

Introduction

Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) improves the quality of life of First Nations through mutually beneficial partnerships with community organizations and industry. Opportunities for improved living are accessed through programs and services in health, safety, economic development, education, and financial investments in the broader community. Acting as a representative body for seven First Nations, STC delivers programs and services to those living in member communities and Saskatoon. More information is attached.

Purpose

This document outlines the priority issues that formulate the Saskatoon Tribal Council's strategic initiatives based on the needs of the communities and people it represents. This document is intended to inform political parties of these issues and challenge them to provide a written response on where their respective parties and leadership stand on these important First Nation community issues.

Historically many First Nations people have been uninformed on how modern politics affects their quality of life and have faced barriers to participate in the electoral process. With recent changes in voting registration policy to increase voting accessibility, First Nations people are more able to become involved in mainstream politics. Under-represented communities are now exercising democratic rights in mainstream politics as witnessed in the 2015 Federal election.

Building on the momentum of increased participation by the Indigenous community in the 2015 federal election, STC has taken the initiative to act as a non-partisan support for the voter registration process, and be a catalyst for political information to help First Nation members make informed decisions on who they will support in the 2016 Saskatchewan provincial election.

The initiative targets new voters, particularly students and those living in the Saskatoon core. As such, Saskatoon Tribal Council is proactively working to:

- 1) engage all political parties to participate in this non-partisan initiative to mobilize the local First Nations community to vote, and;
- 2) ensure all First Nations people from under-represented demographic backgrounds become represented in the provincial democratic structure.

Issues

The priority issues that derive from STC's own strategic plan, and are real and relevant to the communities the tribal council represents and First Nations living in the City of Saskatoon, be it aware or not.

The issues center around four main strategic pillars:

Education

Health

Safety

Economic Development

Within the four strategic pillars are the specific issues, which are as follows:

Housing

Our strategic objective is to increase the inventory of healthy, affordable and available housing for First Nations people. To meet this objective STC requires supportive partnerships with the City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan and the Federal Government. In our view, the province plays a pivotal role in enacting supportive legislation and regulations to Indigenous housing strategies, along with financial and lifestyle assistance for First Nations, particularly students, youth and single parents.

Also, the rate of homelessness, particularly in Saskatoon is growing each year and is becoming a major concern to STC, the City of Saskatoon and the health region. STC's objective is to work in partnership with all levels of government, the health region and other community organizations to eliminate homelessness and the social ills that result from this issue.

What is the position of each political party on First Nations housing, and more importantly its ideas, policies or initiatives to work in partnership to eliminate this social problem?

Education

STC supports not only traditional K to 12 and post-secondary education, but life long learning as a quality of life initiative. Specifically, STC's objective is to increase the high school graduation rate among its community members to meet and exceed average provincial graduation rates by the year 2020. This will

require special initiatives and partnerships with municipalities, school boards and the Provincial Government.

What specifically is the policy platform of each political party on this issue?

Health

Health and quality of life is one of the most important strategic initiatives of the Tribal Council. One of the primary objectives of STC is to improve the overall health status of children and families to that of the Canadian average by the year 2020. The specific health status issues to be addressed by the strategy are, but not limited to: obesity; smoking; youth mental health; food security; diabetes and addictions.

To meet this objective STC believes a critical component is the establishment of a Chronic Disease Management Centre in Saskatoon.

What is the policy or reaction of each political party regarding the support of the establishment of such a centre that focuses on First Nation health and quality of life related issues?

As demonstrated in the Kitaskinaw report, Aboriginal delivered front line services are more effective at reaching and engaging First Nations populations. However disparity in funding for these same services exist between First Nations, provincial and municipal programs. For example, STC is implementing innovative projects such as a mobile bridge program to deliver HIV/AIDS testing and education within the province's central region.

What is the stance of each political party regarding disparity in funding for First Nations delivered preventative and intervention health services?

Justice

It is a known fact that First Nations people, especially youth are grossly over represented within the provincial justice and correctional systems. STC believes that new initiatives and new ideas are required to greatly reduce the number of youth, adults and families in contact with the judicial system.

To meet this objective STC believes that initiatives and specialized programs aimed at reducing youth who are at high risk to become involved in the judicial system is required.

What is the position of each political party to this objective and what ideas or specific programs or initiatives would each political party be prepared to implement to respond to this challenge?

Gaming/CDC

Over the past seven years, the Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation (DDCDC) has invested over 30 million dollars back to Saskatchewan by providing community projects with funds for sport, recreation, culture, justice, Elder and youth programming and countless other essential initiatives. As a profitable First Nations business entity that gives back, it is imperative that the integrity of the current CDC structure is maintained throughout the lifespan of the gaming framework agreement.

What is the policy position of each political party regarding non-disruption of Community Development Corporation sharing?

STC is of the position that a new Indigenous civic community and recreation centre is built in the City of Saskatoon to provide First Nation and Indigenous specific programs and services. This new civic centre would replace the current White Buffalo Youth Lodge on 20th street in Saskatoon.

What is the position of each political party in support of the establishment of such a civic centre and what level of partnership would each political party commit?

Conclusion

The purpose is to inform the Parties with the Saskatoon Tribal Council member community priorities so they can respond accordingly. The leadership of the Saskatoon Tribal Council is challenging all political parties to review and submit in writing to the Office of the Tribal Chief of the Saskatoon Tribal Council its official policy platform response to these First Nation focused election issues.