



**Calgary Chamber of Commerce Aboriginal Workforce
Symposium: Strategies to Engage the Next Wave of Talent
March 25 and 26, 2009
Presenter Bios**

Keynote Presenters

The Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Chuck Strahl was first elected to the House of Commons in 1993. He was sworn in as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians in August 2007.

Since then, Mr. Strahl has worked in partnership to improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples on many fronts, including economic development, housing, safe drinking water, land claim settlements, and the extension of human rights protection for First Nations on reserve.

Mr. Strahl introduced the Specific Claims Tribunal Act in the House of Commons in November 2007, which will create an independent tribunal of superior court judges to help resolve the specific claims of First Nations and accelerate their resolution. He also stood with Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine to launch the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the spring of 2008.

Prior to his work as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Mr. Strahl served as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Treaty 7 Grand Chief Charles Weasel Head of the Blood Tribe

Charles Weasel Head Jr. was born on the Blood reserve in 1949, and one of eight siblings and grandchildren of noted spiritual leader Pat Weasel Head.

He attended the University of Saskatchewan, studying Healthcare Administration. His interests in healthcare have made him aware of the health concerns of his community. As the Director of Napi Lodge, an alcohol Treatment Centre in the early 1980's, and Poundmaker's Lodge near St. Albert, Alberta, and also as the Director of the Blood Indian Hospital under Health Canada in the early 90's, his experience in administration of health services matured. In 1996, Charles moved to the high profile post as Chief Executive Officer for the Blood Tribe Department of Health-- a position he held until his election as Chief of the Blood Tribe.

Charles was elected as the Chief of the Blood Tribe in Nov. 2004, he was re-elected in Nov. 2008. As the Chief of Canada's largest Indian reserve, Charles is committed to striving for a better community. Some of his priorities include: long term planning initiatives to address local economic, social and environmental issues; involving community participation and support; looking toward our own self-identity as a sovereign Nation by taking a firm stand on our resources, both renewable and non-renewable; challenging our local, regional and federal governments in protecting our treaty rights; to explore new and innovative partnership approaches, and to address more local issues such as, housing, poverty, violence in the community and other social and health issues.



Peter Manywounds, Special Projects Consultant to Chief and Council, Tsuu T'ina First Nation

Born, raised and educated in Calgary, Mr. Manywounds studied political science at Mount Royal College. After graduating, Mr. Manywounds worked extensively in several capacities with the Assembly of First Nations, and provincially with the Indian Association of Alberta.

A former Environmental Consultant, Mr. Manywounds served three terms as a Council Member at the Tsuu T'ina First Nation. Recently, Mr. Manywounds spearheaded the federal adoption of the First Nations Industrial and Commercial Development Act, which helped foster large scale First Nations development through regulatory streamlining.

Currently, Mr. Manywounds manages all aspects of Tsuu T'ina's economic development plans.

Expert Presenters

Ben Brunnen, Calgary Chamber of Commerce

Ben Brunnen, Manager of Policy and Research, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, has led the Chamber's Aboriginal Workforce Initiative, a multi-year public policy initiative, which resulted in a report titled *Completing the Circle* report and the Aboriginal Workforce Symposium. Ben has six years experience in economic and public policy research, and has held policy positions with the B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Canada West Foundation.

Deborah Munroe, Trade Winds To Success

Trade Winds to Success Training Society is funded to provide employment programming to meet skills gap shortages benefiting the Union Training Trust Fund(s) and Aboriginal people in Edmonton and Calgary. The project provides training and skills development for Aboriginal people to work in the trades with pre-apprenticeship training to make an informed career choice for boilermaker, carpenter, ironworker, plumber, steam/pipefitter and welder.

Verlyn Olson, Chair, MLA Committee

Mr. Olson was elected to his first term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Wetaskiwin-Camrose on March 3, 2008. He is currently serving as Chair of the Private Members Business Committee, and Chair of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Workforce Planning Committee. Mr. Olson received both his Bachelor of Arts in History with distinction and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Alberta.

Victoria Sedgwick, TransCanada Pipelines

Victoria Sedgwick is an Aboriginal Education and Employment Advisor supporting the Community, Safety and Environment group at TransCanada Corporation. Victoria brings over thirty years of professional experience in the oil and gas industry focused on capacity building, employment, and continuous improvement to attraction, recruitment, and retention processes.

Hank Shade, Community Futures Treaty 7

Hank Shade has been involved in First Nation Economic Development and Training & Employment for the past fifteen years. He began his career with the Blood Tribe as the Director of Economic Development for eight years from 1995-2002. Hank then worked for the Department of Indian Affairs in Edmonton for three years as the Economic Development Officer from 2002-2005. He has been in his present position as general manager of Community Futures Treaty Seven for the past four years.



Larry Veilleux, Golder Associates

After completion of university coursework at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and Royal Roads University, Larry was employed by the Nakoda Stoney Tribes for many years in economic development, business development, housing, health development, and education. In 1999, he was hired by Golder Associates Ltd. (an international engineering and environmental science company) to provide senior expertise in Community, Aboriginal, and Corporate Affairs.

Breakout Session Presenters

Cyndy Bermingham, LYNX Aboriginal Student Career and Employment Program, University of Calgary

Cyndy Bermingham is an alumnus of the University of Calgary and the Program Manager of the LYNX Aboriginal Student Career and Employment Program. This new program was launched in October 2008 at the University of Calgary. The LYNX Program is an innovative and interactive employment program that connects Aboriginal students from nine Western-based Universities to employment opportunities. For more information, visit the LYNX aboriginallynx.ca.

Christy Morgan, Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative

Christy Morgan was born in Penticton B.C. and is a member of the Bonaparte Band, which is part of the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation in B.C. She holds a Diploma in Social Work from Mount Royal College and a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from the University of Calgary. Since 2002, Christy has held the title of Senior Community Liaison for the Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative (CUAI).

Toni Polchies, Aboriginal Futures Career & Training Centre

Toni Polchies has worked for Aboriginal Futures Career & Training Centre for six and a half years. She worked as the Job Developer for the first three years then accepted the position as the Executive Director. She has a degree in Business Administration from the University of New Brunswick with nine years of management experience.

Janet Schimmel, Just Say YES Program

Janet Schimmel has an undergraduate degree in Education from the University of Calgary and a Masters in Administration and Curriculum from Gonzaga University. Janet has been working on a PhD. in Organization and Leadership from Capella University, Michigan and is currently taking a break to work with Urban Aboriginal Communities developing employability skills workshops and programs.

LeeAnne Sicker, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

LeeAnne Sicker is a graduate in Indigenous Studies from Trent University and most recently has taken on the role of Executive Director at the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth.

Adrien Wolfleg, Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association

Adrian Wolfleg was born and raised on Siksika Nation, an hour east of Calgary. He credits his Elders for the teachings they provided him. Adrian has shared these teachings in his roles as: school counselor, museum educator, and news reporter. He has delivered hundreds of workshops and presentations to businesses, school groups and non-profit organizations.