



NEWS RELEASE

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Eskasoni Invites Visitors to Explore Mi'kmaq History and Traditions

Government of Canada invests in Aboriginal tourism



January 11, 2017 – Eskasoni, N.S. – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

The Atlantic economy is built on the region's many geographic, linguistic and cultural communities. From rural areas to larger urban centres, the opportunities and challenges vary significantly. To be sustainable and grow, communities must invest in those initiatives that show the potential to stimulate economic development. With that in mind, Mark Eying, Member of Parliament for Sydney-Victoria, today announced Government of Canada support for the Eskasoni First Nation as it continues to develop Eskasoni Cultural Journeys, an experience that allows participants to become immersed in the culture of the Mi'kmaq people through music, food, folklore and other traditions.

Today's announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Minister responsible for ACOA, and on behalf of the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Eskasoni is receiving a \$99,021 non-repayable investment, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) Innovative Communities Fund, to improve the current tourism product offerings of Eskasoni Cultural Journeys. The project will include infrastructure improvements on Goat Island, including a performance space, interpretation materials, signage, trail improvements, the addition of a gate, and the purchase of canoes and carts. This project also supports brand development, website updates and the addition of a project coordinator.

Other funding partners for this project include: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), \$87,827; the Trans Canada Trail, \$16,000; Eskasoni First Nation, \$6,000; and, the Province of Nova Scotia through the Aboriginal Community Development Fund, \$4,500. This project is a great example of the development of Aboriginal tourism in Atlantic Canada.

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Quotes

“The Government of Canada is committed to helping Indigenous communities prosper, and we are pleased to support initiatives in communities such as Eskasoni that work to improve infrastructure and foster economic growth in the region.”

- *The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for ACOA*

“Our Government is pleased to support the Eskasoni First Nation’s tourism sector. This initiative will promote more Canadians to see the beauty of Cape Breton, experience the warmth of the Eskasoni community and experience authentic Mi’kmaq culture and heritage. Indigenous tourism is an important source of jobs and economic opportunities for Eskasoni members.”

- *The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P., Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*

“As the largest Mi’kmaq community in the world, Eskasoni is well positioned to share its unique cultural experiences with visitors. The support announced today will help the community to realize this goal.”

- *The Honourable Mark Eyking, Member of Parliament for Sydney-Victoria*

“I am so thrilled this money is going towards such an important group. I would like to thank the Eskasoni Band Council for all of its important work, as well as thank the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage for its contribution.”

- *Pam Eyking, MLA for Victoria-The Lakes*

“The Eskasoni Cultural Journeys tourism project has grown leaps and bounds in the last four years. It has become a jewel in our community and has received national attention for being a hands-on aboriginal tourism destination. We are delighted that Cultural Journeys will receive additional funding to improve the infrastructure and in return it will enhance the Mi’kmaq Cultural Journeys experience.”

- *Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni First Nation*

Associated Links

- [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#)
- [Eskasoni Cultural Journeys](#)
- [Eskasoni First Nation](#)

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Backgrounder

The Eskasoni Band Council is the legal governing body for the community of Eskasoni, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The council represents over 4,000 residents and is comprised of a chief and twelve councilors. Community-wide elections are held every four years for both the chief and councilors. Amongst its roles and responsibilities, the Eskasoni Band Council endeavors to develop employment, training and professional opportunities for Band members and to develop commercial and other enterprises to create employment and revenue streams for the community. Eskasoni is the largest First Nation community in Atlantic Canada and one of five on Cape Breton Island.

With a focus on developing infrastructure, Eskasoni has its own community-operated school system from kindergarten to grade 12 and a leading First Nation health center. It also has its own supermarket, a thriving band-owned fishery (Crane Cove Seafoods), and a newly renovated community rink.