

Media Release

FSIN Communication Unit



Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Residential School Settlement Announcement by Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice

(April 25, 2005) On behalf of Saskatchewan residential school survivors and their families, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations First Vice-Chief Morley Watson is pleased with today's announcement by Minister of Indian Affairs Jim Prentice regarding the final agreement of a comprehensive compensation package. Now that all parties have signed off on the agreement, the agreement will now be considered by federal cabinet.

While it is not clear as to when the payments will commence, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations wish to ensure survivors that they will continue to assist survivors in applying for the 'Common Experience Payment. The appropriate application forms will be widely distributed to First Nations survivors through a network of band offices, Tribal Council offices as well as to Friendship Centers and other urban delivery services. Vice-Chief Morley Watson calls "the compensation package a step in the right direction in compensating survivors for the many hardships and suffering experienced by so many First Nations during the years when residential schools attendance was mandatory."

It is estimated that there are between 17,000 to 19,000 survivors in Saskatchewan who attended a residential school for an average of 5.5 years. Survivors will receive an average payment of \$25,000.00 based on the formula agreed to within the settlement agreement. This represents the largest influx of money to individual Saskatchewan First Nations. There are also significant areas that are covered in the agreement to be funded such as Truth and Reconciliation, Healing and commemoration. A critical component of commemoration includes the establishment of a museum that would document and highlight the residential school legacy and the impacts that continue to be felt by so many survivors and their families.

In addition, Vice-Chief Morley Watson, Vice-Chief responsible for the residential school file for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, expressed his wish that First Nations survivors will not be re-victimized by family, friends and businesses as compensation payments begin to flow. Steps need to be taken by First Nations communities, Tribal Councils and other agencies to ensure that a range of support services are made available to survivors throughout all phases of the compensation process.

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