
Release

For Immediate Release
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\$2.25 MILLION COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH MANTO SIPI CREE NATION

Pilot Project to Assist in Determining Future All-Season Road Route

Today, the East Side Road Authority (ESRA) and Manto Sipi Cree Nation announced the signing of a \$2.25 million Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that will provide jobs, training and economic opportunities for local residents in preparation for construction of an all-season road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

“Providing jobs, training and economic development opportunities for east side communities is a fundamental objective of the all-season road project,” said Eric Robinson, Minister responsible for the East Side Road Authority. “This agreement will help to ensure that the residents of Manto Sipi Cree Nation participate in and benefit from the development of an all-season road in the region.”

“This agreement means a great deal to our community,” said Oliver Okemow, Chief of Manto Sipi Cree Nation. “It allows our people to contribute to the development of an all-season road while, at the same time, providing jobs, training, and other spin-off opportunities to local residents. This is a very valuable project for our community and we look forward to working with the Government of Manitoba and the East Side Road Authority.”

“Over the last number of months, we have been working with Chief and Council to establish a Community Benefits Agreement for the community,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of ESRA. “This agreement will ensure the people of Manto Sipi Cree Nation’s role in the development of the all-season road. We look forward to working with Chief, Council and the community, as we move forward with this important project.”

Under the agreement, Manto Sipi Cree Nation will undertake exploratory clearing and clearing of access roads to assist in determining the viability and potential alignment for a future all-season road. The agreement also establishes a construction training program that will provide training opportunities for basic and essential construction skills and skilled labourer or heavy equipment operator training related to gravel crushing, right-of-way clearing and road construction for up to thirty training positions.

Under the terms of the agreement, Manto Sipi Cree Nation will be required to establish a separate corporate entity to undertake the pilot project and related activities. ESRA will perform project and contract administration services for Manto Sipi Cree Nation in order to assist the First Nation in project management, mentoring and ensuring appropriate oversight.

The total value of the three-year agreement, including the training provided by ESRA, is estimated to a maximum of \$2,250,000. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting out the basic principles of the CBA was signed on June 11, 2010.

To date, ESRA has signed a Community Benefits Agreement with Berens River, Bloodvein, Hollow Water, Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake, and St. Theresa Point First Nations. Discussions are ongoing with other east side communities on future agreements.

ESRA is currently undertaking a Large Area Transportation Network Study (LATNS) to examine potential route options for an all-season road in the northern portion of the east side region. Recently, Round Two Community Meetings were held throughout the region to receive further community input on various potential route options under consideration. Feedback received from the communities will be considered and included in the final LATNS study, which is expected to be completed with a recommendation for an all-season road route by the end of 2010.

For more information on the East Side Transportation Initiative, please visit the www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca or contact 945-4900 or toll-free 1-866-356-6355.

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