

# Suncor's Teepee Donations Strengthen Community Connections

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NORTHAMPTON, September 12, 2023 - Suncor Energy

Suncor's Base Plant employees gathered for the blessing ceremony of two teepees raised on site. The teepees are a part of our teepee donation program in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, fostering community connections and preserving Indigenous culture. Teepees stand on many of our operating sites as symbols of Indigenous inclusion and diversity, and our Journey of Reconciliation.

Read more stories about our Indigenous community/Indigenous involvement here.

The teepees were raised in preparation for National Indigenous History Month in June and National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21). Bouchier, an Indigenous owned company located in Fort McKay, donated the Base Plant Main Admin building teepee as an initiative to work towards truth and reconciliation. They also previously gifted the teepee located at the Fort Hills Main Admin building.

The Base Plant Steepbank Mine Complex teepee was a gift from our Indigenous & Community Relations (I&CR) team.

Joy Flett, a relations advisor with I&CR, expressed immense pride in sharing this story with the community.

"I was asked by community members on what ways we can support truth and reconciliation with the work we do in and around the community and the teepee was brought up. I was asked if Suncor could donate teepees to schools and rural communities like Fort Chipewyan and Fort McKay," explains Joy. "The teepees create inviting spaces for Elders, Indigenous students, teachers, community members, and even non-Indigenous people to go smudge and connect with traditional practices. Because they are outside, it allows people to engage in traditional protocol and practices without restrictions like smoke detectors."

Smudging is the Indigenous tradition of burning sacred medicines such as sage, sweetgrass and cedar as a way of cleansing negative energy and offering healing benefits. It is also done during prayer and ceremonies.

The I&CR team has contributed to 20 teepees donations within the FMWB community since 2017, the majority of which were donated to the local schools in the FMWB region.

"I am thrilled to share we are in the process of scheduling the raising of three teepees that will be donated by our I&CR team to the local schools. My hope is for every school in the FMWB region, including both Catholic and public schools, to have its own teepee. This way, we can support Indigenous students and provide an opportunity for non-Indigenous learners to explore our practices, culture, and protocols."

According to Joy, teepee or tipi are both correct spellings for the word, but there is a difference.

"Traditionally, people used buffalo hide, moose hide, or other animal skins to cover their dwellings, which is where the traditional spelling of tipi originated. Nowadays, canvas is commonly used to cover our teepees. Therefore, the spelling of teepee is used for any structure covered with canvas. The spelling tipi is reserved for instances when animal hides are employed to cover the dwelling."

There are teepees at our other sites, including Fort Hills, the Edmonton refinery, Firebag, Syncrude Mildred Lake, and our head office in Calgary. Each one serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and

celebrating Indigenous heritage while contributing to a more inclusive and culturally diverse learning environment.

Watch last year's blessing ceremony for the teepee (tipi) raised at Suncor's headquarter, gifted by the Starlight family of Tsuut'ina First Nation here.

View additional multimedia and more ESG storytelling from Suncor Energy on 3blmedia.com.

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