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BUDGET MAINTAINS STRONG SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PROGRAMMING

The 2016-17 Provincial Budget continues the Saskatchewan government's significant investments in programs and partnership initiatives that help First Nations and Métis people access economic and educational opportunities.

The Budget allocates \$211.9 million in program funding targeted primarily for First Nations and Métis organizations and individuals. That's an increase of \$3.5 million or 1.7 per cent from the funding in last year's budget.

This funding is on top of expenditures on programs that can be accessed by the general population -- programs that also benefit First Nations and Métis people.

"First Nations and Métis people need to be actively involved in our diversified Saskatchewan economy if it is to stay strong," Government Relations Minister Jim Reiter said. "This budget year has been very challenging, but I am gratified that we have been able to stay the course on program funding that assists First Nations and Métis people in improving their quality of life and connecting with opportunities."

Budget highlights include:

- \$30.8 million in funding for targeted activities on- and off-reserve, such as training for jobs and on-reserve Adult Basic Education (Ministry of the Economy);
- \$5.1 million in ongoing funding for initiatives that respond to the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People (Ministry of Education); and
- \$78.8 million, an increase of \$4.8 million, in gaming agreement transfers to First Nations and Métis organizations (Ministry of Government Relations). The Budget also includes increased funding for the hiring of additional wildfire fighting crews (Ministry of Environment) and for the First Nations Apprenticeship Program in the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure.

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