

A Message from the Chair: Strengthening Relationships and Creating Opportunities

Wachay OFNEDA Community,

The past month has been busy with networking, learning, and collaboration opportunities that continue to strengthen First Nation economic development across Ontario.

Our Bi-Weekly Economic Development Officer and Entrepreneur Virtual Networking Sessions continue to provide an important platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing. These sessions bring together Economic Development Officers and business owners from First Nations communities to discuss emerging opportunities, address common challenges, exchange best practices, and build stronger relationships across our growing network.

As part of our Entrepreneurship Unlocked series, OFNEDA recently hosted Procurement: How to Sell to Government and Corporate Clients, facilitated by Sarah Hopkins. The session provided valuable information on procurement processes, requests for proposals, Indigenous procurement initiatives, and supplier diversity programs, helping First Nation businesses identify new opportunities for growth.

OFNEDA was also pleased to host Building Stronger Communities Through Strategic Planning, presented by the Rural Policy and Economic Development Branch of the Ministry of Rural Affairs, focusing on strategic planning and community development.

Throughout the month, the OFNEDA team attended several important gatherings and events, including the 8th Annual ISC Ontario Joint Gathering, hosted by the Southern First Nations Secretariat. The gathering focused on the social determinants of health and provided opportunities for meaningful discussions on community well-being and economic prosperity.

We also had the opportunity to engage with Economic Development Officers, entrepreneurs, and community representatives during the Manitoulin Island Regional Engagement Forum. These conversations provided valuable insight into local priorities, emerging economic

OFNEDA was also pleased to support students attending the Technician Aboriginal Economic Developer (TAED) program on Manitoulin Island, helping build capacity and strengthen the next generation of First Nations economic development professionals.

In addition, OFNEDA attended the Cando Conference and the Economic Developers Council of Ontario Regional Meeting in Clearwater, where we connected with economic development professionals from across the country, exchanged ideas, and explored new opportunities for partnership and growth.

As we move forward, I am encouraged by the dedication, leadership, and vision demonstrated by our members and partners. Together, we are creating opportunities, strengthening communities, supporting entrepreneurs, and advancing First Nation economic development throughout Ontario.

Thank you for your continued support, participation, and commitment to this important work.

Meegwetch,



Adam Pawis
Chair, OFNEDA

New Member Benefit: Exclusive CAA Discounts for OFNEDA Members

Updated CAA Membership Rates Effective November 1

OFNEDA members can save on CAA memberships through exclusive preferred rates. New members can visit their regional CAA website and mention 'OFNEDA' when signing up to receive the discounted rate. Existing CAA members can call 1-800-341-2226 and mention OFNEDA to have the preferred pricing applied to their membership.

Northern Ontario members: **join.caaneo.ca**
Southern Ontario members: **www.caasco.com**
Click **here** to download Employee Membership Program Application Form for **South Central Ontario**

Download the CAA North & East Ontario Flyer

Download the CAA South Central Ontario Flyer

EDOs/Entrepreneurs Community Connections

Wed, Nov 4 and Nov 18, 2026 | 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

OFNEDA invites Economic Development Officers and First Nations entrepreneurs to connect, share ideas, and discuss opportunities in a casual virtual setting. Join us to build relationships, exchange insights, and strengthen the network supporting First Nations economic development across Ontario.

RESERVE SPOT FOR NOV 4

RESERVE SPOT FOR NOV 18

Questions or Tech Issues? Reach Out Anytime

If you have any trouble logging in, please reach out to our Training Coordinator, **Debbie Donivan**, at **trainingcoordinator@ofneda.ca** or call **519.200.1033** for assistance. We look forward to insightful conversations and building lasting connections!

Meegwetch for Attending the Manitoulin Island Regional Engagement Forum!
Here Are Some Highlights from Our Regional Engagement Forum



UPCOMING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM

Join OFNEDA's Regional Meeting to discuss community priorities, challenges, and opportunities while connecting with OFNEDA staff and learning about available programs and resources. Open to EDOs, First Nations entrepreneurs, Chief and Council members, and designated community representatives.
Breakfast, snacks, and lunch are included.

*IMPORTANT: Register for the forum closest to your Chapter. Travel support is available only for eligible First Nation Economic Development Officers attending their nearest location (Chapter Map: **www.ofneda.ca/about/chapters**).*
Please Note: Entrepreneurs and all other attendees are responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses



Regional Engagement Forum – Winnipeg

9:00 AM - 5:30 PM ET | 8:00 AM -4:30 PM CST

Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre

1808 Wellington Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3H 0G3, CA

Reservationsrectly at 204-786-4801 or toll-free (877) 842-4667.

Visit hotel website- [The Victoria Inn, Winnipeg's Premier Hotel accommodations]

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

VIRTUAL COFFEE MEET-UPS

Chiefs of Ontario's First Nation Business Directory

Nov 10, 2026, 1 PM - 2 PM ET

REGISTER NOW



Presented by:
Nima Nikouie,
Project Manager,
Chiefs of Ontario

Join us to learn about the Chiefs of Ontario First Nations Business Directory and how it helps increase visibility, procurement opportunities, and business growth for First Nations businesses across Ontario. Discover how entrepreneurs, EDOs, and communities can leverage this new tool to support economic development and networking opportunities.

FedNor Funding for First Nations Communities

Nov 24, 2026, 1 PM - 2 PM ET

REGISTER NOW

Join us for a discussion on FedNor funding opportunities available to support First Nations



Presented by:
Macey Smith-Arenovich ,
Program Delivery Officer,
FedNor

about current programs and the Indigenous Pathfinder Service, which helps connect communities and entrepreneurs with funding, resources, and industry expertise.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative (RAII) Technical Briefing Webinar
November 12 at 2:00 p.m.
Learn how the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative (RAII) can help organizations adopt and scale AI solutions. Join FedDev Ontario and EDCO on November 12 for a webinar covering funding opportunities, eligibility requirements, and application timelines.

REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

Introduction to Federal Procurement: The Basics of Selling to the Government of Canada
Tuesday, November 3, 2026 | 1 pm - 2 pm EDT
Interested in selling to the Government of Canada? Join Procurement Assistance Canada to learn how federal procurement works, where to find opportunities, and how to position your business for government contracts.

REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

Indigenous Pathfinder Service
Are you involved in the agriculture or agri-food sector?
The Indigenous Pathfinder Service is a free concierge program that helps First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, businesses, and organizations connect with funding opportunities, federal programs, and expert resources to support agricultural and agri-food initiatives.

LEARN MORE

EVENTS

Chiefs of Ontario Fall Chiefs Assembly (ONLINE)

emerging issues, and opportunities affecting First Nations across Ontario.

REGISTER NOW

MineConnect Roadshow: Thunder Bay 2026

November 4, 2026 | Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: Da Vinci Centre, 340 Waterloo St. S., Thunder Bay

Join MineConnect in Thunder Bay on November 4 for an evening of networking, industry insights, and business development opportunities with Ontario's mining service and supply sector. Connect with industry leaders, explore new opportunities, and build valuable partnerships within the mining industry.

REGISTER TO ATTEND

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS SERIES

We are excited to launch a new 10-part learning series for entrepreneurs, led by Sarah Hopkins, Matriarch and Founder of Three Sisters Consulting. Each session offers practical training to support our community in starting, building, or growing a business.



Business Plan Development: Building the Roadmap for Your Business

Monday, Nov 30, 2026 | 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM ET

Learn how to create a practical business plan that serves as a roadmap for your success. This session will cover key business planning components, financial projections, market analysis, and funding applications, while providing participants with a template to support future business growth.

REGISTER NOW

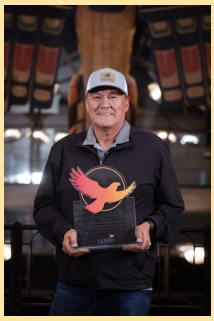
Strategic Planning & SMART Goals

Monday, Jan 25, 2027 | 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM ET

Learn how to assess your business, set a clear vision, and create SMART goals that support long-term success. This session will provide practical tools to build a strategic action plan rooted in your business goals and values.

Congratulations to the 2026 Cando Award Winners





Left to right: Krista Stoesz, Manager of Sc.wénwen Economic Development Corporation and recipient of the 2026 Economic Developer of the Year Award; representatives of the Shackan Indian Band, recipient of the 2026 Community Economic Development of the Year Award; and Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation (CCR) Ltd. of British Columbia, recipient of the 2026 Private Sector Business of the Year Award.

OFNEDA congratulates Krista Stoesz, Shackan Indian Band, and Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation (CCR) Ltd. on receiving Cando's 2026 Economic Development Awards. These honours recognize exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to advancing Indigenous economic development and creating lasting opportunities for Indigenous communities across Canada.

READ MORE



If you would like to book an appointment with **Ryan Moore,** our Director of Indigenous Procurement & Entrepreneurship Development, please click the link below. Whether you have questions about CanadaBuys, Ontario Tenders, funding opportunities, business development, or any challenges you may be facing, Ryan is here to help.

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT WITH RYAN

Have you had a chance to review a draft copy of our toolkits?
We would love to hear your feedback.
You can also contact Ryan directly at **ipeddirector@ofneda.ca.**

Tips & Tricks

November is Financial Literacy Month in Canada, making it a great time to take a closer look at your cash flow and financial plans. Whether you are managing project funding for your community or operating a business, strong financial management is key to long-term success. Consider scheduling a check-in with

potential issues are addressed early.

💡 **Bonus Tip:** Be sure to revisit our past webinar on **Budgeting and Financial Management**, available through your account dashboard, for practical tools and strategies to support your financial goals.

Click the links to learn more about **CanadaBuys** and **Ontario Tenders** opportunities.

Grant Opportunities

Rural Ontario Development Grant
Next opening Jan 18 – Feb 25
https://www.ontario.ca/page/rural-ontario-development-program

FedNor Build Communities Strong – Local Impact Stream fund
Up to $1million and Indigenous may be 100% non-repayable
https://fednor.canada.ca/en/our-programs/build-communities-strong-fund-local-impact-stream-northern-ontario

Looking to hire in youth next summer?
Check out the Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy
https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2026/10/backgrounder-canada-summer-jobs-2027.html

Have you checked out the Chiefs of Ontario's Grants Tracker?
It's recently been updated for an even better interface!

Indigenous Defence Supply Chain Program 2027 – Applications Open
Cando and NACCA are inviting Indigenous businesses, communities, and organizations to apply for the **Indigenous Defence Supply Chain Program 2027**. Participants will receive training, mentorship, supply chain readiness assessments, and networking opportunities to help access Canada's growing defence and security sector, including support related to **CANSEC 2027**, Canada's largest defence and security trade show.
*Applications close **December 15, 2027**.*

Please submit your application using the following link:
Click here- **Indigenous Defence Supply Chain Program Application**

DOWNLOAD THE FLYER FOR MORE INFO

FNEAC 2026 Community Project Finalist Spotlight Dunns Valley Solar Project



Source: Construction of a solar farm, similar to the one pictured, is slated for 2028 east of Sault Ste. Marie in Dunns Valley. (Neoen website)

The **Dunns Valley Solar Project** is a 200 MW solar development partnership between **Garden River First Nation** and **Neoen**. Once operational, it is expected to be Ontario's largest solar farm, powering approximately 40,000 homes and creating up to 300 construction jobs while supporting Indigenous ownership and long-term economic benefits.

Project Lead:
Evan Belleau, Supervisor of Capacity Development
Garden River First Nation | ebelleau@gardenriver.org

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT



Make the Most of Your OFNEDA Membership

Access funding opportunities, grants, exclusive resources, and recordings of past webinars, training sessions, and Coffee Meet-Ups through the OFNEDA Member Portal. Log in with your member email to take advantage of these valuable member benefits.

ACCESS FUNDING RESOURCES AND TRAINING ARCHIVES



May your Halloween be filled with memorable moments, plenty of treats, and time spent with family and friends. Happy Halloween! 🎃 ✨

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OFNEDA | ONTARIO FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

For OFNEDA membership support please contact membersupport@ofneda.ca

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