

AGA Year in Review Report April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

Name of PCMNO Councilor	Region	Date
Mitch Case	4 - Sault Ste Marie, Superior East – Huron North Shore	Oct 26 2020

Introductory Message about the Work within the Region

I am honoured to have been asked by the elders in our community to put my name forward in the most recent election. My family's roots in this region stretch back beyond the formation of our nation as a distinct people, and after all these generations I am proud to be just the next to carry on the tradition of involvement in our community.

I tip my hat to my immediate predecessor, Ernie Gatien for his 8 years of service and thank all those who served our region before me. Our region has several challenges before us, but they present to us some significant opportunities if we only have the vision, passion and determination to relentlessly pursue justice for our communities and to achieve that long desired ability to govern ourselves free from the interference of others!

When the troops arrived in Sault Ste Marie in the fall of 1849, it began the process of silencing our community. The following year, the treaty commissioner formalized that silencing in his refusal to allow our ancestors to join the treaty negotiations. The ultimate insult came when the treaty commissioner's promise was not fulfilled and we were given the "chance" to buy our own lands from the government who now claimed ownership of them. From this point, our long century of suffering began, losing our lands in the Sault – being displaced to the margins of the city, welcomed as refugees on the reserves by our Anishinaabe allies, children being taken to residential school and the total loss of our voice as a community, leaving us unable to prevent the burning of our village at Agawa Bay in 1967.

The resurgence of our community began in the 1960's and came to a climax when Steve, Roddy and the whole Metis Nation took on the oppression of the colonial system. Today we have our rights to harvest secured, our right to self-government guaranteed and it is for us to make of it what we will. The road ahead of us is long and not without hurdles, but I am confident that if we all pull together, we can do great things for our communities. It will be a long journey, but I am certain we will reach our destination.

Highlight of Key Achievements

1850 Robinson Treaty Promise Campaign – On October 21st, Region 4 took time to acknowledge the 170th anniversary of the promises to protect the historic Sault Ste Marie river lots. The day began with the leadership gathering at sunrise to pay tribute to our ancestors who worked so hard to protect those lands. This was followed by the issuing of a press release, and at noon the church bells in the Sault Ste Marie Metis Centre rang as a symbol of the voice of this community calling for justice. We also, with the help of the MNO put together an educational video which explains the history of the claims in the community. Later this year we will launch an educational "meme" campaign geared towards educating Metis young people through social media about the historic claims. It is our hope to later follow this up with a formal letter to the Prime Minister calling for a claims process to be established for our community, and others with similar outstanding claims.

Region 4 COVID Response – Community Hunt – As a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Region 4 applied to the Algoma Community Foundation for the Emergency Community Support Fund. Our application focused on centering Metis culture as the best way to help our citizens through the pandemic. Our application was successful and as of September we began rolling out our program. This includes our community harvest activities which will put away moose, deer, fish and other natural foods to be distributed to our citizens later this fall. There will also be work undertaken to provide kits to provide cultural experiences to youth and elders while maintaining social distancing.

Sault Ste Marie Metis Center – the Historic Sault Ste Marie Metis Council has made investments into the new Metis Centre, the former St John's Church which will see renovations take place in the coming months. This will mean the new Metis Centre will open

its doors to the community in the new year. As part of the new Sault Metis Centre, there will be a first of its kind in Ontario, Metis cultural centre where we can tell the story of our community – showcase our artists and house our most precious artifacts.

Agawa Bay – we have begun the work of fighting for justice for our families affected by the burning of the Agawa Bay village. We have begun interviews with the elders who remember the village and the way the government’s agents torched our homes and left nothing standing. As Regional Councilor I am committed to pursuing justice for our community.

Highlight of Meetings / Conferences

Regional Consultation Committee – the important work of the RCC has continued uninterrupted, working to protect the environment in our region and to ensure our interests are protected when those who seek to exploit our resources come knocking.

Projects Undertaken /Partnerships / Other Committee Participation

Metis Week – in partnership with the Urban Indigenous Early On Centre, we will host “Metis Week” starting Monday, Nov 16th. This will create a week’s worth of workshops and online content for the children served and families served by the EarlyON Centre.

Regional Cultural Strategy – we are undertaking to develop a survey to be sent out to all citizens in the region to get feedback on the development of a regional cultural strategy.

Regional Communications Strategy – work is being done to establish a regional communication’s strategy to improve the lines of communication between the elected leadership and the citizens of the region.

Cultural Competency Training – we are working to create a Metis 101/Cultural Competency training which we can deliver to organizations and institutions serving our communities.

Other Comments

- **Preparing multiple funding applications to support new projects in the region including SSM Heritage Centre.**
- **Working to develop of regional fundraising strategy**
- **Harvesting mobility and the Historic Sault Ste Marie Harvesting Territory northern boundary issue are of primary concern.**