



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New series to prepare businesses and Aboriginal communities for effective partnerships to seize economic opportunities

Calgary, Alberta – This Friday the Calgary Chamber of Commerce will launch the Aboriginal-Business Connection Series, designed to equip businesses and Aboriginal communities with best practices and tools to build successful partnerships and create economic opportunities. Fred McDonald, CEO with the Fort McKay Group of Companies and the Hon. John Duncan, Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development highlight the series.

“Aboriginal communities are integral to the growth of the Canadian economy,” said Ben Brunnen, Director of Policy and Government Affairs and Chief Economist with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. “They represent new markets, an underutilized labour force and valuable business partners.”

Many firms do not have experience working with Aboriginal communities and are unfamiliar with the unique cultural, legal, and financial aspects of building successful partnerships, said Brunnen. At the same time, Aboriginal communities can have difficulties accessing capital and limited capacity to engage in business partnerships.

“The Aboriginal-Business Connections Series will help businesses and Aboriginal communities work together for mutually beneficial economic development,” said Brunnen.

Topics to be covered include:

- Corporate social responsibility
- Best practices in consultation and accommodation
- Structuring business partnerships
- Governance and economic policy
- Accessing capital on-reserve
- Federal engagement

The series is supported by Treaty 7 Management Corporation and The Circle for Aboriginal Relations Society.

“We are excited to be involved in the Aboriginal-Business Connection Series, as it will increase understanding, create new relationships and address impediments to economic development, both on-reserve and off-reserve),” said Ryan Robb, CEO for Treaty 7 Management Corporation.

The series will culminate in a summary report and toolkit for business.



Sam McCracken, N7 Visionary and GM of Nike North American Native Programs will launch the series. Nike Inc. launched Nike N7 almost five years ago as a means of developing long term, mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal communities.

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce has a long track record on Aboriginal policy issues as the first Chamber in Canada to create an Aboriginal Committee. In 2007, it launched the Aboriginal Workforce Initiative (AWI) to engage Canada's largest underutilized source of talent in response to Alberta's labour shortages.

AWI has generated a research report with recommendations to improve Aboriginal labour market outcomes, a workforce symposium, a doing Business On-Reserve Conference, and additional programming including Aboriginal awareness training and pre-employment training to prospective Aboriginal employees.

More information on the series is available at: calgarychamber.com/abc.

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Backgrounder – Aboriginal Business-Connection Series Proposed Speaker Line Up

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BACKGROUND

Aboriginal-Business Connection Series Proposed Speaker Line Up

1. Corporate Social Responsibility

Confirmed Keynote Speaker

Sam McCracken – N7 Visionary and GM of Nike North American Native Programs

2. Accessing Capital

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Manny Jules - Chief Commissioner, First Nations Tax Commission

Harold Calla – Chair, First Nations Financial Management Board

3. Structuring Business Partnerships

Confirmed Keynote Speaker

Fred McDonald – CEO, Fort McKay Group of Companies

4. Governance & Good Economic Policy

Confirmed Keynote Speaker

Dr. Stephen Cornell – Co-Director, Harvard Project of American Indian Economic Development and Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona

5. Federal Engagement

Confirmed Keynote Speaker

The Honourable John Duncan – Federal Minister, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

6. Renewed Relationships for Success

Potential Keynote Speakers

Shawn Atleo – National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

7. Consultation and Accommodation

Potential Keynote Speakers

Prospective speakers include representatives from the BC Oil & Gas Commission, the Alberta Ministry of Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations, the Assembly of Alberta Chiefs, Saskatchewan Treaty Commission, and the Government of Australia.