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Summer 2025 Newsletter

1. Our New Cultural Centre

At this time of writing our new Cultural Centre – Ckultenellcw – is structurally almost complete, following a series of modifications that have occupied us since September of last year when we received our occupancy permit. For some time now, it has become suitable for renting out to interested parties, and details of those rentals will be covered in a later section.

2. The Construction Source Magazine

Earlier this year we were approached by representatives of the Construction Source magazine, wishing to interview us with a view to publishing an article about our new building. We aren't aware of how our building came to their attention, but in early May we arranged for them to interview us along with McFarland Marceau, our architects, and Alfred Horie Construction, our construction managers. The magazine claims to have a readership of 145,000 senior executives, showcases notable projects and features the companies involved. It isn't clear that the article will be of particular benefit to our Society or to its member First Nations, but it will certainly serve to promote the interests of the two companies which did so much to produce our spectacular cultural centre. The edition featuring our building has not yet been published.

3. Our New Cultural Centre Manager

In May and following a call for applicants from among the three actively participating communities, our search committee selected Floyd Dick as our first Cultural Centre Manager, and Floyd commenced his duties during the last week of May. Floyd is a member of the Esk'etemc and is well known to all our member First Nations as the result of his work over the years throughout the Northern Secwepemc communities. We are delighted with his appointment, and he has wasted no time immersing himself in the numerous activities, those underway and those currently in the planning stage.

As we explained in a previous edition, our plan was to advertise the vacancy initially in the three actively participating First Nations – Esk'etemc, SXFN and Tsq'escen – and then, if no suitable candidate emerged, in WLFN and Xat'sull. As a number of



excellent candidates emerged from the initial phase, it was unnecessary to proceed beyond that.

4. Outdoor Signage

David Jensen and his team of Kathy Curry and Jennifer Pantel have continued to work with our President Irene Gilbert to ensure that the narratives and the accompanying images for the eight outdoor signs that are intended to tell the stories of Northern Secwepemc pre-contact life and life after contact, are appropriate. Irene, while speaking for her own Tsq'escen First Nation, has ensured that the input of SXFN and Esk'etemc has been obtained. This project is nearing completion, and the signs are expected to have been produced and erected on site in the near future.

5. Rental of the Building

It had always been our intention to rent out the building during the off-season months, and as soon as the audio-visual equipment had been installed and suitable Wifi connected to the building, we accepted a number of requests from various government bodies to rent out the space for their meetings. The District of 100 Mile House has already used the space for an event, and by the time this edition of our Newsletter reaches you, the Cariboo Regional District will have used the building for one of its semiannual Board on the Road monthly meetings and a meeting of its Committee of the Whole on the previous day. The BC Ministry of Forests will also have rented the space for a day in mid-June. Very soon we expect to contact the other groups that had expressed an interest when we approached them several months ago, and we can expect to continue renting out the space for the duration of the time before we open the building to the public, and then next winter.

6. Opening the Building to the Public

While we had hoped to open our doors to the general public and to the members of our own communities by now, the circumstances we have already described have forced us to delay that important event. Our present hope is to be ready to do so soon after the coming Labour Day, by which time we expect the 8 trail signs with their stories and 13 more smaller signs describing the plants that are in the process of being installed will have been completed.

7. Grant Applications

We have experienced mixed results with our several grant applications since the time of our last edition of this Newsletter. We were extremely disappointed and somewhat shocked that our application to the BC Government's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program was unsuccessful, as we had filed an application with significant help and advice from Ministry officials who regarded the application as being extremely strong. We received no feedback from the decision



makers except for the fact that the fund was vastly oversubscribed, and an equitable geographic distribution throughout the province was a factor. That failure has set back our plans for continuing to engage David Jensen and his team beyond the work they are now undertaking with the two forms of signage we have referred to in an earlier section.

The second unsuccessful application was to the Vancouver Foundation for a grant of \$100,000 in each of three years in order to subsidize our operating budget. Once again, all the feedback we received was to the effect that this particular fund was very greatly oversubscribed, an unsurprising fact.

The third of our applications was to the BC Arts Council for \$40,000 for the purchase of specialized equipment for the display and storage of the artifacts and other archival materials we are expecting to receive, and this one was successful, allowing us to tailor our purchases to the types of items that we receive by way of donations or on loan over the next several months.

In the meantime, we have made another application to the First Peoples Cultural Council for \$70,000 which would defray the expenses of collecting, classifying and storing those artifacts and other archival materials we receive in this same period of the next few months.

8. Repatriation of Artifacts Held in Various Museums

We have reached out to several museums that we know have small numbers of Northern Secwepemc artifacts in their collections, and all of them have responded positively with undertakings to itemize those artifacts and then to engage us in a discussion about how and when to return them to the safe keeping of the Society.

9. Receipt of Artifacts from our Member First Nations and Community Members

We are now ready to receive items from our three fully participating First Nations and from members of their communities and are relying on their administrators to spread the word that we are ready to accept donations or loans, supported by all the appropriate protocols for accepting them. Several individuals have contacted us with offers, and we are anticipating that some, if not all of the First Nations will find it helpful to turn over some of the artifacts and archival materials they have housed on their reserves.

10. One More Grant Not Previously Acknowledged

Some time ago we were contacted by Board members of the South Cariboo Community Enhancement Foundation who had followed the progress of our project and were anxious to make a small donation to our Society. We were advised a short while ago that the application we submitted had been approved by the Foundation,



and we are seeking a mutually convenient time for the cheque to be handed over to us in a small ceremony.

It needs to be said that although the grants we have been accustomed to receiving, particularly for the construction of the cultural centre, have been in the millions and hundreds of thousands, we value this grant equally as much, representing as it does the recognition and support coming from a local organization in our own community. The ceremony may well have taken place by the time this edition reaches our readership, but our expression of gratitude to the Foundation provides a most suitable way to end this edition.



Notes to the Reader

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.