



STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS:
Capturing the Spirit of Aboriginal Entrepreneurs, Canada's Fastest Growing Business Sector
A Major Launch and Celebration of Stó:lō Business

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, April 8, 2014, Chilliwack, BC Shirley Hardman Chair of the Board of Stó:lō Community Futures announced today that the launch of a new business initiative, **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** will be on Wednesday April 9th at 4:30pm at the Coqualeetza Longhouse at 7201 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, BC. There are estimated to be over 150 Aboriginal owned business in S'olh Temexw (Our World; Our Land), the Traditional Territory of the Stó:lō that represents over 10,000 Aboriginal people. **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** is a comprehensive business initiative led by Stó:lō Community Futures to provide training and financial literacy skills, access to micro-loans, and access to markets and investors through partnerships with the Bank of Montréal, Vancity, and the private sector. At its core, **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** is a bold recognition of the rich potential of Aboriginal entrepreneurship. The initiative aims to define, support and advance Aboriginal businesses in the Stó:lō Traditional Territory and to elevate Stó:lō businesses to receive provincial national and international recognition.

A branded initiative, **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** will encompass several business support initiatives including:

- A new micro-lending program delivered in partnership with the Bank of Montréal and Stó:lō Community Futures. Micro-loans of up to \$10,000.00 will be accessible to Aboriginal business start-ups and entrepreneurs who wish to expand their businesses;
- The expansion of the "Each One, Grow One" training program developed and delivered in partnership with Vancity and Stó:lō Community Futures. This training program provides financial literacy and business management training for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and will now be delivered in two new communities, Seabird Island First Nation and Sts'ailes.
- **STÓ:LŌ BUSINESS MATCH** conference in October 2014 will bring together Stó:lō businesses and Stó:lō decision makers with prospective investors and clients. Lines of business include the sectors of land development, construction, real estate, retail, cultural tourism and technology. A creation of Katrin Harry, the Aboriginal Business Match initiative is gaining attention across the province. The 2013 Penticton Aboriginal Business Match event identified well over \$30-million of business transactions.



The **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** launch celebrations will also feature the release and live performance of a new song created by Juno-nominated and award winning Aboriginal pop artist Inez Jasper. Inez Jasper is Canada's top Aboriginal musician from Stó:lō Coast Salish Territory. The launch initiative will bring together Stó:lō leaders, Aboriginal entrepreneurs and the regional business community to celebrate the recognition and future of the Stó:lō business sector.

STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS is about honoring Aboriginal law and traditions, respecting the land and resources and remembering the history of Stó:lō business and trade. **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** is led by Stó:lō Community Futures (SCF), a non-profit organization mandated to provide support in community economic development and business growth to Aboriginal peoples living within the Stó:lō Traditional Territory. SCF embraces and celebrates Stó:lō cultural values and believes in creating and supporting the entrepreneurial spirit in the Stó:lō and Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal business growth, economic development opportunities and Aboriginal partnerships with the private sector are experiencing growth and prosperity across Canada. **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** captures this spirit and says, "Consider the Possibilities. Stó:lō is open for business."

Quote from Shirley Hardman, Chair of the Board of Stó:lō Community Futures: "The **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** initiative strategically focuses on both training programs and business growth - critical tools for Aboriginal job creation and for providing our educated youth with opportunities to live and work in Stó:lō. There is a direct positive relationship between Aboriginal economic development and social development in our communities throughout Stó:lō and as such, the **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** initiative is a powerful-made-in Stó:lō demonstration of SCF's commitment to provide support for community economic development to all Aboriginal people living within the Stó:lō Traditional Territory."

Shirley Hardman: Cell 604-845-2615

Quote from Stewart Anderson, Manager, Indigenous Partnerships, Vancity, Vancouver: "Vancity is proud to be expanding the Aboriginal business training programs that have been so successful over the past year. Creating more opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to have access to information that will strengthen their existing businesses or help them launch new ventures is important in our work to build healthy, vibrant communities."

Stewart Anderson: Cell 604-787-1988



Quote from Candace Dennis, Director of Aboriginal Banking, Bank of Montréal, Vancouver: “Access to capital has been a major challenge for Aboriginal people living in their Communities on reserve land, but progress is being made on several fronts. Micro-loans, which provide access to flexible financial assistance, will enable business start-ups and Aboriginal entrepreneurs achieve their business goals while also cultivating financial management skills. BMO is pleased to work alongside Stó:lō Community Futures, which administers these loans and connects entrepreneurs to the necessary training and mentorship support that is key to the success of the micro-lending program.”

Candace Dennis: Cell 604-258-8247

Quote from Linda Kay Peters, Ringing Bell Robes, Seabird Island First Nation: “I’ve been working with Aboriginal Health for the Seabird Island First Nation for 25 years while also developing my Aboriginal fashion design business for 15 years. In 2013, I was invited to showcase my designs at the New York Couture Fall Fashion Week. This was the first time that this internationally recognized showcase event included Aboriginal designers, and the resulting exposure opened my eyes to the possibility that I could dedicate more of my time to my passion for design. **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS** is exactly what I need to raise the profile of my business and to help me understand how to expand my business while providing the funding to help me be successful.”

<http://couturefashionweek.wordpress.com/2013/09/07/ringing-bell-robles-by-linda-kay-peters-at-couture-fashion-week/> Linda Kay Peters: Cell 604-750-0403

For More Information, contact
Shirley Hardman
Chairperson
Stó:lō Community Futures
Shirley.Hardman@UFV.ca
Phone: 604-845-2615

Mike Watson
General Manager
Phone: 604-824-5270
mwatson@stolocf.ca
www.stolocf.ca