



For Immediate Release

June 13, 2024

Blackfoot Signage Installed by Village of Stirling

As part of the Southwestern Alberta Blackfoot signage project, the Village of Stirling was awarded funding for the installation of wayfinding signage. Three highway signs (pictured) have been installed at each major entrance to the community denoting Stirling's Blackfoot name Omahksikimii Itaikkiapiop.

"On behalf of the Atsi'poyiksi Language Committee, I would like to thank the town of Stirling for their interest in pursuing Blackfoot language signage for their community. The mission of the Atsi'poyiksi Committee is to preserve and revitalize the Blackfoot language. Stirling's readiness to work with us is testimony that we are not alone in this endeavor. Blood Tribe members acknowledge and appreciate the interest shown by southern Alberta communities and organizations in the utilization of traditional/historical Blackfoot names. Stirling was one of the first towns to submit a request and we truly appreciated working with them, until we got it right. Blood Tribe members have stated that this is a very worthwhile project and lends itself to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

"One of the key drivers of the signage project is to further the work of regional reconciliation in accordance with the recommendations included in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, particularly with respect to articles 13 through 17," explains Jim Willett, Executive Chairman of the SouthGrow Regional Initiative. "Our hope is that these signs across the region will add a layer of cultural and historical complexity to the landscape of Southern Alberta to invite residents and visitors to explore and learn about the deep history of the region that is unique in Canada."

"Stirling celebrates its 125th birthday this year, I can't think of a more appropriate commemoration of this important milestone in our community's journey than to take a positive step forward in reconciliation acknowledging the full story of our history," adds Stirling Mayor Trevor Lewington.

Media Advisory: Representatives of Southgrow Regional Initiative and the Village of Stirling will be hosting a photo opportunity with the newly installed signage located along Highway 846, along the North entrance into Stirling of Highway 4. This will occur at 10:00 AM on Tuesday June 18th, 2024. Participants and Media will be asked to first meet at the Village of Stirling Community Centre at 9:50 AM before proceeding to the photograph location. Attendees will have some time to be able to answer questions following the photo opportunity.

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About the Southwestern Alberta Blackfoot Signage Project:

Southwestern Alberta is the home and historical territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, a group of nations that collectively make up the Blackfoot people. The confederacy includes the Blackfoot-speaking Káinai, Siksiká, and Pi'ikanni nations in southern Alberta who have called the region home for many generations. Formed as a partnership between the Kainaiwa, the SouthGrow Regional Initiative, Community Futures Lethbridge Region, Tourism Lethbridge, and Alberta SouthWest Regional Alliance, this project aims to provide matching funding for the installation of Blackfoot language signage for communities, businesses, institutions, and more across the region, with the Kainaiwa providing the translation services needed to either inform applicants of their Blackfoot name or assign the proper Blackfoot translation to a location. The goal is to provide a proof of concept and proof of demand for the



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installation of such signage across southwestern Alberta as a pilot for continued investment in this space. Visit <https://lethbridgeregion.albertacf.com/south-western-alberta-blackfoot-signage-project/> for more information.

About Stirling:

The Village of Stirling is one of three communities in Canada designated as a National Historic Site and is the largest village in Alberta by population with 1,269 residents as of the 2019 municipal census. While Stirling is proud of its past, the community is also preparing for the future with high-speed fibre optic broadband internet service connected to more than 90% of households as well as solar arrays on public buildings to offset municipal power consumption needs resulting in Canada's first electrically "net zero" Village. Visit www.stirling.ca for more information.