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Annual Report

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## If...

...governments worked together differently, they would see a radical change in the amount and quality of services provided for Aboriginal people living off reserve.

Let's be clear that we're talking about public-private partnerships... We know that Waskahegen Corporation and its subsidiaries could help even more people in need and relieve the demands on the government bureaucracy in many ways.

This 39th edition of the Annual Report of Waskahegen Corporation is intended as a heartfelt cry expressing our openness towards the many negotiating sessions that never actually took place and that would have been so rewarding and constructive.

Our success absolutely depends on our collaboration with our partners. We owe it to ourselves to examine and investigate other important dimensions of the reality of Aboriginals living off reserve in Quebec in order to implement change and develop a new basis that we can reliably depend on while defining our future.

Our track record to date is quite impressive: over 2,000 housing units in 117 communities in Quebec. Our team works ceaselessly to provide the best housing conditions for off-reserve Aboriginal people, and to encourage economic development and employment within the same community.

Furthermore, we have demonstrated over the years that we practice sound management of our finances and of all the resources we have in place. Our expertise is recognized and our thoughtful and responsible approach is a creative response to the many obstacles in our path. In fact, our credibility should be a strong argument when it comes time to open doors to our future.

Many in are need. Waskahegen Corporation is an essential part of the social vision that Quebec has long embraced. Enough time has been invested in defending our rights and privileges and in lengthy and costly legal battles that detracted from our reputation. Now, we want to talk about solutions to improve the lives of our fellow Natives and to take action. In this regard, the first item on the agenda should be total respect of the administrative agreement signed in 2000, which we call our Partnership Agreement with the Société d'habitation du Québec, since several clauses of the agreement have not yet been implemented to date.

There are so many "Ifs" I could list. If we could get quicker responses... if our partners could more easily understand our realities... if we could get together around the table more often... if we could work in the same direction and with the same vision... if support could be delivered from all sides... We'd be able to do the best for our clients in need.

In closing, I wish to pay tribute to our partners and to my great team who, despite limited means, managed to do a stupendous job.

**Message from the  
President-Chief Executive Officer  
Gilles Bérubé**

Is it  
**SO...**

### **...difficult to work together?**

For 39 years, Waskahegen Corporation has worked resolutely for Aboriginal causes. The trailblazers Gilles Bérubé and Fernand Chalifoux showed the way and since then Waskahegen Corporation has developed unquestionable expertise in housing management and economic development. Yet, after all these years of constant devotion to bettering the lives of off-reserve Aboriginal people, the governments in place, despite some recognition on their part, are more reluctant than ever to work closely with us.

It is true that Waskahegen Corporation has often been a victim of its own success. Unfortunately, this aroused feelings of envy in some, who did not hesitate to sneer at us to government authorities. It has to be admitted that this has left its mark.

Because we invested large sums over the past decade in defending ourselves against these attacks, we deprived our clients of many opportunities for improved living conditions. Economic development has come to a standstill and a number of opportunities will not occur again. Now that all of this is behind us, we are still here, sleeves rolled up, open to new projects and ready to fulfill our mandate.

### **The duty to carry on...**

We have an important obligation vis-à-vis our clients: never to abandon them and always to fight for them.

If we'd been listened to... if we'd had better support... if we'd had more programs tailored to the needs of our clients. If...

Yes, I know you'll say: "A bunch of ifs won't get you very far." Except that if governments had listened to us more, we'd have performed even greater miracles for off-reserve Aboriginal people in Quebec.



**Message from the Executive  
Officer Assistant  
Marjolaine Doucet**



***Message from the President / Grand Chief of the Native Alliance of Quebec***

**Carl Dubé**

It was 40 years ago that the Native Alliance of Quebec came into existence with a mission to defend Aboriginal rights, including housing. How time flies...

Since our founding, all our leaders have in their own way knocked on the doors of our elected officials to let them know of our needs and demands. If... our elected officials could just listen. It's clear that change is synonymous with slow!

We are the largest Aboriginal organization in Quebec formed by descendants of First Nations. Despite often difficult conditions, many of our members proved their courage in their quest for autonomy. If... the authorities agreed to act like proper fathers in a family, we'd have discussions on how to develop more appropriate measures in terms of housing, education, training, re-entry into the labour force and health, especially regarding problems of malnutrition, drugs, suicide and prostitution.

Our service corporation, Waskahegen Corporation, has great potential for development. It's up to our governments to provide the necessary support, especially since the return on investment is very advantageous. Many development projects with social and economic potential for Native job creation could result.

**If... Quebec agreed to assume its responsibilities towards Aboriginals, our people could actively participate in their own development, as well as Canada's!**



***Message from the National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples***

**Betty Ann Lavallée**

This year's theme fits perfectly. If governments were to show a greater flexibility toward social and economic development, all of the organizations which work for the grass-roots, off-reserve peoples would thrive which would, in turn, drastically improve the socio-economic conditions of the off-reserve Aboriginal Peoples from across Canada.

IF Corporation Waskahegen is an exceptional organization, it is because they continually offer dedicated and loyal services to the off-reserve Aboriginal Peoples of Quebec. I am proud to know that Corporation Waskahegen works so hard to ensure that the socioeconomic conditions of the off-reserve communities in Quebec are improved through programs in housing, employment assistance, economic development, labour market development and much, much more.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples has developed its first Economic Development Strategy that fits into the very idea of Economic Self-Sufficiency. I believe that organizations like Corporation Waskahegen are an exemplary example of what we can do. The off-reserve Aboriginal Peoples can move toward sustaining themselves economically through partnerships and through the levels of dedication and hard work that we see exerted by the people at Corporation Waskahegen.

Congratulations on 40 years of making a difference for the off-reserve Aboriginal Peoples of Quebec!

**If only there were more organizations like yours!**

# COMMUNITIES of Native Alliance of Quebec

## LEGEND

Region 01		<b>NATIVE ALLIANCE OF QUEBEC</b>
Region 02		Head Office
Region 03		<b>WASKAHEGEN CORPORATION</b>
Region 04		Head Office
Region 05		Branch
		Head Office
		Branch





***Message from the Member  
of Parliament for  
Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean***

**Denis Lebel**

For 39 years, Waskahegen Corporation has worked ceaselessly to create wealth for off-reserve Aboriginal people. Honouring the memory of the past, this jewel of Aboriginal entrepreneurship strives hard in its mission to improve the quality of life of the community.

As in all good things in life, an atmosphere of discussion and sharing fosters harmonious relationships and the development of new projects. By putting people at the heart of its activities, Waskahegen Corporation meets their needs by providing services tailored to their reality.

The support they provide is real. From social housing to economic development, the team uses its experience, expertise and know-how to provide better conditions for off-reserve Aboriginal people. Today, the many initiatives and projects in place also extend far beyond the limits of the local area. Waskahegen Corporation is a shining example of success and an inspiration to others.

In closing, I want to pay tribute to the outstanding work of a team that, year after year, has been devotedly carrying out work of the greatest importance for those in real need. Thanks to Waskahegen Corporation, many can have confidence in the future.

***The Honourable Denis Lebel - MP for Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec***



***Message from the Member of  
the National Assembly for Roberval***

**Denis Trottier**

I would like to take the opportunity once again this year to recognize the work of Waskahegen Corporation.

As MNA for the riding of Roberval, I am pleased to pay tribute to the efforts of Waskahegen Corporation to improve the living conditions of off-reserve Aboriginal people. The organization deserves recognition for its contribution to programs in housing, employment assistance and social and community services in several regions of Quebec.

Despite everything, they decided to keep the administrative centre of their activities in Dolbeau-Mistassini in northern Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. As I have often said, I am a strong proponent of decentralization and Waskahegen proves that it is possible to manage a business based in our area.

As official opposition spokesman for forestry, and given that the Corporation manages a major housing stock, I would like to stress the importance of continuing to use wood for construction. I say this not only to support an industry that is struggling to recover from the economic crisis, but also to highlight the noble material itself that is both renewable and environmentally friendly. Quebec is first and foremost a vast land of forests and we should show our concern for this resource by using it extensively.

***Denis Trottier - MNA for Roberval  
Official opposition spokesperson for forestry and mining***



I am pleased to present the 2010 Annual Report of the housing management team. This report outlines various successes over the past year, as well as some indications for the future.

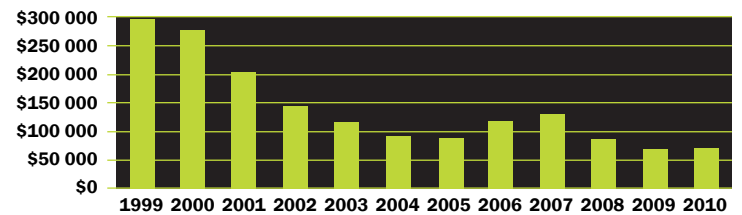
I first wish to present some important results and performance indicators that exemplify the good management and rigorous work of the whole team at Waskahegen/Habitat Métis du Nord.

Year after year we work hard to maintain accounts receivable and bad debts at very respectable levels, while being fully sensitive to the reality of our clients.

#### **Accounts receivable**

For 2010, accounts receivable increased by around 4% over the previous year, which, incidentally, was a record year. This slight increase presents us with a challenge to be even more creative in finding new strategies to improve results. However, we know that it is utopian to imagine that one day we will totally eliminate non-payment of rent.

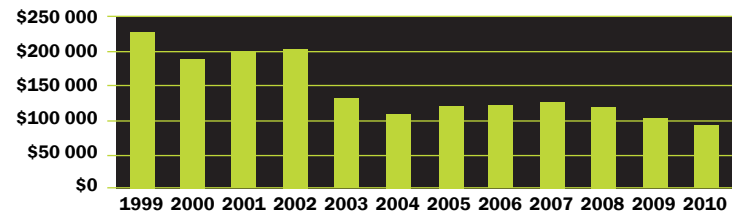
#### **Comparison from 1999 to 2010**



#### **Bad debts**

Regarding bad debts, we achieved a historic low of \$91,057. Compared with the previous year, this represents a decrease of 12%.

#### **Comparison from 1999 to 2010**



#### **Annual visits**

During the past year, 86% of all of our homes were visited. Those that were not, will receive priority in 2011.

**Message from the Director  
of Housing Operations  
Martin Voisine**

The purpose of annual visits is to meet all tenants at least once a year and to assess the state of our housing stock in order to:

- Increase customer satisfaction;
- Ensure the welfare and safety of tenants;
- Assess the state of housing units and identify instances of unhealthiness, neglect or abuse;
- Check that tenants are complying with regulations.

### **Pay Equity**

We also carry out a review to comply with the law on pay equity. The law is intended to correct, within a given company, differences in compensation due to gender-based discrimination among employees in female-dominated occupations.

### **Financing of local housing committees**

Since 1 January 2010, funding for local housing committees was increased by \$2 to a total of \$17 per year for each unit assigned to the territories concerned. This funding enables communities to democratically decide how it should be spent in the collective interest of tenants.

### **Sustainability and pilot project**

Discussions initiated in 2009 with the Société d'habitation du Québec and the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique du Québec have produced results, the outcome of which is the implementation of a pilot project. This project would not have been possible without the valuable collaboration of our collaborators, who again provided proof of their openness and expertise.

Since December 2010, two buildings of six units in the Quebec City region were targeted for installation of 12 solar water heaters coupled to 24 solar panels. The approximately \$90,000-project was 50% funded by the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique du Québec and aims to reduce electricity costs attributable to hot water consumption. A performance assessment of the project will be conducted after a year of operation, early in 2012.

Unfortunately, the financial assistance program offered by the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique ended in March 2011.

If... given these results, governments continue to encourage the establishment of socially and/or financially viable projects aimed at sustainable development, Waskahegen/Habitat Métis du Nord will certainly continue to make every effort to help preserve our natural resources, which for our clients and ourselves are vital for maintaining spiritual balance.

### **Community projects *My Home, my Pride and PAICS***

Each year, through the program *My Home, my Pride* we help create a sense of belonging and pride among our tenants. This year, over 20 projects were carried out across Quebec.

By investing time to improve their living environment through various community-based, decorative-upgrade initiatives, the tenants of Habitat Métis du Nord become more open to those around them.

These instances of collaboration between tenants and Corporation stakeholders can often make a difference in the day-to-day life of a family.

The same holds true for the Programme d'aide à l'initiative communautaire et sociale (PAICS) established in the Pincourt sector of Quebec City in recent years. However, we were informed recently that PAICS funding would end in September 2011.

Knowing how important this initiative is for tenants, Waskahegen/Habitat Métis du Nord has decided to maintain, at its own expense, the program services already in place.

The main challenge for Aboriginal families, who are often less affluent, is that of integration. Dealing with ongoing prejudice and trying to overcome cultural barriers are everyday facts of life for many tenants of Habitat Métis du Nord.

If only everyone reading these lines were aware that with programs like PAICS, we can really make a difference...

If each of you had the opportunity to see the smiles of pride inspired by such initiatives... If you only knew...

### **Intranet**

In 2009, we initiated a project to develop a tool enabling Waskahegen/Habitat Métis du Nord to maximize efficiency in terms of communications, staff integration and training, procedural standardization and operational control.

In 2010, we continued working on this tool, called Intranet, which is both user-friendly and comprehensive, enabling employees to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs of our clients.

The Intranet will be available to our employees through our website in 2011.

### **Priorities for 2011**

In the coming year, we will continue to pay special attention to accounts receivable and bad debts. We also want to complete the process of implementing our Intranet and we will be looking closely at the preliminary results of our pilot project.

### **Findings and thanks**

The reason for the existence of Waskahegen Corporation/Habitat Métis du Nord is our clients. They face many challenges: racism, drug abuse, gambling, sexual abuse, domestic violence, etc.

Fortunately, there are people to support those in need. ON BEHALF OF OUR CLIENTS, I want to thank the employees, members of the Board of Directors, management team, partners and many volunteers of the Native Alliance of Quebec. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the efforts you have made over the past year.

# If...

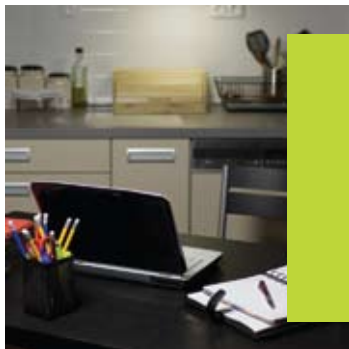
... we succeeded in achieving our 2010 objectives for major projects, it was thanks to our tireless and determined team that always put the well-being of our clients first. The budget of \$4,740,883 was used to improve our housing stock.

However, if we had received the entire budget announced by the government, without suffering a cutback of one million dollars, we could have completed more renovation projects. Those dollars could have been spent on re-roofing, or replacing windows and floor coverings, or improving air exchange systems and drinking water systems. Despite this, priority projects for our buildings are all on track for successful completion.

### *Allocation of costs of major work completed by region*

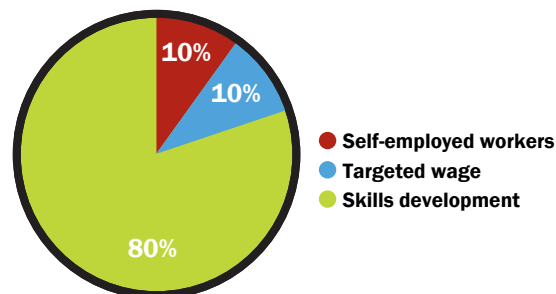
Branches	Number of Units	Cost of work completed	% by region
Val d'Or	120	\$276,839.06	6%
Rouyn-Noranda	197	\$664,026.38	14%
Mansfield	250	\$396,474.27	8%
Maniwaki	241	\$645,161.04	14%
Quebec City	255	\$852,803.03	18%
Montreal	108	\$239,435.11	5%
Dolbeau-Mistassini	306	\$614,289.93	13%
Baie-Comeau	155	\$327,217.08	7%
Sept-Îles	145	\$379,388.56	8%
Mont-Joli	98	\$345,249.32	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1875</b>	<b>\$4,740,883.78</b>	<b>100%</b>





## Labour market developments 2010

For the period April 1 to September 30, 2010, the Government of Canada, via the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, awarded us a total budget of \$124,979.22, or \$77,264 less than last year. Nevertheless, 18 off-reserve Aboriginal people were able to benefit from our assistance.



We know that the government is currently working on restructuring development programs for the labour market in order to offer a new program that is even better suited to the demand and to Native realities. If this could be implemented today, we could help more people find jobs or continue their education in their field of choice.

## Success that speaks for itself!



**Sonia Canuel**

### **Sonia Canuel's success**

Encouraged by her children and determined to change her life, Sonia Canuel of Ragueneau has succeeded in her plans. Returning to school enabled her to obtain a butcher's diploma. As a seasonal worker in a fish factory, Ms. Canuel wanted above all to get a fulltime job. With the support of the program, she completed a nine-month course, far from where she lived (the course was offered in Jonquière), and graduated with distinction. Moreover, she was also winner of the Hats Off to You! contest for women working in a field traditionally reserved for men. "My diploma means my independence," she says. Sonia Canuel works at Intermarché Ragueneau and is very proud of the new direction she has taken.



**Murielle Lacroix**

### **A passion for chocolate**

Murielle Lacroix thought about it for some time – making homemade chocolates. After a course from the Atelier d'apprentissage du chocolat, things got moving, slowly but surely... Today she sells her products throughout the Mont-Laurier area, especially at times when chocolate is the present of choice, like Easter and Valentine's Day. Early results are promising, but recent communications with the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation made her realize that she could broaden her range of products and services. Her plans for a new project are evolving, but in the meantime, Murielle Lacroix's chocolates are popular, which is what makes the owner happy.



**Kisis  
Technologies**

[www.kisistechnologies.com](http://www.kisistechnologies.com)

For Kisis Technologies, 2010 was a year focused on improving productivity and quality, while achieving record sales.

In the course of the year, we completely changed our production line by opting for a very contemporary approach, which allows us to reduce our inventory while responding more specifically to the demands of our many customers.

To continue our growth in Quebec, we plan to expand our range and release new products.

We have also developed an excellent partnership with our Canadian distributor, which allows us to improve our sales and services to architects, designers and consumers.

Although the European economic crisis has considerably reduced our exports, we are hard at work. We believe that next year the Company will experience a period of profitability.



**Polyformes  
Structures**

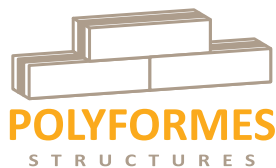
[www.polyformesstructures.com](http://www.polyformesstructures.com)

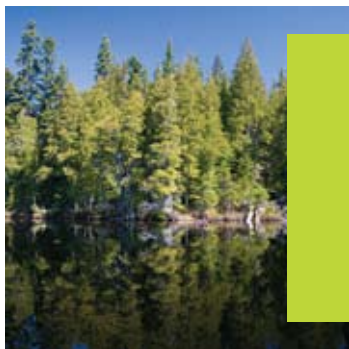
Polyformes Structures is an innovative company in the field of concrete formwork. Over the years, the company has constantly improved its product and it is now used throughout the world.

The system enables substantial savings, as panels are lightweight, easy to install and extremely resistant in any environment. In fact, Polyformes Structures panels play an increasingly prominent role in building systems, since in addition to their primary qualities, they possess significant insulation and durability benefits.

The product is suitable for all interior or exterior sidings and every style of construction, both curved and incorporating beams.

The company's mission is to continue its work by concluding business partnerships with major companies in countries where there is a real need for concrete construction, and by providing social housing for countries hit by natural disasters, such as Haiti.





### **Husky Lake Outfitters**

[www.lachusky.com](http://www.lachusky.com)

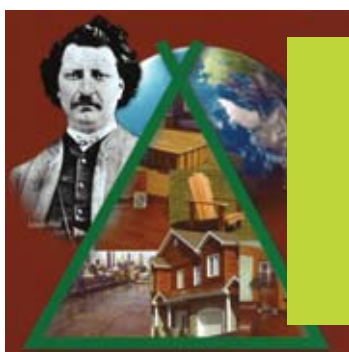
#### **Greener than ever!**

Located 200 km north of Lac-Saint-Jean, Husky Lake Outfitters offer many activities for adventurous hunters, fishers and nature lovers.

Inspired by Aboriginal culture, Husky Lake Outfitters value and respect the virgin forests, countless lakes and spectacular scenery that constitute its exclusive territory.

In 2010, in a continuing effort to meet the needs of its valued customers and in order to offer the highest quality of accommodation, the management of Husky Lake Outfitters has invested over \$150,000 in improving infrastructures and acquiring a new solar energy system.

The main improvements to the inn include: new doors and windows, new flooring, ecological, toasted-wood half-walls and renovated bathrooms. The inn is 80%-powered by solar energy.



### **Waskahegen, An Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Flagship**

**Carl Beaulieu,  
Les Éditions du Patrimoine**

#### **Waskahegen Corporation celebrates its history**

Waskahegen Corporation celebrated a defining moment in its history this year. The historian, Carl Beaulieu of Éditions du Patrimoine, launched a book entitled "Waskahegen, An Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Flagship." The launch was a resounding success and was followed by an Aboriginal entertainment featuring Florent Vollant, Daniel Richer, Samian, Troupe Sandokwa and Mike O'Cleary.

Waskahegen has opened doors for thousands of Aboriginal people since its founding in 1972 in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. In November 20, 1982, it moved its head office to Mistassini. Still little known, Waskahegen Corporation stands out for its excellence and dedication.

Its success is largely explained by the perseverance of its founders. Through the determination and ingenuity of Bérubé and Chalifoux, over time, Waskahegen Corporation has become a role model and reference for off-reserve Aboriginal people. Waskahegen has always lived up to expectations and has always protected and defended the needs of Aboriginal people vis-à-vis government, day after day, year after year, for almost 40 years.

"Waskahegen, An Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Flagship" is more than just a history book. It is a guide to our memory of the past and will help the next generation to focus on success and avoid pitfalls in order to ensure Waskahegen's sustainability.

**Gilles Bérubé – President-Chief Executive Officer**



**Fernand Chalifoux – Vice-president**



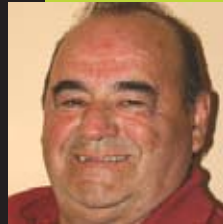
**Jean Jolicoeur – Clerk-treasurer**



**Hélène Gagnon - Director**



**Earl Kearney - Director**



**France Cloutier - Director**



**Roland Normandeau - Director**



**Raymond Bouchard, Director**

