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BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY JUSTICE SYMPOSIUM 2026

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Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council presents the third edition of **OKI COLLECTIVE // QUARTERLY**. This publication provides a structured account of the Confederacy's governance, advocacy, cultural, and community updates. It also highlights the work done by a team of Blackfoot professionals dedicated to advancing the collective interests of Niitsitapi and all things Blackfoot.

Issue **v.003** of **OKI COLLECTIVE** documents a period of strong Blackfoot Confederacy leadership, national advocacy, Treaty work, economic partnership and community engagement throughout 2026. This issue highlights Blackfoot Confederacy's participation at the 2026 Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly in Ottawa, including the advancement of Treaty Land Entitlement through AFN Resolution 13/2026 and national opposition to Alberta separation. It also captures the signing of a new economic partnership between Blackfoot Confederacy and the Iroquois Caucus, strengthening Nation-to-Nation cooperation and creating a joint framework for economic development. Additional highlights include the meeting between Blackfoot leadership and Prime Minister Mark Carney to advance Treaty rights, infrastructure and First Nations economic participation, the appointment of Kirby Smith as Director of the Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society, and the launch of Blackfoot Confederacy's Alberta Referendum 2026 voter information campaign to ensure Niitsitapi have access to clear information as they consider Alberta's constitutional future.



January 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs affirm Treaty rights amid Alberta separation discussion

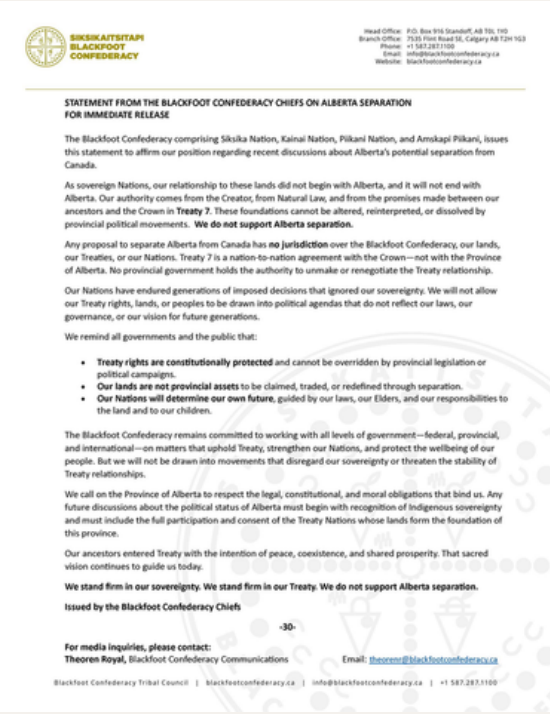
January 30, 2026 | The Chiefs of Blackfoot Confederacy have rejected any attempt to include Blackfoot Nations, lands or Treaty rights within a process concerning Alberta's separation from Canada, stating that the political future of the province cannot alter the Nation-to-Nation relationship established through Blackfoot Treaty 7.

In a statement issued January 30, the Chiefs affirmed that Blackfoot sovereignty predates the Province of Alberta and is grounded in Natural Law and Treaty 7, which established a relationship between Blackfoot Nations and the Crown. The Chiefs stated that this relationship cannot be changed, displaced or redefined through provincial political action.

The statement comes as discussions surrounding Alberta separation continue to develop across the province. Blackfoot Confederacy made clear that any decision concerning Alberta's political status remains separate from the authority and rights of the four Blackfoot Nations. The Chiefs emphasized that Treaty rights are constitutionally protected and that Blackfoot Territory cannot be treated as a provincial asset subject to redefinition through a political process. Any future discussion that could affect Blackfoot lands, rights or Treaty relationships must involve the Nations whose territories and rights are directly connected to those discussions.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, the issue is rooted in the longstanding Treaty relationship and the authority of Blackfoot Nations to determine matters affecting their own peoples and lands. The Chiefs stated that decisions concerning the future of Blackfoot Nations will be made by Blackfoot Nations themselves, guided by their own laws, leadership and responsibilities to the land and future generations. The Confederacy also called on all governments to uphold their Treaty obligations and Indigenous sovereignty, emphasizing that First Nations are Treaty partners in any discussion involving the political or constitutional future of the region.

The January 30 statement established Blackfoot Confederacy's position as Alberta's separation debate continued into 2026. The Chiefs stated that any conversation about Alberta's political status must begin with the involvement and consent of the Treaty Nations whose territories form the foundation of the province. While the Confederacy remains committed to peace, coexistence and shared prosperity under Treaty, it also maintains that political change within Alberta cannot override Blackfoot sovereignty, diminish Treaty rights or change the relationship between Blackfoot Nations and the Crown.



SIKSIKAITSITAPI
BLACKFOOT
CONFEDERACY

Head Office: P.O. Box 916 Standoff, AB T0L 1Y0
Branch Office: 7535 Flint Road SE, Calgary AB T2H 1G3
Phone: +1 587.287.1100
Email: info@blackfootconfederacy.ca
Website: blackfootconfederacy.ca

STATEMENT FROM THE BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY CHIEFS ON ALBERTA SEPARATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Blackfoot Confederacy comprising Siksika Nation, Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, and Amskapi Piikani, issues this statement to affirm our position regarding recent discussions about Alberta's potential separation from Canada.

As sovereign Nations, our relationship to these lands did not begin with Alberta, and it will not end with Alberta. Our authority comes from the Creator, from Natural Law, and from the promises made between our ancestors and the Crown in **Treaty 7**. These foundations cannot be altered, reinterpreted, or dissolved by provincial political movements. **We do not support Alberta separation.**

Any proposal to separate Alberta from Canada has **no jurisdiction** over the Blackfoot Confederacy, our lands, our Treaties, or our Nations. Treaty 7 is a nation-to-nation agreement with the Crown—not with the Province of Alberta. No provincial government holds the authority to unmake or renegotiate the Treaty relationship.

Our Nations have endured generations of imposed decisions that ignored our sovereignty. We will not allow our Treaty rights, lands, or peoples to be drawn into political agendas that do not reflect our laws, our governance, or our vision for future generations.

We remind all governments and the public that:

- **Treaty rights are constitutionally protected** and cannot be overridden by provincial legislation or political campaigns.
- **Our lands are not provincial assets** to be claimed, traded, or redefined through separation.
- **Our Nations will determine our own future**, guided by our laws, our Elders, and our responsibilities to the land and to our children.

The Blackfoot Confederacy remains committed to working with all levels of government—federal, provincial, and international—on matters that uphold Treaty, strengthen our Nations, and protect the wellbeing of our people. But we will not be drawn into movements that disregard our sovereignty or threaten the stability of Treaty relationships.

We call on the Province of Alberta to respect the legal, constitutional, and moral obligations that bind us. Any future discussions about the political status of Alberta must begin with recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and must include the full participation and consent of the Treaty Nations whose lands form the foundation of this province.

Our ancestors entered Treaty with the intention of peace, coexistence, and shared prosperity. That sacred vision continues to guide us today.

We stand firm in our sovereignty. We stand firm in our Treaty. We do not support Alberta separation.

Issued by the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs

-30-

For media inquiries, please contact:
Theoren Royal, Blackfoot Confederacy Communications Email: theorenr@blackfootconfederacy.ca

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council | blackfootconfederacy.ca | info@blackfootconfederacy.ca | +1 587.287.1100

January 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy provides guidance to members on ICE interactions and Jay Treaty rights

January 27, 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy, together with the Jay Treaty Border Alliance, issued information to Blackfoot members regarding their rights and documentation when interacting with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The notice was intended to provide clear information for both U.S. born Blackfoot members and Canada born members exercising rights under the Jay Treaty, particularly as members continue to travel across the Canada United States border for family, cultural, employment and other purposes.

For Blackfoot members born in the United States, the notice confirms that they are U.S. citizens and are not subject to ICE immigration jurisdiction. The information also emphasized the importance of carrying appropriate identification and documentation, noting that Tribal identification, state issued identification or a driver's licence, and a U.S. passport can provide proof of identity and citizenship. The guidance was provided to help members understand what documentation may be important when travelling or when questioned by U.S. authorities.

The notice also addressed Canada born Blackfoot members who enter the United States under Jay Treaty rights. Under Section 289 of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act, eligible American Indians born in Canada have rights to enter the United States and are authorized to live and work there without being treated as ordinary immigration entrants. Blackfoot Confederacy outlined documentation that members may carry to establish their status, including a Tribal letter confirming the required American Indian blood quantum, a Secure Certificate of Indian Status with the red stripe, a long form birth certificate and other government issued identification or immigration documentation where applicable.

The January notice also directed members toward legal and federal resources, including the Native American Rights Fund and contacts within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Tribal Affairs office. By providing members with information about their rights, documentation and available points of contact, Blackfoot Confederacy and the Jay Treaty Border Alliance reinforced the importance of ensuring that Blackfoot people are informed when crossing or residing on either side of the medicine line. The guidance forms part of the broader work to protect the mobility, Treaty relationships and rights of Siksikaitsitapi members across the international border.



February 2026

Treaty First Nations gather in Mohkinstsis for early learning and child care exchange

February 9–10, 2026 — Nearly 200 participants from Treaty Nations across Alberta and Saskatchewan gathered in Mohkinstsis for a two day Treaty First Nations Information Exchange focused on Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care.

Hosted jointly by Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council's IELCC department and Samson Cree Nation Head Start, the gathering brought together First Nations representatives, early learning professionals, educators and community members to share information, experiences and approaches to supporting children and families. Participants attended from Treaty 6, Treaty 8, Treaty 3, Blackfoot Confederacy, the G4 Stoney Nakoda Tsuut'ina Tribal Council and Amskapi Piikani.

The exchange provided an opportunity for First Nations to discuss the work taking place in their respective communities and to learn from different approaches to early learning and child care. Rather than focusing on a single program or model, the gathering created space for Nations to share what is working in their communities, identify common challenges and discuss opportunities for stronger collaboration.

The participation of Nations from multiple Treaty areas also provided an opportunity to examine the ways Indigenous early learning continues to develop across different communities while remaining grounded in local culture, language, family and community priorities.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, the gathering formed part of the ongoing work of its Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care department to support programs and services for children and families across the four Nations. Bringing practitioners and First Nations leadership together allows communities to exchange knowledge directly and strengthen relationships between those working in early learning. The gathering also reinforced the importance of First Nations having a central role in determining how early learning and child care services are designed and delivered for their own communities.

The two day exchange concluded with participants returning to their respective Nations with new information, connections and perspectives to support their ongoing work. The event demonstrated the value of First Nations led gatherings that create opportunities for communities to learn from one another and build relationships across Treaty areas.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, continued collaboration in Indigenous early learning and child care remains part of broader efforts to support children, families, culture and community based programming across Siksikaitsitapi.







Dustin Walter Joins Blackfoot Confederacy as Health Director

February 9, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council welcomed Dustin Walter, Ksk'staakiinna (Beaver Chief), to the organization on February 9, 2026, as he began his transition into the role of Health Director. A Niitsitapi from Amskapi Piikuni, Walter brings a strong combination of clinical experience, academic leadership, Indigenous wellness knowledge and cultural practice to the position. His work is grounded in Blackfoot ways of knowing and a commitment to community-driven approaches that support the health and wellbeing of Blackfoot people.

Walter holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Education in Educational Research from the University of Calgary and is a fourth-year doctoral student in Community Health Sciences, specializing in Population and Public Health at the Cumming School of Medicine. His doctoral research focuses on Indigenous healing, Indigenous trauma strategies and culturally grounded frameworks that support individual and community wellness, bringing together academic research and Indigenous knowledge.

Alongside his health and academic work, Walter is also a singer-songwriter, SAG-AFTRA actor and filmmaker. His creative practice is rooted in Blackfoot storytelling, teachings and lived experience. He began working with Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council in a limited capacity on February 9 before joining the organization full time in April 2026.

During the transition, Charles Weasel Head continued serving as Health Advisor and supporting Confederacy-wide health initiatives until Walter fully joined the Health team. Blackfoot Confederacy welcomes Dustin Walter into his new role and looks forward to his continued leadership and contributions to supporting Blackfoot health and wellbeing. Iiksukapi Dustin, welcome to the team.





February 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy welcomes new Housing Initiatives Officer

February 23, 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy welcomed Susan Solway, also known as Naatowohkkaiyo, to the organization as its new Housing Initiatives Officer. Her appointment adds dedicated capacity to the Confederacy's growing housing work and supports ongoing efforts to advance housing priorities for members across the four Blackfoot Nations.

The Housing Initiatives Officer role is focused on supporting the development and coordination of housing initiatives that respond to the needs of Blackfoot communities. Housing continues to be an important area of work for First Nations, with challenges extending beyond the availability of homes to include planning, infrastructure, affordability, land, community growth and access to appropriate housing options. The position provides additional support for Blackfoot Confederacy as it works with Nations, governments and other partners on housing related priorities.

Solway joins Blackfoot Confederacy at a time when housing is becoming an increasingly active area of organizational work. Her role will contribute to advancing housing initiatives and supporting the coordination required to move projects forward. This includes working across programs and with community partners to help ensure housing priorities remain connected to the needs and direction of the Nations.

The appointment is part of Blackfoot Confederacy's continued development of its organizational capacity and services. With housing now forming an important component of its broader community and economic development work, the addition of a dedicated Housing Initiatives Officer provides further support for the Confederacy's efforts to advance practical housing opportunities for Siksikaitsitapi members.

March 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy seeks caregiver input on Jordan's Principle

March 12, 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy Health Co-management launched an anonymous caregiver survey to hear directly from families who have accessed Jordan's Principle services. The 15 minute survey was designed to gather information about caregivers' experiences and identify areas where families may face challenges when accessing supports for First Nations children.

The survey formed part of ongoing work to better understand community needs and strengthen access to services across Siksikaitsitapi. Feedback from caregivers provides an opportunity to identify what is working well and where improvements may be needed.

Caregivers who had accessed Jordan's Principle were encouraged to participate and share their experiences. The information gathered would help inform continued health planning and advocacy for children and families across Kainai, Siksika and Piikani.



March 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Health Leaders Advance Coordinated Strategic Planning

March 12-23, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council Health Department brought together health leadership, Elders and representatives from Kainai-Blood Tribe, Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation and Amskapi Piikani for a two-day strategic planning session in Mohkinstsis. The gathering focused on strengthening coordination across the four Nations and developing a shared approach to health planning, advocacy and service delivery.

The first day included updates from health leadership across each Nation, outlining current priorities, challenges and emerging initiatives. Participants also heard from Deena Hinshaw and Minh Vuong on the First Nations Health Data Strategy and the role of coordinated data in health planning. Economist Mark Anielski provided a presentation examining health spending for Confederacy members compared with the average Canadian, highlighting gaps in available health supports.

Day two focused on establishing a long-term direction for health systems across Siksikaitsitapi and was facilitated by Dr. Gabrielle Weasel Head. Participants identified shared priorities and worked toward a strategic vision grounded in a collective Niitsitapi approach. Kash Shade of Blood Tribe Department of Health emphasized the opportunity for the Confederacy to strengthen its advocacy and develop a unified strategic plan for the four Nations.

Elders Martin Heavy Head, Pam Heavy Head and Leonard Bastien provided guidance throughout the session, including teachings on traditional Blackfoot health practices. Martin Heavy Head spoke about midwifery as the traditional approach to childbirth before the construction of the Kainai Blackfoot Hospital in 1928 and the disruption of traditional health knowledge through the introduction of western medical systems. Discussions also emphasized wellness-focused services, stronger aftercare supports and a greater role for Elders and cultural knowledge in health delivery.

The session concluded with participating Nations reaffirming the importance of coordinated health planning and collective advocacy. The work will support the development of a shared health vision grounded in Niitsitapi knowledge and focused on strengthening health and wellness for present and future generations of Blackfoot people.



March 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy receives City of Calgary funding to advance Indigenous housing

March 17, 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy has been selected to receive funding through the City of Calgary's Maa'too'maa'taapii Aoko'iyii'piaya Indigenous Housing Program, creating new opportunities to advance culturally grounded, non-market housing in Mohkinstsis. The City of Calgary announced a total investment of $33 million supporting 16 Indigenous Nations and Indigenous-led organizations through 24 housing projects. Collectively, the projects are expected to deliver as many as 379 new non-market homes for Indigenous people in Calgary.

Blackfoot Confederacy was approved for funding through both the Engagement and Planning and Building and Construction streams of the program. The funding structure provides support at different stages of housing development, from early planning and engagement through to construction. Under the Building and Construction stream, funding can contribute up to 40 per cent of eligible capital costs and can also support land acquisition. This provides an important foundation for Blackfoot Confederacy to continue developing housing opportunities that respond to the needs of Siksikaitsitapi members living in Mohkinstsis.



Housing has become an increasingly important area of work for Blackfoot Confederacy as more members live, work, attend school and raise families away from their home Nations. Access to safe, stable and affordable housing remains a challenge for many Indigenous people living in urban centres, while culturally appropriate housing options can be limited. The City's Indigenous Housing Program provides an opportunity for Indigenous Nations and organizations to take a greater role in developing solutions for their own communities, rather than relying solely on existing mainstream housing systems.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, the investment also builds on its relationship with the City of Calgary and ongoing discussions around Indigenous priorities in Mohkinstsis. The Confederacy has continued to advance its role in areas including economic development, community services, housing and municipal relations, with the goal of creating practical opportunities for Siksikaitsitapi members. The housing funding provides another area for cooperation while supporting longer term planning for Indigenous housing in the city.

The initiative will allow Blackfoot Confederacy to continue developing its housing priorities while working with community members, partners and governments to determine how housing projects can best serve Siksikaitsitapi. As planning and development work moves forward, the funding creates an opportunity to build housing that considers not only the need for additional homes, but also the cultural, family and community needs of Blackfoot people living in Mohkinstsis.

The City's investment represents one component of a broader effort to address Indigenous housing needs in Calgary. For Blackfoot Confederacy, participation in the program provides additional capacity to move housing priorities forward and strengthen the organization's ability to develop long term housing solutions for its members. The work will continue through planning, engagement and project development as Blackfoot Confederacy advances its housing initiatives in Mohkinstsis.





April 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy confronts division and advances priorities in annual Premier meeting

April 07, 2026 – The Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council met with Premier Danielle Smith and Ministers at the Westin Calgary Airport as part of its annual leadership meeting with the sitting Premier of Alberta. This meeting has been held each year since the Protocol Agreement was established in 2017 and renewed in 2019, and remains the longest running agreement of its kind between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Government of Alberta.

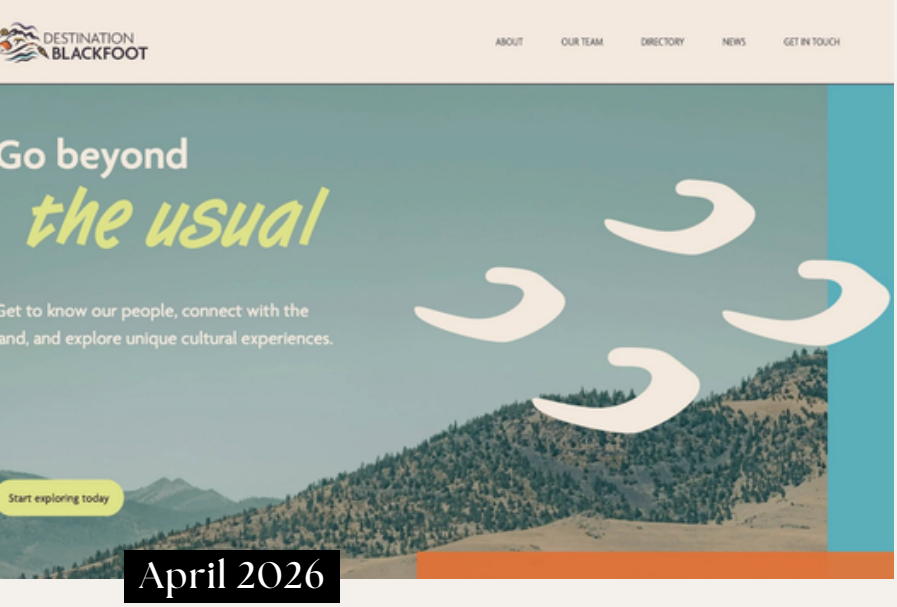
The 2026 session, hosted by Kainai Blood Tribe, brought together more than 30 representatives from across the Confederacy, including Chiefs, Council, senior leadership, and technical teams from Kainai, Piikani, Siksika, and Amskapi Piikani. Chairman of the Amskapi Piikani Nation, Rodney Gervais, was in attendance alongside leadership from all Nations. The meeting opened with prayer by Siksapoo (Patrick Black Plume) and was carried by the Baby Flats Drum Group, grounding the gathering in Blackfoot law, ceremony, and collective responsibility.

The meeting provided each Chief with an opportunity to speak directly on behalf of their Nation and bring forward the priorities and realities facing their communities. Chiefs raised concerns that actions and messaging from the provincial government, whether intentional or not, have contributed to increased division and growing instances of racism and hate directed toward Indigenous and Blackfoot people. Leadership made clear that this environment is unacceptable and stands in opposition to the Treaty relationship. These concerns were presented directly to Premier Smith and provincial ministers, resulting in substantive discussion, follow up questions and direction for several matters to return through the Protocol Agreement structure for further response and action.

Blackfoot Confederacy recognizes that its membership holds different views and priorities, and participation in government meetings does not represent agreement with provincial positions. The Protocol Agreement exists to provide a mechanism for addressing both areas of alignment and disagreement. For Blackfoot Confederacy, diplomacy and direct engagement are necessary responsibilities of leadership when dealing with governments and systems that have a direct impact on Blackfoot people. Difficult conversations cannot be avoided when progress is required, and the Confederacy continues to use its relationship with Alberta to challenge decisions, raise concerns and advance priorities for its Nations.

The Protocol Agreement remains the primary structure for advancing work across areas including child and family services, education, health, justice, environment, transportation and economic development, along with emerging areas such as tourism and housing. Through this relationship, Blackfoot Confederacy continues to assert its position as a Treaty partner with established authority and responsibility to its people, rather than simply a stakeholder in provincial decision making. The annual Premier meeting provides Chiefs with a direct opportunity to hold the Province accountable, advance priorities and ensure Blackfoot perspectives are brought into discussions that affect their communities.

The meeting also took place amid concerns from members about continued engagement with the provincial government. Blackfoot Confederacy stated that the meeting was not undertaken in spite of those concerns, but as part of its responsibility to lead and advocate for Blackfoot people. More than 30 Blackfoot leaders entered the room prepared to address difficult issues directly and advance the priorities of their Nations. The Confederacy will continue to engage, challenge and advocate through the Protocol Agreement while maintaining that Blackfoot people must have a direct role in shaping the policies, systems and decisions that affect their communities.





April 2026

Destination Blackfoot launches new platform connecting visitors with Siksikaitsitapi tourism

April 10, 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy officially launched the Destination Blackfoot website, creating a new online platform dedicated to sharing Blackfoot culture, tourism and visitor experiences across Siksikaitsitapi. The platform brings together tourism operators, artists, businesses, chefs and entrepreneurs from across Kainai, Siksika, Piikani and Amskapi Piikuni, providing visitors with a central place to discover experiences connected to Blackfoot culture, lands and knowledge.

Destination Blackfoot represents the broader geography of Siksikaitsitapi, connecting experiences across Blackfoot Territory from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in Montana and Alberta to Saskatchewan's Great Sand Hills, and from the North Saskatchewan River to the Yellowstone River. The platform provides an opportunity to present Blackfoot tourism as a connected experience across the international border, highlighting the continuing presence, culture and businesses of the four Nations across a shared homeland.

Built for Siksikaitsitapi and by Siksikaitsitapi, the platform brings Blackfoot tourism operators and entrepreneurs together in one place while creating a more direct connection between visitors and the people delivering these experiences. From cultural programming and tourism operators to food, art and entrepreneurship, Destination Blackfoot provides increased visibility for businesses and individuals sharing Blackfoot stories and experiences with visitors.

The launch also supports the continued growth of Indigenous tourism and economic development across the Confederacy. By creating a dedicated platform for Blackfoot tourism, the initiative provides visitors with a clearer way to find authentic experiences while creating greater visibility for Blackfoot businesses and entrepreneurs. It also provides an opportunity for tourism operators to reach audiences beyond their individual communities and participate in a broader Siksikaitsitapi tourism network.

Destination Blackfoot builds on Blackfoot Confederacy's ongoing work to strengthen tourism as an area of economic development and to support Blackfoot entrepreneurs, artists and community based businesses. The platform encourages visitors to look beyond conventional tourism experiences and engage directly with Blackfoot culture, people and places.

Visitors can explore the new platform at www.destinationblackfoot.com and discover the experiences, businesses and stories being shared across Siksikaitsitapi. The launch marks another step in bringing Blackfoot tourism together under one platform while creating new pathways for visitors to experience Blackfoot Country.

DESTINATION BLACKFOOT





April 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy hosts Third Annual Justice Symposium in Sikóóhkotok

April 21–22, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council brought together Elders, youth, leadership, legal professionals, community justice representatives and community members for the Third Annual Justice Symposium in Sikóóhkotok. Held under the theme “INNAIHTSIIYISINNI – Our Sacred Treaties,” the two day gathering created space for discussions grounded in Blackfoot ways of knowing, responsibility and law. Representatives from all four Nations participated, reinforcing a collective commitment to advancing justice work rooted in Siksikaitsitapi values and responsibilities.

The symposium opened with prayer and direction from Elders, followed by remarks from Chiefs, the Chairman and CEO that established a clear focus on Blackfoot jurisdiction and the responsibility to uphold what has been given to the people. An Elders Panel brought forward lived knowledge, history and experience through the voices of Leonard Weasel Traveler, Herman Yellow Old Woman, John Murray and Martin Heavy Head. Throughout both days, community justice leaders, legal professionals and invited speakers contributed to discussions examining the continued development of Blackfoot led approaches to justice and the relationship between those approaches and existing legal systems.

A major part of the gathering was the evening youth showcase, where young people participated in a grand entry and were honoured for who they are and what they carry forward. Youth participation provided an opportunity to place the next generation within the broader conversation about justice, identity, language and responsibility. The gathering emphasized that strengthening Blackfoot justice systems is not only about addressing current challenges, but also about ensuring that future generations remain connected to the knowledge, responsibilities and laws that guide Siksikaitsitapi.

Day Two continued with presentations and discussions from across the Confederacy, including community justice initiatives, enforcement and legal processes, consultation and reintegration pathways. Conversations remained focused on strengthening Blackfoot authority and supporting community driven solutions that are grounded in the realities and priorities of the Nations.

The symposium also provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences, build relationships and consider how Blackfoot approaches to justice can continue to develop within and beyond existing systems.

Blackfoot Confederacy extends its appreciation to Eldon Weasel Child and Tony Delaney, who served as Masters of Ceremonies throughout the gathering, along with the Elder Helpers, staff, presenters and participants who contributed to the two day event. The Third Annual Justice Symposium continues to provide a space for Siksikaitsitapi to bring together knowledge, leadership and community voices while advancing conversations around justice, jurisdiction and Treaty responsibilities.

April 2026

Blackfoot Guardians Strengthen Stewardship at 2026 Gathering

April 29–30, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council brought together Guardians, Elders, youth, leadership and partners for the 2026 Blackfoot Guardians Gathering at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park under the theme Aiskska'tsii'p Ksahkomm – Protecting the Land. The two-day gathering focused on strengthening coordination across the four Nations and advancing a shared approach to stewardship grounded in Niitsitapi knowledge, authority and responsibility.

The gathering opened with Saapsstsimaa, an offering of prayer with the pipe, followed by remarks from Blackfoot Chiefs and presentations from Guardians leads and Parks Canada. Sessions focused on Blackfoot-led conservation priorities, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, environmental change in Paahtómahksikimi, grassland monitoring, watershed protection, species restoration and land-based stewardship. The work highlighted the growing role of Guardians programs in carrying out Blackfoot responsibilities to the land and water.

A major highlight of the gathering was a presentation by Corey Gray-Sleigh of Siksika Nation, titled Bending Spacetime in Blackfoot. The presentation explored Blackfoot knowledge systems and their relationship to broader scientific understandings, providing participants with an opportunity to consider how Niitsitapi knowledge can inform contemporary approaches to land, science and stewardship.
Day two focused on water and wetlands, including drinking water initiatives, beaver and wetlands restoration and watershed-level challenges in the Oldman region. An Elder and youth panel closed the gathering, emphasizing intergenerational responsibility and the continued transfer of knowledge needed to sustain Guardians work across the Confederacy.

The gathering brought together participants from across Siksikaitsitapi and reinforced the importance of coordinated Guardians programs in protecting land, water and ecosystems through Niitsitapi governance systems. Blackfoot Confederacy extends appreciation to the Elders, youth, Guardians, Chiefs, presenters, partners and participants who contributed to the gathering, as well as Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park for hosting the event.









April 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Engages with Medicine Hat Toward Future Agreement

April 30, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council participated in an initial meeting with the City of Medicine Hat administration on April 30, 2026 at City offices. This marked the first formal engagement between the Confederacy and the municipality and established a starting point for relationship building and intergovernmental dialogue.

Blackfoot Confederacy Directors and City leadership met to begin discussions focused on shared priorities, coordination, and long term collaboration. Medicine Hat carries a name rooted in Blackfoot language and history, derived from “Saamis,” loosely translated as “medicine man’s hat.” The meeting set a foundation for continued engagement and identified areas where both parties can move forward in a structured and respectful way.

The discussion formed part of a broader objective to work toward a formal Memorandum of Understanding. Both sides identified the fall as a potential timeline for a signing, contingent on the outcomes of ongoing discussions and alignment on key principles.

Photo: Left to Right, Front to back

Front: Leah Prestayko (Acting Manager Director of Public Services), Genevieve Fox (Director of Education, Culture & Language), Councillor Yusuf Mohammed, Everette Fox, Marla Wolf Leg (Administrative Officer, Intergovernmental Relations), Kellie Grace (Indigenous Relations Coordinator), Xanthe Isbister (Curator of Galleries & Collections), Kimmy Shade (CEO, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council)

Middle: Councillor Stuart Young, Councillor Cheryl Phaff, Elder – Leonard Weasel Traveller, Aaron Nelson (Acting Director of Community Development), Councillor Chris Hellman, Susan Solway (Housing Initiatives Officer)

Back: Elder Makiinima (Roy Fox), Kirby Smith (Director of Intergovernmental Relations), Chief Travis Plaited Hair (Kainai – Blood Tribe)



April 2026

Jay Treaty Border Alliance advances border rights in Ottawa

April 27–30, 2026 | The Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA) met with federal ministers, Members of Parliament and Government of Canada officials to advance long standing priorities around First Nations and Tribal border crossing rights. Discussions focused on proposed amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, improved Canada Border Services Agency training, recognition of Tribal issued identification and improving the border crossing experience for Indigenous peoples.

JTBA representatives also met with 29 Members of Parliament to reinforce the rights of U.S. born American Indians to enter Canada for family visits, ceremonies, cultural practices, governance responsibilities and economic activity within First Nations communities. The Alliance continues to advocate for practical, rights based solutions grounded in the spirit of the 1794 Jay Treaty and the realities of Indigenous Nations whose communities continue across the international border.

May 2026

Destination Blackfoot represented at Indigenous Trailblazers Summit 2026

May 5–6, 2026 | EDMONTON, AB - Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council was represented at the Indigenous Trailblazers Summit 2026 through Destination Blackfoot Promotions Coordinator Cassie Ayoungman. Held in Edmonton, the summit brought together Indigenous leaders, professionals, businesses and allies to amplify Indigenous voices, knowledge and business leadership while creating opportunities for collaboration, learning and relationship building across industries.

Ayoungman was selected as a panelist for #TheRavenRoundtable, joining Indigenous tourism leaders and entrepreneurs from across the Prairies and beyond. The panel focused on Indigenous tourism, authentic experiences, hidden gems and the importance of showcasing Indigenous destinations and businesses across the region. Her participation provided an opportunity to bring the perspective of Siksikaitsitapi tourism and entrepreneurship into a broader conversation.

Ayoungman is also the founder of Soul Of Miistaki, a Blackfoot founded and Indigenous led nonprofit dedicated to creating welcoming outdoor experiences that celebrate diverse communities while honouring Indigenous traditions. Her work through both Soul Of Miistaki and Destination Blackfoot contributes to creating opportunities for visitors to connect with Indigenous places, stories, culture and experiences.

Through Destination Blackfoot, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council continues to promote Blackfoot experiences, stories, businesses and landscapes across Blackfoot Territory, known to our people as the Backbone of the World. The Indigenous Trailblazers Summit provided another opportunity to share this work, build relationships with Indigenous tourism leaders and advance the visibility of Siksikaitsitapi tourism and businesses.







May 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs respond following court decision on Alberta separation petition

May 13, 2026 | The Chiefs of Blackfoot Confederacy reaffirmed their position on Treaty rights and constitutional obligations following a ruling from the Court of King's Bench concerning a citizen led petition seeking to advance a referendum on Alberta separation. In a decision released May 13, 2026, Justice Shaina Leonard ruled that Alberta breached its duty to consult with First Nations and determined that the province's Chief Electoral Officer should not have issued the separatist petition.

The ruling followed legal action brought forward by Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Blackfoot Confederacy, which argued that the referendum process and legislative changes made by Alberta allowed a constitutional process to move forward without consultation with Treaty First Nations. Justice Leonard found there could be "no doubt" that Alberta separation would impact Treaties 7 and 8, reinforcing the position that separation is not simply a provincial political matter, but one that directly engages Treaty rights, constitutional law and the Nation-to-Nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

The Court further determined that amendments made by Alberta to the citizen initiative process triggered a duty to consult and that consultation did not occur. The decision also concluded that the separatist petition should not have been reissued following an earlier court ruling that found the original question unconstitutional. The May ruling followed an earlier decision in April that paused the petition process and prevented certification while the legal challenges were being heard. At that time, the Court identified the potential for ongoing and irreparable harm to Treaty relationships if the process continued without review.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, the decision reinforces the position that Treaty First Nations cannot be excluded from political or constitutional processes that directly affect their territories, rights and future. Blackfoot Treaty 7 predates the creation of Alberta and remains a living and binding agreement between Blackfoot Nations and the Crown. The Chiefs have also raised concerns about narratives advanced by separatist movements that attempt to diminish or sideline First Nations jurisdiction in discussions about Alberta's future, maintaining that any effort to alter the constitutional framework must account for the rights and authority of Treaty Nations.

Blackfoot Confederacy continues to stand alongside Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, Tsuut'ina Nation and Treaty Nations across Alberta that have raised concerns about the referendum process and the lack of consultation. The Chiefs maintain that Treaty relationships must remain central to any discussion concerning Alberta's political future and that the rights and authority of First Nations cannot be separated from the political and constitutional questions affecting the lands and peoples of Alberta.



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BLACKFOOT
CONFEDERACY

Head Office: P.O. Box 916 Standoff, AB T0L 1Y0
Branch Office: 7535 Flint Road SE, Calgary AB T2H 1G3
Phone: +1 587.287.1100
Email: info@blackfootconfederacy.ca
Website: blackfootconfederacy.ca

Blackfoot Confederacy Welcomes Court Ruling Halting Alberta Separatist Petition Process

Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB), Blackfoot Territory – May 13, 2026 – The Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy affirm today's decision from the Court of King's Bench regarding a citizen led petition seeking to advance a referendum on Alberta separation. The ruling confirms what the Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaty First Nations have consistently maintained throughout this process, that Alberta separation is not solely a provincial political matter, but one that directly engages Treaty rights, constitutional obligations, and the Nation-to-Nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

In its decision, the Court ruled that Alberta breached its duty to consult with First Nations and further determined that the separatist petition should not have been issued by the province's Chief Electoral Officer. Justice Shaina Leonard stated there could be "no doubt" that Alberta's separation from Canada would impact Treaties 7 and 8 and found that legislative amendments introduced by Alberta's government triggered constitutional obligations requiring consultation with Treaty First Nations that never occurred. The ruling builds on the Court's earlier decision in April granting a stay on the certification process due to the risk of ongoing and irreparable harm to Treaty relationships.

The Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy state that the ruling is an important affirmation of the constitutional status of Treaty and the legal obligations owed to First Nations. Blackfoot Treaty 7 predates and underpins the formation of the Province of Alberta and Confederation and remains a living, active, and constitutionally protected agreement governing how these lands are shared.

The Blackfoot Confederacy stands in solidarity with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, support from Chief Starlight of Tsuut'ina Nation, and all Treaty Nations across Alberta who raised concerns regarding the referendum process and the absence of consultation.

This decision makes clear that the future of these lands cannot be determined without the First Nations whose rights and responsibilities are grounded in Treaty. Blackfoot Treaty 7 remains a living agreement that continues to guide how this territory is shared and governed. The Chiefs of Blackfoot Confederacy will continue to ensure that any path forward respects that foundation and includes the voices, jurisdiction, and authority of Niitsitapi.

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For media inquiries contact:
Theoren Royal, Blackfoot Confederacy Communications — Email: TheorenR@Blackfootconfederacy.ca
Carol Mason, Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society — Email: CarolM@blackfootconfederacy.ca

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council | blackfootconfederacy.ca | info@blackfootconfederacy.ca | +1 587.287.1100

May 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Child and Family Services Kano'hssini Gathering brings Nations together

May 14, 2026 — MOHKINSTSIS (CALGARY, AB) — Blackfoot leaders, Elders, youth, frontline workers and families gathered in Mohkinstsis for the opening day of the 2026 Blackfoot Confederacy Child and Family Services Kano'hssini Gathering. Representatives from Siksika, Kainai-Blood Tribe, Piikani and Amskapi Piikani came together to focus on the future of Blackfoot children and families and the continued development of Nation led child and family services systems.

The program was guided throughout the day by Masters of Ceremonies Lowa Beebe, Natoyi'sokasiim, and Taos Yellow Owl, Iipisowasshs. Leadership from across the Confederacy spoke about the importance of rebuilding child and family systems through Blackfoot laws, teachings and responsibilities to future generations. National child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock delivered the featured keynote, while representatives from the four Nations provided updates on the realities and challenges facing child and family services within their communities.

Elders and youth remained central to the gathering, with Elders Herman Yellow Old Woman of Siksika Nation, Rose Fox of Kainai-Blood Tribe, Vera Potts of Piikani Nation and Joyce Spoonhunter of Amskapi Piikani sharing personal life histories and teachings. Discussions highlighted the importance of maintaining Blackfoot language and ensuring cultural knowledge continues to be passed to younger generations. The gathering reinforced the role of Elders, families and youth in shaping systems that are grounded in Blackfoot identity and responsibility.

The first day concluded with a banquet and special presentation from Robert Doore, who spoke about culture as a source of strength that carries identity, courage, relationships and responsibility forward. The Blackfoot Confederacy Child and Family Services Kano'hssini Gathering continued May 15, providing another day for leaders, community members, families and service providers to continue discussions about the future of Blackfoot children and Nation led child and family services.







Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs welcome Manitoba Premier's comments on duty to consult

May 26, 2026 | KANANASKIS, AB - Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs welcomed comments made by Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew during the closing press conference of the Western Premiers' Meeting in Kananaskis, where he directly challenged Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's position on the duty to consult First Nations. Kinew stated that the responsibility to fulfill the duty to consult rests with the Alberta government, not with citizens organizing a petition. His comments followed the Alberta Court of King's Bench decision that found Alberta had breached its duty to consult First Nations in connection with the citizen led separation petition.

The exchange came after Premier Smith argued that the duty to consult should not apply to citizen initiated petitions in the same way it applies to major government projects. Kinew publicly disagreed, stating that where government action may affect established Treaty rights, the responsibility to consult remains with government. He also pointed to the potential impact that an international border could have on established hunting and fishing rights.

For Blackfoot Confederacy, Kinew's comments reinforced the position that First Nations are not stakeholders in discussions that may affect their Treaty rights, lands and jurisdiction. They are Treaty partners with inherent rights, responsibilities and authority. The Chiefs stated that any discussion involving Alberta separation, constitutional change, provincial jurisdiction or the potential creation of an international border must begin with proper consultation with the Chiefs of Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8, with engagement taking place directly through First Nations leadership.

Blackfoot Confederacy continues to call on the Government of Alberta to uphold Blackfoot Treaty 7 and its constitutional obligations and to engage directly with First Nations before advancing any proposal that may affect Treaty rights or the future of the province. The Chiefs' position follows the Confederacy's ongoing legal and political work surrounding Alberta separation and its broader efforts to ensure Treaty relationships remain central to decisions affecting Blackfoot people and lands.



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Head Office: P.O. Box 916 Standoff, AB T0L 1Y0
Branch Office: 7535 Flint Road SE, Calgary AB T2H 1G3
Phone: +1 587.287.1100
Email: info@blackfootconfederacy.ca
Website: blackfootconfederacy.ca

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Welcome Premier Wab Kinew's Comments on Duty to Consult

Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB), Blackfoot Territory – May 26, 2026 – The Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs welcome the comments made by Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, during the closing press conference of the Western Premiers' Meeting in Kananaskis, Alberta.

Premier Kinew directly challenged Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's position on the duty to consult First Nations following the recent Alberta Court of King's Bench decision in May 2026, which struck down a citizen-led Alberta independence referendum petition. The Court found that Alberta and the petition organizer failed to properly consult First Nations.

During the May 26, 2026 press conference, Premier Smith called the ruling "anti-democratic" and said the Court "erred in judgment." Premier Kinew responded that the duty to consult belongs to the Alberta government and cannot be shifted to citizen petition gatherers. The Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs welcome Premier Kinew's comments and his clear affirmation that potential impacts to Treaty rights must trigger proper consultation with First Nations. A potential international border through Alberta would clearly affect First Nations rights, including hunting, fishing, harvesting, movement, lands, jurisdiction, and the Treaty relationship with the Crown.

The Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs also acknowledge Premier Kinew's call to focus on cooperation, economic development, pipelines, Churchill, LNG, and northern trade corridors instead of referendum politics. Canada's future cannot be advanced by bypassing First Nations. It must be built through proper consultation, Treaty respect, and Nation to Nation engagement. First Nations are not stakeholders in these matters. First Nations are Treaty partners with inherent rights, jurisdiction, and responsibilities to the land, water, resources, and future generations.

Proper consultation with the Chiefs of Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 is not a courtesy. It is a constitutional obligation. It must be early, direct, meaningful, and led through proper First Nations leadership. The Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs continue to call on the Government of Alberta to respect Blackfoot Treaty 7, uphold its constitutional duties, and engage directly with First Nations Chiefs before advancing any proposal that may impact Treaty rights, First Nations jurisdiction, or the future of this province.

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For media inquiries contact:
Theoren Royal, Blackfoot Confederacy Communications Email: TheorenR@Blackfootconfederacy.ca

June 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy issues community safety notice amid rising political tensions

June 1, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy issued a community safety notice to members across Alberta amid rising political tensions and recent incidents involving anti-Indigenous rhetoric and politically motivated harassment. The notice came at the beginning of National Indigenous History Month, a time intended to celebrate Indigenous cultures, languages, histories and the strength of Indigenous Nations. Leadership stated that while many Albertans continue to demonstrate respect and support for Indigenous peoples, recent events have created concerns about the safety and well-being of Blackfoot members.

Blackfoot Confederacy encouraged members living on-reserve and off-reserve, as well as those studying, working, travelling or attending events throughout Alberta, to remain aware of their surroundings and take appropriate precautions if they encounter harassment, threats, discrimination or suspicious activity. Members experiencing an immediate threat to their safety were advised to call 911, while non-emergency incidents such as harassment, hate related incidents, property damage, suspicious activity or threatening messages should be reported to the appropriate police service, Indigenous police service or RCMP detachment.

The notice also encouraged members to document incidents by preserving screenshots, messages, emails and other evidence, while recording dates, times, usernames, locations and other identifying information where possible. Members were advised not to engage with individuals making threats or attempting to provoke a response, but instead preserve evidence and report the matter. Information was also provided for local police services in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Kainai, as well as RCMP and anonymous Crime Stoppers reporting options.

Blackfoot Confederacy encouraged members to remain informed, support one another and stay connected with trusted family and community members, particularly when travelling, attending public events or participating in demonstrations. Leadership stated that the Confederacy would continue to monitor developments and provide information as required, while maintaining the safety and well-being of Blackfoot members as a priority.



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Head Office: P.O. Box 916 Standoff, AB T0L 1Y0
Branch Office: 7535 Flint Road SE, Calgary AB T2H 1G3
Phone: +1 587.287.1100
Email: info@blackfootconfederacy.ca
Website: blackfootconfederacy.ca

BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY COMMUNITY SAFETY NOTICE

June 06, 2026 | Staying Informed. Staying Safe. Looking After One Another.

As we begin National Indigenous History Month, it is unfortunate that we must issue a notice focused on community safety. This month should be a time of celebrating our cultures, histories, languages, and the strength of our Nations. However, recent incidents and rising political tensions across Alberta have raised concerns regarding the safety and well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities.

Recent incidents and public reports involving anti-Indigenous rhetoric and politically motivated harassment have reinforced the importance of community awareness and preparedness. While many Albertans continue to demonstrate respect and support for Indigenous Peoples, members are encouraged to remain vigilant and report concerning behaviour when it occurs.

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER Call 911 immediately.

Examples include: Threats to your personal safety, Being followed, intimidated, or harassed in person, Weapons being displayed, Assaults or crimes in progress, Any situation where you fear for your immediate safety.

REPORTING NON-EMERGENCY INCIDENTS:

For harassment, hate-related incidents, suspicious activity, property damage, or threatening communications:

RCMP (Anywhere in Alberta)
• 310-RCMP (7267)

Municipal Police Services: Calgary Police Service – 403-266-1234, Edmonton Police Service – 780-423-4567, Lethbridge Police Service – 403-328-4444, Medicine Hat Police Service – 403-529-8400

DOCUMENTING THREATS AND HARASSMENT: If you experience or witness concerning behaviour Take screenshots of messages, posts, or comments, Save text messages, emails, and voicemails, Record dates, times, locations, and usernames, Keep notes of any witnesses or identifying details, Request and retain any police file numbers

Do not engage with individuals making threats. Preserve evidence and report the incident to police.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING: Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-TIPS (8477): Information can be submitted anonymously if you do not wish to identify yourself.

COMMUNITY REMINDER

The Blackfoot Confederacy has always relied on the strength of our people, families, and communities. We encourage members who are travelling, attending public events, or spending time away from home to remain connected with family and trusted contacts.

By remaining vigilant, documenting incidents, and reporting concerns, we help ensure the safety of our communities and one another.

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council | blackfootconfederacy.ca | info@blackfootconfederacy.ca | +1 587.287.1100

June 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs meet with Mayor Jeremy Farkas to strengthen partnership with City of Calgary

June 1, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs and representatives of Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council met with newly elected Calgary Mayor Jeremy Farkas at Calgary City Hall to reaffirm the growing relationship between the Confederacy and the City of Calgary. The meeting provided an opportunity to build relationships with the new Mayor and discuss work underway through the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Blackfoot Confederacy and the City in May 2025.

The gathering opened with prayer from Elder Leonard Weasel Traveller, setting the direction for discussions focused on shared priorities and continued government-to-government engagement. Also attending were Former Chief and Elder Charles Weasel Head, CEO Kimmy Shade, Carol Mason, Kirby Smith and Theoren Royal, alongside Ward 3 Councillor Andrew Yule, Kelly Cote, Manager of Government Relations, and members of City Administration.

Leaders discussed progress made since the MOU was signed and the ongoing work between Blackfoot Confederacy and City staff. Discussions focused on the four foundational areas identified through the agreement: Economic Development and Tourism, Housing and Homelessness, Arts and Culture, and Events and Communications. Chiefs also emphasized the importance of continuing the relationship built with previous Calgary mayors Jyoti Gondek and Naheed Nenshi. Mayor Farkas expressed his commitment to continuing that relationship and working with Blackfoot Confederacy on matters of shared interest.

The meeting reinforced a shared commitment to continued dialogue, collaboration and long term partnership. Blackfoot Confederacy and the City of Calgary will continue working through the MOU to advance opportunities that support communities, strengthen Blackfoot presence in Mohkinstsis and build on the work already underway. Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs and Tribal Council look forward to continued engagement with Mayor Farkas, City Council and Administration as the relationship continues to develop.



June 2026

Gathering for Treaty and Unity brings First Nations leadership together in Mohkinstsis

June 14, 2026 | The Siksikaitsitapi Oh'Kinn'niinaiks Society, also known as Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society, hosted the Gathering for Treaty and Unity Rally in Mohkinstsis on June 14, bringing together leadership from the Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaties 6, 7 and 8 alongside community members, allies and supporters. The gathering provided a space for First Nations leadership and community members to come together in support of Treaty rights, unity and the continued responsibility to uphold Treaty relationships.

The gathering began in a good way with a Pipe Ceremony led by Elder Martin Heavy Head, grounding the day in Blackfoot ceremony, prayer and respect. Opening remarks were delivered by Chief Troy Knowlton of Piikani Nation, Chief Travis Plaited Hair of Kainai-Blood Tribe and Chief Samuel Crowfoot of Siksika Nation. The Chiefs reaffirmed Blackfoot Confederacy's commitment to protecting Treaty rights and strengthening Nation-to-Nation relationships.

The afternoon featured remarks from Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi and MLA Jodi Stonehouse-Calliou, followed by Treaty leadership including Chief Ellery Starlight of Tsuut'ina Nation, Treaty 7, Treaty 6 Grand Chief Joey Pete of Sunchild Cree Nation and Treaty 8 Deputy Grand Chief Sheldon Sunshine of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. Speakers discussed the enduring importance of the Treaties, Indigenous rights and the responsibility of First Nations to remain united in protecting their relationships and responsibilities for future generations.

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society extended appreciation to the Chiefs, Elders, leaders, speakers, honoured guests, volunteers, allies and community members who attended and stood together in support of Treaty rights. The gathering reinforced the importance of unity and collective leadership among First Nations, with the shared understanding that the Treaties remain living agreements that continue to guide the relationship between First Nations and the Crown.









June 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy recognizes leadership and service of Carol Mason

June 29, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council recognized and thanked Carol Mason for her leadership, service and commitment to the Confederacy as she concluded her time with the organization. During her tenure, including her service as Interim Chief Executive Officer, Mason provided steady leadership while Blackfoot Confederacy continued to expand its advocacy, government relations and organizational work.

Working alongside the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society, Executive Leadership and staff, Mason supported strategic priorities and strengthened the Confederacy's presence across political, governmental and intergovernmental forums. Her work included engagement with all orders of government, advocacy on Treaty and inherent rights, participation in international discussions through the Jay Treaty Border Alliance and coordinated communications supporting the voice of Blackfoot Confederacy across Canada and internationally.

Mason's leadership was grounded in accountability, collaboration and the importance of presenting a unified Blackfoot voice. She worked closely with Chiefs, leadership, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and staff while also contributing to internal capacity and supporting staff as they represented the Confederacy in their respective areas of work. Her time with the organization included a period of continued development across governance, policy, communications and strategic initiatives.

CEO Kimmy Shade thanked Mason for her contributions, noting that her experience and commitment helped strengthen the organization and advance the priorities of the Chiefs and Nations. Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council extends its appreciation to Carol Mason for her service and wishes her continued success as she begins the next chapter of her journey.







June 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy hosts Blackfoot Placenta Ceremony at Belly River Campsite

June 22, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council Health Department hosted the Blackfoot Placenta Ceremony on June 22 at the Belly River Campsite, bringing together participating mothers and their families from across the Blackfoot Confederacy. Held outdoors in a traditional setting, the gathering centred on Blackfoot teachings surrounding birth, family and the beginning of life, providing families with an opportunity to participate in ceremony and strengthen their connection to cultural practices.

Elders and cultural knowledge holders guided the ceremony and shared teachings throughout the day, supporting families as they participated in this longstanding Blackfoot practice. The gathering provided an opportunity for cultural knowledge to be carried between generations while creating space for mothers, families and community members to come together through ceremony. The Health Department continues to support initiatives that make cultural practices accessible to families and strengthen connections to Blackfoot ways of life.

Blackfoot Confederacy extends its appreciation to the Elders, ceremony leaders, organizers, Health Department staff, volunteers and families whose contributions made the gathering possible.

The Confederacy also congratulates the mothers who participated in this year's ceremony: Candace Gladue, Tyne Shouting, Sierra Shade, Torry Eagle Speaker, Isabelle Bastien, Chyloe Healy, Skyler Herrera, Nikesha Many Fingers, Kiya Tailleur, Hope Big Plume and Taylor Crow Spreads His Wings.

Through initiatives such as the Blackfoot Placenta Ceremony, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council continues to support the practice and preservation of Blackfoot cultural traditions. Creating opportunities for families to participate in ceremony helps ensure that teachings surrounding birth, family, identity and responsibility continue to be carried forward within Siksikaitsitapi for future generations.









July 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy hosts largest Stampede BBQ to date in Mohkinstsis

July 8, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council welcomed more than 800 people to its 2026 Annual Stampede BBQ at the Calgary Branch Office in Mohkinstsis, making it the largest Stampede BBQ hosted by the organization to date. Blackfoot Confederacy members, families, Elders, youth, leadership, partners and guests gathered to share a meal, reconnect and celebrate together during the Calgary Stampede season.

The success of the event was made possible through the collective efforts of Chiefs, Chairman, leadership, Elders, partners, sponsors, vendors and volunteers, with additional support from the U21 Blackfoot Confederacy Hockey Team and the Confluence. Blackfoot filmmaker and storyteller Cowboy Smithx of Piikani Nation served as Master of Ceremonies, guiding the program throughout the afternoon. Rudy Strangling Wolf of Kainai-Blood Tribe provided live music showcasing Blackfoot talent, while staff from Ranchman's Dancehall shared a Stampede tradition through an interactive line dancing demonstration.



The BBQ also welcomed a number of dignitaries and guests, including Naheed Nenshi, Leader of the Alberta New Democratic Party; Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford; Diane Gray, President of Prairies Economic Development Canada; Mayor Pat Fule and members of Strathmore Town Council; Mayor Corrie DiManno of Banff; representatives from Excite Lethbridge, the Government of Alberta and the Whoop-Up Days team. The event also welcomed royalty from across the Confederacy, including 2025–2026 Miss Siksikaitsitapi Emma Mountain Horse, Kainai, Piikani and Siksika Nation princesses, and Calgary Stampede Royalty First Nations Princess Reagan First Rider of Kainai-Blood Tribe and Calgary Stampede Princess Sarah O'Brien.

The gathering also provided an opportunity to recognize the service of two individuals who have contributed to the work of Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council and Siksikaitsitapi Oh'Kininaiiks Society. Blackfoot Confederacy extended appreciation to Carol Mason for her years of leadership and service, while also recognizing outgoing Councillor Pat Armstrong Jr. of Amskapi Piikani for his years of leadership as a Board Member and his contributions to the organization. The Confederacy also extended its appreciation to all Blackfoot members who attended, with the gathering providing an opportunity for families, Elders, youth, leadership and community members from across the Nations to reconnect and celebrate together. Blackfoot Confederacy looks forward to welcoming everyone again for the 2027 Stampede BBQ.



July 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs meet with Prime Minister to advance Treaty rights and economic partnership

Story with files from Siksika Nation Tribal Administration

July 11, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs' Society met with Prime Minister Mark Carney on July 11 in Mohkinstsis to discuss Alberta separation, major infrastructure development, Treaty implementation and economic opportunities for First Nations. Chief Troy Knowlton, Chief of Piikani Nation and President of the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs' Society, reaffirmed that Treaty First Nations must participate as governments and Treaty partners in decisions affecting their lands, waters, resources and rights. Discussions included the Building Canada Act, Bill C-5, proposed national energy and infrastructure corridors, and the need for meaningful consultation and free, prior and informed consent.

Blackfoot leadership emphasized that First Nations support responsible economic development but expect a direct role in decision-making and a fair share of the benefits generated from projects within Treaty territories. Leadership also called for discussions with Canada on resource revenue sharing and compensatory negotiations related to the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement. The meeting also addressed Alberta's separation discussions and the importance of protecting Treaty rights and the constitutional relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

Siksika Nation Chief Samuel Crowfoot also met with Prime Minister Carney to discuss the proposed national energy corridor and reaffirmed that Siksika Nation expects full government-to-government engagement on projects affecting its lands, waters or Treaty rights. Discussions included First Nations ownership, equity participation and long-term economic partnerships. "Siksika Nation is open to partnership, responsible development, and economic opportunity," said Chief Crowfoot. "Our participation must be founded on respect for Treaty, meaningful consultation, and recognition of our role as a government and Treaty partner."

Chief Travis Plaited Hair of Kainai-Blood Tribe emphasized the need to accelerate outstanding land claims, noting that lengthy delays continue to create costs for First Nations and hinder economic certainty, community development and Canada's Treaty obligations. Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council CEO Kimmy Shade and leadership from Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 also participated. Blackfoot leadership called for direct representation at the upcoming First Ministers' Meeting and reinforced the need for Treaty Nations to be full partners in decisions affecting economic development, major infrastructure and Treaty rights across Canada.

July 2026



Sweetgrass Project Increases Access to Sacred Medicine for Urban Blackfoot Members

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council, in collaboration with the City of Calgary, completed a Sweetgrass Transplant Project to increase access to Blackfoot medicines for members living in Mohkinstsis.

Blackfoot Confederacy Youth Council members and staff participated in transplanting sweetgrass and received teachings on its cultural significance and care. The sweetgrass was transferred from Corral Depot to the Blackfoot Confederacy Calgary Branch office and The Confluence at former Fort Calgary.

Sweetgrass at the Blackfoot Confederacy office will be maintained by the Health Team and made available to Blackfoot members, providing an accessible location for sacred medicine and supporting Niitsitapi cultural practices in the urban community.

July 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy and Iroquois Caucus advance joint economic partnership

July 15, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy and the Iroquois Caucus signed a resolution in Ottawa on July 15 to strengthen their Nation-to-Nation relationship and advance a joint economic implementation plan. Titled “To Establish the Relationship Between the Iroquois Caucus and the Blackfoot Confederacy and Create a Joint Economic Implementation Plan,” the resolution builds on the Peace and Recognition Alliance signed by both parties on October 11, 2023, and establishes a framework for continued cooperation.

The resolution creates a Joint Economic Action Committee made up of representatives from both groups. The committee will identify opportunities for collaboration, address barriers to intertribal trade and develop a coordinated Economic Action Plan. Both parties will also work toward a joint Terms of Reference outlining how the committee will operate, with the final framework to be brought forward for approval by their respective leadership.

Areas identified for collaboration include online gaming, exports and trade, tourism, information technology sharing, resource management and negotiations, as well as the planning of joint events and activities. The agreement provides an opportunity for both groups to share knowledge, build economic capacity and pursue initiatives that support Indigenous-led economic development while strengthening connections between Nations.

The resolution marks the next phase of cooperation between Blackfoot Confederacy and the Iroquois Caucus, expanding the relationship established through the 2023 Peace and Recognition Alliance into practical economic action. The Iroquois Caucus is represented by Oneida Nation of the Thames, Six Nations of the Grand River, Wahta, Akwesásne, Kanehsatàand Kahnawà, while Blackfoot Confederacy is represented by Kainai, Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation and Amskapi Piikani. Together, the Nations are establishing a foundation for long-term Nation-to-Nation economic partnerships and joint initiatives.





July 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy welcomes national support following AFN emergency resolution opposing Alberta separation

July 16, 2026 — OTTAWA, ON | Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs welcomed the adoption of an emergency resolution at the Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly affirming that Treaty rights cannot be altered, diminished or extinguished by any provincial separatist initiative. The resolution, introduced by Sunchild First Nation and the Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations, received support from First Nations across Canada and reaffirmed that no province has the legal authority to interfere with the constitutional relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

The resolution followed a historic gathering on July 13 involving leadership from Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, Blackfoot Confederacy and the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador. Leaders came together to discuss growing concerns surrounding Alberta separation and its potential implications for Treaty rights. Chiefs from Quebec shared their experience responding to previous provincial separation efforts, while Alberta Treaty Nations reaffirmed that any proposal affecting the future of Alberta must include First Nations.

Blackfoot Confederacy has consistently maintained that the rights, responsibilities and Nation-to-Nation relationships established through Treaty predate the Province of Alberta and remain constitutionally protected. Any proposal seeking to alter Alberta's constitutional status would directly affect Treaty relationships and cannot proceed without the full participation and free, prior and informed consent of affected First Nations.

The AFN emergency resolution calls on federal and provincial governments to uphold the Honour of the Crown and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Blackfoot Confederacy welcomed the national support and reaffirmed that any political or constitutional process affecting Treaty Nations must proceed through respectful government-to-government engagement and direct participation from First Nations.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEWS RELEASE

AFN Emergency Resolution Opposes Alberta Separation

First Nations are united in opposition to separatism

July 16, 2026 (Unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin Territory) — The Annual General Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has passed a landmark resolution to protect Treaty Rights from threats posed by a separatist movement in Alberta. The emergency resolution was put forward by Sunchild First Nation and Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations Grand Chief Joey Pete and Proxy Chief Matthew Coon Come, Cree Nation of Nemaska, Quebec. It states that no province has the legal authority to alter, diminish, or extinguish Treaty Rights or the constitutional relationship between First Nations and the Crown.

Alberta Chiefs from Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 8, Blackfoot Confederacy, Treaty No. 7 and the Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) came together on July 13th for a historic meeting marking their first formal gathering. During discussions about separatist threats to Treaty Rights, Chiefs from Quebec shared their experience responding to previous provincial separation efforts and highlighted the importance of asserting First Nations as distinct rights holders. Treaty First Nations from Alberta emphasized that any proposal to separate Alberta from Canada would directly affect First Nations' rights, lands, territories, and future, and therefore cannot proceed.

Since taking office, Premier Danielle Smith and the current Government of Alberta have undertaken a coordinated political agenda to advance Alberta's autonomy from the Government of Canada and normalize Alberta's possible separation while failing to recognize or engage First Nations as Treaty Rights holders whose rights and interests would be fundamentally affected by such constitutional change.

The emergency resolution formally calls upon all federal and provincial governments to uphold the honour of the Crown and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples– ensuring that any constitutional or political process that may affect First Nations proceeds only through respectful government-to-government engagement with the free, prior, and informed consent of the affected First Nations.

Nations from across the country have expressed their solidarity with Treaty First Nations in Alberta in opposing this threat. First Nations rights are not negotiable and continued cooperation among First Nations will be essential in protecting Treaty Rights for future generations.

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Media Contacts:

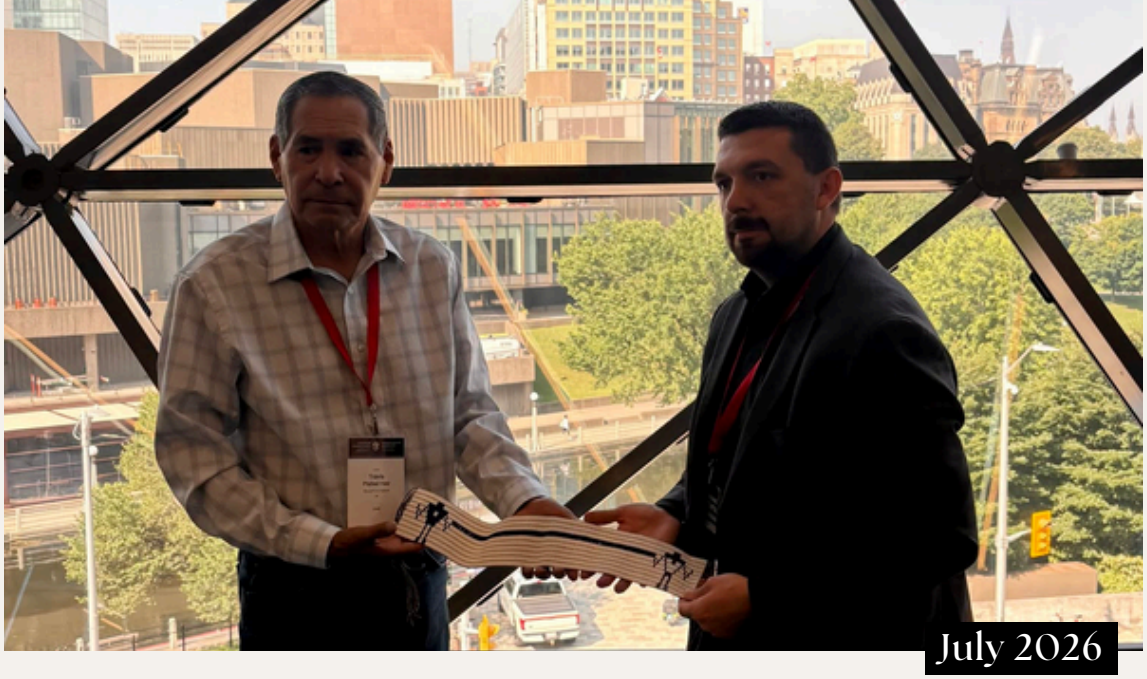
Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations
Ranell Lagrelle
Grand Chief Liaison
gcl.2026@treatysix.org

Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksikáí'tsitapi)
Theoren Royal
theorenr@blackfootconfederacy.ca

Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador
Gabrielle Lavigne-Couture,
Communications Advisor
Glavigne-couture@apnql.com
581-984-7779

Treaty 7 First Nations Chiefs' Association
admin@treaty7.org

Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Jordan Wilkins
Communications Officer
jwilkins@treaty8.org



July 2026

Treaty rights and economic partnerships strengthened as Blackfoot Confederacy concludes 2026 AFN Assembly

July 17, 2026 — OTTAWA, ON | Blackfoot Confederacy concluded its participation in the 2026 Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly, held July 14–16 in Ottawa, with a strong focus on Treaty implementation, political advocacy, Nation-to-Nation relationships and economic development. Representing Blackfoot Confederacy were Chief Traveller (Travis) Plaited Hair of Kainai-Blood Tribe, Chief Samuel Crowfoot of Siksika Nation, Chief Troy (Bossman) Knowlton of Piikani Nation and CEO Kimmy Shade. Throughout the three-day Assembly, leadership participated in national discussions, strategic meetings with federal ministers, Treaty discussions and engagements focused on advancing priorities for the four member Nations.

A key outcome was the adoption of AFN Resolution 13/2026, Settling Treaty Land Entitlement Claims Outside the Specific Claims Process, which was moved by Chief Traveller (Travis) Plaited Hair and seconded by Chief Troy (Bossman) Knowlton. The resolution calls on Canada to establish dedicated negotiation processes for outstanding Treaty Land Entitlement claims that fall outside the federal Specific Claims process, including long-term mandates for equitable compensation and land restitution. The resolution builds on the Supreme Court of Canada's 2024 Shot Both Sides v. Canada decision concerning the Blood Tribe's Treaty Land Entitlement and Canada's obligations under the Blackfoot Treaty of 1877.

Blackfoot Confederacy also joined First Nations from Alberta and across Canada in supporting the emergency resolution opposing Alberta separation. Leadership reaffirmed that provincial political initiatives cannot alter, diminish or extinguish Treaty rights or interfere with the constitutional relationship between First Nations and the Crown. The Assembly also provided an opportunity for Chiefs from Alberta and Quebec to strengthen relationships and discuss shared approaches to protecting Treaty rights and advancing Indigenous priorities across Canada.

Another key achievement was the signing of a resolution between Blackfoot Confederacy and the Iroquois Caucus establishing a Joint Economic Implementation Plan. Signed July 15, the agreement builds on the 2023 Peace and Recognition Alliance and creates a Joint Economic Action Committee focused on intertribal trade, tourism, online gaming, information technology, resource management and other economic initiatives. Blackfoot Confederacy leadership also received traditional gifts from representatives of the Iroquois Caucus, marking the growing Nation-to-Nation relationship and shared commitment to future collaboration.

Beyond the Assembly, Blackfoot leadership continued discussions on the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, Treaty implementation and natural resource jurisdiction, while meeting with federal ministers including Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and Dominic LeBlanc. Meetings focused on the implementation of the Shot Both Sides decision, the Kainai-Blood Tribe Treaty Land Entitlement claim and other national priorities. Supporting the delegation were Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society staff Patti Currie and Ryan Crosschild, alongside Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council staff Theo Royal and Andrea Yellow Horn. The 2026 AFN Annual General Assembly provided Blackfoot Confederacy with another opportunity to advance Treaty rights, strengthen national relationships and continue building economic and political partnerships on behalf of Siksikaitsitapi.

August 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy welcomes Indigenous Services Minister for Calgary meeting



August 11, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy welcomed Indigenous Services Canada Minister Mandy Gull-Masty and members of her team to the Calgary branch office on August 11 for a meeting with Blackfoot Chiefs, leadership and the Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society.

The meeting provided an opportunity for Blackfoot leadership to welcome Minister Gull-Masty to Mohkinstsis and discuss priorities affecting the four Blackfoot Nations. Discussions included First Nation membership cards, border crossing and immigration matters, additions to reserve and outstanding applications.

Leadership also raised capital projects and Child and Family Services, with Indigenous Services Canada providing updates and discussing continued federal engagement. The meeting continued ongoing government-to-government discussions between Blackfoot Confederacy and Canada on priorities identified by the Confederacy Nations.

August 2026

New Siksikaitsitapi royalty crowned at 5th Annual Powwow

Three young representatives were crowned as the 2026–2027 Siksikaitsitapi Royalty during Day 1 of the 5th Annual Siksikaitsitapi Powwow at Whoop-Up Days in Sikóóhkotok. Sierra Scout was crowned Miss Siksikaitsitapi Senior, Kahleia Wells was crowned Miss Siksikaitsitapi Junior, and Avaya Young-Calf was crowned Siksikaitsitapi Tiny Tot. Blackfoot Confederacy congratulates all three as they begin their year representing Siksikaitsitapi.

The annual pageant brought together young women and girls from across Blackfoot Confederacy, providing an opportunity for participants to represent their Nations, culture and community. Blackfoot Confederacy also thanked this year's judges and all participants who took part in the pageant, recognizing their time and commitment to carrying Siksikaitsitapi representation forward.

The day also included the outgoing royalty, with Emma Mountain Horse completing her 2025–2026 reign as Miss Siksikaitsitapi. During her outgoing Teen Girls Jingle Special, Emma was joined by April Ironheart of Amskapi Piikani, who won the special. Blackfoot Confederacy congratulates April on her achievement and thanks Emma for her year of representation.

Throughout her reign, Emma proudly represented Niitsitapi and carried the culture and people with her wherever she travelled. Blackfoot Confederacy extends its appreciation to Emma for her hard work and dedication throughout the past year, while welcoming Sierra, Kahleia and Avaya as the new Siksikaitsitapi royalty for 2026–2027.



August 2026

Kirby Smith appointed new Director of Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society

August 27, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council has appointed Kirby Smith of Piikani Nation as the new Director of the Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society, effective August 26, 2026. Smith brings eight years of service with Blackfoot Confederacy to the position, having held senior roles in intergovernmental relations and leadership support while working alongside Chiefs to advance the collective priorities of Siksikaitsitapi.

Most recently serving as Director of Inter-Governmental Relations, Smith has worked to strengthen relationships between Blackfoot Confederacy and governments, municipalities, organizations and other partners. His work has supported government-to-government dialogue, advanced Blackfoot priorities through intergovernmental engagement and represented the Confederacy in regional and national discussions.

Smith has also supported Blackfoot presence and relationship-building throughout southern Alberta, including work connected to the Siksikaitsitapi Pow Wow and Princess Pageant and relationships with municipalities including the City of Calgary and Town of Banff. His experience has provided him with a strong understanding of the Confederacy's relationships, priorities and ongoing work across the region.

In his new role, Smith will provide senior operational leadership for the Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society and support the implementation of its strategic priorities. The Society brings together the leadership of Kainai, Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation and Amskapi Piikani to collectively advance Siksikaitsitapi priorities through strategic coordination, advocacy and government relations. Blackfoot Confederacy congratulates Kirby Smith on his appointment and acknowledges his years of service, organizational knowledge and commitment to the collective work of Siksikaitsitapi. His continued leadership will support the Chiefs' Society as it advances the priorities and interests of the four Blackfoot Nations.



August 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy Education Advances Niitsitapi Knowledge Through Annual Sacred Sites Tour

August 16–21, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy Education, under the direction of Director of Education and Language Dr. Genevieve A. Fox, hosted the 2026 Annual Sacred and Significant Sites Tour through Kitawahsinnonni, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) Territory. The tour brought Elders, Knowledge Keepers and participants to important sites throughout the region, with Kaahsinnoniks providing historical accounts and teachings connected to the places visited. The journey travelled to the easternmost boundary where Stumiksoosak, Chief Bull Back Fat, agreed to have traders enter Kitawahsinnonni, providing important historical context for Niitsitapi trade relationships.

A major focus of this year's tour was Fort Union, established in 1828. Blackfoot Confederacy Education met with Fort Union administration to establish a working relationship and ensure that the Niitsitapi Nations are included in the upcoming 200-year celebration. The visit emphasized the importance of ensuring Blackfoot presence, history and input are included and honoured as planning for the celebration continues.

The group visited Sleeping Buffalo, Piskan at Havre, the Town of Culbertson, Wolf Point, Fort Belknap Canyon, Fort Union, the confluence of the Yellowstone River and Missouri River, and Judith Landing, the site of the 1855 Lame Bull Treaty. The tour also included the confluence of the Judith River and Missouri River. Fort Belknap was particularly meaningful as a place connected to the ancestry of participants, adding another personal connection to the history carried throughout the journey.

The distance between sites presented challenges, particularly for the Kaahsinnoniks who travelled with the group and provided the history and accountings at each location. Their teachings formed an important part of the Annual Sacred and Significant Sites Tour, helping carry forward knowledge connected to Niitsitapi history, Treaty relationships and significant places within Kitawahsinnonni. The annual tour continues to support the preservation and transfer of Niitsitapi knowledge through the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.





August 2026

New Amskapi Piikani leadership welcomed by Blackfoot Confederacy

August 20, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy leadership and staff met with newly elected Amskapi Piikani Chairman Terry Tatsey and members of the new council on August 20, 2026, in Browning, Montana. The meeting provided an opportunity to welcome the newly elected leadership and provide an orientation to the work of Blackfoot Confederacy, its leadership and ongoing relationships across Siksikaitsitapi.

Representing Blackfoot Confederacy were Chief Troy Knowlton of Piikani Nation and Chief Samuel Crowfoot of Siksika Nation, along with Council Members Albertine Crowshoe of Piikani Nation and Dorothy First Rider of Kainai-Blood Tribe. Blackfoot Confederacy staff in attendance included CEO Kimmy Shade, Kirby Smith, Jodi Running Rabbit and Theoren Royal.

The discussion introduced the new Amskapi Piikani leadership to Blackfoot Confederacy's priorities, ongoing initiatives and work supporting the collective interests of the four Nations. It also provided an opportunity for leadership to discuss the importance of maintaining strong communication and relationships among Siksikaitsitapi Nations.

Blackfoot Confederacy congratulates Chairman Terry Tatsey and the newly elected Amskapi Piikani Council and looks forward to continued dialogue, collaboration and relationship-building among the four Nations of Siksikaitsitapi.



August 2026

Blackfoot Confederacy golf tournament brings Nations together in support of youth

Blackfoot Confederacy hosted its annual Golf Tournament on August 22 at Nanton Golf Club, bringing registered teams together from across the Confederacy for a day of competition and community. The tournament also supported programming and opportunities for Blackfoot youth across the four Nations and in urban centres.

Blackfoot Confederacy extends its appreciation to all participating teams who travelled to Nanton and helped make this year's tournament a success. The winning team was CFT7, made up of Rob St. Dennis, LD Duck Chief, Jordie Mark and Darius Chiniki.

The tournament was made possible through the support of this year's sponsors, including ATB Financial, Graham Construction, MNP LLP, Walsh LLP, Fox Law LLP, MLT Aikins, BFL Canada and Scotiabank Lethbridge. Their contributions help support continued programming and opportunities for Blackfoot youth.

Blackfoot Confederacy thanks all sponsors, teams, volunteers and participants for their support and continued investment in Blackfoot youth!







August 2026

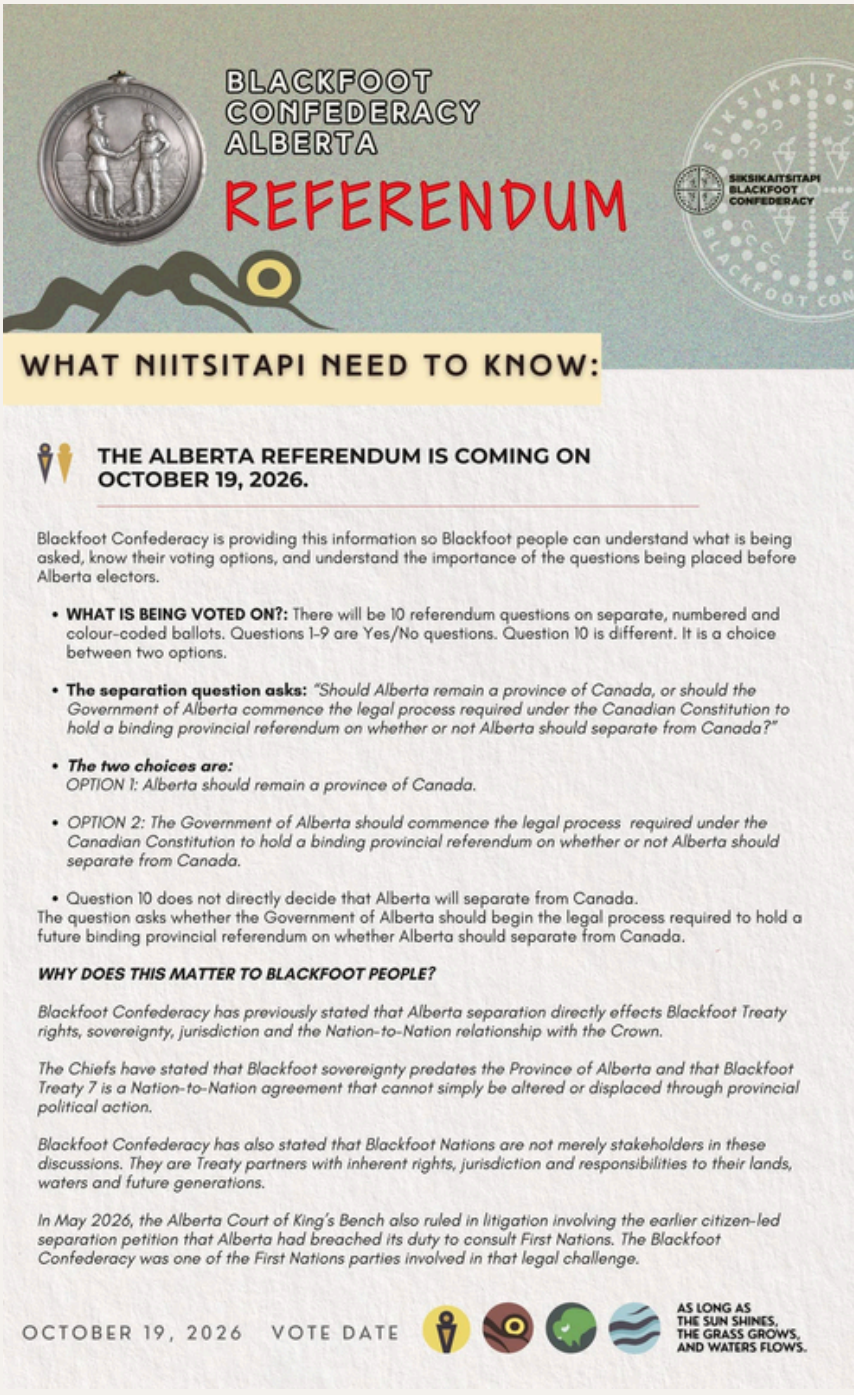
Alberta Referendum 2026 | What Niitsitapi Need to Know

August 31, 2026 | Blackfoot Confederacy has launched a weekly voter information campaign for Blackfoot Niitsitapi in the lead-up to the Alberta referendum on October 19, 2026. The campaign will provide clear information each week about the referendum questions, voting eligibility, important dates, voting options and what Blackfoot people need to know as Treaty people.

There will be 10 referendum questions on separate, numbered and colour-coded ballots. Questions 1 through 9 are Yes/No questions, while Question 10 asks whether Alberta should remain a province of Canada or whether the Government of Alberta should begin the legal process required to hold a future binding provincial referendum on separation. A Yes vote on Question 10 would not itself separate Alberta from Canada, and Elections Alberta states that the result is not binding.

For Niitsitapi, Alberta's constitutional future raises important questions about sovereignty, Treaty rights, jurisdiction, lands, waters and the Nation-to-Nation relationship with the Crown. Blackfoot Nations and Treaty relationships existed long before the Province of Alberta, and Blackfoot Confederacy has maintained that Blackfoot Nations are Treaty partners, not simply stakeholders, in decisions affecting their lands, rights and future. In May 2026, the Alberta Court of King's Bench also ruled in litigation involving the earlier separation petition that Alberta had breached its duty to consult First Nations.

Eligible voters must be Canadian citizens, 18 years of age or older and ordinarily resident in Alberta. Advance voting is scheduled for October 13–17, with Referendum Day taking place Monday, October 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eligible electors can also vote by mail through the Special Ballot process, with applications closing October 9 and completed ballots required to be received by Elections Alberta before 5:00 p.m. on October 16. Blackfoot Confederacy will continue sharing information throughout the campaign to help Niitsitapi understand the referendum, their voting options and the importance of participating in the process.





Honouring One of Our Own | Cody Angeline Small Legs

June 2026 — Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council congratulated Cody Angeline Small Legs (Yellow Wings) of Piikani Nation on completing her Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies with a Minor in Indigenous Governance from the University of Lethbridge.

Cody joined Blackfoot Confederacy in 2023 as a post secondary summer student and has since served in several roles, including Administrative Assistant with Intergovernmental Relations and as one of the inaugural Blackfoot Guardians. She now serves as an Environmental and Guardianship Support Technician, supporting Blackfoot stewardship, environmental monitoring and land based priorities.

As the first person in her family to graduate from university, Cody's accomplishment is an important milestone. Her education, combined with her three years of service with Blackfoot Confederacy, reflects her commitment to professional development and to supporting Siksikaitsitapi priorities. Blackfoot Confederacy extends its congratulations to Cody and wishes her continued success in the years ahead.

Congratulations are also extended to all Niitsitapi graduates across Blackfoot Territory reaching important educational milestones this year.

Whats Next:

- Blackfoot Confederacy Conference - Host Nation: Siksika Nation. Westin Calgary Airport September 21-23, 2026
- BFC AGM September 21, 2026 Calgary Westin Airport

Blackfoot Confederacy Welcomed New Staff to the Team

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council continued to strengthen its team with new staff and leadership supporting health, housing, administration, Jordan's Principle, Indigenous health benefits and governance. New team members include:

- Marla Wolf Leg — Administrative Officer
- Buffy Bromley-Grier — Health Coordinator
- Susan Solway (Naatowohkkaiyo) — Housing Initiatives Officer
- Dustin Walter (Ksk'staakiinna – Beaver Chief) — Health Director
- Melissa Dixon — Jordan's Principle Coordinator
- Keely Wadsworth — NIHB Navigator
- Kirby Smith — Director, Siksikaitsitapi Ohkin'niinaiks Society

These appointments bring additional experience and capacity to Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council and support ongoing work across the four Blackfoot Nations. Together, the team contributes to strengthening programs, services and organizational priorities for Siksikaitsitapi.

Our Team (August 2026)

Leadership Team:

- Kimmy Shade, Chief Executive Officer (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Dr. Genevieve Fox, Director of Education, Language and Culture (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Shirley Crop Eared Wolf, Director of Childrens Services and IELCC (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Kirby Smith, Director of Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society (Piikani Nation)
- Dustin Walter, Director of Health (Amskapi Pikuni)
- Jodi Running Rabbit, Executive Administrative Officer (Siksika Nation)
- Theoren Royal, Corporate Affairs and Communications Manager (Siksika Nation)
- Patti Currie, Political Strategist - Blackfoot Chiefs Society (Montana First Nation)
- Ryan Crosschild - Blackfoot Chiefs Society (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Justin Bruised Head, Enviroment and Blackfoot Guardians Coordinator (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Shane Breaker, Economic Development Project Manager (Siksika Nation)
- Susan Solway, Housing Initiatives Officer (Siksika Nation)

Service Area, Project Coordination and Support:

- Andrea Yellowhorn, Justice (Piikani Nation)
- Cassie Ayoungman, Promotion Coordinator, Destination Blackfoot (Siksika Nation)
- Travis Yellow Wings, Administrative Officer (Piikani Nation)
- Nitasha Scout, Administrative and Cultural Liaison Officer (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Marla Wolfleg, Adminstrative Officer (Siksika Nation)
- Buffy Bromley-Grier, Health Coordinator (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Melissa Dixon, Jordans Principle Coordinator (Siksika Nation)
- Keely Wadsworth, NIHB Navigator (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

Advisory Roles:

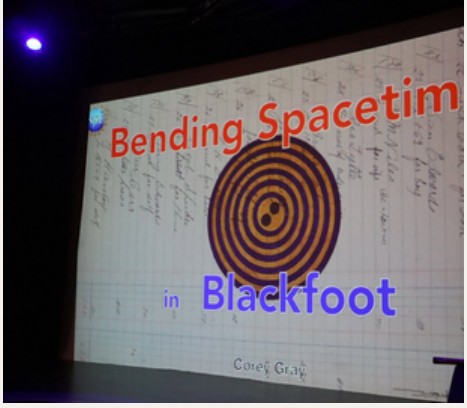
- Charles Weasel Head, Health Consultant Advisor (Kainai-Blood Tribe)

Office and Building Management:

- Cheryl Many Grey Horses, Office Assistant/Reception (Kainai-Blood Tribe)
- Daryl Many Grey Horses, Maintainence Technician (Kainai-Blood Tribe)













BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY
TRIBAL COUNCIL

587.727.1100

www.blackfootconfederacy.ca

PO Box 916
Stand-Off, AB
T0L 1Y0

facebook.com/siksikaitsitapi

instagram.com/destinationblackfoot