

MEMBERTOU TRIP

Trip - purpose, agenda / content, itinerary / actual trip description, action / follow up items, recommendations, others.

The Membertou Trip was charged to the Adverse Effects funding - what is also required: how did this trip resolve and/or diminish Adverse Effects on the people?

The purpose of this trip is to educate and inform the Council and either Lloyd or Vicky, as managers, about the steps and tough decisions Membertou Council and management had to make to get where they are. Eliminating their deficit suggests cuts across the board including eliminating discretionary jobs. As secondary purpose was to gather and compile this information for presentation to the community members at the next band meeting.

Membertou Trip

Introduction

Fox Lake Cree Nation has endured many years of living with the negative effects of hydro development within its territory. The Keeyask Generation Project represents an opportunity for Fox Lake to begin the process of reversing these negative impacts and to utilize hydro development to assist in the healing and restoration of a community's governance, identity and sustainability.

To achieve these goals, it is necessary for FLCN to identify areas that will initiate this change. The governance of the community becomes a very important area and FLCN will have to revisit not only its governance system but the way that it is understood and relates to the community both socially and economically.

Purpose:

Fox Lake is currently under a "custom" process which means that there is to set term for Chief and Council. Council members are removed and selected by members of the First Nation at a community meeting. All decisions impacting the community are handled primarily through the Home office located in Bird. Fox Lake has established a sub-office located in Winnipeg, which employs staff to negotiate with Manitoba Hydro on its behalf.

Within the past year, Council has provided direction that all programming will be implemented at the local level and programming will not be a function of its Winnipeg negotiations office. Once negotiations with Manitoba Hydro are completed, the function of the Winnipeg office will cease and all implementation will be carried out locally either at Bird or Gillam.

Part of this includes the need for FLCN to examine how it will reorganize itself both as the government and administrative body for FLCN. With the various economic opportunities that would be available through Keeyask and potentially other future hydro developments, FLCN is exploring the development of a corporate strategy.

FLCN felt it was helpful to network and learn from other First Nations that have already taken great steps to reorganize itself and achieve success. Fox Lake has undertaken steps in preparation to leverage and maximize opportunities and benefits from future hydro development through the development of a corporate strategy. In developing this strategy, Fox Lake has examined the success of various other First Nations. The Membertou First Nation has been very successful in transforming business opportunities into reality for its membership. Fox Lake Cree Nation initiated discussions with Membertou and felt it was necessary to also meet and discuss with Membertou First Nation the corporate strategy it utilized in achieving their success.

As part of Fox Lake's preparation to leverage and maximize opportunities and benefits from future hydro development through the development of a sustainable corporate strategy, Fox Lake has been in discussions with the Membertou First Nation located just outside of Sydney, Nova Scotia. The Membertou Council has agreed to meet with the Fox Lake Council to present their corporate strategy and the issues they had to address in implementation.

Agenda:

On November 18, the trip and delegation was approved by the membership at and on November 28 – 30, a contingent of Fox Lake members and staff attended at Membertou First Nation in Nova Scotia. Chief Shirley Neepin and Councillor Lena Spence-Hanson attended along with Home Office Director of Operations, Victoria Henderson, Housing Manager – Sarah Henderson and Manager of Impact Assessment Unit, Negotiations Office – Loretta Ross.

The group were met by the Communications people of Membertou who escorted them to a meeting with the Chief, members of his Council and CEO's of Membertou's Band Office and Corporations. The meeting was held during the evening and the respective parties exchanged some background on their communities and the Membertou Council prepared a power point presentation for Fox Lake. The presentation detailed not only background on the community itself, but included the efforts it used in getting to where they are today. Some of those included:

- Tough personnel decisions and changes
- Creating relationships with City of Sydney

- Setting up a corporate division
- Running the office as a business vs. social office
- Identifying top priorities

During the next day a tour of their facilities including their VLT, Entertainment Centre; Restaurant and under-construction convention centre; school; band office and community were provided and the Fox Lake met with the respective “managers” of Membertou to exchange ideas.

Funding:

The Negotiations office received approval from Manitoba Hydro to fund this trip to a maximum of \$15K and was to be charged to AEA.

Fox Lake believes this to have been a very worthwhile investment as it will support exposure of the Council to a successful approach to wealth generation as well as to the capacity requisites of a sound organization i.e. governance, management, administration and service delivery.

A band meeting was held on November 2, 2011 at which the Council informed the community of the trip and sought community approval.

On March 29, 2012 the community was presented with a power point presentation on the trip and each member provided a personal account of their personal observations and experience.



Membertou
Trip

November 28 – November 30, 2011

Participants

- Chief and Council
- Victoria Henderson, Director of Operations
- Sarah Henderson, Housing Manager
- Loretta Ross, Manager of Impacts Assessment Office

Meeting and Tour

- Met with Chief and 4 Councillors
 - CEO of Corporate Department
 - CEO of First Nation (Band Manager)
 - Director of Education
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- Tour of Infrastructure and community

Background

- Belong to the Mi'kmaq Nation
- Located right beside the city of Sydney Nova Scotia
- Urban First Nation with population of over 1276 people
- Indian Act Band with 1 Chief and 12 Councillors elected every 2 years

Governance - Chief & Council

- Few changes in Council in 28 years
- Chief Terry Paul – 28 years
 - Chief and Council meet twice monthly to discuss Membertou's future plans, resolve current issues and voice thoughts and ideas of community members –they meet until the Agenda is complete

RESULT: consistency, efficiency and effectiveness

Governance

- Transparency and Accountability
 - Financials shared with employees and membership
 - Policies on authorizations; signing
 - NO BAND MEETINGS
 - Prepare a newsletter weekly that provides membership with updates of all activities
 - Have community forums or workshops where community has input

RESULT: positive morale overall

Process of Change

- Hired a young Membertou lawyer back in the community to become the CEO and assist in bringing change to community
- Recruitment of Band Members (who left community)
 - Functional Administration & Departments (Senior Advisor, Executive Director, CEO, COO)
 - Results in Band being operated as a business
 - Earned respect from external parties in government and industry
 - Qualified employees – tough decisions

Process of Change

- ISO - 9000 (International Organization for Standardization)
 - Set of 8 quality management standards
 - First Aboriginal government in the world to continue to meet these standards
 - Results in profitable partnerships with private industries
 - Once they attained ISO status they had gained credibility with business and industry

Process of Change

- Setup a Corporate Division
 - Focus on creating and enhancing business relationships
 - Creating wealth and development for Membertou
 - Created partnerships internationally (USA/ Spain) as well as within Canada

Health, Wealth and Infrastructure

- Building Wealth- focus is on “what will generate revenue”
 - Vlt's – primary source of revenue
 - IT storage facility
- Education
 - Top priority
 - Empower and encourage staff and students
 - Results in higher number of high school graduates

Housing

- Housing
 - Majority is Home Ownership
 - Band owned units dealt with by C&C
 - No Housing Department/Manager

Current Position

- doubled its land base since 1984
- Have a multi-million dollar Trade and Convention Centre,
- Entertainment Centre – Bingo Hall
- Kiju's Restaurant
- Currently constructing a hotel
- High employment rate – (80% employment)

Observations:

- I absolutely love how they always put a positive spin on everything!!! They are very positive and inspiring people.