



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reclaiming the Michif Language: The MN-S launches trailblazing Michif Language Program

Saskatoon, January 22, 2020 — The United Nations declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages, which helped to raise public awareness of the perilous state of many Indigenous languages in Canada. For the Métis, the Michif language faces extinction if decisive action is not taken soon. Just how high are the stakes? According to Canada's most recent census data (2016), there are only about 640 people living in Canada who speak Michif, as either a first or second language.

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) is taking strategic action to reverse the Michif language downward trend. Today, President Glen McCallum announced the The Future of Michif Program, a multi-faceted educational initiative designed to get more Métis speaking their traditional language. “When I go to my hometown, I know I belong because I can hear my own language and I can be me. We have to implement language preservation because it is so important for our people. When we know our language, we shall never forget who we are as Métis. Identity, language, and culture are important to our Métis Citizens,” says President McCallum.

The MN-S is partnering with *Canadian Geographic* on The Future of Michif Program. Through this historic partnership, the MN-S and Canadian Geographic will collaborate on “The Future of Michif”, a multiplatform engagement program that will celebrate Michif and Métis culture, while building national capacity to educate and inspire the next generation of Métis youth to learn their heritage language.

Through this program, *Canadian Geographic* will leverage its expertise and reach to elevate the MN-S' important work within the national consciousness. Elements of the project will include a Michif Language Speakers Bureau to promote and teach Michif; an online Michif language conversation forum on the MN-S website; a free, summer camp-style program for Métis youth focusing on Michif language learning during the 2020 Batoche Days celebration, as well a Michif language training program for educators. The *Canadian Geographic* magazine will also feature a story on the Michif language with an associated poster map to reach millions of Canadians.

For Gilles Gagnier, Publisher and Chief Operating Officer of Canadian Geographic Enterprises, The Future of Michif Program provides an exciting opportunity to support the Métis People of Saskatchewan in growing the number of Michif speakers and helping Canadians learn more about the language. “Our experience in publishing the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada was instrumental in guiding *Canadian Geographic* towards and upon its first steps on the path to reconciliation,” says Gagnier. “We are proud to continue this important journey, in partnership with the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, as they fulfill the historic dream of Louis Riel in building their nation.”

The Future of Michif Program affirms MN-S's commitment to building a stronger path for future generations through education – a path built on trust, respect, understanding, acceptance and forgiveness.

About the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) is a government that represents Métis citizens in Saskatchewan. The Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA) is the governing authority of MN-S, made up of the Presidents of Métis Locals and the Provincial Métis Council. The MNLA has the authority to enact legislation, regulations, rules and resolutions governing the affairs and conduct of the Métis in Saskatchewan.

About Canadian Geographic

Canadian Geographic (in English) and *Géographica* (in French), are published by The Royal Canadian Geographical Society and highlight the latest geographic news and trends. *Canadian Geographic* has featured award-winning journalism focused on our cultural and natural heritage since it was founded in 1930 and is Canada's 2nd most read full-size magazine with over 3.2 million readers per issue.

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