

The Purdy Crawford Chair

In Aboriginal Business Studies

Case Studies in Aboriginal Business

Fort McKay Group of Companies

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**Purdy Crawford Chair in
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The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies was established at Cape Breton University in 2010 in response to Aboriginal community leaders' expression of the need for entrepreneurship, business investment, and corporate skills training for the purpose of creating a model of self-reliance.

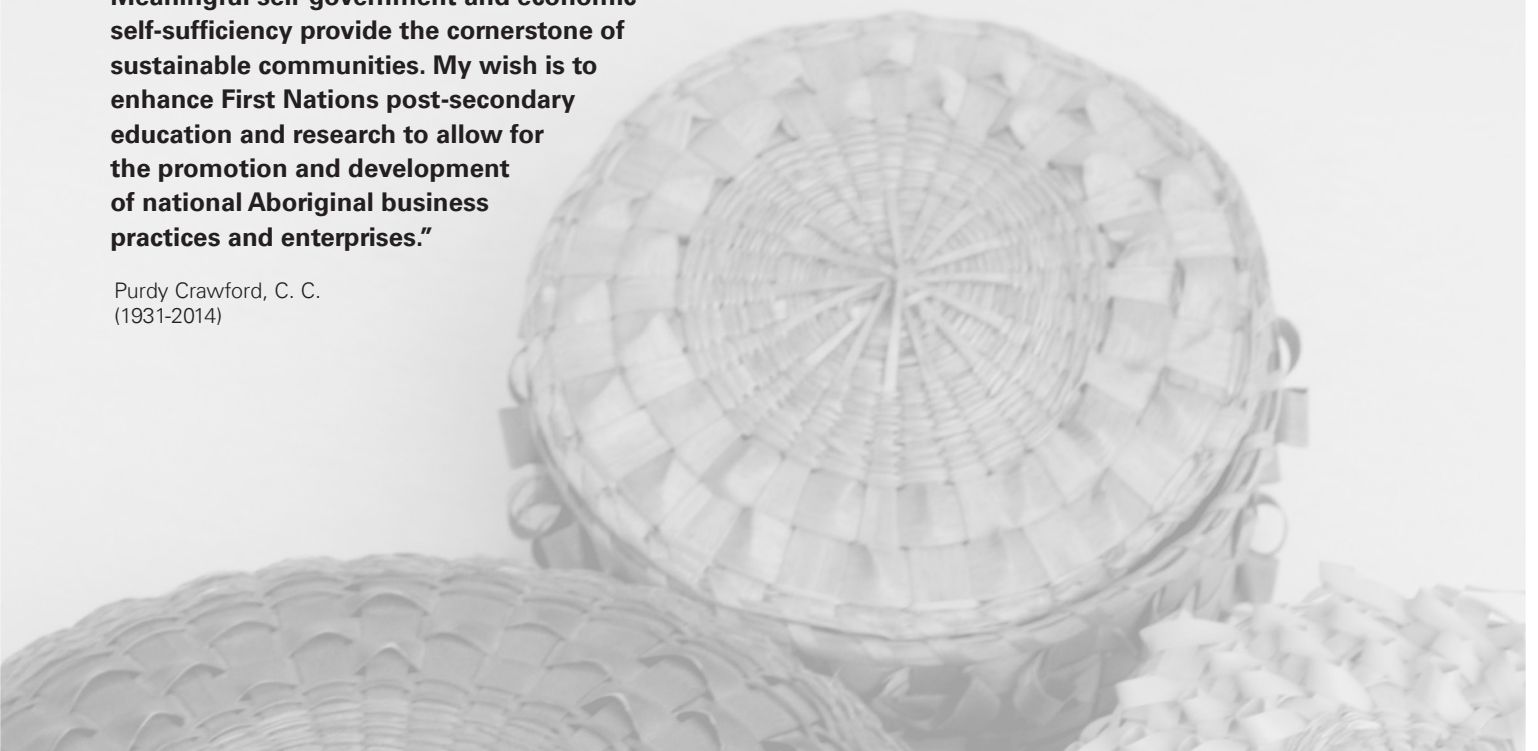
Named in honour of Canadian lawyer and corporate boardroom leader, the late Mr. Purdy Crawford, the Chair aims to promote interest among Canada's Aboriginal people in the study of business at the post-secondary level.

The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies focuses its work in four areas:

- Research on what "drives" success in Aboriginal Business
- National student recruitment in the area of post-secondary Aboriginal business education
- Enhancement of the post-secondary Aboriginal business curriculum
- Mentorship at high school and post-secondary levels

"Meaningful self-government and economic self-sufficiency provide the cornerstone of sustainable communities. My wish is to enhance First Nations post-secondary education and research to allow for the promotion and development of national Aboriginal business practices and enterprises."

Purdy Crawford, C. C.
(1931-2014)



FORT MCKAY GROUP OF COMPANIES

Located in Alberta, Fort McKay Group of Companies is one of the premier construction and service companies in Canada. Fully owned and operated by Fort McKay First Nation, the corporation specializes in a diverse array of fields within the oil sands industry, including heavy equipment operation, warehouse logistics, infrastructure maintenance, and land leasing operations. Revenue flows back into Fort McKay First Nation, making Fort McKay Group of Companies a key player in establishing the economic stability of the surrounding Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

FORT MCKAY FIRST NATION

Fort McKay First Nation is located approximately 65km north of Fort McMurray, along the banks of the Athabasca River in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The community borders the Fort McKay Métis Community.

Fort McKay First Nation has over 600 members with approximately 400 Dene, Cree, and Métis community members. The band belongs to the Athabasca Tribal Council and is a signatory of Treaty 8, which covers 840,000 square kilometres, including territory in northern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan, and the southernmost portion of the Northwest Territories.

In 1820, the Hudson's Bay Company built a trading post near the group's community. In 1912, the community was named after Dr. William Morrison McKay, who was Alberta's first resident doctor and the first President of the Northern Alberta Medical Association. The band is currently managed by an elected chief council and senior administrative body, with the band's current council including Chief Jim Boucher and councilors Raymond Powder, Peggy Lacorde, and Crystal McDonald (Fort McKay Group, 2016).

FORT MCKAY GROUP OF COMPANIES

Fort McKay Group of Companies (FMGOC) is based in Fort McKay, Alberta, with offices in Fort McMurray and Edmonton. Established in 1986 with one janitorial project and six employees, the company has expanded over the ensuing decades to become one of the top oilfield construction and service companies in Canada.

FMGOC operates three limited partnerships: Fort McKay Strategic Services LP, Fort McKay Logistics LP, and Steep Bank Earth LP. The combined companies offer a variety of services, including earthworks, site services, fleet maintenance, fuel services, reclamation support services, and logistics. The company's success was built on

collaborative partnerships with suppliers, strategic partners, and employees, in addition to their strict compliance with safety principles, management of planned growth, and adherence to traditional Indigenous values. Grossing over \$150 million in revenue each year and employing approximately 1,000 individuals, the company hopes to reach a goal of a minimum of 20% Aboriginal employees within the next few years of its development.

FMGOC's board of directors oversees company operations, led by CEO Adam King and CFO Marguerite MacDonald, as well as ten other managers and divisional managers. The company's mission statement demonstrates their desire to provide diverse services and products to reputable customers and clients in their traditional territory in order to ensure the future success of their community.

FMGOC is fully owned and operated by Fort McKay First Nation, ensuring that profits flow back into the community to support employment, housing development, infrastructure, health, recreation, sponsorships, social services, and other community programs. The company strives to provide future success for the next generation of Fort McKay First Nation residents (Fort McKay Group, 2016).

SERVICES

The company's earthworks division works under the Muskeg Mountain division of Fort McKay Strategic Services. A major contender in the heavy equipment industry, FMGOC's earthworks division boasts a fleet of over 100 pieces of heavy equipment, which works onsite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year at the Shell Albion, Shell Jackpine, and Syncrude Base Mine sites. The company's diverse skillset includes road building and maintenance, dyke construction, dewatering, and technical support, as well as the removal of muskeg, a bog-like soil compound found in swamplands and other marshy areas.

FMGOC's site services division operates under Fort McKay Strategic Services, offering direct access to experienced operators and general labour for both long and short contracts. The division specializes in snow clearing and removal, guard rail installation, asphalt repair, grounds maintenance, landscaping services, and warehouse services.

Also operating within Fort McKay Strategic Services, the FMGOC's fleet maintenance division is a full service facility. Renowned for its experienced staff and excellent customer service, this division provides worry-free mechanical services, seasonal tire changes, and troubleshooting and diagnosis.

FMGOC's fuel services department is based at the Fort McKay Industrial Park. The 24-hour cardlock gas bar provides clear and dyed diesel and gasoline and has the distinction of being the only publicly accessible fuel source north of Fort McMurray. The

station vastly improves the safety and efficiency of workers traveling along Highway 63, with three 200,000 litre tanks designed to dispense around 24 million litres per year.

Designed to respond to the growing need for environmentally responsible business practices in the oil sands industry, FMGOC's environment division also falls under the umbrella of Fort McKay Strategic Services. The department operates the acclaimed Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch in collaboration with Syncrude Canada. Overseeing a herd of more than 300 prize-winning registered Wood Bison stock, the division is responsible for ensuring that the daily operations of the ranch run as smoothly as possible. This includes not only feeding and watering the livestock, but also repairing fences, pasture management, and calving assistance. Bison being a traditional symbol of strength within many Canadian First Nation communities, the ranch is of particular cultural significance to FMGOC. As a result, the corporation has gone to great lengths in order to maintain its reputation for the superb health and quality of its animals. Moreover, the ranch not only helps to nurse the depleted bison population back to its pre-colonization numbers, but also serves as proof of the environmental sustainability of reclaimed, post-extraction land.

Finally, Fort McKay Logistics boasts over twenty years of experience in transportation, warehousing, and material management. With locations in Edmonton and the Fort McKay Industrial Park, the division provides stable employment for over 360 individuals (Fort McKay Group, 2016).

THREE DECADES OF SUCCESS

In 2016, FMGOC commemorated thirty years of operation. The company has demonstrated a deep devotion to providing for future generations of Fort McKay First Nation residents, having expanded from a small start-up company to one of the largest and most successful construction corporations in the country.

Safety remains a primary goal for FMGOC. In 2008, the company was runner-up for Small Business Safety Award for its warehousing and logistics, environmental services, and fuel hauling divisions. In 2010, all four crews in mine operations at Shell-Albian Sands officially reached One Year Goal Zero, marking 365 days without a work-related injury. In 2011, the company was awarded the Syncrude President's Award for 2010 Contractor Safety. In 2014, FMGOC's Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch reached the milestone of 4,500 days without a recordable injury, with the last recorded injury taking place in May of 2004. Ranch manager Brad Ramstead attributes this achievement to his team's excellent communication skills and diligent mitigation of risks. Most recently, FMGOC received the Most Improved Safety Contractor Award – Large Company at Syncrude's annual safety awards in 2015. Former FMGOC CEO Jim Carbery credits their success to the institution of a Loss Prevention System that uses

behaviour based tools and management techniques in order to prevent or reduce losses (Fort McKay Group, 2016).

Furthermore, FMGOC is always looking for new prospects for expansion. For instance, the company has undertaken several partnerships with successful enterprises like Suncor Energy Inc. in order to develop a sustainable industry economy for the residents of Fort McKay First Nation. Gaining over \$300,000 in start-up funding from Suncor, FMGOC is capitalizing on its reputation for smart decision-making and rapid expansion, allowing the company to increase its development even further in the coming years (Anonymous, 2008).

SOURCES

Anonymous. (2008). Suncor Energy and Fort McKay First Nation partner to promote business development for Aboriginals. *Canada NewsWire*. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.cbu.ca/docview/455309757?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo.

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