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Press Release

For Immediate Release

## Qalipu's fourth annual business forum, Mawio'mi 2015, a great success

March 27, 2015—Corner Brook, NL—The Days Inn in Stephenville was the site for Qalipu's fourth annual Aboriginal Business Forum, Mawio'mi 2015, held on March 26. The forum's intent was to facilitate connections between aboriginal entrepreneurs, member-owned business and industry. More than 80 business owners, project leads and other delegates turned out for the event.

Ralph Eldridge, Director of Service Qalipu, said that this year's line-up of presenters, which included project leads from Hebron, ABB, Valard Construction, Emera NL, Nalcor, and ATCO Structures & Logistics, made for an informative and interesting day.

"We got to know some new businesses as well as receive updates that expanded on information shared at past forums. The project update from Frank Maher, Benefits and Supplier Development Coordinator for ExxonMobil on the Hebron Project, for instance. It's amazing to see the scope of industry activity being done in our province, something you could really appreciate with the time-lapsed video Maher shared. It compressed three years' worth of work on the Bull Arm and Deep Water Site," Eldridge said.

Eldridge went on to say that much of the information being shared was geared at demonstrating to members and member owned businesses the particulars of how to get involved with some of the work being done in the province and, who to contact for more information.

Cheryl Hillier, business owner of Safety Marketing in Bishops Falls and recent winner of the Business Woman of the Year Award for the Exploits Region, was a third time Mawio'mi delegate at this year's event. She said that the Forum has always been enjoyable and, in addition to being an excellent way to network with other business owners to share ideas and support, the information she has taken away from the Forum has also helped her business to progress.

"I met contacts last year who provided details on the advantage of having WE Connect International and CAMSC Certification." She said, "It was through meeting the right contact at Mawio'mi that I was able to access a scholarship from the Hebron Project Supplier Diversity Program in order to pursue it and, today, I can proudly say that my business has those certifications. It changes the whole conversation when I'm making a call looking to do business.



When I say that I have We Connect and CAMSC, the conversation changes and there is a higher level of interest.”

Brendan Sheppard, Chief of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation, was on hand for the event. Addressing partners and potential partners in the room, Sheppard said “The best practice is when development happens hand in hand with environmental stewardship, in consultation and collaboration with special interest groups like ours, and is respectful of our communities. That is a strong element of what is motivating us to seek partnerships in big projects. We want to be there, to remind industry that this place is special, and to ensure that development is inclusive and sustainable.”

## Media

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