

Municipalities, First Nations WORK TO STREAMLINE TLE PROCESS

By AMM Staff

A partnership agreement was signed on March 17 between the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) and the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba (TLEC). The agreement is part of an ongoing dialogue aimed at establishing a more open and effective Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) process in Manitoba.

According to **Doug Dobrowolski**, AMM President, the agreement further solidifies a relationship that is already working well. "The AMM meets regularly with the TRCM and the TLEC and we've collaborated on a number of initiatives," he said. "The TLE claim process is complicated, and open communication is absolutely essential to keep these agreements moving along."

Over the past two years, the organizations have opened the lines of communication by attending each other's events, speaking to each other's members, and sharing their perspectives.

"The original intent of the treaties was to create shared prosperity for everyone in Manitoba through cooperation and respect," said **James Wilson**, Treaty Commissioner. "Today's agreement is signed in that same spirit and reminds us resolving outstanding treaty land entitlements will mean a stronger province for our children and grandchildren."

"With the heightened interest in TLE, the Kapyong Barracks and the recent economic development ventures on urban reserves in Winnipeg and Swan River, the signing of this agreement is timely," said Sapotawayak Cree Nation **Chief Nelson Genaille**, President of the TLEC. "We want to demystify the misconceptions of 'Indian Reserves' and the TLE process and pave the way for more urban reserves throughout Manitoba. And the only way to achieve these goals is through on-going dialogue and working together."

Dobrowolski says the agreement goes beyond simply encouraging further dialogue amongst the parties. "It's true that we *need* to work together – in many cases the First Nation is the municipality's closest neighbor, and both benefit from a cooperative working relationship. But we also *WANT* to work together," he explained.



(L-R) Treaty Commissioner James Wilson and Chief Nelson Genaille, President of the TLEC, join President Doug Dobrowolski to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on March 17.

"Manitoba municipalities understand the importance of working with their neighbours, and they know that working cooperatively with First Nations benefits their whole region.

At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: for municipalities and First Nations to build stronger, more cooperative working relationships." **LM**

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