



2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Chief & Council Report



ACFN
ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN
FIRST NATION

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Chief & Council Greetings

In October 2023, we proudly accepted our responsibility as your elected Chief and Council. Now, as we conclude the second year of our mandate, we are at the halfway point of our four-year term. This milestone gives us the opportunity to reflect on the work accomplished so far and to share our vision for the next two years.

Over these past twenty-four months, we have listened to you, celebrated with you, and stood alongside you in times of difficulty. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation is more than a Nation; it is a community of family, friends, and neighbours who share history, culture, and traditions. As leaders, we are guided by that foundation as we work to protect our future while honouring our past.

Council has worked closely with ACFN administration and with our Members to advance the goals in our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. Together, we have pursued new ways to serve our people, strengthen sustainability, and create opportunities that reflect your priorities.

One of the most significant milestones of this past year has been the successful negotiation and conclusion of the long-awaited Treaty Annuity Settlement. This historic achievement, decades in the making, brings closure to years of effort and represents a lasting step forward for our Nation. It reflects the strength of our people, the perseverance of our leadership, and the collective determination to secure justice for our Members.

This Report highlights the milestones of the past year while also pointing to the important work that lies ahead. Our Nation has demonstrated resilience through significant challenges, from the pandemic years to the ongoing threats of climate change, such as the wildfires that affected Fort McMurray in 2016, Fort Chipewyan in 2023, and Fort Smith in 2024. We know that future challenges will come, and we are committed to facing them together with strength and unity.

Our Vision reminds us: *“We are the ACFN K’ai Taile Dene. We are fiercely protective of our Treaty Rights, our traditional land, and our language for future generations.”* That vision guides every decision we make.

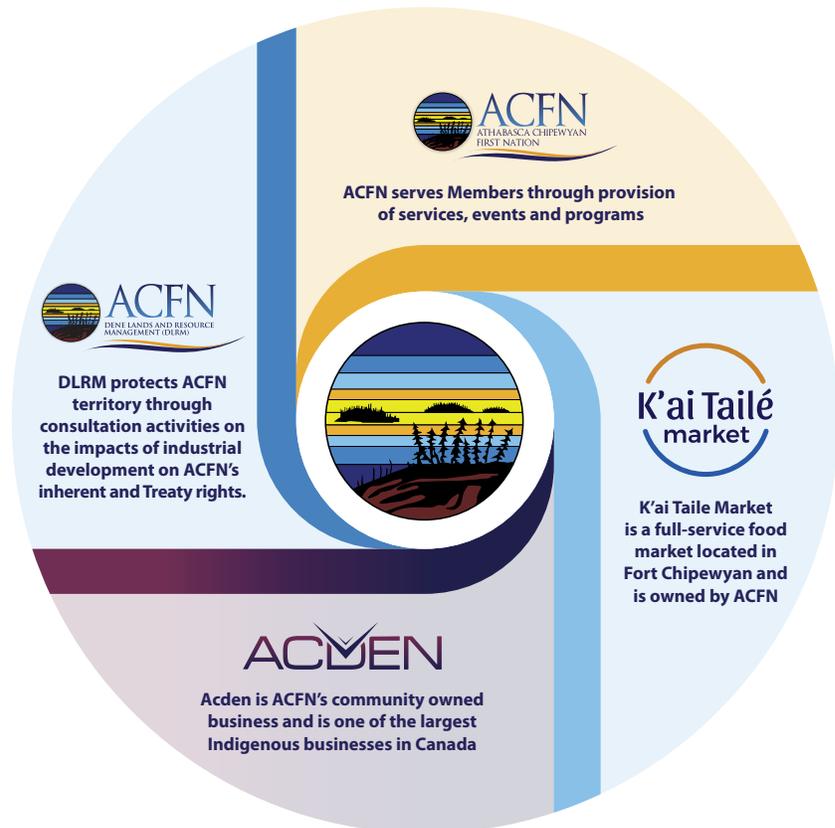
We are honoured to serve you as your protectors, your advocates, and your Chief and Council. The next two years of this term will be critical in building upon the progress already achieved, and we remain committed to advancing the well-being of our Members and our Nation.

Marsi cho,

Chief Allan Adam
Councillor Flossie Cyprean
Councillor Hazel Mercredi

Councillor Mike Mercredi
Councillor Teri Villebrun

How We Serve ACFN Members



Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation 2024-2028 Strategic Plan Frequently Asked Questions

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan sets out the vision, mission and values for the Nation, and sets our priorities for the term in which Chief and Council are elected.

How is the strategic plan developed?

At the beginning of the elected term, Chief and Council work with the administrative team to identify ongoing work, new opportunities and challenges, and ways to address them. These become the pillars that support achieving our vision and mission. Our values guide how we do the work.

Why does ACFN need a strategic plan?

The strategic plan helps Chief, Council, and our administrative team to clearly define our goals for the next four years. It guides our work and ensures we are meeting the needs of the Nation for today and tomorrow, while still recognizing and honouring our past.

What are the pillars in the ACFN 2024-2028 Strategic Plan?

The new strategic plan outlines eight pillars:

- Administration and Capacity Building
- Infrastructure
- Natural Resource and Environment
- Treaty Rights and Governance
- Health and Well-Being
- Economic Development
- Education
- denesųliné Language and Culture

How does the work of ACFN's departments support the plan?

In this report you will find updates from our departments that show the strategic plan in action; guided by our values and the pillars of the plan, the work accomplished by the ACFN team in each department supports reaching our vision and serving our Nation and Members with excellence and pride.



t'a dáníddheni | VISION

k'aitélé hot'íné dáídlj. t'ahú tsąba nálya nj sí, eyi bet'á nuheyatié ú nuhenéné hųt'édhé bóghedi hóąą yųn-adhé xa. eyi begħą dánít'éth nuheskéné beskéné xa. nuhenéné k'e náídé ú t'ahú lósi náílzá ú edegħą nakóhíldé ú nánuhenet'en ha hóąą íle.

We are the ACFN K'ai Taile Dene. We are fiercely protective of our Treaty Rights, our traditional land, and our language for future generations.

t'a dáíltsi ha sí | MISSION

denenj bech'áníé ú ąasi t'a k'adórelj ą nj sí bek'édásídlj hóąą. t'ahú tsąba nálye nj sí eyerots'j nuyatié ú nuhehéne ú t'ąt'ú náídé sí eyi bóghedi hóąą. t'ąt'ú eyi bóghedi walí yanadhé hoxa, t'ąt'ú nuheba súghá ha sí eyi bekádáníta hok'étt'á. dene ts'éráídi ú yoh ú la ú honelten ú nuhenéné k'e ąasie dáíltsi ú dene beba súghá ha sí horelyj eyi ąasie xa dádóríldzá, kųt'ú k'aitélé hots'j denesųlíné hoąąj nárátser ha, tth'i nuheskéné beskéné bets'ádíe k'érální ha ú yets'én nárátser ha.

We honour our ancestors' traditional ways of being and knowing, and innovate new ways to protect and preserve our Language, our Land, and our Treaty Rights. We invest in people, programs and infrastructure to empower our Members, strengthen and sustain our Nation, and to benefit our future generations.

t'at'ú dene nezọ dáidlj ha | Core Values

yunadhé ha hóᗑa hołé Trailblazing

t'at'ú dene yázi edýnj ᗑasíe dáłtsi ha ú t'at'ú hoᗑázi hýzý eghálada walí beba súghá ha yekádáneta déza, eyi ha dene ts'éráidi ha.

We encourage innovation and boldness to pathfind solutions and to disrupt/ challenge the status quo.

horelyú' bek'éseđlj déza Respect

nuhenéné hots'j dene, njh ú, tu ú horelyú' bek'éseđlj hóᗑa. yanísj dene t'at'ú dághena nj sí, ałý duhý hots'én kýt'ú náidé horíłdza, denesýliné dáidlj. nuhenéné k'e horelyú' ᗑasíe bazj k'oríłya ú t'at'ú ᗑasíe bet'oríłza, eyi tth'i bek'éseđlj déza. horelyú' dene etk'ézi aráıłdhen ú nuheyatié ᗑá ú nuhech'ánje ᗑá dene k'edásıđlj.

We deeply value our people, our land and our water. We honour the diversity of our collective lived experience. We treat everyone with dignity, grace and compassion in our words and actions.

dene etts'érádi Service

nuhni eghádálaghída horelyú' etá, hotié etth'i k'aitélé hot'jne ts'éráidi ha, t'at'ú nuhts'j la hoᗑázi beba bet'oreᗑa ha.

We work together as a team to excel in the provision of top-quality services for the benefit and growth of our Members and our community.

horelyú' la bek'ója ú net'j ha Accountability

horelyú' ᗑasí t'a dáłtsi sí bóret'j. t'at'ú eghálaghída ú t'at'ú dene hél dáyałłti ú.

horelyú' dene hél dáyałłti nuhórelker dé, hok'éłł'á dene hél ᗑóidi ha dórıłdza ú sj.

We are transparent; we embrace work conduct and communications that are truthful, responsive and informative.

naráłtser ha Empowerment

t'at'ú eghálaghída sí, hotié eghádálaghída horelyú' k'aitélé hots'j denesýliné hoᗑázi náráłtser ha. k'aitélé hots'j denesýliné bech'ánje bazj hadónıłten, ᗑasíe ghá k'óıdé ha hadónelten ha ú yunadhé nídel ha beba súghá ha.

We approach our work through the lens of empowering our people and our Nation.

We value our people and are committed to their growth through a culture of constant learning and leadership development.

etá eghálaghída Collaboration

jłáh k'ézi eghádálaghída ú, etáđýne dene hél eghádálaghída ú. horelyú' dene etk'éch'á hél eghálaghída ú, njh ts'én k'óıdé dené ú, kýt'ú horelyú' ᗑasí bazj bet'oríłza ha ú náráłtser ha, nuhni k'aitélé hots'j dene.

We acknowledge that our strength is found in unity, and through working collaboratively as a team and with other Nations, organizations, and stakeholders in ways that will most benefit the Nation.





Decolonizing Land and Water Summit: Reclaiming Indigenous Stewardship

On September 16 and 17, 2025, Indigenous leaders, knowledge keepers, and allies gathered at Métis Crossing in Smoky Lake, Alberta, for the inaugural Decolonizing Land and Water Summit, hosted by Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation in partnership with Indigenous Climate Action. The two-day event united communities from across Treaty 6, 7, and 8 to honour traditional knowledge, share stories, and advance Indigenous-led solutions for the land and water.

For thousands of years, we - the K'ai Tailé Dené – lived in balance with the Peace-Athabasca Delta through hunting, fishing, and gathering. The signing of Treaty 8 in 1899 affirmed this connection, recognizing inherent rights and cultural identity. Guided by Dené Law, ACFN has long upheld our responsibility to protect the Creator's gifts of land and water. The summit was an extension of this duty, rooted in history yet focused firmly on the future.

In recent decades, industry and government have promoted the idea that the boreal forest is “more resilient than ever” after oil sands development. Yet only 0.1 percent of disturbed land has been certified reclaimed in more than 60 years. After decades of countering such claims, ACFN has declared “enough is enough” and created the summit as a forum to centre Indigenous priorities, amplify solutions, and confront ongoing environmental challenges.

Over two days of dialogue and workshops, participants explored strategies to restore sovereignty and strengthen stewardship. Several key themes emerged:

- **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Elders and leaders emphasized that no development should proceed without the free, prior, and informed agreement of Indigenous communities. FPIC was presented as the foundation of respectful partnerships and decision-making.
- **Legal Empowerment:** Presenters shared strategies to uphold treaty rights in courts and through Indigenous-led policies, ensuring Treaties 6, 7, and 8 remain central to modern governance.
- **Community-Based Monitoring:** Guardians from various Nations highlighted programs where Indigenous communities track water quality, wildlife, and habitat health. These efforts hold industry accountable and ensure timely responses to environmental threats.
- **Data Sovereignty and Traditional Knowledge:** The summit underscored that environmental data gathered by Indigenous communities must remain under their ownership and control. Elders reinforced that data must be paired with traditional knowledge, cultural context, and storytelling to guide climate action effectively.

- **Cumulative Effects:** Participants recognized that conventional project-by-project assessments overlook the combined impacts of decades of industrial activity. Indigenous-led cumulative effects assessments were identified as a path toward holistic land use planning that safeguards ecosystems and cultural values.

The summit emphasized that stewardship cannot be reduced to short-term fixes. Instead, Indigenous Nations are asserting long-term visions for their territories through land use plans that designate protected areas, cultural sites, and sustainable economic opportunities. By doing so, communities are reclaiming authority over how their homelands will be used, ensuring development aligns with stewardship responsibilities.

As the gathering concluded, a strong sense of unity and determination filled the air. The summit was more than an exchange of ideas – it galvanized a movement. Participants left with strengthened alliances, new tools, and a reinvigorated commitment to lead environmental solutions at home.

ACFN hails the event as a landmark achievement, one that reaffirms the Nation’s role as a steward of land and water while inspiring others to do the same. We celebrate the summit as an example of reclamation and resilience – a powerful step toward a future where Indigenous sovereignty guides environmental governance and where stewardship values that have safeguarded Turtle Island for millennia continue to shape solutions for generations to come.



Economic Development

In the past year, ACFN advanced several key initiatives that strengthen both our economic independence and our long-term sustainability. These efforts reflect our Nation's commitment to creating opportunities that benefit our Members today while building a resilient foundation for generations to come.

A milestone achievement this year was the launch of **First Nations Financial Markets (FNFM)** in September 2025. This initiative, approved by the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization (CIRO), opens the door for First Nations to participate directly in Canada's financial sector.

ACFN is proud to be one of six Alberta-based founding Nations, together holding 51 percent ownership. This ownership will be shared more broadly over time as additional Nations join the partnership. Through FNFM, our Nation and our partners will engage in syndicated financing opportunities, including capital raises for major infrastructure projects such as pipelines and power lines. With registration to operate across all provinces, FNFM represents a bold step toward building intergenerational wealth and expanding First Nations influence in capital markets.

Sustainable energy development remained a central focus in 2025. On February 1, ACFN exercised its option to convert a debenture into a **50 percent ownership stake** in solar and battery energy storage (BESS). This investment positions our Nation at the forefront of renewable energy while also securing a strong economic return.

Despite the current environment of low electricity prices, BESS continues to demonstrate solid potential. In August and September, the system performed especially well, capturing peak pricing during periods of volatility. These results reinforce the importance of clean energy solutions in diversifying our Nation's economic portfolio.

Through **Three Nations Energy**, ACFN joined our partners in securing **\$300,000 in grant funding** to explore the expansion of the Fort Chipewyan solar farm. With growing demand on the community's electricity grid, this feasibility study will help determine how renewable energy can continue to support local needs while reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

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Looking further into innovative energy solutions, ACFN also received **\$100,000 in grant funding** to conduct a feasibility study on a **Lake Source District Heating system**. Using water from Lake Athabasca as a sustainable heat source, this project has the potential to significantly lower heating costs and reduce environmental impacts in the region.

These initiatives highlight how ACFN is leveraging innovation, partnerships, and forward-looking investment to strengthen our Nation's sovereignty. Whether through financial markets, renewable energy, or community-based infrastructure, we continue to shape a future rooted in both economic prosperity and environmental stewardship.



Education

The ACFN Education Department is pleased to report on the past year's support for learners across all levels. A total of 72 post-secondary students received funding, while 14 ATC-funded students benefited from additional top-up support provided by ACFN. Incentives were also distributed to recognize academic milestones, with 4 awarded for High School Continuing Education, 13 granted for post-secondary program completion, and 19 provided for High School Completion.

Youth Elders Lodge (YEL) Update

The Youth Elders Lodge continues to play a vital role in supporting cultural connection, community gatherings, and wellness for our Elders and youth. Over the past year, YEL programs and activities created many opportunities to share knowledge, celebrate traditions, and strengthen intergenerational bonds.

Staff and Support

YEL was supported this year by Manager Lilly Marcel and staff members Donna Marcel (Assistant), Jay Moore (Maintenance), Herman Adam (Temporary Handyman), James Adam (Handyman), and John Cardinal (Handyman). In addition, summer students Maelyn Alberts and Jerome Bruno provided valuable support to programs and events.

Gatherings and Cultural Events

The Lodge supported cultural presence and participation at key gatherings, including the Treaty Day Cultural Tent, Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage, Jackfish Cultural Sharing Gathering, Dene Days, and ATC Gathering.

Harvest and Land-Based Activities

YEL organized seasonal harvest activities such as ice fishing at Brander Lake, spring and fall harvests, berry picking, and fall canning and preserving. These initiatives provided members with healthy food while ensuring traditional practices remain strong.

Programs Throughout the Year

Regular programming included sewing traditional items, moosehide tanning, bingo, cookouts with staff and Elders, and monthly hampers for members 65 and older. In addition, 131 hampers were distributed at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Elders luncheons and bingo events were hosted in collaboration with ACFN, MCFN, Métis, and RMWB partners, further strengthening community relationships.

Cultural Knowledge Preservation

Important cultural projects were advanced, including the completion of a Dene cookbook and dictionary, which will be updated and shared with members when ready.



Emergency Management

The Emergency Management Team continued to strengthen preparedness, training, and response capacity over the past year. Building on the success of last year's ICS I-100 training, where 32 employees completed the course, the team advanced training opportunities by offering ICS I-200 in Fort McMurray early in the new year. Twenty employees successfully completed this course. Additionally, one team member attended the ICS I-300 training offered in Edmonton through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), ensuring ongoing capacity development at higher levels of the incident command system.

With support from the Canadian Red Cross, ACFN was able to obtain two drones equipped with thermal imaging cameras. These tools enhance the Nation's ability to conduct search and rescue operations and detect fire hot spots. To ensure compliance with Transport Canada regulations, staff members Paul Cyprien and a colleague completed ground school training and received pilot certification to operate the drones.

FireSmart programming continued to be a priority. For two months during the summer, four employees were hired to carry out FireSmart work around Fort Chipewyan, supported by Canadian Red Cross grant funding. The FireSmart crew also responded to an active wildfire near Point Brule, deploying cabin sprinkler systems to protect infrastructure within a few kilometers of the reserve.

Through funding secured from Indigenous Services Canada, the team acquired a new trailer and 10 fire pumps to enhance readiness in the event of fire emergencies on reserve lands. In addition, the Emergency Management Department approached Acden for support, resulting in the donation of a vehicle. This vehicle was equipped with water tanks and a fire pump, significantly improving the department's ability to respond to fire events or provide a backup water supply in the Fort Chipewyan area.

These efforts demonstrate the department's ongoing commitment to advancing training, expanding emergency equipment, and strengthening fire protection measures to safeguard the community.





Employment and Training

In the last year, ACFN continued to invest in building skills, supporting job readiness, and creating meaningful employment opportunities for our members. Since January, the Nation has invested \$131,417.68 in employment and training programs.

Through the ISETS program, we supported 52 members in completing various programs, courses, and certifications. These opportunities included short-term training programs (under 12 months) that lead directly to employment, as well as specialized safety certifications and the provision of personal protective equipment.

The Employment and Training Department also provided one-on-one support with resumes, cover letters, job searches, referrals, and interview preparation, helping members take the next step toward their career goals.

Guided by the ACFN SETS Committee, we remain committed to developing new pathways for members to access training and employment opportunities, ensuring our community continues to grow a skilled and resilient workforce.

Events

This past year, the Events Team focused on bringing members together through cultural celebrations, wellness initiatives, and community gatherings. From traditional workshops to seasonal contests and major celebrations, our events created opportunities for connection, learning, and fun across all ages. With strong participation and new partnerships, we continued to strengthen community spirit while supporting the well-being of our Nation. Here is a snapshot of some of the events and activities we delivered:

- **5th Annual Virtual Fall Family Challenge** - Over 200 ACFN members participated in the six-week virtual challenge, with participation growing each year. The grand prize was a VIA Rail trip for four from Edmonton to Vancouver.
- **Orange T-shirts for Truth & Reconciliation Day** - Hosted an artwork contest for the design of this year's shirt. The selected design, created by ACFN member Brandy Marcel, was so well-received that everyone wanted one.
- **CIBC Run for the Cure – Team ACFN** - Registered a team for members to join. A garage sale raised over \$1,000, contributing to a total of \$5,896.75 raised.
- **Virtual Halloween Contest** - Members submitted photos of costumes, home décor, face paint, and even pet costumes. Cash prizes were awarded to the winners.
- **Festival of Trees – Mommy-Son/Daddy-Daughter Ball Tickets** - Donated tickets were shared with members to attend with their children.
- **Family Violence Prevention Month** - ACFN offices in Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan wore purple to show support and encouraged members to do the same.
- **New Events Coordinator** - Welcomed our new Events Coordinator, Candace Voyageur.
- **Oilers Indigenous Celebration Night** - Hosted a ticket draw for this special night where the Oilers recognized and celebrated the culture, history, leadership, and talent of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

- **Christmas Parties** - Each location reached capacity, with families enjoying food, laughter, and a visit from Santa.
- **Virtual Christmas Contest** - Strong participation across categories including decorated trees, homes, and outdoor lights.
- **Super Bowl Tickets** - Offered two tickets to the Super Bowl in New Orleans, including flights, accommodations, and game entry. Winner Shaun Cardinal brought fellow member and friend Anthony Ladouceur.
- **Grocery Gift Cards** - Introduced a monthly draw where four names are selected to win \$250 grocery gift cards.
- **Healing Without Words** - The 3rd annual event promoted holistic well-being through massage therapy, block therapy, Indigenous traditional medicine, haircuts, and more.
- **Easter Hampers** - Assisted YEL in distributing hampers to every member household in Fort Chipewyan.
- **Community Easter Party** - Hosted a cupcake-decorating station with 300 cupcakes for kids and community members.
- **Red Dress Beaded Pin Workshop** - Elder Beverly Tourangeau guided members through beading 10 pins while sharing the meaning and significance of the red dress.
- **Wood Buffalo Pride Event** - Helped plan the two-day event in Fort Chipewyan alongside RMWB, Métis, and MCFN.
- **Calgary Stampede Ticket Giveaway** - Calgary Stampede ticket admission and ride passes for members. 100 passes were distributed.
- **Elders' Good Food Box** - Assisted YEL with packing and delivering boxes to Elders.
- **KTM Community Fish Fry** - Supported the Market's event by organizing door prize draws for youth and adults and helping keep the day lively.
- **ATC Golf Tournament** - Four ACFN members, including one youth, represented our Nation with pride, coming close to winning the Chief's Cup.
- **ACFN Treaty Days** - A successful two-day celebration in Fort Chipewyan, bringing together members and the wider community.
- **Calgary Stampede Passes** - Purchased 100 admission and ride-all-day passes for members to attend.
- **Ribbon Skirt Workshop (Fort Chipewyan)** - Hosted a two-day workshop, supported by ATC, open to both members and invited community members.
- **Fort Chipewyan Community Beach Party** - Partnered with RMWB and other Nations to host this annual event, which brought all ages together for a day of fun in the sun.
- **Garden Pride** - Recognized beautiful yards and gardens by presenting nominated members with recognition signs.
- **ACFN Member BBQ Tour** - Hosted BBQs in three locations, bringing families together for food, fun, and connection.
- **Land & Sea Feast** - Hosted a steak and lobster dinner fundraiser with a silent auction to raise funds for the Arctic Winter Games team.
- **ATC Cultural Festival** - Assisted with hosting the cultural camp at this well-attended event.
- **Ribbon Skirt Workshop (Edmonton)** - Offered members the opportunity to learn how to make their own skirts.
- **6th Annual Virtual Fall Family Challenge** - Launched another six-week challenge, continuing this popular annual tradition for members.
- **Truth & Reconciliation Week** - Hosted a week of cultural awareness, healing, and reflection, beginning with Orange Shirt Day.



Fort Chipewyan Community Daycare/ Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve Program

Hello, all families and friends, This past year has been a meaningful journey for Fort Chipewyan Community Daycare and Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve Program. Together, we celebrated milestones, overcame challenges, and continued to provide a safe, nurturing, and culturally grounded environment for our children. Leadership also transitioned during this period. Former Director Shivani Chauhan stepped down in October 2024, and Maria Riza Ulanday fulfilled the role of Acting Director until the appointment of Tsitsi Mhende in February 2025, who now serves as the current Director. Many thanks to both Shivani and Maria for their contributions and leadership during this time of change.

Enrollment

Enrollment remained strong, peaking at 32 children in summer. We currently serve 26 children:

- 2 Infants
- 6 Toddlers
- 7 Preschoolers
- 10 Headstart
- 8 Out of School Care

Highlights & Achievements

- Cultural Events: Fall gathering, holiday celebration with food drive, and graduation for 8 children (“Beyond the Rainbow”).
- Summer Programming: Partnership with Helping Hands provided cultural and mental health activities at Athabasca Delta Community School.
- Professional Development: Training in speech/ language, FASD, and early learning practices. One staff advanced to Level 2 certification and enrolled in Level 3.
- Health & Safety: Successfully passed two health checks and two licensing inspections. Managed a Hand, Foot & Mouth outbreak with minimal disruption.
- Nutrition: Introduced a new menu emphasizing fresh, healthy meals.
- Community Partnerships: Monthly visits from RMWB Library enriched literacy programming.

Challenges

Due to funding cuts, Speech and Occupational Therapy services have been limited. Securing alternatives remains a priority to support children’s developmental needs.

Programming Focus

- Daily literacy activities and “Say & Play” speech strategies
- Indigenous traditions, storytelling, and land-based learning
- Social-emotional development through outdoor play and teamwork

Community Engagement

Families participated in seasonal gatherings, graduations, and cultural celebrations. Elders and Knowledge Keepers continued to guide the integration of cultural values into programming.

Looking Ahead – 2025/26

- Expand cultural and land-based learning opportunities
- Increase parent engagement through workshops and family events
- Explore facility upgrades aligned with community development
- Strengthen staff wellness, professional development, and team capacity

Appreciation

We extend gratitude to our staff, families, Elders, Board of Directors, and community partners. Together, we are creating a safe, culturally rich environment where children grow and thrive.

Tsitsi Mhende
Director FCCDS/AHSOR



Housing & Capital Projects

In the past year, the Housing Team advanced several key initiatives that directly support Member housing needs. 12 Home Renovation Grants and Five Home Ownership Grants were awarded, each valued at \$25,000, providing significant support for families in our community.

Housing growth continued with the installation of three new modular homes and the construction of two new builds for tenants, adding to the Nation's long-term housing capacity.

A major milestone this year was the completion of the Housing Shop. The project was finished according to plan, with all permits closed and the Final Occupancy Permit granted. This new facility provides secure storage for materials and convenient access to tools and equipment, all in one location. The Housing Shop enhances efficiency and enables the team to deliver housing projects more effectively.



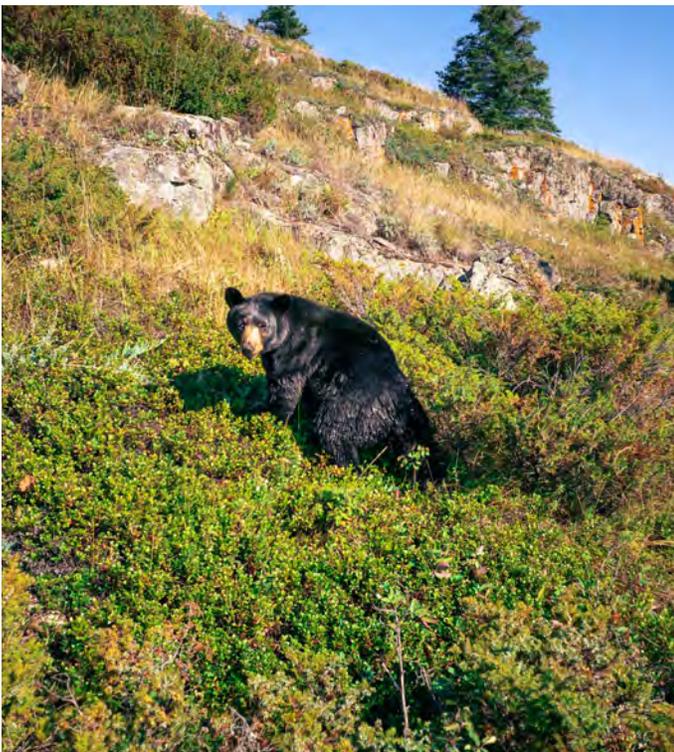
Human Resources

As of September 2025, ACFN and DLRM together employ a total of 68 staff members. Of these, 61 are regular employees and 7 are temporary employees.

We are proud to share that 43 of our employees are ACFN members, with an additional 14 identifying as Indigenous (First Nation or Métis). This means that 83% of our workforce is Indigenous, reflecting our commitment to creating meaningful employment opportunities within our Nation and for Indigenous peoples.

Within the total workforce, 47 employees are part of ACFN operations and 21 are employed through DLRM. In addition, we supported youth employment by hiring 10 summer students in 2025, with 8 placed in ACFN and 2 with DLRM.

Our Human Resources team continues to focus on building a strong, skilled, and representative workforce that supports the needs of our Nation while creating opportunities for future generations.



Intergovernmental Affairs

The past year has been marked by significant challenges and important progress as ACFN worked to defend our rights, protect our lands, and strengthen collaboration with partners.

Big Dock – We continue to work alongside the other two Nations of Fort Chipewyan to hold government accountable and ensure community safety. Testing is underway at the Big Dock site, with remediation and repair scheduled for the coming year.

Voting Rights – The right of ACFN members to participate in municipal elections came under threat when local UCP MLAs Brian Jean and Tany Yao voted against restoring our voting rights. Our team remains steadfast in the fight to ensure every member has the ability to cast their ballot in every election.

Alberta Separation – ACFN has led the response to Alberta's illegal attempts to annex our land. We have taken this fight into the courts, challenged the referendum process, and made it clear in the media - and directly to Premier Smith - that our lands are not for the taking.

Unparalleled Collaboration – This year also demonstrated the power of working together. From partnering with ATC to secure education funding, to establishing mutual aid agreements with other Nations to respond to wildfires, to standing alongside Treaty 8 and the Assembly of First Nations in opposing Bill C-5, ACFN has consistently been at the forefront of building strong coalitions in pursuit of fairness and justice.



K'ai Taile Market

The past year was a milestone one for K'ai Tailé Market, marked by growth, innovation, and stronger community partnerships.

A Growing and Sustainable Market

On August 1, 2025, K'ai Tailé Market celebrated its seventh anniversary. For the first time, the Market surpassed \$6 million in food sales, exceeding budget by 9.6 percent in food and 1 percent in tobacco. Sales also reached a record \$500,000 in a four-week period. Thanks to careful financial management, the Market ended the year with a positive bank balance for the first time, requiring no subsidy from the Nation.

Winter road shipments were completed six weeks ahead of schedule, reducing costs and increasing efficiency. Innovations such as enhanced procurement systems, a strengthened "Meals to Go" program, fresh food strategies, and detailed category reviews all contributed to these successes.

Supporting Food Security

Food security and sovereignty remain top priorities. This year the Market relaunched the Good Food Box and introduced the Prenatal Good Food Box in partnership with Nunee. More than 15,000 bottles of water and numerous fruit and vegetable trays were donated to gatherings and memorials, while over 6,000 food hampers were sourced, procured, and assembled. KTM also partnered with the Wood Buffalo Food Bank to support community hampers, with an expanded partnership to be announced soon.



Community Partnerships and Events

KTM supported and participated in numerous cultural and community events, including ACFN Treaty Days, Mikisew Treaty Days, the Métis Jamboree, and the ATC Gathering. The team also launched the first Fort Chip Food Fest and Feast, partnered with the Fall Fair, and hosted a BBQ at Treaty Days that served more than 350 people.

Investing in People

The Market employs between 20 and 23 staff annually, including eight ACFN members and ten youth. Long-serving staff were celebrated, and an employee recognition program was launched in spring 2025. Training and development were a focus, with staff completing first aid recertifications, de-escalation training, food safety courses, and incident command training. Senior managers attended the Forward Summit and toured other Indigenous-run stores to share knowledge and strengthen capacity.

KTM also supported education by hiring local high school students to assemble ATC-funded Harvesters Grant Hampers and by accommodating student schedules. Three staff members proudly graduated from Theresa Tuccaro High School in 2025.

Looking Ahead

With strong sales and community support, KTM is preparing for the future. Strategic planning is underway to expand warehouse space, reduce reliance on costly air freight, and eventually grow retail space. Partnerships with Acden, ISC, and ACFN are being explored to support these initiatives.

The Market has also strengthened its online presence with new websites (themarketfortchip.ca and kaitailemarket.ca), enhanced social media outreach, and a promotional planner to deliver consistent value to the community.

Language Revitalization

Dene language classes were delivered virtually through Zoom by Alice Rigney and Cecilia Adam, offered Monday through Wednesday.

In Fort McMurray, in-person Dene language classes were facilitated under the leadership of Janette Jones-Flett. A Dene Language Engagement Strategy to guide long-term revitalization efforts was created.

Elders continued their collaboration on the drafting and review of the ACFN Denesųłin  Dictionary.

A range of Dene language materials were produced, including posters, a “Word of the Day” feature shared through ACFN’s Facebook page, and video recordings of Elders pronouncing Dene words.

The program supported several language-focused events, including the Elder’s New Year’s Party Language Challenge, National Indigenous Language Day, Dene Bingos, Treaty Days, the Family Camp at Jackfish, Dene Days, and the ATC Gathering.

A Dene Language social engagement strategy was completed to expand awareness and participation. An immersion program was undertaken in Black Lake, Saskatchewan, providing participants with intensive language-learning opportunities.

The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation extends its appreciation to Dorothy Voyageur and Dr. Josh Holden for their ongoing commitment to the Dene Language Program. Funding support provided by Heritage Canada concluded on March 31, 2025. ACFN has submitted applications for renewed funding and is awaiting confirmation.



Social Development

Over the past year, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation's Social Development Department has continued to walk alongside our members on their healing and wellness journeys. Our team has provided vital supports, strengthened partnerships, and expanded programs that respond directly to the needs of families, youth, and Elders in our community.

We are proud to share that 14 members successfully completed treatment programs in ACFN's funded treatment beds and several more accessed detox services with our guidance. In collaboration with local agencies, we also provided housing supports to 18 members experiencing houselessness, ensuring safer and more stable living situations. Through advocacy and navigation, we assisted members with NIHB supports and supported 11 families with Jordan's Principle applications, helping children and youth access health, education, and social services they need to thrive.

Strong partnerships remain at the heart of this work. By working closely with the Mark Amy Treatment Centre, Pastew Detox Centre, and Nunee Health, we are ensuring members have access to culturally grounded addiction supports and pathways to recovery.

Community Programming

Social Development programming continues to create opportunities for connection, healing, and cultural learning:

- Triple P Parenting Program delivered in community to support families.
- Backcountry Mountain Excursion for youth on and off reserve, building confidence, resilience, and leadership.
- Water Teachings Camp held off-reserve, providing cultural teachings rooted in land and water.
- Ski trips to encourage healthy living and family time.
- Three community hockey camps, offering youth skill development, teamwork, and positive recreation.
- These initiatives are more than activities — they are spaces where culture, wellness, and community strength come together.

Advocacy & Prevention

The opioid crisis continues to impact many of our members. ACFN, in collaboration with ATC and other Nations, remains committed to ongoing advocacy through the State of Local Emergency, meeting monthly to ensure members have access to critical supports and that the voices of our community are heard.

In prevention, Social Development has strengthened its role in keeping families supported and children safe by:

- Assisting families navigating Children's Services.
- Offering daycare supports for grandparents who have assumed custody of their grandchildren.
- Providing direct supports through the Caregiver Grant and Sports Grant, both of which are helping families meet basic needs and encouraging youth to stay active and engaged.

Youth

This year, the ACFN Youth Program offered a diverse range of activities that supported youth in developing skills, connecting with their culture, staying active, and engaging with the community. From sports and recreation to cultural events, training opportunities, and family gatherings, youth had the chance to learn, grow, and have fun in safe and supportive spaces. Below is a categorized list of the year's activities.

Sports & Recreation

- Sliding Party
- Figure Skating
- Jasper Ski Trip & Jasper Planetarium
- Hiking with Youth
- Hooplife Basketball Camp
- Girls Inc. Golf Tournament in Fort McMurray
 - Included movies, bowling, laser tag, and a rib feast

Arts & Culture

- Colour Me Mine outing
- Paint Nights
- Monthly Movie Nights

Community Events

- Assisted in the Mental Health Fair
- Oilers Watch Parties
- Youth Day at Treaty Days
- Community Beach Party
- Winter Carnival
- Community Family Bingo

Training & Development

- YMCA Job Fair
- Moontime Training



Treaty Days





ACFN DLRM

Government Relations

Over the past year, ACFN has advanced important initiatives that strengthen environmental protection, safeguard community health, and elevate our Nation's voice on the international stage.

Climate Change Plan

Funding has been secured to complete a Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Plan. Community engagement has recently begun, and more updates will be shared as this important work continues.

International Advocacy

ACFN participated in two major international conferences this year, ensuring our Nation's voice is heard globally:

- **International Association for Impact Assessment, Bologna, Italy** – This conference provided opportunities to learn best practices from Australia, New Zealand, and other nations. Our participation highlighted the critical importance of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, and helped us build strong international connections to support our efforts to protect Treaty Rights.
- **47th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, Paris, France** – ACFN addressed the international community on the need to protect Wood Buffalo National Park. Our involvement directly influenced the adoption of a draft decision that secured the next Reactive Monitoring Mission for summer 2026. We also strengthened ties with other Indigenous peoples and organizations worldwide, enhancing our ability to engage with Canada and other State Parties.

10-Year Health Study

Following Minister Guilbeault's funding commitment in summer 2025, work has begun on the design of a 10-year Health Study. ACFN is working in partnership with the Fort Chip Métis and Mikisew Cree First Nation to establish governance structures. Regular meetings with federal departments are ongoing to negotiate the contribution agreement and finalize funding arrangements.

Indigenous Environmental Health Risk Assessment (IEHRA)

The Community Stewardship Committee completed household surveys with approximately 70 members over the past year. An interim report has been drafted and was shared with the community during an open house in Fort Chipewyan on August 26, 2025.



Ronald Lake Bison Herd

ACFN continues to play a leading role in the management of the Ronald Lake Bison Herd. We serve as one of the Indigenous co-chairs on the Co-operative Management Board and partnered with Parks Canada to conduct community engagement and draft a disease containment and intervention plan.

Land and Rights

Over the past year, the Lands and Rights team advanced key initiatives that protect our rights, lands, and waters while building stronger community and government relationships.

- **Ronald Lake Buffalo Herd Research** – Researchers continued working closely with Elders to strengthen protection of the herd and ensure traditional knowledge guided decision-making.
- **Nipiy Tu Research Knowledge Centre** – The mobile lab officially opened, and an interim Board of Directors was established to guide its future development.

- **ACFN Land Code** – The first draft of the Land Code was completed and submitted for legal review. A community presentation is planned in the coming year. As part of this process, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted on each reserve, with minimal concerns identified aside from open dumpsites.
- **Collaboration with Fish and Wildlife** – The Department began building a relationship with Alberta Fish and Wildlife, meeting regularly throughout the year. Plans are underway for joint patrols with the ACFN Guardians, fostering stronger collaboration and stewardship.
- **Community Access near Carswell Lake** – Work began with local families to identify a suitable location for a quad trail, ensuring access needs are balanced with environmental protection.

These efforts reflect ACFN's commitment to safeguarding the land, water, and wildlife while upholding Treaty rights for future generations.



Regulatory and Industry Relations

The Industrial Relations Department continued its important work throughout 2024–2025 to protect Treaty Rights, advance environmental stewardship, and strengthen the role of ACFN in decision-making around resource development.

Oilsands

Sampling on Mine Sites

Through our agreements with industry partners, ACFN completed two sampling regimes at Imperial Kearl Lake to establish baseline data and interpret results with the support of our technical advisors. Looking ahead, the Community-Based Monitoring team will expand on-site monitoring across operations to build trust in the mining sector and safeguard Treaty Rights through data-driven oversight.

Tailings Management

ACFN worked closely with other Indigenous communities and oilsands operators to develop shared approaches to tailings management and reclamation. At the federal level, we contributed to the Crown-Indigenous Working Group (CIWG) alongside Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to design regulations under the Fisheries Act for oilsands effluent management. This work also included exploring alternatives for process water treatment and release, such as deep well injection and inter-operator transfers.

Uranium

Traditional Land Use Study

Phase two of ACFN's Traditional Land Use Study for uranium mining advanced this year, with more members engaged in interviews and information gathering. This knowledge provides essential evidence for courts in determining whether proposed projects infringe on Treaty Rights.



Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC)

In May 2024, ACFN signed a Terms of Reference with the CNSC, establishing a framework for meaningful collaboration and consultation on nuclear regulatory processes. A Uranium Focus Group, made up of ACFN members, was also formed to guide relationships with industry and government and provide direction to DLRM staff.



Exploration and Deposits

Significant uranium deposits exist both east of our traditional territory and within Alberta, including the Maybelle River Deposits. To prepare for increased exploration near reserves and traplines, the regulatory team has focused on strengthening knowledge of the mineral mining regulatory environment.

Richardson Backcountry

This year, ACFN confirmed with the Elders Council the boundaries of the Richardson Backcountry, reaffirming the Firebag Declaration of 2010. This declaration ensures that no further development takes place north of the Firebag River.



DLRM Community Engagement

In 2024–2025, the Community Engagement team focused on connecting ACFN members to opportunities, services, and resources that support education, training, and employment.

A key initiative was the introduction of Education and Employment Pop-Up Hubs in various locations. This pilot project was designed to bridge the gap between ACFN members and the services offered by the SETS Committee. Pop-up hubs were successfully completed in Calgary and Edmonton, with future sessions planned for Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, and Fort Smith.

We also launched the ACFN Labour Pool Analysis Survey in partnership with the Government of Alberta. This survey is helping us gain a clearer understanding of ACFN members aged 15 and older, both on and off reserve. By gathering information on career goals, training needs, and employment challenges, we will be able to identify barriers to meaningful employment and provide better support for members. Once the data is analyzed, a summary report will be shared with all members in an upcoming newsletter.

In addition to these new projects, the Community Engagement team organized and supported annual ACFN DLRM events, including K'ai Tailé Dene Days, the Elders New Year's Celebration, job fairs, and Elders meetings. We also continued to support Community Advisory Groups, ensuring that member voices are heard and reflected in our work.





2025 K'ai Tailé Dene Days

The annual K'ai Tailé Dene Days is a culturally rich 2-day event that brings together community, visitors and the departments of ACFN and DLRM for an annual Denesuline celebration.

Day 1 began with a continental breakfast, followed by opening ceremonies and craft classes led by Elder Bev Tourangeau and ACFN Member and artisan, Cassandra Marcel. Though it rained quite steadily, there was no shortage of smiles and laughter. A delicious meal of roast and all the fixings was served inside the Charlie Voyageur Conference Centre, while freshly prepared food was served outside at the traditional kitchen and traditional camp.

Though the weather was soggy, it did not damper the spirit of the annual Rene Bruno Hand games tournament. The game was moved inside to the lower level of the Youth and Elders Lodge and continued into the evening.

Day 2 was delivered with a day full of sunshine and beautiful weather. Attendees were welcomed with a continental breakfast or freshly fried Bannock and syrup/jam at the traditional camp. Artisan classes continued inside while community members visited and participated in the boat rides, dry fish demonstrations and Bannock on the stick making outside.

Dene hand games were completed before lunch, congratulations to the winning teams! You all did so amazingly. An all-time favorite activity is Dene Bingo which was played before lunch. Marsi cho to Councillor Hazel Mercredi for calling the numbers out in Denesuline.

The event ended with an amazing feast of both western and traditional foods, topped off with cupcakes.

Marsi cho to all who came out and enjoyed the day and to the sponsors who made it possible.

We hope to see you there next year!



What's Next for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation?



“Our responsibility as Council is to guide and care for our Nation together. Moving forward, we will continue to lift up our Elders with the respect they deserve, while encouraging our Youth to pursue their dreams. By looking after every Member, we build strength that carries the whole Nation into a brighter future.”

- Councillor Flossie Cyprean



“Our strategic plan gives us a clear path for the future. A key part of this journey is safeguarding the Denesuline language. It is the heart of our culture, and we will continue creating spaces where our people can learn it, speak it, and pass it on proudly. Protecting our language means protecting who we are.”

- Councillor Hazel Mercredi



“The vision for ACFN is bold and forward-looking. We are committed to balancing progress with preservation by investing in infrastructure that serves our people while defending our lands, waters, and traditions. With these priorities, we are building a Nation ready to meet the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.”

- Councillor Mike Mercredi



“Opportunity is at the core of our work. We are expanding access to education, training, and employment so that every Member has the tools to achieve their goals. When our Members succeed, the whole Nation rises with them, creating a stronger and more resilient community.”

- Councillor Teri Villebrun



“Our Nation has proven time and again that we are leaders - in advocacy, in protecting our lands, and in standing firm for our Treaty Rights. The successful conclusion of the long-awaited Treaty Annuity Settlement is a landmark moment for ACFN. It strengthens our foundation and honours generations of perseverance. With this achievement behind us, we look ahead with determination, focused on building a sustainable, thriving future for every Member. We are Denesuline - united, resilient, and proud.”

- Chief Allan Adam

