



Artisan Board of Directors

Ohpahow Wawesecikiwak Arts Marketing Co-operative Ltd.

As part of Saskatchewan Co-operative Association's ongoing series of co-operative profiles, we interviewed Marie Prebushewski. She is the Executive Director and Project Manager for the Thickwood Hills Business and Learning Network, a non-profit organization located in Hafford, SK. She has been assisting First Nation communities on the west side of the province for many years. She is also the network developer for The Aboriginal Business Service Network, which has a mandate to develop co-operatives and small businesses in Aboriginal communities.

Ohpahow Wawesecikiwak Arts Marketing Co-operative
Hafford SK
Phone: (306) 724-4700

What is the Big River First Nation's Artisan Co-op? Where is your co-operative located?

The official name of the artisan co-op is the Ohpahow Wawesecikiwak Arts Marketing Co-operative Ltd. The co-operative assists artisans of the Big River First Nation to market their art and is located in the Big River First Nation community.

When was it established? By whom?

The Co-operative was established in July of 2008. The Thickwood Hills Business and Learning Network assisted artisans and other community members who were interested in furthering the capacity of artisans to follow the steps required to form the co-operative.

What unique products or services does the Artisan Co-op offer/sell?

There is a large variety of goods produced by the artisans such as replicas of teepees, hand sewn vests, woodcarvings, moccasins and gloves, jewelry, 3D pictures and paintings. The Artisans assist each other in marketing their goods and



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by teaching the youth of the community to appreciate and practice different skills such as curing the animal skins, beading and developing patterns.

How does the co-op presently contribute to or address community needs?

The Co-operative provides a means to create work so the individuals can supplement family incomes.

How many members does the co-operative have? How do they participate in the co-operative?

There are over 20 active members in the co-operative who participate by attending meetings, serving on the Board of Directors, serving on community committees and assisting with teaching.



What have the greatest successes of the co-operative been? How were they achieved? What about challenges?

The greatest success is the recognition of the work that the Artisans perform and the interest generated with the youth of the community for their traditional arts. The artisans support each other by sharing the workload for large orders, by sharing costs for exhibits and by communicating with each other. Their main challenge remains generating enough revenue to buy the goods required to produce their art.

What do you envision for the co-op in the next five years?

The Co-op will continue to grow and gain a bigger share of the market with more artisans pooling their resources. They are exploring how to expand their product line. They hope that soon there will be a space in the community to display their art.

How can people find out more about the co-operative?

Contact can be made with Rebecca Morin at 306-724-4700.

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