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March 2020 Newsletter

1. The Coronavirus Pandemic

Most of the news we are reporting this month is affected by the spread of the Coronavirus within B.C. which most understandably has led to the trimming of operations in all of our member Bands' offices.

First and foremost, we want to extend our best wishes to the thousands of Band members, whether they reside on the reserves of our member Bands or elsewhere, hoping and praying for their health and safety during these challenging times.

2. Our Fundraising Project

Our President Kerry Chelsea reports that the Esk'etemc community meeting held on February 25th, was very well attended, and that the presentation he and Ashley George made was warmly received. Chief Fred Robbins had intended to bring our funding request to the next scheduled Band Council meeting on March 24th, but the COVID-19 crisis resulted in its cancellation. As with so many other activities in our lives, that meeting and its consideration of our request will await better times.

3. Exhibit Design Development

We don't expect to learn the outcome of our funding application to the Investment Readiness Program until early May by which time we can only pray that the coronavirus pandemic has subsided to the point that it will be safe for David Jensen and his team to proceed with its work at Canim Lake. If the funding is forthcoming, it seems reasonable to assume that it will be held available for us until it is safe to proceed.

We have also applied to the McConnell Foundation for funding that would not become available until the Fall of this year, but which would enable us to engage David Jensen to continue with his work at Stswecem's Xgat'tem and – most hopefully – at Esk'et. We don't anticipate learning the outcome of that application for several weeks.



4. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

We have previously reported on the warm and encouraging response we have received from Minister Lisa Beare and her senior officials. During our recent telephone conference with the Minister, she offered the ongoing support of her officials with respect to our efforts to identify funding sources for our ongoing activities, and earlier in March we were approached by her office and put in contact with the Executive Director of the Arts and Culture Branch of her Ministry. Unfortunately, a telephone call scheduled for March 23rd fell casualty to the virus pandemic and will be rescheduled once the situation improves.

5. NStQ Leadership Council and Chief Janice George

Before we knew whether or not the April Leadership Council meeting would proceed, we contacted Chief Janice and invited her to postpone her trip to Williams Lake to address our Chiefs and Band Councillors in the event she and her colleagues at the B.C. Museums Association felt it was prudent to do so. They did decide to accept that invitation, and we will look forward in due course to working with Chief Janice and Hank Adam, Treaty Manager at the Tribal Council, to reschedule her visit. Hank had been most helpful with the arrangements, and we are most grateful to him.

6. Cariboo Regional District Board Presentation

The last of our plans to fall casualty to the virus, is the invitation we had earlier received from the CRD to provide a status report to the Board members on our project. We had been offered several dates ranging from late February to May, and had opted for one of the two May meetings. For many reasons we have asked the CRD to allow us to forego that great opportunity at this time in the hope that once life returns to normal, we may be permitted to reschedule. The CRD at both Board and staff levels have been true supporters and champions of our project since its very inception, and we prize the opportunity to make this presentation at a later date.



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Page 3 of 3

7. A Final Word to All Our Readers

These final words are to reiterate the good wishes we extended in our opening paragraph in the hope that all our readers and their loved ones will survive this pandemic in good health and good spirits as we all strive to look out for our families, friends, neighbours and strangers in these challenging times.



Notes to the Reader

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2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.