



Reporting Period
Yr 1 • June 11, 2025 -
May 29, 2026

2025-26

ONÎKÂNÎW KENTON CARDINAL'S YEARLY REPORT:

“The New Generation Offers A Leader”



Table of Contents

Mandate	1
Year-at-a-Glance	2
Governance	3
Diplomacy	4
Treaty	5
Economic Development	6
Safety	7
Community	8
Youth/ Recreation	9
Next Steps	10



SADDLE LAKE CREE NATION #125

COUNCILLOR KENTON CARDINAL

May 31, 2026

Subject: Councillor's Yearly Report

Tan'si Niwahkomâkantik,

It has been an honour and responsibility to serve the people of Saddle Lake Cree Nation over the past year. As your elected Councillor, I believe accountability and communication are essential parts of public service. This report is intended to provide an update on the work I have undertaken, the priorities I have focused on, and the progress we have made together as a Nation.

Since being elected, I have worked to represent the interests of our members with integrity, transparency, and respect for our traditional values. My role has included attending Council meetings, participating in community consultations, advocating for programs and services, and addressing concerns brought forward by community members.

I understand that trust is earned through actions, consistency, and accountability. For that reason, I will continue making myself available to the people and ensuring that communication remains an important part of my role as Councillor.

Our Nation is strongest when our people are informed, united, and involved. I believe we all share a responsibility to support one another and move forward together with respect for our culture, our treaty rights, and our future generations.

Thank you to the membership, Elders, youth, families, and community members for your guidance, patience, and continued support.

Hiy hiy kinanâskomtinawaw,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kenton Cardinal".

Kenton Cardinal, Onîkânîw (Leader)
Saddle Lake Cree Nation #125
Kenton.cardinal@saddlelake.ca
(Cell): 780-547-6366

Year-at-a-Glance



“This past year has been one of growth, responsibility, and learning. As one of the youngest elected councillors in our Nation’s history, I entered this role with a strong commitment to accountability, transparency, and representing the voices of our people—especially our vulnerable.

Throughout the year, my focus has been on strengthening governance, advocating for community priorities, and contributing to decisions that support long-term growth and stability. I also worked to represent our Nation in external spaces, building relationships and advocating for opportunities that benefit our people.

While progress has been made, there is still important work ahead. This report reflects not only what has been accomplished, but also where continued effort and focus are needed.”

My Roles & Responsibilities

As an elected Councillor for Saddle Lake Cree Nation, I hold responsibility for representing the interests of our membership through governance, oversight, and participation in key institutional and organizational bodies. My role is not operational or managerial in nature. Rather, it is grounded in governance: ensuring accountability, supporting transparent decision-making, and contributing to strategic direction in alignment with the long-term interests of our Nation.

A fundamental aspect of my approach is respect for established processes and the individuals and teams responsible for operational delivery. Effective governance requires both active oversight and trust in the systems and professionals tasked with implementing decisions. My responsibility is to ensure those systems remain accountable, effective, and aligned with the values and priorities of our membership.

The following outlines my current roles and portfolios:

- **Wahkohtowin Child and Family Services**
- **Onihcikiskowapowin Business Trust (Trustee)**
- **Saddle Lake Smoke Eaters (Board of Directors)**
- **University nuhelot’jine thaiyots’j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (Chair)**

GOVERNANCE

Governance is grounded in our nehiyaw values of responsibility, relationship, and care for one another. In my role as Councillor, I carry this work with a strong sense of duty to our people —ensuring our decisions reflect who we are and what we stand for. This also means continuing to stand up for our rights, advocating for our Nation, and engaging governments to ensure our voice is respected and our priorities are advanced. At every table, I remain mindful that the work we do today must honour our ancestors and protect the path for future generations.



Every week leadership makes it a priority to meet every Tuesday and Wednesday for Regular Scheduled Council Meetings (RCMs) and Band Membership Interviews (BMIs).

Together we fulfill our duties as elected representatives using Roberts Rules of Order to make decisions on behalf of our nation

“Today I had the great pleasure of meeting with the honourable Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada., and Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

During this opportunity we arranged a one-on-one meeting with each minister in December where we want to address a few key points: The proposed 2% cuts to Indigenous spending over the next five years. Developing a Treaty based funding framework for our programs and services. Inviting them out to Saddle Lake Cree Nation for a ministerial visit and in celebration of the 150th year of the signing of Treaty Six next year (Our celebration). Other objectives include lobbying for additional funding for capital infrastructure, addressing membership coding, amending policies that cap our department(s) income from ISC (ie., Economic Development).

Together we can move the dial amidst these pressing times and get SLCN where we need to be in terms of development and growth. Special thanks to MP Billy Morin for hooking us up with the invite - he was the one who made this all possible.” (Cardinal, K. 2025, November 17. *“Today I had the great pleasure of meeting with the honourable Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada., and Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.”* Facebook.

DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy is how we build and maintain meaningful relationships beyond our Nation. Whether engaging with other First Nations, municipalities, or different levels of government, I carry our voice with respect and clarity. This work is about protecting our interests while fostering partnerships that create opportunities for our people. It is important that we are present, heard, and respected in all spaces where decisions impact us.



Councillors Elesha Buffalo & Frank Buffalo,
Samson Cree Nation Powwow 2025

Did You Know:

Saddle Lake and Samson Cree Nation have a joint MOU supporting economic interests, partnerships, and collaboration signed Sept. 16, 2005

Norway House Cree Nation Visit Oct. 28, 2025



Joint Council Meeting w/ Whitefish Lake #128

Nov 20, 2025



“By working together, pooling our resources and building on our strengths, we can accomplish great things.”

- Ronald Reagan

We have been committed and serious about working together. Despite our complex history and previous tensions, we have been meeting monthly working to achieve a higher quality of life for our membership(s).

MEETINGS TO DATE:

November 20, 2025
February 13, 2026
March 13, 2026
March 16, 2026
April 17, 2026
May 22, 2026

JOINT INITIATIVES:

- Advocacy (*In-Progress*)
- Capital Infrastructure (*In-Progress*)
- Membership (*On-going*)
- Safety Committee, Myself & Stephanie Jackson (*In-Progress*)
- Specific Claims (*On-going*)

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA TREATY 6 FLAG RAISING

SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2026

OPPORUNITY TO VISIT ATEP!



Being invited to the University of Alberta Treaty 6 flag raising is an important recognition of our Nation's place within Treaty territory and our ongoing relationship with institutions that operate on our lands.



As an elected leader, attending and representing our people in these spaces ensures that Saddle Lake Cree Nation remains visible, respected, and included in conversations that shape education, policy, and future opportunities.

CITY OF EDMONTON - TREATY NO. 6 RECEPTION

March 12, 2025



Being invited to the City of Edmonton Treaty 6 reception is an important opportunity to strengthen our Nation-to-municipality relationship and ensure Saddle Lake Cree Nation is represented in key spaces.

Engagements like this also connect directly to initiatives such as the City's *Urban Reserve* efforts, which create long-term opportunities for economic development, partnerships, and increased visibility for our Nation. By building these relationships, we are opening doors for our membership—supporting access to opportunities, services, and a stronger future both on and off reserve.



**Dr. Buu Nygren,
Navajo Nation President**



**Mark Macarro,
Chairman of Pechanga Tribe**

NATION-TO-NATION

Diplomacy, from our perspective as First Nations, is rooted in sovereignty and nation-to-nation relationships that extend beyond imposed borders. As nehiyawak, our connections have always crossed what is now known as Canada and the United States, and I carry that understanding into this work. I remain committed to strengthening partnerships with other Nations and governments in a way that honours our inherent rights and jurisdiction. This means asserting our place at decision-making tables, building alliances that respect our authority, and ensuring that cross-border relationships continue to reflect who we are as sovereign peoples.

**(March 24, 2026)
Declaration of Kinship
and Cooperation signed
by AFN & NCAI**



What This Means:

- We Affirm our Jurisdictionally
- Enhance and Enforce the Jay Treaty (1794)
- Overstep Trump's Tariffs
- Are Genuine About Nation-to-Nation Partnership/ Trade

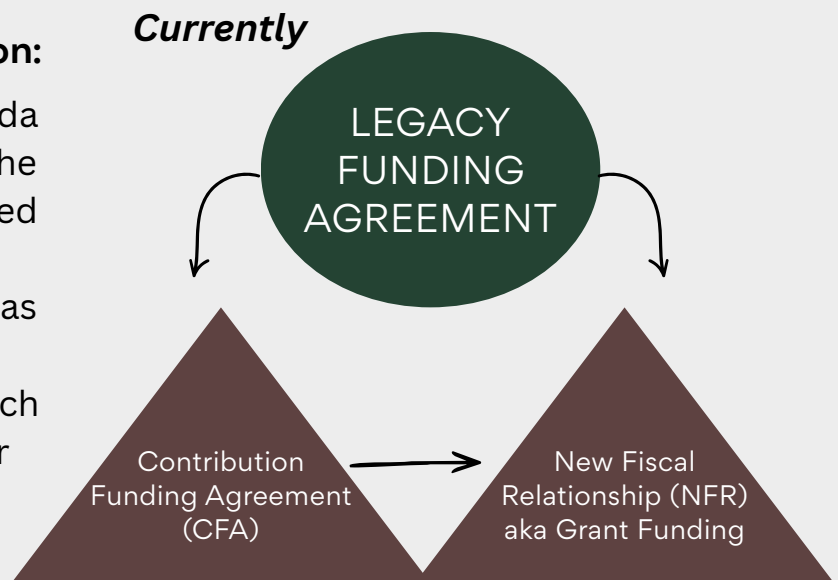


TREATY

Treaty is not just history—it is a living commitment that continues to guide our rights and responsibilities today. As a Councillor, I hold Treaty as a sacred agreement that must be upheld, honoured, and advocated for in all areas of governance. This means ensuring our people understand their rights, and that we continue to assert and protect them for the benefit of future generations.

(October 30th, 2025) Meeting w/ Region:

It's no secret the Government of Canada is trying to do away with us. This was the meeting where leadership, accompanied by directors and staff, met with the regional representatives from ISC. It was there they unveiled Canada's new approach to First Nations funding, which unilaterally sets us up for the 10 Year Grant Funding Framework.



At this moment, we need to tread lightly but be proactive in our approach to the proposed funding frameworks. This means by being ahead of the game we can develop our own protections and safety nets within the proposed CFA agreement.

We need to be pragmatic, but not romanticize what's called Treaty-Based Funding. There's lots of work to be done before we assume direct-funding from the treasury.

In My Opinion:

1. RALLY THE CHIEFS TO LAUNCH A FULL INQUIRY INTO OUR TRUST FUND - PUT ONUS ON ISC
2. CHALLENGE THE FIRST NATIONS FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ACT AND FIRST NATIONS FISCAL MANAGEMENT ACT - ASSERT OUR JURISDICTION
3. DISTINGUISH OUR MONIES (TREATY 1-11) FROM METIS, INUIT, AND NON-TREATY NATIONS
4. REASONABLY CHALLENGE THE EXISTING FUNDING ALLOCATIONS TO MEET OUR NEEDS - IDENTIFY THE GAPS (TREATY 1-11 WIDE, ENSURING FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION)
5. DEVELOP OUR OWN INHERENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT LAW(S) - AFFIRMING OUR OWN AUTHORITY
6. SEEK ROYAL ASSENT FROM OUR TREATY PARTNER (CROWN) GRANTING US AUTONOMY AND ADMITTING TO CANADA'S BREACH TO TREATY OBLIGATIONS - "MOLESTATION" AS PER THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1763

Note: Will only work if we have the full support of all treaty chiefs - strength in numbers*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is essential to building a strong, self-sufficient Nation. My role is to support initiatives that create long-term, sustainable opportunities for our members—while ensuring they align with our values and benefit the community as a whole. True economic growth is not only measured in revenue, but in how it improves the quality of life for our people.

Often, we tend to romanticize capital projects and ventures, neglecting the crucial preliminary design work and site selection.

One common issue I've observed is the overcrowding in the core area of Saddle Lake, which contains all the essential components for infrastructure, such as electrical lines, water pipes, gas lines, and more. We also have issues around the politics of land (e.g. *Occupancy Rights*)

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Onicikiskwapowin Crossing Area Structure Plan

Wednesday, August 6, 2025, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, Cork Hall

The Open House will provide an opportunity to view displays, ask questions and provide comments before the ASP is presented to Council for First Reading. Project representatives from the development team will be on hand to answer questions.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- Legend
- Plan Boundary
 - Commercial | Light Industrial
 - Stormwater Management Facility (SWMF)
 - Phase Boundary
 - Sub-Phase Boundary
 - Wetland
 - Access Road
 - Emergency Access
 - High Pressure Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way
 - Low Pressure Gas Pipeline



For additional information contact: **Greg MacKenzie, Planner**
Greg MacKenzie + Associates Consulting Ltd. (operating as Collaborative Futures™)
Phone: (250) 850 7307 • Email: greg@collaborativefutures.ca

“Onicikiskwapowin Crossing” will be a new site for business development for our nation, home to our upcoming Funeral Home and other opportunities for commerce and retail.



Ec. Dev. is also finishing up work on the Elders Extencicare Facility and beginning work on their next project: SLCN Multiplex





TOUR OF BLOOD TRIBE AGRICULTURAL PROJECT APRIL 9, 2026

A delegation of Saddle Lake Leadership, directors, and elder had the opportunity to visit the Kainai Forage Plant situated in Blackfoot Territory. Their operation is the 3rd largest irrigated project in the world following Navajo Nation, and the Gila River Tribe, USA.

This visit was important—Saddle Lake Cree Nation is the second largest band in Alberta in terms of land mass. If we were to harness the economic potential of our lands and control 100% of our subsurface leasing through a band business, we'd see a huge decrease in land-lease leakage to white farmers and generate a few hundred thousand to a few million annually. Additionally, if we were to build and manage our own processing plant, we'd have a say in what needs to be produced for our lands. We would be our own logistics company selling to people who want our product(s)—Indigenous Owned and Operated. This will increase money circulation in our economy, develop new training opportunities in agro-technology, and hire plenty of seasonal laborers yearly. *This can be our rebirth to Saddle Lake's ARDA Project.*

CASINO

Saddle Lake Cree Nation both this term and previous term have been in talks with casino giants situated in Edmonton. To speak generally there has been discussions on acquisitions of existing sites, now moving into developing our own property. It's a delicate process and naturally these talks came about seeing the success of other nation-owned casinos in Alberta. However, the market is saturated in the larger cities and would require a brand recognized by many.

My Recommendation:

Partner with the Seminole Tribe of Florida and jointly-build a Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Edmonton

SAFETY

The safety and well-being of our community is a top priority. This includes not only physical safety, but emotional, mental, and cultural well-being. I am committed to supporting initiatives and partnerships that create safer environments for our families, youth, and Elders. A strong Nation is one where its people feel secure, supported, and protected.

**RESTORING THE CIRCLE:
INDIGENOUS VOICES IN JUSTICE**

4th Annual Indigenous Justice Conference

Join us this year in a shared vision of a path forward in healing
Open to all community members, justice professionals, and all who seek change.
Step into the circle and be part of a movement to restore healing, truth, and
balance in our communities

SPEAKERS

MYRNA MCCALLUM
TRAUMA INFORMED
LAWYER

KENORA JUSTICE CENTRE
JUSTICE DAVID GIBSON,
DAPHNE ARMSTRONG,
DARRELL MANDAMIN

RAY YELLOWKNEE
BIGSTONE
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

**JUSTICE KAREN
CROWSHOE**
CALGARY INDIGENOUS
COURT

SHIRLEY HUNTER
JUSTICE AS
COMMUNITY HEALING

More Speakers To Be Announced!

[To Register - Click Here](#)

IN COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE IVAN
LADOUCEUR & JUSTICE JORDAN STUFFCO

SEPTEMBER 26-27 2025
University nuhelot'jine thaiyots'j
nistameyimákanak Blue Quills

Contact Shannon For Further Questions or
Support - ShannonB@bluequills.ca
3 Airport Rd, S Paul, AB. 7806454455

Attending the “Restoring the Circle: Indigenous Voices in Justice” conference reinforced the importance of understanding tribal justice, restorative approaches, and our own traditional laws. True safety in our communities goes beyond enforcement—it is rooted in restoring balance, healing relationships, and addressing harm in a way that reflects our values as nehiyawak. Being part of these discussions is critical as we continue to advocate for systems that recognize our jurisdiction and support community-led approaches to justice.

(November 19th, 2025)

Coming home from the National Restorative Justice Symposium, I ran into the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. Briefly I mentioned that Saddle Lake Cree Nation is wanting to jump start Mamawihminostamakiwin (Saddle Lake Tribal Justice) program again. Lobbying for Indigenous law development funding for their proposed liberal budget.



PAROLE & CORRECTION

January 13, 2026



Tribal Justice

March 23, 2026

Leadership has taken important steps toward strengthening community safety by supporting the development of a local arm of corrections and parole, while beginning the work of establishing Saddle Lake Tribal Justice. This approach recognizes that true safety comes from community-led solutions —supporting our members through reintegration, accountability, and culturally grounded processes. By creating space for our own systems of justice, we are moving toward approaches that reflect our values as nehiyawak, while working to reduce reliance on external systems. This work marks an important step in reclaiming jurisdiction and building a safer, more responsive justice framework for our Nation.

DRUG HOMES

Cracking down on known drug houses and unsafe spaces have been an initiative leadership has taken seriously. It's never easy especially in a close-knit community like ours where we're all related, but safety comes first.

We made a motion to close down a known drug home causing concern to the nearby school and mourning families at the hall.

Given consent by the family to shut down the home and demolish it. ATCO power refused to cut services as the winter months were approaching. We have since removed that individual from our band list and gave him an eviction notice.

Recommendations:

- ESTABLISH CLEAR SAFETY LAWS (1987 RESIDENCY BY-LAW)
- DEVELOP A RESPONSE PROTOCOL
- DEVELOP STRONGER MOU'S WITH UTILITY COMPANIES – DISCONNECTION EFFORTS
- ESTABLISH ELDERS TRIBUNAL TO DEAL WITH OFFENDERS
- ENFORCE THE 2008 TRESSPASS BY-LAW

ANTI-BULLYING



“Wearing my pink shirt today is more than participation – it’s a commitment. On Pink Shirt Day, we stand against bullying in all its forms and stand up for kindness, respect, and courage. As a First Nations leader, I carry the teachings of our ancestors – that every person has a spirit, a purpose, and inherent dignity. Bullying goes against who we are as Indigenous people. Our cultures teach us to lift one another up, to protect the vulnerable, and to move as a community. The legacy of colonialism and residential schools has already caused deep harm in our Nations. We know the impacts of shame, exclusion, and lateral violence. That is why today – and every day – we choose a different path. We choose compassion. We choose unity. We choose to raise strong young people who are proud of who they are. Wearing pink is a reminder that leadership is not only about policy – it is about example. It is about creating safe spaces in our schools, our workplaces, and our communities where every child and every person feels seen, valued, and respected. Let us continue to build communities rooted in kindness, culture, and accountability. Today we wear pink – and every day we stand for our people.” (Cardinal, K. 2026, February 25. “On Pink Shirt Day, we stand against bullying in all its forms and stand up for kindness, respect, and courage.” Facebook.)

COMMUNITY

Community is at the heart of everything we do. My role is to listen, support, and advocate for the needs of our members. This means being present, accessible, and responsive. It is important that our people feel connected to leadership and confident that their voices are being heard and respected in decision-making processes.

(Oct 1st, 2025)
National
Indigenous
Cultural Expo



Supporting our membership means creating opportunities for our people to be present, represented, and connected. As Chief and Council, we have supported initiatives such as the Treaties 1-11 Gathering, the National Gathering of Elders, and the Knowing Our Spirits Conference, along with sponsorships for Elders, youth, and families. These opportunities are important in strengthening identity, sharing knowledge, and ensuring our people are part of larger conversations that impact our Nations. Investing in our members in this way is an investment in the strength, voice, and future of Saddle Lake.



(Oct 10th, 2025)

**SOBEYS DONATES \$1000 TO OUR
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT TO FEED OUR
VULNERABLE**

A Few Initiatives We Proudly Supported:

- Community Hampers
- Community Walks
- Increasing Elders Christmas Monies
- Remembrance Day Ceremony
- Thanksgiving Gift Cards
- Youth Christmas Toy Drive



All of which would not of been possible without the amazing contributions of our Directors, Managers, and Band Employees!

WE THANK YOU AND RECOGNIZE YOUR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS



(April 2nd, 2026)

PORTAGE COLLEGE CAMPUS GRAND OPENING!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION:

Creating space for all members to feel seen, supported, and included remains a priority. While there are ongoing limitations within Indigenous Services Canada funding structures, we recognize the importance of ensuring off-reserve members are not left out of opportunities, programs, and engagement. Inclusion also means doing the internal work—continuing to create space for education and dialogue around issues such as disabilities, consent culture, and lateral violence. By supporting workshops and awareness initiatives, we are working toward a stronger, more respectful community where all members feel valued and safe.

YOUTH/ RECREATION

Our youth are the future leaders of our Nation, and investing in them is one of our greatest responsibilities. Supporting youth and recreation means creating spaces where young people can grow, stay active, and feel a strong sense of identity and belonging. I am committed to encouraging opportunities that empower our youth, nurture their potential, and keep them connected to who they are as nehiyawak.



(August 3rd, 2025)

FIRST NATIONS VOYAGERS CANADA

AAA First Nations youth set out to play hockey internationally. Saddle Lake Cree Nation had one youth playing:
Karter Mills

Together as a leadership we supported families in Alberta Indigenous Games (AIG), Provincial Hockey, and Treaty Hockey. We've also done personal sponsorships for other sports and events like ceremony and graduations.

However, we also must expand our resources to reach kids who aren't involved in athletics. Young people need a voice and they need an outlet to express themselves.



(May 27th, 2026)

ONCHAMINAHOS SCHOOL/ SLECC CONCERT

Recommendation:

- Create a SLCN Youth Council
- Support Programming in the Arts

NEXT STEPS

As we move forward, my approach will remain focused on strengthening our Nation's position—politically, economically, and socially—while ensuring our decisions are guided by the long-term interests of our membership.

A key priority will be advancing inclusive governance. While federal funding frameworks through Indigenous Services Canada continue to impose limitations, I will continue to advocate for solutions that recognize and support our full membership, including those living off reserve. This requires both strategic negotiation and internal alignment to ensure no member is left behind in our planning and delivery.

I will also continue to push for stronger accountability and transparency across all levels of governance. This includes clearer communication with membership, more accessible reporting, and ensuring that leadership decisions are consistently aligned with the priorities of our people.

Within my portfolios, the focus will be on measurable outcomes. In child and family services, this means supporting systems that keep our children connected to culture and community. In economic development, it means protecting and growing our Nation's assets in a way that creates long-term stability and opportunity. In governance and external relations, it means ensuring Saddle Lake Cree Nation maintains a strong, respected presence in regional and institutional decision-making spaces.

Equally important is investing in the next generation of leadership. Creating space for youth voices, mentorship, and meaningful participation will be critical to sustaining our Nation's strength into the future.

The work ahead requires unity, discipline, and a clear vision. I remain committed to working collaboratively with Chief and Council, administration, and our membership to move our Nation forward in a way that is strategic, inclusive, and grounded in who we are as nehiyawak.

Hiy hiy,

Kenton Cardinal, Onikânîw (Leader)
Saddle Lake Cree Nation #125
Kenton.cardinal@saddlelake.ca
(Cell): 780-547-6366

