

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> 2015**

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **AFOA CANADA CELEBRATES ITS 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL CONFERENCE BY INVITING CHIEF JIM BOUCHER, CANADIAN BUSINESS JOURNALIST BRUCE SELLERY AND CANADA'S FINANCIAL LITERACY LEADER JANE ROONEY TO ADDRESS OVER 900 ABORIGINAL LEADERS IN WINNIPEG, MB FEBRUARY 17-19, 2015**

On February 17 - 19, 2015, AFOA Canada (formerly the Aboriginal Financial Officer Association of Canada) is hosting its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Conference, assembling over 900 of Canada's most prominent Aboriginal business and elected leaders at the RBC Convention Centre Winnipeg to discuss "*Business Development - Capitalizing on Opportunities that Lead to Self-reliance and Economic Prosperity.*" The Canadian Aboriginal Community has an opportunity to capitalize on significant business opportunities that will benefit our communities. This conference will focus on how these communities have been successful in developing business opportunities and will provide workshops on key areas that need to be considered as Aboriginal business leaders continue their journey toward economic prosperity and self-reliance.

AFOA Canada will be hosting two main conference plenaries:

**Wednesday Plenary – Part 1: Capitalizing on Opportunities that Lead Toward Economic Prosperity and Self-Reliance.** Guest Speaker Chief Jim Boucher, Chief of Fort McKay First Nation, AB

#### **Part 2 - Panel Discussion – How Economic Development Corporations Contribute Toward a Community Vision**

TD Economics estimate that the combined income of Aboriginal household, business and government sectors could be \$32 Billion by 2016. This significant growth is in part due to the Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) that First Nations governments and Aboriginal communities continue to develop. What is the role of EDCs and how should they be managed to ensure they fulfill the needs that the community wants? This plenary will present perspectives and lessons learned on: the role of EDCs; how they can be managed to address community needs and wants; their contribution to the goal of economic prosperity and self-reliance; and what their future growth potential could look like.

#### **Panelists:**

Chief Jim Boucher, Fort McKay First Nation, AB

Chief Francine Meeches, Swan Lake First Nation, MB

Dawn Madahbee, General Manager, Waubetek Business Development Corporation & Board of Director, National Aboriginal Economic Development Board

Jean Paul (JP) Gladu, President and CEO, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business & Conference Committee Member

Keith Martell, CAFM, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, First Nations Bank of Canada,

#### **Event details are as follows:**

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2015

Time: 8:30am to 10:30am

Location: Meeting Room 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg

**Thursday Plenary: Part 1 - Panel Discussion: Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in the Marketplace**

In 2006 there were more than 37,000 Aboriginal people in Canada who identified as having their own businesses. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of Aboriginal business owners increased by 38 percent and the growth rate of Aboriginal entrepreneurs was five times that of the self-employed Canadians overall. The panelists will discuss the importance of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the economy and the opportunities and challenges they face in the marketplace and in the community. Panelists will also share their perspectives about financial literacy and its role in their success.

Panelists:

Sharon Bruyere, Franchisee - Tim Hortons Sagkeeng First Nation, MB

Jean Paul Gladu, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and Conference Committee Member

Brenda LaRose, Managing Partner, Higgins International Inc

Chief Dennis Meeches, Long Plain First Nation, MB

Lisa Meeches, President, Eagle Vision Inc.

**Part 2 – A Conversation on the Importance of Financial Literacy**

Improving financial literacy of individuals is a growing concern around the world. Bruce Sellery discusses why smart people do dumb things with their money – and what you can do about it.

Moderator: Monique Bateman, Special Advisor on Aboriginal Relations, TD Canada Group

Speaker: Bruce Sellery, Canadian Business Journalist, Best Selling Author and Past Television News Anchor

**Event details are as follows:**

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2015

Time: 8:30am to 10:00am

Location: Meeting Room 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg

A media release with further details on the National Conference will be available at the event.

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For further information and interview requests, please contact:

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