

Many Heads spearheading various projects named EDO of the Year

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Photo: Trevor Boller

Tom Many Heads, the CEO of the Siksika Resource Development Ltd., is named Economic Developer of the Year by Cando.

Since becoming the CEO of the Siksika Resource Development Ltd. (SRDL) in 2010, Tom Many Heads has played an instrumental role with various business ventures on his First Nation.

The SRDL promotes all investments and economic developments for Alberta's Siksika Nation.

The SRDL has been a part in a number of success stories in recent years with various businesses that have popped up on its First Nation.

And there are no plans to slow down.

In fact, officials with the SDRL are going full steam ahead with their plans to have the Siksika Nation become the first First Nation in Canada to have a medical marijuana production facility on its own land.

Many Heads said the SDRL has already secured what he calls a "pre-licensing authorization letter" from Health Canada.

The plan is to have a 25,000-square foot facility fully operational on the Siksika Nation by some point in 2019 or at the latest the following year. Construction is expected to begin soon.

"I'd love to see it start this fall," Many Heads said. "But we're probably looking at some point in the winter."

The production facility would undoubtedly employ a number of Siksika Nation members. Plus Many Heads believes producing medical marijuana on his First Nation would help somewhat with the massive opioid crisis occurring throughout the country.

"There is a lot of potential for economic and health benefits for our own involvement in terms of what cannabis can do in positive ways," he said.

For his various ventures with the SDRL, Many Heads is one of the four nominees for Cando's economic development officer of the year.

Many Heads was named the winner of the Individual EDO of the Year at this year's Cando Conference, on Oct. 25 in Enoch, Alta.

2018 Economic Developer of the Year Awards

Cando Connect

November/December 2018

Tom Many Heads

Cando, the national organization that promotes Indigenous economic development, also annually recognizes those in Indigenous Private Sector Business and community of the year categories.

Under Many Heads' leadership, some brand name businesses have recently opened on the Siksika Nation. These include a Petro Canada, which opened in December of 2016 and has exceeded expectations with more than \$6 million in sales, as well as a Subway, which has been open since June of 2017.

The SRDL has also entered the hospitality business as it has formed partnerships with various hotels. Earlier this year it announced it was buying into three British Columbia-based hotels.

The SRDL will also have a 50 per cent equity partnership with hotels expected to open this September in Calgary and Edmonton.