



## **SCEDC JOINS FORCES WITH FUTURPRENEUR TO SUPPORT FIRST NATION ENTREPRENEURS**

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**ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB** — The Southern Chiefs' Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) and Futurpreneur Canada will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today to combine efforts to support young, aspiring business owners from Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) member Nations, Grand Chief Jerry Daniels announced today.

"We created the SCEDC to strengthen and enhance the economic base of our member Nations, because we know First Nation business owners have to overcome systemic obstacles," said Grand Chief Daniels. "I am confident this new partnership will help to break down those barriers and biases."

The two parties will sign the MOU that will see Futurpreneur share information and resources with youth from SCO's 34 member communities, including information on upcoming training and outreach events. Futurpreneur will also designate a contact person in Manitoba for SCEDC to refer southern First Nation youth for support to help them launch businesses.

Grand Chief Daniels noted SCEDC will help to connect youth committees, boards, and initiatives with Futurpreneur and their programs, and the two organizations will work together to develop specific training and/or networking events about programming, tools, and resources through Futurpreneur.

"Both the leadership at SCEDC, and Futurpreneur believe it is time to enter into a partnership and help foster First Nation entrepreneurship," said SCEDC CEO Ian Cramer. "SCEDC values partnerships, mentoring and education leading to sustainable First Nation business development."

Futurpreneur is a national non-profit organization that provides financing, mentorship, and resources to aspiring business owners aged 18 to 39. More than 15,000 young Canadian entrepreneurs from coast to coast to coast have successfully launched their business with Futurpreneur's support. The end goal of the MOU is to support young people in launching, maintaining, and growing businesses locally.

"There is no question that many Indigenous young people are interested in owning their own businesses and creating opportunity for themselves and their communities," said Scott Bowman, Futurpreneur's Vice President, Ontario, Prairies and Northern Canada. "One of our core values is driving inclusive Canadian prosperity, and we are proud to enter into this agreement to help further that goal across the SCO member Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations."

RezGal Inc. owner Brandi Woodhouse, from Pinaymootang First Nation, started marketing her line of First Nation inspired beauty products in 2020 with the help of Futurpreneur.

"When I first created my brand RezGal, my goal was to help Indigenous girls feel beautiful and empowered. I created a line of lashes at an affordable price that had an Indigenous niche to it and provided the products to all my sisters across Turtle Island," Brandi said. "With the help of Futurpreneur, I was able to expand and build my business. I am fulfilling my goals and dreams of becoming a successful entrepreneur. I highly encourage other First Nation entrepreneurs to make the most of this opportunity now before us."

"Ms. Woodhouse is a great role model for other young First Nation would-be entrepreneurs," said Grand Chief Daniels. "My hope is she and others like her, who are taking back their economic sovereignty through entrepreneurship, will inspire others to do the same. This agreement will provide the support needed to take that first step."

Indigenous businesses, many of them First Nation owned, contribute more than \$9.3 billion annually to the Manitoba economy. Read Indigenous Contributions to the Manitoba Economy report here: <https://scoinc.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Indigenous-Economy-Report.pdf>.

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*The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 80,500 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.*

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