



Council of Yukon First Nations

Champagne & Aishihik First Nations **Cultural Orientation** **and Protocols Toolkit**



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CHAMPAGNE & AISHIHIK FIRST NATIONS (CAFN) SPECIFIC CULTURAL ORIENTATION AND PROTOCOLS

1.0 History

The ancestors of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations people have lived in the region roughly centred in Haines Junction for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence found at the present day community of Canyon indicates that the area was used by people of the Little Arm Culture (8,000 to 2,500 BC).

As the Champagne and Aishihik name indicates, the CAFN is composed of two separate, though closely related, Southern Tutchone nations that were initially amalgamated for the administrative convenience of the federal Department of Indian Affairs. The Champagne First Nation includes descendents of the Hutshi, Champagne (Shadhala), Klukshu, Neskatahin, and Dalton Post (Sha'washe) people. The Champagne culture has long been heavily influenced by close association, trade, and intermarriage, with the coastal Tlingits. The Aishihik First Nation, smaller than the Champagne, was traditionally based around Aishihik Lake, both the north end where the village site is located and around Otter Falls. The traditional territory of the CAFN covers approximately 41,000 sq. km. The St. Elias Mountains mark the south and west boundary, to the north it reaches the headwaters of the Nisling River and to the Teslin River and Big Salmon range to the east.

Over the thousands of years that the CAFN people have lived in the region they have had to adapt to many changes and at times had to survive disasters. A relatively recent example is the Lowell Glacier surging across the Alsek River near Goatherd Mountain around 1725. The ice dam created an enormous lake, submerging much of the valley, including Haines Junction. In 1850 the ice dam broke and the approximately 40 cubic kilometres of water drained in just two days, destroying everything in the flood path.

However, it was the coming of the Europeans to the region that has tested the resilience of the CAFN the most as the pace of cultural and economic change, along with the introduction of new diseases that killed many Southern Tutchone people became overwhelming.

The Haines Highway and parts of the Alaska Highway follow trading routes that were originally travelled by Tlingit and Southern Tutchone peoples. The first European trader to settle in the area was Jack Dalton. He established the first trading post in 1894 at Sha'washe on the Tatshenshini River and then operated the Dalton Trail along the traditional trading route inland during the gold rush a few years later. Other trading posts followed, including one at Champagne in 1902.

When the Canadian government established the boundary between British Columbia and the Yukon, Southern Tutchone families from Sha'washe and Neskatahin were

forbidden to hunt in their traditional territory on the B.C. side. This pretty much forced these families to move north.

The small gold rush to the Kluane region in the early 1900s brought more outsiders and the trail from Mendenhall Landing became a wagon road. This was also the beginning of the gradual shift from traditional fishing and hunting camps and villages to more permanent communities.

The pace of change accelerated again with the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. The community of Haines Junction had its beginnings as a highway construction camp built at the junction of the Alaska Highway and Haines Road. Haines Junction is not a traditional CAFN settlement but was located on well used travel routes. The original name for the area was Dakwakada, meaning high cache, which indicates that the area was an important hunting and fishing region. The community only gradually became a place where CAFN people permanently settled in the 1940s and 1950s after Haines Junction began to grow as a regional centre. The number of First Nation residents increased sharply beginning in the 1960s when the federal government relocated families from Champagne and Aishihik to the community.

The Southern Tutchone people attended residential school like other First Nations across the country. Before children were taken away from the security of family and community, the people lived life in harmony with the land. Children were happy and were an important part of the community. All this changed. The goal of these schools was to assimilate the people into another culture that did not reflect the traditional ways of the Southern Tutchone. The children were traumatized by their experiences in residential school. Some lived through unspeakable physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Families were devastated when the children were taken from them. A huge gap was left behind as traditional family roles and responsibilities were disrupted. Today, the people are slowly but steadily recovering from these experiences and moving toward to a brighter future under self-government.

2.0 Current Status in Land Claims, Self Government or Other

The land claim and self government agreements were signed on May 29, 1993 and CAFN became a self governing nation on February 14, 1995. The implementation of the agreements continues to be a major priority for the Champagne & Aishihik government and requires ongoing negotiations with the Yukon and Government of Canada. The agreements can be viewed at www.cafn.ca

CAFN Governance and Structure

The First Nation is governed by a Chief and Council whose responsibilities and authorities flow through a constitution, and who report on an annual basis to the General Assembly. Chief and Council is made up of 1 chief, 4 councilors, 1 Elder councilor and 1 youth councilor. These positions are elected for four year terms.

The Southern Tutchone Tribal Council was formed between the three Southern Tutchone Nations in order to work together on common issues. The two other nations are Ta'an Kwach'an Council and Kluane First Nation.

Champagne & Aishihik First Nations Government includes the following departments:

- Health & Social
- Secretariat (Economic Development, Human Resources, Negotiations & Implementation, Community Justice, Admin. Appeals Tribunal)
- Finance/Administration
- Housing/Municipal
- Heritage, Lands, Resources
- Education

3.0 *Communications and Relationships*

When developing relationships with First Nation members plan to get to know them a bit before discussing business. Rushing is seen as being disrespectful and pushy – when meeting take the time to have “tea” first. Remember you are dealing with a culture, not a business and issues concerning members usually have far reaching affect.

The “Moccasin Telegraph” still exists and do not mistake it for gossip. Be aware that what you say will likely get around the community.

Physical contact within the community is very common and you will see “lots of hugging”. Once you become familiar, you can expect to be hugged as well. When this starts to happen you will likely begin to feel quite comfortable in the community. If you are teased by members, do not take it the wrong way. It's a form of acceptance and you can “tease” back if that suits you, but do it in a respectful way.

In a small community, relationships are close and everyone knows one another. It means the community is able to come together in times of need and work toward the common good. It also can mean personal disagreements or conflicts are felt on many levels in the community. To prevent misunderstandings, contact the Health and Social department with contentious issues. Being aware of family networks and dynamics is important.

4.0 *Specific Cultural Values and Beliefs*

Cultural practices continue to be fundamental to the Champagne & Aishihik people. Hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering berries and plants are important cultural activities. They provide not only healthy food and medicines but just as importantly they connect the people to the land and to their history. Sharing is an important dimension of First Nations harvesting; food is provided not only for one's immediate and extended family, but also for Elders of the community.

CAFN is traditionally matriarchical which means the heads of the community were women/mothers and matrilineal meaning that family history was traced through the female line. The households are headed by both men and women in current day reality.

5.0 Birth and Death

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations celebrate a birth by giving a name to the child at a Memorial Potlatch. The mother asks permission of the family hosting the Potlatch and discusses the name giving with grandmothers on the maternal side of the family. CAFN produced a Funeral and Memorial Potlatch booklet in 2007 that discusses funeral/memorial potlatches and the many protocols surrounding those events. The booklet is included in the resource section of the Toolkit.

Death is a sacred time in the community. The CAFN offices close to show respect to the family.

6.0 Potlatch Traditions

A traditional potlatch is a community gathering to recognize an important point in a person's life, such as births and deaths. Other potlatches were held to commemorate special people (a son could honour his living mother through a potlatch). Today, potlatches are most commonly held for funerals and memorials. Potlatches remain an important custom: a way for community members to support one another through a difficult process of putting a loved one to rest.

Children and pregnant women are not allowed to participate in the funeral potlatch until the body is buried in the cemetery. It is believed the spirit of the loved one who just passed away can come and disrupt the life of an unborn child or the spirit of children. The memorial potlatch, which is held a minimum of one year after the loved one is buried, is a more festive occasion. You may notice some Champagne and Aishihik First Nations members, because they had intermarried into the Tlingit nation, will observe some of the Tlingit cultural protocols which are more complex.

The Memorial Potlatch is celebrated one year after the funeral potlatch and is a time of gift-giving to the opposite Clan members. The traditional belief is that their loved ones spirit finally leaves earth. It can be a more joyous occasion with dancing and drumming and the giving of gifts. The rituals and traditions mentioned in the Funeral Potlatch section of the booklet can also be applied to the memorial potlatch, if not specifically stated otherwise.

When people are asked to work at a potlatch they do it without question as it is considered a high honour. This cultural responsibility needs to be supported by supervisors and managers as well as supported by personnel policy.

7.0 Marriage

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations had many protocols around marriages. Some are as follows:

- Marriages are not encouraged in the same Clan; blessings are given for opposite moiety or clans
- The future husband has to ask the father of the bride or the eldest family member for the bride's hand in marriage
- Usually the future husband would have to prove himself by being a good provider to the bride and her family and that might include hunting, fishing or working with the bride's family for a certain amount of time or until the family decides he is worthy of the bride.

8.0 Traditional Laws

There were many traditional laws that were strictly followed for many generations. These laws were modeled by the people and passed down through stories and legends. The laws covered family structure and behaviour, food harvesting and how to show respect to other members of the clan and community.

CAFN has developed laws that govern the First Nation including Fish and Wildlife Act, Financial Administration Act, Government Administration Act, Lands Act and Traditional Activities Protection Act. They can be viewed at www.cafn.ca

9.0 Traditional Health and Healing

Seasonal activities such as food gathering are critical to community members and are key to family wellness. Seasonal activities usually happen in late August and September and include hunting, fishing, berry and medicine gathering. CAFN encourages all members to take part in cultural activities.

10.0 Protocols

10.1 Approaching Elders for advice or teachings

Elders are held with high regard in First Nation communities. They are considered by many as the keeper of traditional knowledge. Never interrupt an Elder while they are speaking. As oral teachers of the culture, they take time to think about what they say before saying it so there are often pauses as they convey their thoughts.

If you are meeting an Elder to ask for advice, it is encouraged to bring a useful gift such as food, tools or in some cases protocols may suggest a gift of tobacco, which is considered a sacred item by some individuals. Another gift may be an offer of your time to complete work the Elder needs done such as wood cutting or baking.

10.2 Accessing and sharing traditional knowledge

First Nations use the term traditional knowledge to describe information passed from generation to generation. This information may be rooted in: storytelling, ceremonies, traditions, ideologies, medicines, dances, arts and crafts or a combination of all these. It is recognized as the foundation or base of all key

information from the past and is blended into the departments within the First Nation.

There are policies to protect this knowledge as it must be treated with the highest respect as this wisdom is sacred. The Heritage department has put in place an application process. Contact the Heritage department for more information.

10.3 Home visiting & invitations

As a resource worker, you need to work with Social & Health staff and have someone be with you when you visit community members, especially with Elders. There may be a language barrier and communicating with them may be difficult. Plan to have "tea" with them as they like to get to know you before discussing business.

Each person reacts differently to people that they do not see on a daily basis. To show respect, especially to the male gender, it is important to explain your plan and process so they are clear of what will happen.

10.4 Speaking /meeting with individuals of the other gender

It is not appropriate to meet and visit with individuals of the other gender alone. Someone from Health & Social will need to be with you when you make home visits, especially if it's your first visit. As comfort levels increase, you will be able to make home visits by yourself but be patient, as this takes time.

10.5 Meetings

The community has regular public meetings on a variety of subjects. Posters are usually put up around the community. When it is posted publicly, anyone can attend, unless it is noted that it is open to the First Nation only.

Prayer is common as a beginning and end of meetings and community gatherings/events. Participate in the prayer as you feel comfortable and if your beliefs require that you not participate, act on your beliefs as quietly and respectfully as possible.

10.6 Expected Behaviour

Resource workers must treat all people with respect and dignity, this includes demonstrating self respect and holding yourself in high regard at all times including after hours - be a positive role model.

The dress code is casual. Do not go to the community in a suit. Suits are seen as being in authority and too business like. First Nation members were forced to live in uniforms in residential schools and they dislike this attire, so dress code is casual at best.

Resource people must be willing to put in the time that is required to gain respect and trust from the people. The advice is to go slow, be patient, be observant and be aware of things happening in the community.

Community members are encouraged to attend public events. This is a way to build positive relationships with staff and community members.

Regalia, drums, feathers and other ceremonial items, especially eagle feathers are considered sacred items. Permission is needed to even touch these items. Never refer to regalia as a costume because they are not. A costume could be interpreted as a Halloween costume and you would be making a grave error to call it such.

11.0 Community People, Health and Social Well-being

11.1 Population and Demographics

The majority of CAFN citizens reside in Haines Junction which has a population of about 800. However, many members live in other smaller communities – Champagne, Takhini River Subdivision, Canyon, Aishihik Village and Klukshu. Many CAFN citizens also live in Whitehorse.

11.2 Education and Income

The St. Elias Community School offers grades K-12 in Haines Junction. The staff includes two native language instructors.

There is a Yukon College Campus in Haines Junction where continuing education programs are offered, with special programs that are developed together with the First Nation. As well, members of the community attend the main Yukon College campus in Whitehorse or other institutions for specialized education.

11.4 Health and Social Strengths

The Champagne & Aishihik people take pride in culture and the strength of family connections, especially when something serious happens in the community. During these times, the community comes together in support and caring.

The leadership and staff are part of the community and strive to work on the goals and priorities voiced by the people. The strength comes from land-based programs and the integration of knowledge of culture and traditional ways.

The self-government agreements have empowered the CAFN to develop programs and services that serve the people in the areas of culture, social and educational pursuits.

CAFN people express their close tie to culture and traditional ways through arts and dance. CAFN is known for its beautiful arts & crafts as well as the Dakwakada Dancers.

11.5 Community Challenges and Issues

Unlike most First Nation communities, the citizenry of CAFN is spread out over six communities. This makes providing programs and services as well as meeting infrastructure needs very challenging.

Funding for long-term programs and capacity is a major challenge. It's very difficult to meet the needs of the community when program funding is inadequate as well as tied to program use that is not necessarily suited to the needs and priorities of CAFN.

A lot of the social issues within the community stem from the devastating inter-generational effects of residential school. There are community members who want help with their problems, but don't seek support from resource people. It takes time to build trust within the community, where social issues stem from grief and loss, especially multiple loss, and intergenerational effects from residential school.

11.6 Community Uniqueness and Spirit

Champagne & Aishihik First Nations traditional territory covers some of the most beautiful landscapes in the Yukon including the St. Elias Mountains - the home of Canada's highest and most massive peaks (Mount Logan & Mount Saint Elias). CAFN is the largest of the Yukon First Nations and the membership is spread out in six well established communities within their Traditional Territory.

11.7 Health and Social Programs Staff

CAFN Main Haines Junction # 867-634-4200

Director	634-4213
Reception/Office Administration	634-4221
Social Programs Manager	634-4238
Case Manager Haines Junction	634-4203
Case Manager – Whitehorse	456-6875
Counsellor	634-4225
Social Support – Whitehorse	456-6890
Health Programs Manager	634-4222
Community Care Coordinator	634-4223
Elder's Program Coordinator	634-4230
Family Health Promotion	634-4223
Health Promotion Facilitator	456-6889
Youth Centre Coordinator	634-2012

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APPENDIX 1: CHAMPAGNE & AISHIHIK FIRST NATIONS AND HAINES JUNCTION COMMUNITY PROFILE



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This community profile is for the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), a Yukon First Nation located in and around Haines Junction with established communities in Champagne, Klukshu, Takhini River, Canyon, and Aishihik Village. The purpose of the community profile is to provide some background information on the community

2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

2.1 *Yukon Information*

Geography

Yukon Territory is in the extreme northwest corner of Canada. It is bordered by the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alaska and the Arctic Ocean. The territory is 483,450 square km (186,661 square miles), about one third the size of Alaska. Landforms in the Yukon are mainly plateaus bordered and crossed by mountains. The highest range is the Elias Mountains in the southwest where the highest peak in Canada, Mount Logan rises 5,951 metres (19,524 feet) above sea level. The Yukon and Peel rivers drain virtually all of the territory and in the far north the tundra stretches 160 km southward from the Arctic Ocean.

Economy and Transportation

There are no major industries within CAFN traditional territory. Although mining has historically been Yukon's chief industry it is not very important to CAFN as their traditional territory is surrounded by parks. Tourism and recreation are important activities that contribute to the local economy.

All CAFN Communities are accessible by road from Whitehorse. Air travel is used to access Whitehorse and flights are also available to Dawson City and Old Crow (the only fly in community). The Alaska Highway and Klondike Highways are heavily used and all communities other than Old Crow are situated along these highways.

Population / Demographics

The population of the Yukon was 28,674 in 2001 (Census 2001) and has risen to 34,157 by June, 2009 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics Monthly Statistical Review August 2009). This is the highest population on record. The overall population increased 2.6% from June 2008 to June 2009. Thirteen of seventeen communities

in the territory showed population increases during the same period. Whitehorse has 71% of the population with 25,636 people with the remaining people distributed throughout 16 other communities. There are slightly fewer women than men – males 17,407 and females 16,750. Persons under the age of 15 years accounted for 16.7% of the population, while 8.2% of the population was aged 65 or over. The 2006 Census recorded 7,580 Yukoners (23%) as being of Aboriginal identity. According to Statistics Canada, 3,665 of that total were aboriginal males and 3,915 females. The percentage of the aboriginal population aged 15 and over was 72.8% and 18.2% under the age of 15.

Health and Social Status

The overall life expectancy has risen from 73.4 years in 1994 to 75.7 years in 2006. Yukon female's life expectancy is 77.7 years and for males, it is 74.0 years. Life expectancy at birth is lowest for Aboriginal males in the Yukon with an average of 8.8 years less life expectancy than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Aboriginal males also had the highest increase in life expectancy of 7.3% or 4.6 years from 1994 to 2006. Aboriginal females had the second highest increase of 4.5% or 3.2 years.

The Canadian Community Health Survey (2006) for Yukon aboriginal people reported that 47.4% of self-rated their health as very good or excellent (2396 responses) and 65.7% self-rated their mental health as very or excellent (3319 responses). 21.5% of people over 18 years reported that they had quite a lot of life stress (978 responses). 69.4% felt a strong sense of belonging to their local community (3509 responses).

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics reported the Yukon labour force at 17,500 in October 2009 and of that 16,400 were employed with an unemployment rate of 6.3%. Federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments employed a total of 7,000. Private Sector employed 7,300 and 2,100 reported as self-employed.

2.2 Location and Infrastructure

Haines Junction is located on the Alaska Highway at kilometre 1632, at the junction of the Haines Highway. It is 158 km from Whitehorse, 255 km from Haines, Alaska and 310 km to the Alaska border at Beaver Creek. It is a community of about 800 people, many of which are First Nations.

Haines Junction is a full service community with K-12 school, health centre, community hall, library, RCMP detachment, post office, bank, gas stations/convenience stores, churches, motels and restaurants, campgrounds, airport (small aircraft). Recreational facilities include arena, curling rink, swimming pool, ski trails, outdoor basketball court and skateboard park.

CAFN opens the Dä Kų Cultural Centre in the spring of 2012. Dä Kų means "Our House" in Southern Tutchone. It is a gathering place that recognizes and celebrates the cultural contributions and way of life of Champagne and Aishihik

people. There will be a cultural and heritage resource centre, assembly hall, classroom space, kitchen, meeting room language lab and workshop as well as display and exhibit space.

Da Ku is also home to the Haines Junction Visitor Reception Centre and to Kluane National Park Visitor Centre. Kluane National Park and Reserve provides guided interpretative hikes, displays, slide presentations, trail information and a wealth of information on the region.

St. Elias Convention Centre - is home to a local history exhibit depicting significant events of the Kluane region. The Grand Hall has a stage, dressing rooms and food service area and there are four meeting rooms in the building.

Other CAFN communities include:

Champagne which is located 67 km south of Haines Junction on the Alaska Highway. It has a community hall, a fire hall and outdoor skating rink and playground.

Canyon is located where the Aishihik River crosses the Alaska Highway, 32 km south of Haines Junction. About 15 families live in the community that has a fire hall and small community hall attached.

Aishihik Village is located, 148 km from Haines Junction, at the north end of Aishihik Lake with very few year-round residents. There are about 20 cabins there and a community hall.

Klukshu is a traditional salmon fishing village for the CAFN located at the source of the Klukshu River where it empties Klukshu Lake. Several families live in the community seasonally. This is an important gathering village for the CAFN especially during salmon harvest season. There is a community hall with a well and generator and a playground. Klukshu is 64 km west of Haines Junction, enroute to Haines Alaska.

Takhini River Subdivision is the newest CAFN community, developed in the early 1990's. There is a small community hall, water treatment facility, and workshop with an outdoor skating rink and playground. As Takhini River Subdivision is only 48 km from Whitehorse, community members utilize Whitehorse services and facilities.

CAFN has an Administration Building in Haines Junction as well as one in Whitehorse. CAFN owns and maintains 96 housing units and 5 community buildings in Haines Junction and the rest of its communities. New homes continue to be added each year and older homes renovated.

2.3 Business and Government Services

Business

Haines Junction has a host of businesses providing services to residents and tourists. They include multiple motels and restaurants, B & B's, bakery, general store, gas stations and auto repair, tour operators, sawmill, and freight company.

First Nation Business

The Champagne & Aishihik First Nations conducts its business through the Dakwakada Development Corporation. Its role is to create employment and business opportunities for members of the First Nation. Key business ventures include Latitude Wireless, Castle Rock Enterprises, Black Street Investments, RAB Energy, Kilrich Industries, and Dakwakada Properties.

CAFN's traditional territory encompasses three parks, Kluane National Park, Tatshenshini-Atsek Park and Kusawa Territorial Park. This unique relationship has given the First Nation an opportunity to identify cultural tourism as a long term goal. Forestry also provides other economic development opportunities.

Yukon Government Services

The Yukon government provides a full range of services to the territory from education, health and social services, environmental services, economic and community development. Please visit www.gov.yk.ca for more information.

Services provided in Haines Junction include:

- YTG Highways
- YTG Property Management
- YTG Health and Social Services
- YTG Aviation and Marine Branch
- YTG Community Nursing
- YTG Energy, Mines and Resources
- YTG Wildland Fire Management
- YTG Department of Transportation (weigh scales)
- YTG Renewable Resources Field Services
- YTG Renewable Resources Parks and Outdoor Recreation Branch
- YTG Territorial Agent
- Yukon Liquor Corporation
- Yukon Housing

Services located in Haines Junction also service the surrounding communities of Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek.

Government of Canada Services

Over time, Federal responsibilities for many services including fisheries, mine safety, intra-territorial roads, hospitals and community health care were transferred to the Yukon government. In October 2001, the Yukon Devolution Agreement was concluded enabling the transfer of the remaining province-like responsibilities for land, water and resource management to the Government of the Yukon on April 1, 2003. As a result, the presence of the Federal Government in the territory has diminished. Services provided in Haines Junction include police, postal services, environmental protection and a large Canadian Heritage presence. Visit www.canada.gc.ca for more information.

Non Government Services

Many Rivers Counselling Services – is a Whitehorse based organization who offer non-emergency counselling for individuals, couples, families and groups in Haines Junction. A counsellor is assigned to Haines Junction and makes regular visits to the community.

Alcoholics Anonymous – meetings are held in the community.

Child Development Centre – is a Whitehorse based organization providing early supports and services to Yukon children from birth to school age, particularly those whose needs are special.

Blood Ties Four Directions – Whitehorse based organization that provides outreach services educating people and supporting those with blood born diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C.

First Nation Services

The self governing First Nation provides a range of services to the community including social, health, heritage, lands and resources and others. The services are funded directly by the federal government or through financial transfer agreements linked to programs and services transfer arrangements that are the method for implementing self government.

The Health and Social Department provides services to CAFN citizens in the areas of employment and social assistance, individual case management, elders fuel benefits, community care, elders programs, recreation, and family health and health promotion. Alcohol and drug programs include education, support, prevention and counselling. Child welfare assistance includes support for families experiencing child apprehensions or the potential threat of child apprehensions in and out of the Yukon. This includes court support, family mediation and intervention. Community wellness and crisis intervention programs include education, support, prevention, referrals and counselling in areas such as family violence, relationship problems, residential school, occupational and other

stress/anxiety, anger management, sexual abuse, mental health, suicide prevention, child protection, and trauma.

Social and Economic Trends and Opportunities

The Southern Tutchone have a long history of living off the land and its resources, with gratitude and respect. The people were governed by traditional laws that ensured their commitment to the health of their people. Through time, social and economic objectives have shifted, but will always focus on the well-being of the people.

As a self governing First Nation, CAFN now has the ability to make laws on behalf of its membership and to deliver programs and services to its citizens as well as develop business opportunities.