



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community approach to homelessness gives Battleford Lighthouse a reprieve

September 28, 2021 – Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S), the City of North Battleford, Battleford Agency Tribal Council (BATC), and the Lighthouse Supported Living are collaborating on a local effort to help address homelessness in the Battlefords. The partnership will ensure the homelessness service remains accessible beyond MN–S funding for the Lighthouse serving the Battlefords, which ends September 30, 2021.

The Lighthouse has agreed to lease the North Battleford Shelter to BATC to operate a shelter over the next six months while evaluating their service model to become a more community-based organization with community partner focused programming.

In March of this year, the Lighthouse did not qualify for homelessness funding and was at risk of closing the shelter in the North Battleford location. At that time, MN–S stepped in with its commitment to fund services to the most vulnerable. The North Battleford Lighthouse Supported Living emergency shelter was able to remain open until the end of September.

Over the last six months, multiple community leaders in and around the Battlefords have been discussing a collaborative and achievable plan to respond to homelessness come October 1, 2021.

“The City of North Battleford is very thankful for our community-minded partners that have worked together to develop an innovative approach to continue this needed service for the homeless in the Battlefords,” stated North Battleford Mayor David Gillan.

MN–S Housing Minister Ryan Carriere said, “Homelessness prevention can not be done successfully by one operator from outside the community. A community-based partnership approach is more effective in achieving our goal of eliminating homelessness.”

BATC has stepped up, working tirelessly to assume the full operations of the homeless shelter in North Battleford, with short notice. Community programming, outreach, partnerships, and a strong strategic plan will improve the lives of the shelter’s guests and the day-to-day operations.

“It is with pride that we have worked with our Elders to create a new name, ‘Miywasin Kikinaw - a beautiful place’. It is our hope to work with clients on a case-by-case basis, while focusing on health, wellness, and future transitioning. This has been close to our hearts. We have provided funding to the Lighthouse for over a decade. It makes sense to all of us at BATC to lead a new, more innovative approach to addressing homelessness in the Battlefords,” said Battleford Agency Tribal Council Chiefs.

Over the next six months, the Lighthouse Board will be working on strengthening community partnerships in the Battlefords and Saskatoon, evaluating current homeless programming, improving reporting and transparency practices, and developing a strong, long-term sustainable plan to ensure the risk of closing the doors in the future will be mitigated.

The Lighthouse Board Chair Jerome Hepfner said, “Building strong partnerships within the community is essential to ensure the needs are being properly served. We are committed to evolving the services to support the Battlefords and surrounding area in the best way possible through these partnerships.”

A community impact meeting will be held in the coming weeks to bring together all housing and community service providers to understand what programs the Lighthouse may have to suspend and establish a coordinated community effort to fill gaps that may exist in and around the Battlefords resulting from the transition.

MN–S Housing Director Christena Konrad said, “This meeting is to make sure the community is aware of challenges and the temporary change. It will allow all community partners to work together and fill gaps that may remain from the transition. The meeting will also uncover duplication of services or identify programming that has a low impact on the community overall.”

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About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is the recognized government of the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan. MN–S is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values, and language. MN–S works to advance Métis rights and recognition. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and educational interests of more than 80,000 Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional, and provincial levels.

<https://metisnationsk.com/>

About Battleford Agency Tribal Council

Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs Inc. (BATC) is a tribal council that was formed in the spring of 2007 with the original first nations of Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Moosomin First Nation, Red Pheasant Cree Nation, Sweetgrass First Nation, and

Stoney Knoll First Nation signing the Convention Act. Saulteaux First Nation joined in 2009 and Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head Lean Man First Nation in 2014. Historically, BATC was created to facilitate advisory services to the areas of housing (community planning), economic development, band governance (development of policies and procedures), financial management, justice, and sports and recreation. Social development, employment and training, industry relations, and investments have been added to the list of services to date.

<https://www.batc.ca/about.html>

@BattlefordsAgencyTribalChief

About the Lighthouse North Battleford

The Lighthouse North Battleford is an extension of The Lighthouse Supported Living based in Saskatoon and has been operating a homeless shelter and other services in North Battleford since 2014, including a stabilization shelter and Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) in partnership with Battle River Treaty 6 Health Centre (BRT6) along with some short-term housing.

About the City of North Battleford

The City of North Battleford is a community of 14,420 people located in Saskatchewan's northwest region. North Battleford endeavours to work collaboratively with nearby municipalities, rural communities, and First Nations to provide essential services and support the health and well-being of the region.

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