



The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to increase communication between management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

In this issue:

- GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship
- Employee Assistance Plan
- Ottawa Appeals Daniels' Case Decision
- Métis Veterans' Monument

Highlights:

- 2013 Indspire Awards 2
- IT Update 3
- 10-Digit Dialing Coming to Sask 4
- Payroll Cut off Calendar 5

GDI Apprenticeship: A Pathway to Success

By James Oloo

An Aboriginal Elder once said, 'My children, education is the ladder to all our needs. Tell our people to take it.' William Yeats noted that 'Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' And as the Navajo say, 'Tell me and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand.' John Richards puts it this way, 'There is evidence that should prompt a sense of urgency among those responsible for Aboriginal education. Low education outcomes are condemning the next generation to poverty.'

Education in a lecture hall or classroom is not the only road to a successful career. The youth across Aboriginal communities have been exploring careers through apprenticeships for hundreds of years. Apprenticeships are a time-tested way to learn a skilled trade. GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative aims to increase Aboriginal participation in skilled trades. As of June 30, 2012, there were 1,288 registered Aboriginal apprentices in Saskatchewan (and by next year, GDI will have added another 120 or 10% more Aboriginal apprentices in the province).


Here is why apprenticeship is relevant today and should be a top career choice for Aboriginal youth.

The opportunity to be the best: GDI Apprenticeship clients learn a skilled trade from a master craftsman who is a certified journeyman. The client has a chance to learn the trade he/she loves, and to be their best. Clients also benefit from supervision and mentoring by qualified journeymen who have walked a similar path. This may open doors to greater career opportunities for the future – everyone wants to hire the best.

A marketable skill: Jobs that start with an apprenticeship are highly skilled, and they are in high demand. After all, not everyone can do one of these jobs! It takes specialized training, which you'll gain through your apprenticeship. After completing the program, you'll have recognized certification.

Great opportunities: There are 70 designated trades and subtrades in Saskatchewan. Thus, you can find an apprenticeship for a variety of careers you may be interested in. And, if you complete an apprenticeship, you'll have the skills and job experience to earn higher wages and get better opportunities than people who have entered your field without an apprenticeship.

A pay cheque while you learn: Normally people don't get paid to learn. But as an apprentice, you'll learn a new skill and get paid. Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with classroom learning. At the end of the apprenticeship, you may keep your job and earn a higher salary or you can take your skills to a new job. What's more, our clients are just as happy as or happier than their university/college-going counterparts. Through the guidance of our employment counsellors, our clients have realistic work expectations and a good idea of what they're going to be doing in the apprenticeship program and after they finish their apprenticeship. Data from GDI survey of apprentices and employers last year shows that 98% of our clients agree or strongly agree that overall they are satisfied with the supervisory, teaching and mentoring ability of their supervisors. 82% of the employers agree or strongly agree that the apprentices are meeting expectations and requirements of the job.

Employers also benefit when they partner with us in the GDI Apprenticeship Initiative. Such benefits include increased productivity, improved safety, and reduced employee turnover. For more information please contact GDI at apprenticeship@gdite.gdins.org or call toll free 1-877-488-6888 



2013 Indspire Awards a Remarkable Success!

By James Oloo

The 20th Annual Indspire Awards celebration was phenomenally successful. The evening was as much about the performances as it was the actual achievement awards that were given out 14 Aboriginal recipients selected by a national jury for their outstanding accomplishments in various disciplines. The event was a nationally televised from Saskatoon.

Of the 14 2013 Indspire Awards recipients, four were Métis. They were:

Award for Youth – Métis went to Graham Kotowich, a professional ballet dancer who has trained at the National Ballet School of Canada in Toronto and at the Royal Ballet School in London, England. He has been with the Northern Ballet Company in Leeds, England as a dancer since 2008. Some career highlights include performing at the 40th Anniversary Northern Ballet Gala and performing for members of the Royal Family at Buckingham


Palace. Kotowich has also taught and demonstrated in ballet workshops aimed at raising youth awareness in ballet and the performing arts.

Theoren Fleury was the recipient of the 2013 Award for Sports. Fleury played in the National Hockey League for over 13 years. He also helped Team Canada win gold medal in the 2002 Winter Olympics. His bestselling 2009 autobiography highlighter Fleury's troubled past and his overcoming addiction. He is a passionate advocate for sexual abuse victims.

The 2013 Indspire Award for Environment and Natural Resources went to Lloyd (Sonny) Flett, an Alberta Métis who has dedicated his life to protecting the environment. Flett's belief that traditional knowledge can play a key role in the pulp mill industry and his campaign for Aboriginal

economic development led him to develop joint ventures between the Métis local, two First Nations in the municipality of Wood Buffalo and business partners. The result was the establishment of Akita Wood Buffalo and Wood Buffalo Catering Ltd.

Jacqueline Guest was the recipient of the 2013 Indspire Award for Arts. Guest is a renowned writer of books for children and youth. Her books often depict Aboriginal cultures and address common social phenomena such as bullying and blended families. Her books have won numerous awards including the 2012 American Indian Youth Literature Award (for her book Free Throw and Triple Threat) and a gold medal at the Moonbeam Awards (for Ghost Messages). Guest offers writing workshops and mentors up-and-coming Aboriginal writers through online coaching. See www.jacquelineguest.com.

For more information on Indspire Awards, please visit <http://indspire.ca> 



James Oloo, Research Coordinator at the 2013 Indspire Awards
Photo credit: J. Oloo



Sylvia Moss, Program Coordinator T&E Saskatoon
Photo by envoguephotography.ca

Great West Life Employee Assistance Plan

By Jim Edmondson

GDI through its Group Coverage Benefits plan with Great West Life offers plan members/employees an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) titled CONTACT. CONTACT provides employees registered in the benefit plan and their dependents with access to confidential counseling and information services.

EAP/CONTACT is completely confidential within the limits of the law. No one, including the Institute, ever knows that an

employee has accessed the service unless the employee chooses to divulge.

This service is provided at no cost to employees and if the employee needs to access more specialized or longer term support, EAP will assist the employee in selecting an appropriate specialist or service that can provide the required assistance.

Employees and immediate family members (as defined in the employee benefit plan) can receive support over the

telephone, in person, online and through a variety of issue based health and wellness resources. Employees can receive a series of sessions for each concern. A team of health professionals aids employees in selecting an appropriate support option that is best for them.

Employees receive practical, relevant support, fast and in a method that is most suitable to the individual's preferences, learning approach and lifestyle.

Continued on Page 5



IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

Website

In the month of January 2013, the Gabriel Dumont Institute website (www.gdins.org) received over 80,000 page hits (excluding the main News feeds). The highest activity was experienced on the Home Page, Apply to DTI, DTI Programs and Contact Us pages.

The RSS News feeds add another 80,000 hits to the counter; with the Employment Vacancies (both internal and external) pulling in over 13,000 hits each.

IT Support System

In January 2013, we received 38 new IT requests to the support system, of which 34 are completed and closed (89% closure rate). Overall, we closed 60 calls in this period. There are currently 39 open Work Orders.

Management Reporter

The implementation of Management Reporter continues. Training has been delivered to DTI Program Coordinators, and their computers configured to use the new program. We have successfully set up remote links to SUNTEP Regina, and will continue to rollout over the coming months.

Twitter

Gabriel Dumont Institute is now on Twitter (www.twitter.com). Follow us at @gdins_org. We will be using this feed to follow and tweet conversations of interest to the GDI community as well as announcing news and events from GDI. In the three weeks since launching, we have made 13 tweets, have 23 followers and are following 24.

We are aiming to post around one tweet a day. If you have any information you would like us to post through official channels, please email support@gdins.org with the details, and we will publish this (also please use this method for Facebook or website updates).

Website Redesign

We have just embarked on the process of redesigning our website. The current site was only ever intended as an interim design. Whilst it is an improvement over the previous one, it is in need of a facelift to make it more graphical, and more user friendly. We have begun the design process through the Website Steering Committee (which has replaced the Social Media Group). Currently we have been working on a design specification, and will tender this out to web design companies for ideas and proposals before a final decision is made on the way forward.

Virtual Server

We have just finished implementation of a new Virtual Server environment in Saskatoon. This allows us to run multiple file servers on one physical server as virtual machines. The user will not be able to tell the difference, but the system will give us extra advantages in resilience, reliability and performance.

The first virtual server is already rolled out, and will be followed in the coming months by a webserver replacement and a domain controller replacement.

Online Payslips

We are embarking on the implementation of an online payslip system. This will enable employees to access their own Payroll payslips and T4 information online automatically.

The system is likely to reduce significantly the processing costs, and the amount of paper used to send payslips out to members of staff. The system is developed by Joe Software in Edmonton and interfaces directly with the Great Plains payroll data.

The controlling webserver is setup and configured, and this is in the final testing phase. Over the coming month, Payroll and IT staff will be receiving in-service training on this; and we will start implementing the new system. We will parallel run the online processes with paper based payslips for the first few months, with a view to switch over once all is completed

Social Networking Security

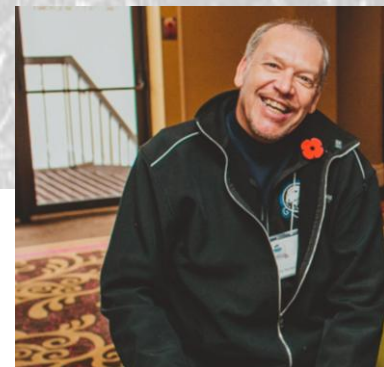
We have recently experienced a type of threat from popular social media avenues such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Through this, an email is received stating that someone wants to be a friend or join your network or follow you. Often the link attached redirects to some other site that is harmful if clicked. Please note that for all requests coming to your email via the social media, the safest way to confirm them is not from the email link, but from the website itself. 



Lisa Duncan
Administrative Assistant, Skills, DTI



Ryan Nordmarken
Senior Admin Coordinator, Publishing



Dwayne Docken
Employment Counsellor, GDIT&E
Photos by envoguephotography.ca



Federal Government Appeals Daniels' Case Decision

By James Oloo

The Harper Government announced on Wednesday February 6, 2013 that it will appeal a landmark court decision on the Daniels' Case.

On January 8, 2013, Federal Court Judge Michael Phelan affirmed the constitutional rights of the Métis and Non-Status Indians in *Daniels v. Canada* when he ruled that Métis and Non-Status Indians fall under federal jurisdiction. In his decision, Judge Phelan stated that the ruling would allow for a greater level of "respect and reconciliation" by removing "constitutional uncertainty surrounding Métis and Non-Status Indians."

However, in a statement issued on February 6, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Minister John Duncan indicated the federal government will appeal the Federal Court decision because the ruling raises "complex legal issues." Duncan

noted that it would be "prudent for Canada to obtain a decision from a higher court" to address the nuances.

The Daniels' Case was filed by the late Métis leader Harry Daniels, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and others in 1999 and had been before the Court for over 13 years before Judge Phelan's ruling.

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan president Robert Doucette said that the appeals process will likely take years. "I am really disappointed because we're back to square one" President Doucette said. "I think the federal government really missed a historic opportunity in the history of this country to fix the wrong that happened over a couple hundred years ago and to really sit down and talk with Métis people." The president suggested that an offer from Minister Duncan to sit down with Métis leaders would be a gesture of good will

and would help build a "community spirit." The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples expressed disappointment in the decision to challenge the ruling. "I have to say that I am truly disappointed, but at the same time not surprised," said National Chief Betty Ann Lalavallee. "This decision comes at the expense of Métis and Non-Status Indians, who for far too long have been the 'Forgotten Peoples' of Canada struggling for recognition of their constitutional rights, equality, dignity, self-worth and fairness."

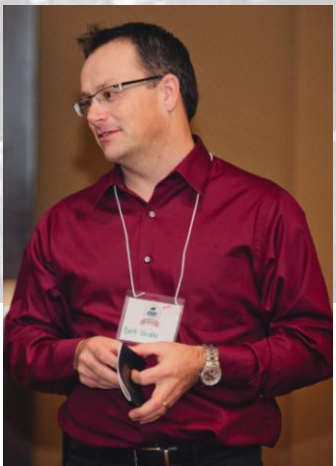
In a strange turn of events, Minister Duncan resigned from his portfolio several days after announcing the Government's decision to appeal the Daniels' Case. The Prime Minister has appointed Bernard Valcourt to succeed Mr. Duncan.



Ashley Matheson
Administrative Coordinator, DTI



Kimberly Parent
Administrative Coordinator, DTI



Brett Vandale
Acting Director, GDIT&E

Photos by envoguephotography.ca

Local 10-Digit Dialing Coming to Saskatchewan

By Gareth Griffiths

This spring, Saskatchewan is adopting a second area code (639). It is necessary because the province is running out of 306 numbers due to growing population and popularity of cellular devices. As a result, 10-digit dialing will become mandatory on May 11, 2013.

Customers will need to add the area code before dialing the usual seven digits. The new 639 numbers go into effect starting May 25.

Before May 25th, all stored local fax and phone numbers will need to include the 306 area code.

This will affect telephones, fax machines and other automated dialing functions. This can even be done now, as it has worked for the last 12 months. If you need assistance with changing these entries, please contact IT at support@gdins.org

Métis Veterans' Monument Update

Fundraising for the planned Métis Veteran's Monument to be built in Batoche is on-going. As the Métis organization that can issue charitable tax receipts, GDI is engaged to lead the fundraising exercise. To date, we have written proposals that have resulted in

over \$126,000 through grants, donations, and fundraising. On February 8, 2013 the Provincial Métis Council passed a motion authorizing the Clarence Campeau Development Fund "to direct the next \$100,000 capital grant for Batoche towards the Métis Veterans

Monument to be constructed on the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Batoche grounds effective for the 2013/14 fiscal year." This recent development will put the realization of the Métis Veteran's Monument within reach.



Employee Assistance Plan ... *Continued from Page 3*

The services under the Employee Assistance Plan are intended to help employees address various challenges and issues of concern including marital, family and relationships; personal and emotional difficulties; alcohol and drug abuse; violence; work and career-related issues; and bereavement.

Other services the program provides are: nutritional and weight management counseling; stress assessment and counseling; legal assessment and information; financial assessment and

consultation; trauma response services; childcare and eldercare assessment and information services; information regarding home health care options and access to your local home care providers; as well as telephone access to registered nurses for health information, assessment and referral to appropriate medical services.

All of the CONTACT services are available to employees who are Great-West Life plan members and their dependents by dialing the toll-free 1-800-387-4765 (English) or

1-800-361-5676 (French). The toll-free numbers are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by intake counselors who can provide immediate support and counseling, respond to crisis or emergency situations or schedule appointments.

For further information regarding any GDI Employee Benefit plan provisions, please contact Robbie Walliser, GDI Benefits Administrator at robbie.walliser@gdi.gdins.org or 1 (306) 657-2264. You may also visit Great-West Life website at

www.greatwestlife.com 



Jim Edmondson
Director of Human Resources
Photo by Envoguephotography.ca

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, March 2013

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Buschnyski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
					Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Mar 8 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Mar 22 Student Payroll, TMS & Payroll Revisions for Mar 15 payday			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Mar 22 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Invoices, Timesheets for Mar 28 payday	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Apr 5 Student Payroll		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday	Good Friday Stat Holiday	
31						

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.
New employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance.
MRTs due by 15th of every month.



Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0R9

PHONE:
(306) 242-6070

FAX:
(306) 242-0002

E-MAIL:
general@gdi.gdins.org

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index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/brows/index.php/833)

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www.gdins.org



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

GDI Locations

GDI Head Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

GDI Publishing Saskatoon

2—604 22nd Street West
Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1
Phone: (306) 934-4941
Fax: (306) 244-0252

GDI Finance and Operations

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 975-0903

DTI Head Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

Toll Free (DTI):
1-877-488-6888

SUNTEP Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 764-1797
Fax: (306) 764-3995

SUNTEP Saskatoon

Room 7 McLean Hall
University of
Saskatchewan
106 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E6
Phone: (306) 975-7095
Fax: (306) 975-1108

SUNTEP Regina

Room 227 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4110
Fax: (306) 347-4119

GDI Training and Employment Head Office

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 683-3508

Toll Free (T&E):
1-877-488-6888

GDI Library Regina

Room 218 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4124
Fax: (306) 565-0809

<http://gdi.voyager.uregina.ca/>

GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 922-6466
Fax: (306) 763-4834



GDI Mission:

To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research