

Introduction

Bettina Schneider

This issue's Lessons from Experience highlight the work of the 2024 Cando winners. The first article focuses on Cando's Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner in the Community Category, Bearspaw First Nation, and its many profitable businesses and initiatives in Alberta, led by Rob Shotclose, the CEO of the Bearspaw First Nation since 2011. The second article explores the exciting economic development work accomplished by Lisa Grant, Cando's 2024 Economic Developer of the Year, through her work for the Haisla First Nation in British Columbia. The third article shares the journey of Natasha Peters, and her major achievements and sources of inspiration as the owner and creator of Kaska Dena Designs, Cando's 2024 Indigenous Private Sector Business Award winner.

The three articles in Lessons from Experience showcase the important work being done by one Nation in Saskatchewan and two First Nation economic development corporations in British Columbia. In *Looking After Everyone Right: The Fishing Lake First Nation Approach to Treaty Settlements*, Tasha Brooks and Bob Kayseas share how Fishing Lake First Nation set up the *Waywaynih Kunawapunteeing* Trust to invest their \$101.3 million "Cows and Plows" settlement instead of choosing one-time payouts, and the long-term benefits of this decision. In *Economic Self-Determination in Action: Sii T'ax Development Corporation's Achievements*, Bert Mercer and Mia Brown share how the Sii T'ax Development Corporation (STDC) became an independent economic development corporation of the Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government after the Nisga'a Final Agreement required Nisga'a's four villages to manage business and economic development through independent economic development corporations. Mercer and Brown provide an overview of STDC's transition to

independence, all that it has achieved since independence, and what other Nations can learn from STDC's experience. In *Seeds of Self-Determination: How Snuneymuxw Built Economic Power*, Greg Moynan and Tasha Brooks examine the Petroglyph Development Group's evolution as an economic development corporation of the Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN). They share their early beginnings, supporting community-based ventures, as well as their larger undertakings, such as the acquisition of Casino Nanaimo and Elements Casino Victoria, and PDG's building blocks of success.