



PHOTO: DAN POWERS

Blackstone films in Edmonton, area

Executive producer and director Ron E. Scott chatted with Carmen Moore, who plays Leona Stoney, in *Blackstone*, which wrapped up eight weeks of shooting in early September in Edmonton and Namao. Edmonton locations included the Diamonds Gentleman's Club on Gateway Boulevard. Namao was turned into the Blackstone Indian reserve for filming. The highly successful pilot for the Prairie Dog Film and Television show led to the production of eight one-hour episodes of *Blackstone*, which will air on APTN and Showcase in early 2011. "*Blackstone* is relevant and relational in an Aboriginal story world, with universal themes and conflicts," said Scott.

Homeless count in October

Two hundred and fifty to 300 volunteers will be hitting select areas of Edmonton in early October to count the homeless. The count takes place every second year, said Alex Abboud, spokesman with Homeward Trust. From 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Oct. 5, designated areas in downtown Edmonton, Old Strathcona, Alberta Avenue, Fort Road, and the west end of Stony Plain Road will be walked by volunteers meeting up with homeless people. Volunteers will conduct surveys at drop-in centres, libraries, temporary employment agencies, bottle depots, and various areas. The results of the survey are expected to be released in mid-November. In 2008, the survey noted that close to 40 per cent of the homeless in Edmonton's streets were Aboriginal. The count "provides a current snapshot of our overall homeless population and enables us to examine how this population changes over time," said Abboud.

Aboriginal comedy, talent aired on CBC

The Alberta Comedy Spectacular, filmed in St. Albert at the Arden Theatre in May, was broadcast in two separate shows on CBC. *Turtle Island Too*, hosted by Lorne Cardinal and headlining veteran comic Don Burnstick, was broadcast Aug. 28. Also taking part were emerging comic Lars Callieou; Dawn Dumont, newly transplanted to Edmonton from Saskatchewan; "Indian vaudeville" creator Ryan McMahan and Howie Miller, star of the APTN series *Caution: May Contain Nuts*. *Best of the West* was hosted by comedy veteran Jebb Fink, with performances by Big Daddy Tazz, Brian Stollery and Carmen Stockton, along with up-and-comers like Brad Muise and Erica Sigurdson and was aired Sept. 4.

Community barbecue important for networking

SHINE Youth Clinic hosted a community barbecue on Sept. 11 in front of the Boyle McCauley Health Centre in downtown Edmonton. Along with serving hot dogs and hamburgers, volunteers spread the news about the Saturday afternoon clinic, which is run by student volunteers and supervised by practicing physicians and trained health professionals. "The challenge for us is just getting patients in the door. Once they're here, we know we change their lives for the better through various medical treatments and social services," said Sarah Wozney, SHINE's VP of Communications. Patients and drop-ins are not required to provide identification or an Alberta Health number and have access to medical, dental, and social services along with food, hot coffee, socks, tuques and even bus fare back to their shelter. Patients are seen for as much time as required to provide complete care, including time for treating multiple symptoms and answering questions.

Work on TB screening for Aboriginal children results in award

University of Alberta science graduate Angela Lau was recently honoured at the Rising Stars of Research conference at the University of British Columbia for her work with tuberculosis screening. Lau's lab discovered current screening methods used on First Nations children often falsely indicate an infection where there is none. Because of the increased risk, First Nations children receive a vaccination at birth, followed by a skin test in elementary school. Lau's lab discovered that the initial vaccination led to more positive results on the test. Lau's lab retested a sampling of the children and discovered only a small number tested positive for TB. Lau told the *Edmonton Journal* that changes to the testing needed to occur. "It's an unreliable test to use for school screening," Lau said, noting that treatment resulting from false positives is an unnecessary burden on the medical system. First Nations people in Canada are 30 times more likely to develop TB than other Canadian-born residents, and four per cent of infected Aboriginals died between 1990 and 2000, most of whom were adults.

Compiled by Shari Narine

More federal dollars for tackling homelessness

By SHARI NARINE
Sweetgrass Writer

EDMONTON

Recent funding announced by the federal government will continue to help meet the needs of homeless people on Alberta streets.

"Most of the funds were already allocated, but we did receive some new capital," said Alex Abboud, spokesman with Homeward Trust Edmonton.

Abboud's organization received \$12.9 million through Homelessness Partnering Strategy, a federal program under Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Of that, \$1.8 million is allocated for Aboriginal Communities funding.

"We have designated funding from this stream for Hope Mission's 52-unit Housing First complex, and the remainder is yet to be allocated," said Abboud.

The federal dollars are from a program which began in 2007 and then was extended in 2008.

Last month, Rob Moore, federal minister of Small Business and Tourism was in Edmonton at Homeward Trust

to announce that the federal government would continue to fund the program until 2011.

The Aboriginal Communities portion of the HPS funding is to meet the specific needs of the homeless Aboriginal population. While the program doesn't require matching contribution for dollars used, Abboud said Homeward Trust gets more mileage out of the dollars by asking for organizational commitment.

"We do our best to leverage our funds. Homeward Trust will make a donation, but we also expect a proponent to raise some of the funds itself and to seek to find other funding sources as well," said Abboud.

Six or seven capital projects have already received funding, he said.

Homeward Trust and its predecessor have been recipients of government funding for 10 years.

"We manage and distribute the funds," said Abboud.

The funding is also used by Homeward Trust for its Housing First teams, allowing 60 workers to go out into the field and work directly with clients as well as to provide training for

the Housing First workers. Funding is also used to support and promote Homeless Connect, which is held twice annually and provides a variety of free services downtown to the homeless.

"We are making progress towards ending homelessness, and this partnership is an essential part of the effort," said Susan McGee, Homeward Trust executive director.

The funding commitment gives the federal government the flexibility to work with the provinces and territories and municipalities, and with charitable organizations, to develop ways to improve the effectiveness of federal spending in the area of housing and homelessness.

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy emphasizes longer-term supportive and transitional housing by focusing on a housing-first approach to help people make the transition out of the cycle of homelessness.

The program provides funding to 61 communities across Canada, including Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Wood Buffalo, and Medicine Hat.

New U of A journal discusses urban Aboriginal issues, policies

By DARLENE CHRAPKO
Sweetgrass Writer

EDMONTON

The Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta has launched a new academic journal, the first to address emerging issues of Canadian Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginals.

According to editor Chris Andersen, a Métis and associate professor at the U of A, *Aboriginal Policy Studies* fills a gap by focusing on policies that shape and influence those living off-reserves. The journal's aim is to begin to talk about social trends that affect the future of the ever-increasing number of Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginals living in urban areas.

What currently exists is a "mish-mash of policy and programming," and there is little knowledge about how policy differs from city to city, Andersen said. "More than half of Canada's Aboriginals live in cities and there's comparatively little policy or academic attention paid to off-reserve issues. This is going to be a demographic situation that will demand a lot of policy attention over the next couple of generations."

According to Andersen, 90 per cent of funding goes to on-reserve issues, a policy dating back to the 1950s, when the federal government directed its

focus to the reserve within the treaty context and the practices of the Indian Act. As a result of this focus, little attention has been paid to the Métis, non-status, and off-reserve population. Andersen said the journal's aim is to address this gap through academic discussion of the issues and to share discoveries with people who deliver services.

To lessen the gap between the academic world and service providers, the journal intends to use plain language. Moreover, 25 per cent of the editorial board includes practitioners with strong policy and practical experience. Each issue will also include one non-academic commentary piece to play off the academic content.

Funded by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Aboriginal Policy Studies* will be published twice annually in March and October, with the provision for one additional special issue dedicated to a key issue area. Papers presented by members of the editorial board at the journal's launch have been submitted for consideration for the first issue due out in December. The launch took place at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences annual meeting in Montreal this past May.

As part of the University of Alberta's open access policy, the online journal will be free. It has garnered strong academic



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

University of Alberta professor Chris Andersen: editor of the new *Aboriginal Policy Studies* journal.

interest as Andersen has received a number of submissions for the second issue. Once vetted by Andersen for relevancy, the articles will be passed on to Aboriginal academics with expertise in the subject area. In a full blind academic review process comments will be sent back to the author for reconsideration and resubmission prior to publication.

The journal has created a place for academics to think and talk through issues and share their findings with those who create policy. According to Andersen, ultimately, the journal's discussions will "spur discussion about meaningful policies" by helping to define what it means to be an Aboriginal person living in a city.