



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP TO BE SIGNED

## TRADITIONAL CANOE ARRIVAL PLANNED FOR CUPE, MÉTIS NATION

**BATOCHE** -- The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) will become the first Métis group in Saskatchewan to sign a partnership agreement when they ink a deal with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) on Wednesday. The deal vows cooperation on Métis employment in the public sector and other areas of mutual interest.

The Memorandum of Understanding will be signed at the Back to Batoche festival, which is an expanded event this year in honour of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Métis resistance at Batoche.

“The Métis culture and our people come from a blending of different backgrounds,” said Robert Doucette, president of the MN-S. “So the Métis Nation and I look at this opportunity as one in which we can bring together and blend the strengths and experiences of our organizations. I think Métis communities and the province as a whole stand to benefit.”

CUPE Saskatchewan has been a leader in developing and delivering Representative Workforce strategies within the public sector workforce. Since 2003, the Union has also hosted an annual Back to Batoche canoe trip, paddling as many as 20 canoes more than 70 kilometres over three days and landing at the annual festival in Batoche.

“Saskatchewan can stand proud as a nation-wide leader,” said Paul Moist, CUPE national president. “CUPE in Saskatchewan and Métis and First Nations groups in Saskatchewan have consistently stepped up as leaders, addressing employment and equity issues. Groundbreaking partnerships like this one set the bar for communities across the country.”

According to Tom Graham, president of CUPE Saskatchewan, the provincial divisions of the two organizations were a perfect fit.

“Certainly we’ve talked about ways in which we can ensure that Métis people have full access to opportunity when it comes to public sector employment,” said Graham. “But CUPE and the Métis Nation also have a lot of other issues in common, like our mutual desire to address access to safe, clean water; our interest in education and training opportunities; and our members’ common call for us to be vocal on environmental issues.”

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Media are welcome to attend this event.

- Nearly 50 participants and volunteers will launch their canoe journey on Monday, July 19.
- Additional canoes and Métis and Union leaders will paddle the final leg of journey from Gabriel Dumont Bridge, launching at 8:00 am on Wednesday, July 21.
- Canoes will be welcomed to the Back to Batoche festival by Métis leaders on the bank of the South Saskatchewan River at East Village in Batoche at 10:00 a.m. on July 21.
- Doucette, Moist and Graham will sign a Partnership Memorandum of Understanding on the Event Centre Stage on the Back to Batoche festival grounds at 11 a.m. on July 21.

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The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan is the province-wide political organization which represents the interests of approximately 80,000 Métis people. The MN-S mandate is to pursue the recognition of Métis social, cultural, civil, political and legal rights and to work toward the implementation of the Métis Nation’s right to self-governance.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada’s largest union, representing 600,000 members in sectors including health care, education, municipalities, libraries, universities, social services and more.

CUPE Saskatchewan is the policy arm of the union in Saskatchewan, and represents 29,000 Saskatchewan workers in the public and community-based sectors. In addition to eight other committees, CUPE Saskatchewan members elect an Aboriginal Council committee to focus on Métis and First Nations issues and advise the union’s provincial executive board.

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact:

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