

*Artists' Statement*  
*Partnerships for Prosperity*

-----

Mark Preston and Mark Rutledge

Dakhl'awèdí (Eagle Clan) and Kùkhhittàn (Raven Child Clan) are two of many clans that the Yukon First Nations have. The Eagle symbolizes grace, power, and has great intellectual abilities. The Eagle is a sacred, wise and noble creature representing power and prestige to the Yukon First Nations. The gift the Eagle shares is the ability of foresight and an indication of good times to come.

In many stories, the Raven teaches us about life and right from wrong. The Raven symbolizes change in life, creativity, and humour. A key figure in Yukon First Nations' legends, the Raven is involved in many creation stories and is also recognized as the bringer of light as it is said that the Raven released the sun and moon.

The Eagle is represented here by the panel to the left, and the Raven is illustrated as he crosses the Yukon River.

The mighty Yukon River is shown to reflect the history that Yukon First Nations' people have with the land and the water. The Yukon River also represents the relationship that was built with other First Nation's and "outsiders" or non-Indigenous people as they established trade routes with them in partnership.

Throughout the history of the Yukon, its inhabitants have prospered by trading and working together. Only through collaboration and partnership have the people survived and thrived to build a Territory that is culturally rich and diverse.

Welcome to the 19th issue of the Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development (JAED), co-published by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Offices (Cando), and Captus Press. In this issue we continue to offer new stories and articles by creative and eclectic writers, researchers, and community development practitioners and leaders.

This new issue coincides with an interesting time in our Indigenous history: October 2016 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). What have leaders and communities done to move forward the recommendations RCAP made 20 years ago?

In 1999, JAED published its first issue, featuring the proceedings of a symposium held in the fall of 1997, titled *The Cost of Doing Nothing: A Call to Action*. Sponsored by Cando and the Royal Bank of Canada (under the leadership of then Executive VP of Business Banking, Mr. Charles Coffey), the issue contained Cando's Statement on the Economic Development Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Statement concluded with a "What Can You Do?" section:

A keen sense of timing and a strong measure of good judgement on your part as the leaders of corporate Canada have brought you here today. We believe that your interests will be served as well if the Aboriginal population of the country has the opportunity to experience an increased standard of living. The development of Aboriginal peoples' economies provides new markets, new consumers with growing incomes and new business partners.

The research of Aboriginal Business Canada shows that Aboriginal businesses, when started by women, have a higher chance of being here five years down the road than those started by their mainstream male counterparts. No group within Canada offers more potential to develop and maintain the small and medium business sector of the Canadian economy than Aboriginal people. No group within Canada is more dedicated to their development than Aboriginal people. No group within Canada has displayed more determination and spirit in changing their place in Canada than Aboriginal people.

It is this spirit that we want to nurture. We want somehow to create the conditions under which this creativity, this perseverance, this desire to do things for ourselves is supported and encouraged to grow.

We believe that the economic development recommendations of the Royal Commission will encourage and support this new spirit. The nine steps outlined by Professor Fred Wien in his paper are the foundation of this support. The recommendations put control back into the hands of Aboriginal people.

Long term development agreements allow Aboriginal nations and communities to choose their own development path and give them a

base of resources to start to follow it. The rebuilding of economic institutions in Aboriginal nations and communities provides the mechanisms to support this development and enables governments to guide it. Development requires a concerted and co-ordinated effort of many parts of society.

It is our position that the government of Canada should adopt the economic development recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. However, that will not be sufficient. It will also take some action by those in this room. As you can see, Aboriginal communities across the country are already working on the development of their economies and their futures.

Your support of this effort is critical. To derive the benefits of increased volumes in your stores and operations, to increase investment levels in your banks, and to make significant improvements in your bottom line results, our people must experience sustained levels of economic activity. Heightened purchasing power for this segment of the Canadian population will create a win/win situation for all of us. You will see the spinoffs from improved Aboriginal economies. Heightened consumer spending resulting from improved economic development will translate into increased margins in all geographic regions and in all industrial sectors.

We have learned that development of our economies is not a task that we can undertake ourselves. Our economies are interwoven with yours in many ways. Your support and involvement are important and necessary....

Then turn to your colleagues and ask: what can you do to help create a place of dignity and respect for Aboriginal peoples in this country? What can you do to help develop Aboriginal peoples' economies? Buy from an Aboriginal supplier. Help a small Aboriginal business get started. Start an internship program to hire Aboriginal people. Support Aboriginal educational efforts.

These suggestions are the first steps you can take when you return to your offices this afternoon. I encourage each of you to extend your support through new and creative ways. The talents and skills that have produced your own success stories are needed throughout Aboriginal communities across this country.

Call your local business school or an Aboriginal organization. It could lead you to Aboriginal students or entrepreneurs who could benefit from the advice and guidance of a mentor. An invitation to a group of Aboriginal young people could lead to a talented pool of summer employees who need exposure to corporate environments. Support colleges and universities where Aboriginal students are pursuing postsecondary professional programs. Help establish programs in high schools to encourage Aboriginal children to stay in school. Encourage your employees to volunteer their time in helping Aboriginal primary school children start junior achievement programs. Encourage excellence and achievement for Aboriginal students through scholarships and bursaries.

The Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers is an organization dedicated to the rebuilding and strengthening of Aboriginal economies. It consists of approximately 350 economic development officers from communities all across Canada. It also has approximately fifty corporate partners who work with us in this daunting task. These partners are involved in some form or other

with Aboriginal businesses. All are making an excellent contribution to the development of Aboriginal economies.

It recently announced the first Aboriginal certification program for economic development officers in North America. This work has been the result of the efforts of CANDO's educational partners: seven colleges and universities across Canada who offer some form of education directed at Aboriginal economic development. We believe that this initiative, over time, will ensure that those who are working with us have a common understanding of the tasks and the skills to perform them.

CANDO's efforts as an organization are directed toward those on the front lines of economic development: the economic development officers. It provides support, advice, training and information to help them do their jobs. We hope that you can become involved in our work. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's is the most expensive inquiry ever in the history of Canada. It conducted its work in a spirit of optimism and believed that real and meaningful change is possible. It believed that Canadians are generous and desirous of a new relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

The direction that the Royal Commission laid out is, in our view, the correct path to follow to create economic and social justice for Aboriginal peoples. The work that follows from the Commission's recommendation is important work for Canada and for Aboriginal people. It is the work of a generation and it is the work of all Canadians.

(David Newhouse and Corinne Mount Pleasant-Jetté, pp. 133–135)

Today, we at JAED ask: What have leaders and/or communities done since that time? How has that worked out? What still needs to be accomplished? What could be done differently?

June 2, 2016, also marks the first anniversary of the publication of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. What are individuals and institutions doing to prepare for the challenges set out in the TRC's recommendations?

There is a great deal to discuss, contemplate, and share at this particular time in history. We hope to hear about how you or your community has addressed the challenges set out in these two important documents.

On behalf of Cando and Captus Press, we hope you enjoy this issue of JAED, and consider becoming a contributor to the next journal. Thank you.

Warren Weir