



## **FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

### **Natoaganeg Community Development Centre Secures \$480,000 Provincial Investment for Expansion**

**Natoaganeg, Mi'kma'ki - January 22nd, 2024** — The Natoaganeg community is set to embark on an exciting journey of growth and enhanced well-being, thanks to the generous support of the Province of New Brunswick through the Regional Development Corporation. A significant contribution of \$480,000 has been allocated towards the expansion of the Natoaganeg Community Development Centre, a pivotal hub that not only serves as a community development centre but also houses essential mental health services.

The Honourable Minister Rejean Savoie expressed enthusiasm about the project, stating, "Today is about celebrating the vision you have for a better community. The expansion of this building will give you the space that you need to have cultural events and to provide training and mental health counseling services. We are pleased to partner in this important project to help you build a strong and vibrant community."

Minister Savoie highlighted the significance of having a dedicated space for cultural events and mental health services, stating, "Having a space dedicated to coming together, learning, and sharing culture contributes to everyone's well-being and provides opportunities for everyone to flourish."

The \$480,000 investment from the Regional Development Corporation will play a pivotal role in creating a welcoming and inclusive space for the community. Minister Savoie acknowledged that the expanded centre will not only benefit the immediate community but will also be an asset to the entire region due to the diverse services it will provide.

The centre houses the head office of Mawlugutineg Mental Wellness Services, which is an incorporated partnership of five Mi'kmaq communities in northeastern New Brunswick (Metepenagiag, Natoaganeg, Esgenôpetitj, Oinpegitjoig and Ugpi'ganjig) and also serves a client base of 1000 members. Shelley Francis, Director of the Mawlugutineg Mental Wellness Team, expressed her excitement. "This announcement is amazing. We have been working for three years to try and find a place for Mawlugutineg."

On behalf of Council, Staff and Community, Chief Ginnish states; "This is huge, for our members to be able to be served in their own community. We are pleased with the support for our community development-wellness expansion project from the province through the Regional Development Corporation. This support allows our project to proceed to the call-for-proposals stage. This will provide much-needed space for these essential services to our members. Wela'lioq."