

PRESS RELEASE

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SIEF nominees win NACCA Indigenous Business Awards of Excellence

The **Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation (SIEF)** is pleased to announce that **Askiy Apoy Hauling of Onion Lake Cree Nation** and **Kendal Netmaker of Netmaker Enterprises** won their respective categories at the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) **Indigenous Business Awards of Excellence**.

Awards were recently handed out at a gala dinner reception in Ottawa, in conjunction with the Indigenous Economic Prosperity Forum.

Askiy Apoy Hauling was the winner in the Indigenous Community Business category, while Netmaker Enterprises took top honours in the Indigenous Youth Business division.

Founded in 2008, Askiy Apoy Hauling, is 100-per-cent First Nation owned. The company's success is a result of exceeding customer expectations, delivering professional services that meets the needs of the oil industry while respecting maintenance of the environment and promoting safety of staff, community and clients.

Onion Lake Cree First Nation community members form 90 per cent of the company's workforce, including 17 full-time staff and 25 vehicle owner/operators, with a total of 46 commercial drivers.

Askiy Apoy is proactive in creating community wealth by actively seeking enthusiastic community members to train and hire and by partnering with Lakeland College to train Nation members in professional driver courses.

In addition, Askiy Apoy is negotiating with Onion Lake Community Futures Development Corporation to create an entrepreneurship program that will assist owner/operators to create and grow their businesses.

Kendal Netmaker is the owner of Netmaker Enterprises and his story is one of overcoming several obstacles to achieve business success.

While studying at the University of Saskatchewan, Netmaker started his clothing line Neechie Gear in 2011. It's a lifestyle apparel brand that empowers youth through sports. He ran this business from his one-bedroom apartment while he finished his schooling before expanding into several retail locations and an office headquarters in Saskatoon.

A percentage of Neechie Gear profits go toward increasing participation in sports by underprivileged youth. He has also supported 19 Indigenous post-secondary students across Canada with cash bursaries.

Five years after the launch of Neechie Gear, Netmaker started Netmaker Enterprises. His company focuses on public and inspirational speaking and coaching services and product sales. In addition to speaking professionally on motivation, leadership and the power of telling your story, Netmaker has used the Neechie Gear platform to author “Driven to Succeed” and mentor more than 40 Indigenous entrepreneurs across Canada.

Today, he has six contract employees who help him grow Netmaker Enterprises.

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