



The MNO South West Region brings together Métis citizens and four Community Councils across southwestern Ontario, led by one PCMNO Regional Councillor and four elected Presidents, with administrative support from the Regional Administrator.

Regional News

Explore the latest regional updates and activities for the last quarter.



Welcome to our first ever quarterly South West Region, regional newsletter. In an effort to keep everyone informed and connected on the happenings and news from within our region, which includes the following councils - Clear Waters, Grand River, Niagara Region and Thames Bluewater Councils, we will be publishing this newsletter on a quarterly basis.

As the Regional Councillor for the South West Region, formerly known as Region 9, I am thrilled to see this new tool for communication being launched. It is hoped that this newsletter will serve as a way to deepen your connection to your Métis community within our region. As Métis living outside our traditional territories, I often hear that people do not feel connected to their community. It is hoped that this will be lessened with this newsletter as your volunteer councils are very busy hosting events throughout the year and would love to see you at these events.

As for the region, we are busy working with both the councils and the broader MNO to support and deliver strong Métis programs, structures, and governance throughout the region. I recently attended the Riel Flag Raising and Lobbying day at Queens Park, where I participated in the effort to lobby several key MPP's on our 2026 Budget asks and Métis awareness. Below is a picture of me MPP Guy Bourgouin and Region 2 Regional Councillor Alicia Brink.



Well that's it for now. I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and hope everyone takes time to enjoy family and friends.

If you ever have any questions about the MNO, its structure, our drive for self-government, the constitutional process, or anything really, just reach out to me at kathleena@metisnation.org and I will do my best to answer it.

South West Regional Rendezvous — Returning September 2026!

This past September, the South West Region hosted our first Regional Rendezvous! It was a day filled with family fun, cultural demonstrations and celebration, and community connection. Citizens enjoyed archery, crafts, music, a vendor market, and traditional games, along with plenty of laughter, good food, and new friendships. Photos from the South West Rendezvous can be viewed [here](#).



We are thrilled by the positive feedback from citizens, families, vendors, and volunteers who joined us for this special gathering. Your enthusiasm and participation made it clear; the Rendezvous is here to stay!

The Regional Leadership Team is excited to announce that we'll be hosting another South West Regional Rendezvous next year, and this time, we'll also be celebrating Powley Day as part of the festivities!

Stay tuned for the official date and location announcement in early 2026 and mark your calendars for another unforgettable day of Métis culture, community, and celebration!

Koffee with Kathleen

PCMNO South West Regional Councillor Kathleen Anderson is opening her virtual door to citizens every this quarter year for casual "coffee talks". These are friendly Zoom conversations where you can ask questions about the MNO, our regional work, Métis heritage, the constitution process (including what is a constitution and why is it so important for us), or anything else that matters to you. You can submit a question in advance or bring it to the meeting and join the discussion.

Our last coffee talk was held on November 3rd, and the next one is scheduled for February 10th. Watch your email in the new year for the Zoom invitation. All South West Region citizens are very welcome to attend!



First Region-Wide Elections

The South West Region hosted MNO's first ever region-wide elections in November and December. In an effort to increase voter turnout and citizen engagement in our electoral processes, the four councils within the South West Region got together and agreed to coordinate their election dates and terms. Going forward, every three years, all the councils within our region will be holding elections at a similar time. I congratulate the vision of those Presidents who participated in this decision. It shows great leadership to work cooperatively this way within the region. It is efforts like this that is helping to build a strong region, to build a strong voice within the MNO, and to build a strong awareness of our presence here on these non-traditional lands in the south.

Click [here](#) to see the results of the elections in each of the councils. Note that the Grand River Métis Council's election was delayed due to the Canada Post strike. The election has *just* concluded (December 4th), and the results are available below.

[Clear Waters Métis Council's Election Results](#)

[Niagara Region Métis Council's Election Results](#)

[Thames Bluewater Métis Council's Election Results](#)

Grand River Métis Council's Election Results

Holiday Greetings from the Regional Leadership Team



As the year comes to a close, the South West Regional Leadership Team and all the Regional Councils would like to extend our warmest wishes to every Métis citizen, family, and community member across the region.

May this holiday season bring you peace, joy, and time spent with loved ones. We are grateful for the many ways our citizens, council, and volunteers have come together this year to strengthen our communities, celebrate our culture, and support one another.

As we look ahead to a new year filled with opportunity and connection, we wish you a wonderful and safe holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you at upcoming gatherings and events in 2026!

Please share photos and stories about how you celebrated Christmas or New Years in a way that is distinctly Métis for you. We know there are unique memories that speak to your Métis heritage and we would be very interested in hearing them. You can submit them to southwestr@metisnation.org. Some of these stories and pictures will be shared in our next newsletter, so please share and stay tuned!

Merry Christmas, happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

For printable trilingual Christmas Cards developed by the MNO Language Team (like the one above), click [here](#).

A Message from Jim Tolles, South West Captain of the Hunt Liaison

Allo! I'm Jim Tolles, Captain of the Hunt Liaison for the South West Region. My Métis roots are from the Georgian Bay area in Region 7, through the Vasseur and Longlade families. I grew up living the Métis way of life — hunting, fishing, trapping, and learning by doing alongside my seven siblings.

I have been involved with the Métis Nation of Ontario for over 25 years, serving in roles such as Councillor, Senator, Traditional Knowledge Holder, and Captain of the Hunt in Region 8. In 2018, my family and I became caretakers of a historic trapline near Moon River and Twelve Mile Bay, a place where I continue to teach traditional harvesting and land-based skills.

I enjoy sharing Métis culture through hands-on learning, storytelling, and community events. I'm always happy to connect and support citizens who want to learn, teach, or explore our harvesting traditions.

I was gifted Métis tobacco seeds from the Vienna Museum, which I have dried and prepared. If you would like some, I am happy to share and can arrange to drop them off through your local council.

I am here to support our South West Region citizens. You can reach me at COTHLregion9@metisnation.org.

Maarsi,
Jim Tolles, Captain of the Hunt Liaison, South West Region

A Message from Kaitlyn Anderson-Mitchell, South West Region Youth Representative

Taanishi! My name is Kaitlyn Anderson-Mitchell, and I am the South West Region Youth Representative on the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council. I am a proud Métis woman descended from the Desmarais, Bercier, Anderson, and Erasmus families, with roots in St. Andrew's Parish, Red River and Northern Manitoba, although I've lived in the South West Region all my life.

I'm passionate about Métis culture and enjoy beading, horseback riding, sewing, and reading. Before stepping into my current role, I served for six years as the Youth Representative on the Thames Bluewater Métis Council.

I look forward to supporting youth across our region, building connections, and helping create spaces where Métis youth feel seen, heard, and proud of who they are. You can reach me by email at: MNOYCR9@metisnation.org

Community Council Updates and Activities

Explore the latest regional updates and activities for the last quarter.

Clear Water Métis Council

Louis Riel Day Celebration

On November 15, 2025, the Clear Waters Métis Council, in partnership with the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Public Library (HPL), proudly hosted the first-ever Louis Riel Day Celebration at the Hamilton Central Library. The day brought together Métis and non-Métis citizens alike for storytelling, music, exhibits, and learning, creating an inspiring and inclusive community event that welcomed over 300 attendees throughout the day.

The celebration featured a lineup of activities, including Métis Children's Storytime and Youth Learning Sessions with Amanda Clement and HPL staff, a Métis Musical Journey by Nicholas Delbaere-Sawchuk (Youth Representative Heather Gross-Sheriff joined Nicholas on stage to jig), and a dynamic Métis 101 presentation by Council President Dana Robbins. Warm welcome remarks were also presented by RC Anderson as she joined CWMC in celebrating Riel Day. The afternoon also included a Métis encampment exhibit led by Niagara Region Métis Council President Derrick Pont.



Community feedback provided to the HPL was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the event as *“informative, respectful, and deeply moving.”* One attendee shared, *“This event was organized with great consideration and respect for Métis peoples and ways. The experiential learning opportunities for youth and elders truly reflected Métis ways of teaching and community.”*

The Hamilton Public Library expressed its gratitude for the leadership, collaboration, and spirit of the Clear Waters Métis Council, noting how the success of the day demonstrates the community’s growing interest in Métis culture, history, and traditions. The HPL team looks forward to continuing this meaningful partnership and hopes to host the celebration again next year.

Virtual Cocoa Making Workshop

On November 27th, 2025, citizens joined the Métis Family Wellbeing Team online for a festive Virtual Cocoa Making Workshop. Participants designed and assembled their own custom hot cocoa mason jars, perfect for a cozy treat or holiday gift.

Supplies were provided locally, and everyone enjoyed creating their jars while connecting virtually with other Métis citizens in the Hamilton and Brantford areas. The evening was filled with laughter, creativity, and a little winter magic.

Christmas Dinner & Party

On December 6th, 2025, the Métis Family Wellbeing Program welcomes registered citizens to a joyful Christmas Dinner & Party at the MNO's Hamilton office. Families will enjoy a free holiday meal, festive activities, and gifts for all ages.

The event will bring together citizens, staff, and volunteers to share in fun, food, and community spirit, a beautiful way to celebrate the holiday season surrounded by Métis kinship and warmth.

Registration for this event has closed. If you would like more information on opportunities like this, please reach out to Crystal Tufford at CrystalT@metisnation.org or by phone at 416-550-7858.

Clear Waters Winter Feast

The Clear Waters Métis Council Winter Feast will once again bring together the community for an evening of good food, joy, and celebration. Building on the success of last year's sold-out event, this year's feast will feature a gala dinner and community celebration that highlights Métis culture and connection.

Mark Saturday January 24th on your calendar, and watch your email for upcoming information and registration details. The information will come for the Clear Waters Métis Council email account. We can't wait to host another Winter Feast!

Grand River Métis Council

Grand River Métis Council – Newsletter Participation

The Grand River Métis Council did not share council updates or activities in this edition in order to respectfully adhere to the Council By-laws, Electoral Code, and established practices during an active election period.

We appreciate the community's understanding and support as the council upheld these commitments to ensure a fair, transparent, and impartial election process.

Election details are provided below for citizens wishing to learn more.

Grand River Métis Council Election

The Métis Nation of Ontario announced the Grand River Métis Council election on November 7th, 2025, in accordance with the Community Charter Agreement, By-laws, and Community Council Electoral Code.

Nominations opened on November 12th, 2025, and closed December 1st, 2025 at 4:00pm. Following the close of nominations on December 1, 2025, six (6) nominations were submitted to fill six (6) positions, and all were verified as candidates. Four (4) positions did not have nominations and remain vacant. As there were no contested positions and the council met quorum, there will be no voting in the election. Click here to view the [Official Election Results](#) released December 4th, 2025.

Niagara Region Métis Council

Louis Riel Day Flag Raisings

The Niagara Region Métis Council proudly hosted and participated in three Louis Riel Day flag-raising ceremonies this November, honouring the legacy of Métis leader Louis Riel and celebrating Métis heritage and culture.

The council partnered with the City of Thorold and the City of Welland to raise the Métis flag alongside community members, local leaders, and citizens. City delegates and President Derrick Pont shared words of recognition and support, honouring the contributions of Métis people.



The Welland flag raising took place at Town Square on Friday, November 14 at 9:30 a.m., followed by the City of Thorold's ceremony at 11:00 a.m. the same day. The council then hosted its own flag-raising event on Sunday, November 16th at the Niagara Region Métis Council Office in Thorold, where citizens gathered to reflect on Métis history, identity, and resilience. The event concluded with light refreshments and community connection. More photos from the events can be viewed on the council's [Facebook page](#).

Special thanks to all dignitaries, council members and volunteers whose efforts made these three commemorative events possible.

Niagara Region's Métis Youth Group: Learning, Connecting, and Building Skills

This year the Niagara Region Métis Youth Group (ages 13-17) enjoyed a series of fun and skill-building adventures, including mini golf, compass orienteering, and archery and axe throwing! Each event brought together Métis youth to learn new skills, challenge themselves, and connect with one another and their community.



Through these experiences, youth explored teamwork, confidence, and cultural connection in a supportive and welcoming environment. We're proud of everyone who came out to participate and look forward to even more exciting opportunities in the new year!

Maarsii to all the youth, families, and to the volunteer Youth Advisors, Derrick and Lisa, who continue to make this a group success. More photos of our youth in action can be found on the [Niagara Region Métis Council's Facebook page](#).



NRMC's Annual Harvest Dinner

The Niagara Region Métis Council hosted its annual Harvest Dinner on October 5th at the beautiful Ball's Falls Conservation Area, bringing together citizens, families, and friends to celebrate the season of gratitude.

It was a lovely afternoon filled with good food, laughter, and connection, as we gathered to give thanks for the harvest and the strength of our Métis community.

A heartfelt thank you to the council members, volunteers, and all who attended, including the dignitaries who joined us in sharing the special evening. Your presence and support made the event truly memorable.

At the close for another harvest season, we are reminded of the importance of community, culture, and coming together in gratitude.

NRMC's Election has Concluded

The Niagara Region Métis Council is pleased to share that council elections have concluded. Congratulations to Giselle Legiehn, who has been re-elected as the NRMC Women's Representative.



Giselle has proudly served with the Niagara Region Métis Council for over 15 years, dedicating her time to supporting Indigenous women in the community, fundraising, representing the council at local events, and celebrating and sharing Métis culture.

We want to extend our gratitude to all those who put their names forward to serve on council, your commitment and willingness to contribute to the Métis community are appreciated.

There are currently two vacant Councillor-at-large positions, which will be posted in December 2025.

Early Learning & Child Care Christmas Party

The Niagara Region Métis Council is excited to once again host its cherished ELCC Christmas Party, a festive gathering for registered Métis families with children ages 0–12.

This annual celebration brings together community, culture, and holiday joy with creative activities, delicious food, a Métis-themed story time featuring the ELCC's Christmas story illustrated by Métis children, and a special visit from Santa with gifts for the little ones.



This event continues to be a meaningful opportunity for Métis families in the Niagara Region to connect, celebrate, and build memories together. Registration has now closed, and we look forward to welcoming all registered families to this joyful celebration of culture, community, and holiday spirit!

Thames Bluewater Métis Council

Louis Riel Day Pancake Breakfast

On November 15th MNO’s Melissa Wojciechowski with the Community Wellbeing Program in partnership with Thames Bluewater Métis Council hosted a hybrid Pancake Breakfast in honour of Louis Riel Day. Citizens gathered both in-person and virtually to reflect on Louis Riel’s legacy and the ongoing importance of Métis rights, culture, and identity.



Those attending in person enjoyed freshly made pancakes, prepared by dedicated council members and volunteers, who helped create an atmosphere of connection, comfort, and Métis hospitality. For those joining virtually, pancake mix was sent to their homes, allowing everyone to participate and make pancakes from home, creating a shared experience across distances.

It was a morning filled with gratitude, thoughtful conversation, and a shared sense of community spirit. A heartfelt thank you to all council organizers, pancake makers, volunteers, and citizens who made this event so special.

Canning Workshop at Growing Chefs

On November 30th, 2025, the Thames Bluewater Métis Council hosted a Canning and Preserves Workshop at The Grove at Western Fair District in partnership with Growing Chefs Ontario. Participants learned valuable food preservation techniques to support local and sustainable food practices through the winter months.

This hands-on workshop was informative, engaging, and full of teamwork as participants came together to prepare homemade preserves. The council thanks Growing Chefs for sharing their expertise, and all volunteers, and citizens and guests who joined in for this fun and educational afternoon.

Your Voice Matters.

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