thousand square foot, \$7.2 million meeting and convention facility is the largest in the province outside of Halifax and provides meeting, banquet, conference, trade-show, wedding, and concert services (Membertou First Nation, 2010). The centre and its operations created full-time and part-time jobs, and provides in-house services such as video-conferencing, smart-boards, wireless communications, audio-visual support, and extensive catering services. The Membertou Gaming Commission (MGC), established in 2002, employs over 50 people and houses 5 gaming pavilions and head offices. Profits earned from the MGC assist in the creation of new business and capital investments, while also providing annual dividends to all community members (Membertou First Nation, 2010). The Membertou Entertainment Centre (MEC) opened its doors in 2007 and is a 33,000 square foot building host to bingo games and VLT machines. MEC donates hundreds of thousands of dollars to a variety of local charities each year (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010). Membertou Market opened in 2001 as a food retailing and gas bar concept unique to the Sydney area. The facility offers a variety of products: grocery items, fresh fruit, and vegetables; gas, diesel, and propane; lottery and tobacco items; and eat-in or take-out fast-food, coffee, and deli services. The market has grown to greet several hundred people daily (Membertou First Nation, 2010).

In 2001, Membertou's chief and council recognized that while the community infrastructure and economy was experiencing tremendous growth, emphasis was needed on the celebration of its culture and heritage (Doucette, 2008). The Membertou Heritage Park was soon conceived.

The cultural heritage interpretive centre is surrounded by a two-hectare outdoor green space for exhibits and living heritage demonstrations (Doucette, 2008). Opened in June 2012, the Membertou Heritage Park will educate visitors and preserve the community's history through both static and dynamic experiences, including exhibits, pictures, photographs, video and audio recordings, scale models, artifacts, and programming in basket-making, canoe-making, leather work, bead work, drumming, and dancing. Additionally, the interpretive centre houses a gift shop, an Elders tea room, and theatre (Doucette, 2008). In the future, the four acres of surrounding property will be developed with demonstration areas, ponds, wigwams, interpretive walking trails, medicine gardens, and an amphitheatre for outdoor demonstrations, storytelling, and performances (Membertou Heritage Park, 2008).

The Heritage Park has already made a lasting impact on the community. Its development has fostered new relationships and old friendships, and has reaffirmed the importance of each member to the community. All aspects of the design and programming are reflective of the values of the community. It will provide the opportunity for interaction with Membertou's Elders and to learn from their teachings, heighten the importance of cultural and historical preservation, and offer the world a unique perspective of First Nations history (Doucette, 2008).

In June 2010 the community broke ground for the opening of the Membertou Business Centre, a 33,000 square-foot mall located on a road that links the Sydney harbour area, through Membertou, to the main 125 artery highway. The Business Centre anchors many of the community's joint-company partnerships and provides land and facilities for long-term lease. The "incubator mall" was designed for professional and commercial office space, but also contains smaller, incubator spaces for fledgling entrepreneurs and other small-business endeavours (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010).

The Hampton Inn and Suites by Hilton partnered with Membertou to construct a \$20 million dollar hotel adjacent to the reserve on land formerly owned by Membertou. The new facility, which opened in June 2012, features meeting space, executive suites, a swimming pool, a hot tub, kitchenettes, wireless Internet, and a

pedway connection to the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. The hotel is expected to create approximately 50 permanent jobs (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010).

Most recently, in March 2011, Membertou announced its plan to construct a multi-million dollar sports and wellness arena in 2011–2012 (CBC News, 2011). While such a facility will undoubtedly play a role in job creation, it also demonstrates Membertou's ongoing commitment to the betterment of the community for its members.

Services

Membertou Insurance Broker provides insurance products and services to First Nation organizations and businesses (Membertou First Nation, 2010). Membertou Geomatics Solutions (MGS) offers geomatics services to turn data into visual representations (Membertou First Nation, 2010). First Fishermen's Seafood follows the traditional ways of fishing passed down from First Nation ancestors, respecting nature and the environment, while maintaining a modern approach to quality assurance and sustainability. The company utilizes a fleet of six vessels to harvest a variety of Atlantic Canadian ground fish, shell fish, and large Pelagic, including tuna and swordfish (Membertou First Nation, 2010). Membertou Data Center specializes in the hosting and management of complex IT environments that feature support personnel, cooling, power, connectivity, and physical security for clients. The Data Centre also manages hosting, assists in business continuity and disaster recovery, provides website and email hosting, and offers data, file, print, and technical support services (Membertou First Nation, 2010). In January 2011, A.P. Reid opened a new location in the Membertou Business Centre. This partnership is the first of its kind in Canada, with Membertou holding majority ownership in the company that retains the franchise agreement with A.P. Reid Insurance Stores. A.P. Reid Insurance offers auto, home, tenants, watercraft, travel, and customized commercial insurance services (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010). *Kiju* is the Mi'kmaw term for "one's mother," and *Kiju's Restaurant* offers a first-class dining experience influenced by many cultures such as Cape Breton, Mi'kmaw, Italian, Polish, American, and Mexican. Its décor reflects that of the

Mi'kmaw culture and its chef takes pride in creating cuisine with fresh, local ingredients (Membertou First Nation, 2010). Petroglyph's Gift Shop is located in the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre and offers authentic, locally made Cape Breton and Mi'kmaw art and crafts, from dream-catchers and jewelry, to hand-made sculptures and paintings (Membertou Corporate Division, 2010).

As the Membertou community continues to witness economic and social transformations year after year, the importance of its continuation through the further development of human capital has been moved to the forefront. It has encouraged the community to invest in capacity-building programs and initiatives, as well as the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students to post-secondary education. Such education, noted one community member, not only ensures the community will have skilled works for the future, but also facilitates networking between future Mi'kmaw leaders and the future leaders of other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities (interview, July 21, 2011).

6. Commitment to Human Capacity Development

The Government of Canada has observed the need for advanced education to develop the next generation of workers as flexible, innovative, and qualified: "to adjust successfully to growing global competition, Canada must take full advantage of a better educated population and a highly qualified workforce. As a result, post-secondary education appears to be vital to Canada's future growth" (Government of Canada, 1992, "Introduction"). This generation must be able to uphold a competitive global vision and meet its growing demands. Efforts to withstand an aging workforce and build the nation's prosperity have spurred a federal focus on post-secondary education, skills-development training systems, access to lifelong learning opportunities, and erasing barriers to persons of minority, including immigrants, women, persons with disabilities, and Aboriginals (The Council of the Federation, 2006).

The Aboriginal population in Canada is experiencing faster growth than many other segments of the population, increasing by "45% over the last 10 years" (Levin, 2009, p. 689). It

is also one of the youngest populations in Canada, with almost 50% under the age of 25 (Government of Canada, 2009). Consequently, this segment of the population has been identified as having the potential to "help meet Canada's long-term demand for workers" as a result of an aging workforce (ibid, p. 3). The number of Aboriginal students successfully completing a degree, certificate, or diploma, however, is lower than that of non-Aboriginal students and may impede the ability to meet this potential (ibid, p. 6). Ben Levin, Canada Research Chair in Education Leadership and Policy at the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education, University of Toronto, states that while the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in and graduating from programs has vastly improved over the past two decades, there is still much to be done to reach levels comparable to their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Levin, 2009, pp. 689–90).

The pursuit of post-secondary education holds many benefits for Aboriginal people and their communities: "Knowledge equals wealth. You learn to earn. The more individuals in First Nations that are retained in PSE, the more wealthy and self-sufficient the community will be. In a knowledge-based economy, knowledge is the commodity" (as cited in AAEDIRP, 2010, p. 72). Such education has become an increasingly important element of the Membertou Business Model. Indeed, Thayer Scott identified human capital development—specifically advanced education—as one of two key components of Membertou's success (2004, p. 23). Membertou continues to explore proactive education and career-related training programs for its secondary students and residents of all ages to ensure that they are equipped to pursue employment opportunities stemming from the community's business partnerships and initiatives.

Membertou has had a long-standing history of cooperative partnership with Cape Breton University (CBU). CBU is located in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and boasts the "largest Mi'kmaq post-secondary student population in Eastern Canada," as well as the "highest number of Mi'kmaq graduates each year" (AAEDIRP, 2010, p. 26). As a result, and in consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Unama'ki, CBU has made significant enhancements to its Aboriginal services and programming. The university has established Unama'ki College, which

houses the Department of Indigenous Studies and the Mi'kmaw language lab; a Mi'kmaw Student Services Centre; and the Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, which houses documents available for use by students, educators, communities, and the general public (AAEDIRP, 2010). Chief Paul is also actively involved in the university's functions and sits as a member of the CBU Shannon School of Business Advisory Board where he joins other national leaders in developing the knowledge and abilities of the University's students. The existing MOU between Membertou and CBU has focused on issues ranging from environmental remediation to scholarship opportunities. This MOU was recently amended to support the newly established Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies. The Purdy Crawford Chair promotes awareness and ignites interest among Canada's Indigenous people in the study of business at the post-secondary level. The Chair also takes under its wing the enhancement of the university's Aboriginal business curriculum, as well as pure and applied research specific to Aboriginal communities (Cape Breton University, 2011). MOUs have also sprung between the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office and the university's new Centre for Sustainability in Energy and the Environment (CSEE). This partnership pursues economic opportunities directly tied to research and development in energy and environmental sustainability, and seeks to engage local Mi'kmaq in these research and development efforts (Cape Breton University, 2011).

Membertou and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Marconi Campus established a business and education partnership in 2004 to address the under-served needs of Aboriginal people at the post-secondary level. The Marconi Campus provides customized training programs relevant to Membertou's employment opportunities and secondary education transition support programs (Nova Scotia Community College, 2009).

In addition to their commitment to post-secondary education, Membertou has revisited its approach to its elementary and secondary education system, and has implemented several community trades training programs and initiatives to promote the value and benefit of continuous learning within the community. A 2001 assessment of the community's secondary education

system unveiled an overwhelming desire from the Membertou people for their children to be taught in the reserve school. Voices from the study also identified areas for improvement and offered suggestions for enhancing the curriculum in the existing Membertou elementary and secondary school (LaPorte, 2001). Improvements to the "Membertou School" involved establishing a culturally sensitive, blended-language curriculum with a focus on Mi'kmaw oral, writing, and reading skills; integrating Elder and historian insight and wisdom into lessons; embarking on traditional cultural experiences; and discussing First Nations news, values, and spirituality (Doucette, 2008). The focus on language is significant: "If Mi'kmaq is the initial language, it encompasses all your values and then the Mi'kmaw people need not worry about the future" (interview, July 21, 2011).

Education about and promotion of Aboriginal entrepreneurship is another concept that has grown in popularity within the community. Aboriginal economic development and its principle of encouraged entrepreneurship has resulted in substantial research activity, academic value, and a growing number of self-sufficient and self-governed communities. The benefits of its community practice and presence in Aboriginal education have been strikingly evident throughout Membertou's early, yet assiduous stages of growth.

Entrepreneurship as one of the fastest-growing trends in higher education and its lessons offer students valuable curricular, instructional, and experiential learning opportunities. Its focus on opportunity has distinguished itself from other academic disciplines, and has improved and prepared students and their communities for succession in the 21st century. The entrepreneur has increasingly become the ignition of community economic growth through small businesses and innovative means—means powered by the education of, and access to, equity capital, labour, and skills (ibid). "Entrepreneurship itself is the genesis of business activity. More importantly, it forms the basis of an economy and by some standards, is the economy of a nation" (Anderson, 2002, p. 48).

This blossoming relationship between entrepreneurship education and successful strategic economic development has been found in Membertou First Nation (Johnstone, 2008;

Kayseas et al., 2006). The offerings of entrepreneurial skills-training and educational programs have spurred community members to establish sustainable business operations. In doing so, these entrepreneurs have enhanced socioeconomic circumstances and have minimized gaps between the reserve and the local non-Aboriginal community (Thayer Scott, 2004).

Membertou has partnered with various organizations to foster the development of entrepreneurship within its members. One of its partners has been the YMCA of Cape Breton, where their joint venture, the Membertou Entrepreneur Centre, provides customized business training and individual support to First Nations people interested in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours (Steel, 2010). In 2005, as the Centre opened its doors to the community, Chief Paul prided himself in saying, "Membertou has pursued an aggressive strategy towards economic sustainability and we have now identified a growing need in our community for entrepreneur training and business support. The Entrepreneur Centre opens up the opportunity for our community members to actively pursue small business development and in turn contribute to the Cape Breton economy" (Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office, n.d.). The fruits of Membertou's entrepreneurial labours can also be found in the growing number of new Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses occupying space within the Membertou Business Centre. Those driving this entrepreneurial change have been given the skills, encouragement, and opportunity by the community to "successfully identify opportunities in the needs and wants of individuals ... and [convert] these opportunities into viable ventures" (Anderson, 2002, p. 50). While capitalizing on education and opportunity, these entrepreneurs have ultimately seen success due to their consideration of cultural influences that, in the end, maintain this economic energy and vibrancy within the community.

7. Grounding in Community Culture

Some of the most successful Aboriginal communities are the most culturally conservative (Cornell & Kalt, 1990). Developing Aboriginal communities must carefully choose strategies that fit their community-specific needs and preferences (Cornell & Kalt, 1992). The careful con-

sideration of cultural and historical factors has fostered community trust, support, and productivity, and has spun all areas of Aboriginal economic growth: "By neglecting to recognize and consciously include these cultural aspects into the design, business strategies, and operations, there is a risk of failure to meet the community needs and to lose the support of the community" (Anderson & Parker, 2009, p. 107).

The balance between economic growth and maintaining community-supported and culturally appropriate operations is often difficult to achieve (Rhodes, 1997); yet, it is one to which Membertou has been consciously attuned. Membertou implements various cultural programs and initiatives that connect and advance the community such as a weekly newsletter, cultural programming in Membertou Elementary School, and the Membertou Youth Centre. The preservation and celebration of culture and its importance in Membertou's development agenda has allowed the community to preserve its heritage and connectivity while also growing operations and the community's economy (Doucette, 2008). This combination has re-energized Membertou Elders, and has even prompted many to take active roles in navigating the community's development strategy. The Membertou Heritage Park is one of such collaborative initiatives, and complements many additional endeavours in the fields of education, health, justice, and cultural tourism.

Perhaps the best example of Membertou's grounding of business practice in community culture, however, comes from its early attempts to develop gaming facilities. The Chief and council held a referendum in the community to determine whether Membertou should pursue gaming opportunities. Perhaps surprisingly, the community did not support the proposal. Kayseas et al. explain, "The reason for the negative vote involved band members fearing that only a small majority would benefit from gaming. Other Nova Scotia bands have allowed gaming in their communities but individuals reap the profits and pay the band fees" (2006, p. 19). According to community values, such development should benefit the entire community. In response, the Chief and council revised their vision so that community members would receive dividends from the development of gaming and when the second referendum was held, the proposal was approved

by an overwhelming majority. Reflecting on this experience, one interviewee expounded on the relationship between development and culture, saying, "Our development will not be successful unless it is based on our values; meaning, it belongs to the community, the community benefits from it, and it is not about profiting individuals. To me, that makes all the difference in the world" (interview, July 28, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Membertou has a longstanding history of achievements resulting from the contributions of social leaders in the community. Upon this foundation, Membertou's business model has created an environment that attracts business; employs good governance, leadership, and vision; produces stable governments; and values transparency and accountability. "It is an ideal example of what it takes to transform a community from one that inhibits development and progress, to one that is an exemplar of good governance and progress, a place where entrepreneurs flourish" (Membertou First Nation, 2004, p. 23). Chief Paul reflects on the community's reformation and accomplishments and affirms that "the attitude now is that people realize government funding is not the way to go ... it's better to control your destiny than let others control it for you" (p. 10).

In addition to the challenges typical of economically independent communities, Membertou has had to overcome development challenges unique to Aboriginal communities. Membertou has either eliminated or decreased issues with band governance, racism, unemployment, out-migration, and access to capital and resources (Brown & Pyke, 2007). As Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault stated, "Membertou is leading the way for other First Nations across the country ... Membertou is a leader among First Nations, among all nations" (in Kelly, 2002, p. 8). Since adopting this development model and engaging its foundational principles, Membertou has witnessed recent economic success:

- Over the past ten years, Membertou's budget has grown from \$4 million to a current \$76 million. Membertou Corporate Division currently sits with an asset base of approximately \$45 million and contributes more than \$250 million to the Canadian economy.
- Membertou completely eliminated its deficit of \$1 million.
- Since the mid-1990s, Membertou's employee base has grown from 37 to over 600. The reserve employs both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.
- The community's employment rate has increased to nearly 80 per cent.
- Membertou currently generates 75% of its revenue through its own community businesses, business investments, and partnerships.
- The Marshall decision altered federal legislation and dramatically changed race relations across the country. The ruling resulted in the establishment of an Aboriginal fishery which significantly increased Aboriginal participation throughout the country and led to Membertou participation in the industry.
- Numerous internal departments and businesses have been created due to the community's growth, including Membertou Market, Membertou Advanced Solutions, Membertou Mapping Service, Membertou Quality Management, and Membertou Trade and Convention Centre.
- In 2003, Membertou was awarded Economic Developer of the Year by Cando.
- The efforts of the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office have provided an increased awareness of Membertou and the Mi'kmaw Nation in academic and business circles not just in Canada, but around the world. Its partnership approach has allowed the Office to recognize and sufficiently fill industry needs. In 2010, the Office was recognized for its contribution to economic development at the Atlantic Canada Aboriginal Entrepreneur Awards Show and the national Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) Conference.

While this list of accomplishments is impressive in the context of business, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that Membertou has never lost sight of its social responsibilities, as evidenced by its ongoing support of education and cultural initiatives.

The choice to embrace corporate structure and the decisions that have been made in Membertou have sometimes been criticized; however, because of the regulatory situation created by AANDC and the Indian Act, there is a need to be creative to enable development. While there isn't always consensus regarding the best approach for addressing discrete challenges faced by the community, overall the model is collaborative and encompasses the non-economic aspects of community development. Business decisions have been and are always made with an eye to what is best for the community as a whole over the long-term.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Membertou Business Model has enabled this Aboriginal community to transform from one of poverty and dependence, to one of good governance and national and international business acclaim. Present and future development opportunities resulting from its strong strategic vision continue to build momentum for the Corporation's financial independence and the community's self-determination. Membertou has staked its place in opportunity and welcomes the world to join in — its business, and its people, promise to deliver.

As many First Nation communities across Canada face similar challenges to those of Membertou, there has been interest in the feasibility of employing the Membertou Model elsewhere. Further research is required to determine how "universal" the principles of the Membertou Model might be. The first step might be to compare the Membertou Model to those used in other successful First Nation communities across Canada and determine which principles are common. There is no question that Membertou's success with this model is tied to a particular history and geographic location; however, the concepts applied in the model can be utilized by other First Nations to further the goals of their communities.

NOTES

1. This article has benefited from feedback provided by the Membertou Chief and Council, who reviewed a draft in January 2012.

2. In the Smith-Francis orthography, adopted by the Grand Council in 1982, Mi'kmaq is the plural noun and the name of the language spoken by this First Nation, while Mi'kmaw is the singular noun and the adjectival form (see <http://mrc.cbu.ca/miscellany.html#1>). Several other orthographies remain in use throughout Mi'kmaw territory, including Metallic, Pacifique, and Rand.
3. Unama'ki means "land of fog."
4. Grand Chief Membertou was the first Mi'kmaw to be baptized as a Catholic in 1610 by missionaries.
5. The original design can still be seen on a wall in the Membertou Wellness Centre.

REFERENCES

- AAEDIRP. (2010). The Atlantic Aboriginal post-secondary labour force. Retrieved from <<http://www.apcfn.ca/en/resources/TheAtlanticAboriginalPost-SecondaryLabourForceFinal.pdf>>.
- Anderson, R. (2002). Entrepreneurship and Aboriginal Canadians: A case study in economic development. *The Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 7(1), pp. 45–65.
- Anderson, T.L., & Parker, D.P. (2009). Economic development lessons from and for North American Indian economies. *Australian Journal of Agricultural & Resource Economics*, 53(1), pp. 105–127.
- Band on a run: The Membertou First Nations dramatic turn around and the CEO who pulled it off. (2004). *Canadian Business*, 77(8), p. 10.
- Brown, K. & Pyke, J. (2006). Brand Membertou: Walking in two different worlds. Case presented at 36th Annual Atlantic Schools of Business Conference, Sackville, N.B.
- Brown, K. & Pyke, J. (2007). Membertou first nation: Building the brand and building the brand. Case presented at the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
- Brown, K.G., Pyke, J., & Johnson, D. (2008). Aboriginal cultural tourism: Land of the fog. *Journal of Culture and Tourism Research*, 10(2).
- Cape Breton Regional Municipality. (2011). Welcome to Cape Breton Regional Municipality. Retrieved from <<http://www.cbrm.ns.ca/>>.
- Cape Breton University. (2011, January 5). Cape Breton First Nations partner with CBU in R&D into green economy. Retrieved from <<http://www.cbu.ca/news/cbus-csee-and-cape-breton-first-nations-partner-green-economy>>.
- Cape Breton University. (2011). Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies. Retrieved from <<http://www.cbu.ca/crawford>>.
- Cardinal, C. (2005). Utilizing traditional knowledge to strive towards unity. *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 4(2), pp. 13–20.

- CBC News. (2009, August 6). Wrongfully convicted Donald Marshall Jr. die. CBC News.com. Retrieved from <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2009/08/06/donald-marshall-wrongful-conviction-dies342.html>>.
- CBC News. (2011, Mar 11). Membertou unveils plans for new arena. CBC News.com. Retrieved from <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2011/03/11/ns-membertou-arena.html>>.
- Cornell, S., & Kalt, J. (1990). Pathways from poverty: Economic development and institution-building on American Indian reservations. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 14(1), pp. 89–125.
- Cornell, S., & Kalt, J. (Eds.) (1992). What can tribes do? Strategies and institutions in American Indian economic development. Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center.
- Cornell, S., Kalt, J., Jorgensen, M., & Spilde, K. (2005). *Seizing the future: Why some native nations do and others don't*. Retrieved from <http://www.jopna.net/pubs/jopna_2005-01_Seizing.pdf>.
- Council of the Federation, The. (2006). A strategy for post-secondary education and skills training in Canada. Retrieved from <<http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/pdfs/PSE%20Strategy-July-ENG.pdf>>.
- Doucette, M. (2008). Membertou heritage park: Community expectations for an Aboriginal cultural heritage centre. (Unpublished major research essay). Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova Scotia.
- Doucette, N. (1972). Some people seem to care. *The MicMac News*, 2(3), p. 4.
- Erskine Doucette, S.E. (2008). "Donald Marshall Sr." In D.L. Daigneault (Ed.), *Native Leaders of Canada* (40–42). Ottawa: New Federation House.
- Government of Canada. (1992). Post-secondary education: An imperative for Canada's future. Depository Services Program, BP-319E. Retrieved from <<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/bp319-e.htm>>.
- Government of Canada. (2008). Government of Canada provides training and skills development opportunities to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. Retrieved from <<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=412409>>.
- Government of Canada. (2009). Federal framework for Aboriginal economic development. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Retrieved from <http://ainc-inac.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/ffaed1_1100100033502_eng.pdf>.
- Government of Nova Scotia. (2003). Order of Nova Scotia Recipients 2003. Retrieved from <<http://www.gov.ns.ca/iga/2003recipients.asp>>.
- Governor General of Canada. (2005). Governor General to invest 43 recipients into the Order of Canada. Retrieved from <<http://archive.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=4620>>.
- Johnstone, H. (2006). Membertou First Nation Indigenous people succeeding as entrepreneurs. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 2(2), pp. 140–148.
- Kayseas, R., Hindle, K., & Anderson, R. (2006). Fostering Indigenous Entrepreneurship: a case study of the Membertou first nation, Nova Scotia, Canada. Albuquerque Conference.
- Kelly, T. (2002, January 31). Business plan paying dividends for Mi'kmaq band: Tiny reserve pulling in private partners and investment. *Toronto Star*, p. 8.
- King, N. (2008, February 29). Membertou wants young people to dream big. Retrieved from <<http://www.capebretonpost.com/Living/Community/2008-02-29/article-768813/Membertou-wants-young-people-to-dream-big/1>>.
- LaPorte, J. (2001). The place of the community in the school education at Membertou. (Unpublished Master thesis). St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Lawrence, Raymond. (2000). Membertou keeps its site set on accountability. *Circles of Light*, (7), p. 2. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/ainc-inac/R12-100-7-eng.pdf>.
- MacDonald, T. (2005, Feb 12). Membertou set for more economic development. *The Cape Breton Post*, pp. A1, A6.
- MacDonald, T. (2006, July 18). Membertou, CEO part company. *The Cape Breton Post*, no. 168, pp. A1, A2.
- Membertou Band Council. (1983). *Membertou Community Profile*. Membertou, NS: Planning and Development Committee. [Retrieved from Mi'kmaq Resource Centre, Robin Armstrong Papers, MG 12, 2 MRC 2001-2-1330b, File No. 16.]
- Membertou Corporate Division. (2010). Retrieved from <<http://www.membertoucorporate.com>>.
- Membertou First Nation. (2010). Retrieved from <<http://www.membertou.ca/main-page.asp>>
- Membertou Heritage Park. (2008). Retrieved from <<http://www.membertouheritagepark.com/index.asp>>
- Micmac Association of Cultural Studies. (1996). Chief Ben E. Christmas. *Micmac Hymnal*. Sydney, NS: Micmac Association of Cultural Studies.

- Mi'kmaq Resource Centre. (2011). Mi'kmaq bands in Nova Scotia. Retrieved from <<http://mrc.cbu.ca/nscouncils.html>>.
- Miller, A. (2006). "Bernd Christmas: Mi'kmaq lawyer contributes at home". *Windspeaker*, 23(12), p. 6.
- National Centre for First Nations Governance. (n.d.). Governance toolkit best practices. Retrieved from <http://fngovernance.org/resources_docs/AR_Membertou.pdf>.
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). (2009). Report to the community 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.nsc.ca/news_events/publications/community_report/2009/>.
- Roy Anslem Gould obituary. (2004, December 7). *Cape Breton Post*, p. 3.
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997). *Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Open University Press: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Steel, D. (2010). Report highlights keys to business success. *Windspeaker*, 27(10), p. 11.
- Thayer Scott, J. (2004). Doing business with the devil: Land, sovereignty, and corporate partnerships in Membertou Inc., Halifax, N.S. Atlantic Institute for Market Studies.
- Toughill, K. (2001, March 3). "Boardroom finesse buys band respect — Wheeling and dealing signals trend in quest for Aboriginal rights." *Toronto Star*, p. 1, NR04.
- Toughill, K. (2004, May 14). "Capitalism behind success of tiny Cape Breton reserve." *Toronto Star*, p. A06.
- Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office. (2010). Unama'ki annual report 2010: Collaborative approach to economic development. Retrieved from <<http://unamaki.ca/pdfs/Unamaki-2010-Annual-Report.pdf>>.
- Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office. (n.d.). Entrepreneur Centre. Retrieved from <<http://www.unamaki.ca/entrepreneur-centre.asp>>.
- York, G. (1990). *The dispossessed: Life and death in native Canada*. London: Vintage U.K.