

SPECIAL EDITION

DAKOTA OJIBWAY TRIBAL COUNCIL

“Indian control of Indian Development”



Canupawakpa Dakota Nation

Long Plain First Nation

Swan Lake First Nation

Birdtail Sioux First Nation

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

Waywayseecappo First Nation

Dakota Plains Wahpeton First Nation

Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation

Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation

MANITOBA VOTES - 2011

Message from Chief Ken Chalmers/Chair, DOTC Council of Chiefs

Manitobans will be voting on October 4, 2011. Voting is about making a choice as to which candidate or party best represents the needs and expectations of the citizen. In so doing, individual preferences when aggregated, provide us with a collective decision in regards to the party that will govern to address the issues and priorities that have been so expressed.

The participation rates in provincial elections by First Nation members and other Aboriginal people are extremely low. The interest and participation in Band elections and federal elections is much higher. Some major reasons cited are that the relationship and outstanding issues are with Canada/Crown. Band elections assume crucial importance as this is the government that is closest to people and, where daily life is impacted.

This is at least one main reason which perhaps explains the reason for low participation by our people in provincial elections. This disengagement also allows for mainstream candidates and political parties to ignore citizens of First Nations and other Aboriginal Groups. Another reason is that a good majority of our people think that they cannot vote in provincial elections or; that it does not apply to them. This needs to be addressed.

At our end, there needs to be a recognition that workings at provincial level has an indirect if not an explicitly direct affect on lives of those belonging to First Nations and other Aboriginal Groups. The changed federal-provincial relationships is one where it is increasingly more about shared programming and delivery of services. Furthermore, the separation of powers between the federal and provincial domains allocates to the latter important areas such as education, health, child and family services to name some.

My message is that the provincial arena and elections can no longer be ignored. Participation at this level in no way should be seen to be weakening or giving up on inherent and treaty rights. We need to be make ourselves counted... and be heard! No one else will do it for us. I encourage all to exercise their right to vote. Make sure you vote on October 4, 2011.

Message from Robert Daniels/CEO, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council

Elections are an opportunity to take stock of the country and its society. It is also an opportunity for the citizen to engage and express their choice and expectations. Out of this process of interaction and engagement arises a sense of direction and priorities for any society.

First Nations and their members tend to place greater importance to Band Elections. The belief being this where for them decisions are made. They tend to ignore or be indifferent to federal and provincial elections. Why is this so? Broadly speaking this arises from a sense of general apathy, feeling of being ignored by mainstream political of parties and candidates. It is also a lack of awareness and appreciation that decisions made at the federal and provincial levels has an direct and/or indirect affect on our daily life.

The importance of political participation in provincial elections needs to be given consideration. This need not dilute the inherent and treaty rights and, the “nation to nation relationship” with the Crown. We all need to find a way by which to preserve the latter while exercising our right to vote.

This special edition on “Manitoba Votes-2011” has its objective to serve as a reference document for our members to provide them with the relevant information. At another level, if it serves to engage both the First Nations and other Aboriginal Groups and, the mainstream political arenas to “interact and dialogue” the purpose would have been additionally served. If we can work to change the conversation- that is to say we can appreciate and work to meet each others’ interests- perhaps this may be one means by First Nations can be engaged.

As you peruse through this issue, the following should become apparent- First Nations and others belonging to the larger Aboriginal Family are an important factor. Through participation, we need to ensure that our concerns and voices are heard. Our daily concerns are no different from those faced by Canadians in the larger mainstream of the society. A significant portion of population of First Nations and Aboriginal peoples reside outside the reserves- in urban centres across Canada.

Data from some key selected ridings shows that First Nations and Aboriginal vote can be a major factor in determining the outcome. Aboriginal People may be seen to be down...but they are certainly not out. Closer analysis of preceding data suggests we can make an impact, be heard and make a difference. We need to begin organizing strategically- by way of getting on the agenda. Organizing may have to be two fold- macro and micro- high-level and at the local level.

It however hinges on each person taking responsibility to exercising their right and privilege- the right to vote! It is my hope that this special issue of the DOTC Newsletter -Manitoba Votes 2011- will serve its part in getting the reader out to vote.

Powers and Responsibilities of Provinces

The “separation of powers and responsibilities” between the federal and provincial governments in Canada has a profound impact on who and how our daily lives are ordered. Provincial governments and law have a major say and affect on our daily lives. To name some of the powers and responsibilities that fall under the provinces;

- Courts and civil laws
- Education and schools
- Drivers’ licences
- Health services and hospitals
- Management of natural resources
- Labour laws
- Child protection services, (child and family services)
- Family courts and
- Child custody
- TLE Land Conversions

The Democracy Project

(Source: Winnipeg Free Press, September 17, 2011- Cited with Permission)

- 20.9 -- percentage of Long Plain First Nation registered voters (98 of 468) who cast ballots in Carman constituency in the 2007 provincial election.
- 53.2 -- percentage of overall registered voters in Carman constituency who cast a ballot in 2007.
- 56.7 -- percentage of Manitoba registered voters who cast ballots in 2007 (420,540 of 740,991).
- 9.1 -- percentage of aboriginal residents in the 15 Manitoba constituencies with the highest voter turnout in 2007.
- 30.7 -- percentage of aboriginal residents in the 14 Manitoba constituencies with the lowest voter turnout in 2007.
- 3,800 -- total population of Long Plain First Nation, with about 2,000 living on the reserve southwest of Portage la Prairie. Most others live in Portage, Brandon and Winnipeg.
- 131,796 -- number of registered Manitoba First Nation members as of May 2009.
- 1952 -- year in which status First Nations people were allowed to vote in Manitoba elections, although those serving in the military had had the vote since 1932. Federally, all aboriginal people received the franchise in 1960.
- 61.7 -- percentage of First Nation members living in their home communities.
- 60.5 -- percentage of Manitoba First Nation members under the age of 30 in 2009.

Sources: *Elections Manitoba*, *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada*, *Long Plain First Nation*, *The Encyclopedia of Manitoba*, and *Voter Turnout in Manitoba: An Ecological Analysis*, by Jared Wesley

Aboriginal Vote Compass: Put your candidates to the test

Adapted from an Article By Colleen Simard/Winnipeg Free Press- April 9, 2011.

Overcoming voter apathy...getting the spark back...get ready and cast your vote. Colleen has created a “helpful questionnaire” to find out which party will address aboriginal issues. For complete details consult the full-article. Meanwhile make use of the guiding questions as to inform your decision as to who you vote for:

- Question 1: Whose campaign flyer has shown up in your mailbox? Does the campaign material contain a photo of an aboriginal person
- Question 2: Read all the party pamphlets carefully. If you didn’t get one from a specific party then track one down. Does any information list a promise that would benefit you personally? Or aboriginal people in general?
- Question 3: Have any party leaders mentioned any of the following while campaigning, or in their platform: aboriginal people; aboriginal issues (this could be First Nation education, housing, water, poverty, etc.) and/or aboriginal rights
- Question 4: Put your imagination to work for this one. Which party leader would be best at a) jigging, b) round dancing, and c) powwow dancing? All of the above.
- Question 5: Check out all the party leaders making speeches on TV or online. Size them up really well. Now would you trust any of them enough to let them in your house? Let them babysit? Drive your car? Would you cook them a meal if they dropped by?

Message from Chief and Council To Members of Long Plain First Nation

"Long Plain, long forgotten: Voters on First Nation all but ignored in provincial election". This article by Larry Kusch was published the Winnipeg Free Press edition of September 17, 2011.

The Chief was interviewed for the article and made following points. Where it concerns provincial elections, even more so, the participation rate of the peoples from First Nations is dismal. Yet, without us knowing, outcomes of provincial elections have an indirect if not an explicitly direct impact on our lives.

The Canadian political system allocates a clearly defined "separation of powers and responsibilities" between the federal and provincial governments. This "division" does have major consequences for communities and peoples resulting from allocation of social and economic from transfer of payments.

We do stand by that we (the First Nations) can no longer be passive spectators or bystanders to provincial elections-otherwise, we will continue to see opportunities pass us by.

Another point in the article, if there is terribly lower electoral participation in the provincial election, the fault does not entirely lay with the First Nations and their people. First Nations people are ignored by political candidates and parties.

If the reasoning from the candidates and parties is that of limited financial resources and cultural sensitivities, then we all need to address the issue. For its part, Long Plain First Nation is providing to the all the candidates in the Portage riding with free advertisement on Rez radio as well as access to the Long Plain First Nation and its members.

So, why do members of Long Plain First Nation need to participate and vote in the current and future federal and provincial elections?

Voting to elect a candidate and political party of choice is an important right that we all as citizens have. To use the comparison of Band Elections, political parties are no different from those running for the position of Chief or Council members. It is then a matter of choice and preference and, this is an opportunity for a citizen to express the same.

The "separation of powers and responsibilities" between the federal and provincial governments in Canada has a profound impact on who and how our daily lives are ordered. Provincial governments and law have a major say and affect on our daily lives. Some major powers have been listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Choosing to be bystander, is choosing abstain on how are daily lives are ordered. At minimum, we should exercise this right!

Provinces will play a not a lesser role but a larger role in our future society. A quick reading of "separation and responsibilities of powers" leads us to think that provinces will exercise more not less powers and influence in our daily lives. First Nation issues such as resources, education and health do and will continue to involve provinces. To cite one issue, education. Education is a key asset for one to succeed in today's economy, yet compared to other citizens elsewhere across Canada, children from First Nations and other Aboriginal groupings continue to lag behind.

This discrepancy has not much to do with the ability or desire; but more to do with the allocation and amount of funding. It is that simple, yet if we, from First Nations, do not participate in the political process, then who are we short-changing. Not others, but ourselves.

The Chief and Council continues to maintain our direct relationship with the federal government as it relates to our inherent and treaty rights and will continue to fight for our rights afforded to us by our treaties.

For the current and all future federal or provincial elections, the people of Long Plain First Nation need to exercise their vote - and rights!

For the political candidates and parties, they too have an obligation to take members of Long Plain First Nation, indeed from all First Nations and other Aboriginal Groupings, with equal seriousness and, courtesy and respect that is accorded to all others.

A polling station will be held at the Spirit Lodge on October 11, 2011.

So, Manitoba Votes 2011, members of Long Plain First Nation need to go out and exercise their vote.

Sincerely,

Chief and Council

Long Plain First Nation.

Manitoba Ridings with over 10% of Aboriginal Population

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Arthur-Virden 10.9 | ..... | Flin Flon 54.1 | ..... | Portage la Prairie 22.8 | ..... | Thompson 52.4 |
| Brandon East 12.7 | ..... | Gimli 10.4 | ..... | Riding Mountain 15.6 | ..... | Transcona 10.1 |
| Burrows 18.0 | ..... | Interlake 52.5 | ..... | Selkirk 19.9 | ..... | Tyndall Park 15.5 |
| Concordia 12.0 | ..... | Kewatinook 91.6 | ..... | St. Boniface 12.8 | ..... | Wolseley 16.9 |
| Dauphin 18.0 | ..... | Lac du Bonnet 27.0 | ..... | St. Johns 16.0 | ..... | Within Winnipeg 10.9 |
| Dawson Trail 12.3 | ..... | Logan 21.1 | ..... | St. Vital 9.9 (rounded off to 10.0) | ..... | Outside Winnipeg 21.9 |
| Elmwood 13.7 | ..... | Minto 15.7 | ..... | Swan River 41.5 | ..... | Manitoba 15.4 |
| Emerson 10.1 | ..... | Point Douglas 38.3 | ..... | The Pas 75.1 | ..... |  |

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can Vote?

You can vote if you:

- are a **Canadian citizen**
- Are **18 years of age** on or before election day
- have **resided in Manitoba for at least 6 months** immediately before election day

When can I Vote?

October 4, 2011 is provincial election day, but if you choose, you can vote earlier.

Advance voting will be held **Saturday, September 24 to Saturday, October 1** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday).

- You don't need a reason to vote in advance.
- You can vote at any advance voting place in the province. Be sure to bring **government issued photo identification**, such as a driver's licence, or two other documents with your name. Whenever possible, advance voting places are accessible to all.

Can I vote if my name is not on the voters list?

- Yes. Just bring government issued photo identification, or two other documents with your name, and sign an oath.

How can I get on the voters list?

- During enumeration at your permanent residence from July 21 to August 22. (Any responsible person at your home can provide names of all eligible voters to the enumerator.)
- By appointment with your returning officer, from July 21 to September 22

What if I do not have a permanent address

- You can vote if you do not have a permanent home. You can bring a letter to the voting place from a shelter or an agency saying they know who you are.

What if I am unable to vote in person at polling station?

- **Advance voting**
All eligible voters can vote from September 24 to October 1 at any Advance voting location in Manitoba.
- **Homebound voting**
If you are unable to go in person to a voting place due to a disability, you and/or your caregiver can vote in your home.
- **Curbside voting**
If you are unable to go inside the voting place because of a disability, a voting official will bring the ballot box to your vehicle.

What if I face visual challenges when exercising (filling-in) my vote?

- **Braille ballot templates** that allow you to mark your ballot on your own are available at all voting places.
- **A Braille list of candidates** will be available on election day and at some advance voting locations. Check with your returning officer for the location nearest you.
- **Magnifying lenses and a large print list of the candidates** will also be available from the voting officer.
- You can also bring **someone with you to help you vote**. If they are 18 years of age or older, they will sign an oath and help you mark your ballot. A voting official may also assist you.
- **Translation services**
A translator is available by telephone at all voting places. Contact your returning officer in advance to arrange for this service.

Students attending school inside Manitoba

- If your course is longer than six months you will vote in the electoral division you live in while attending school.
- If your course is shorter than six months you will vote in your home electoral division.

Students attending school outside Manitoba

Eligible voters attending school outside Manitoba can still vote in a Manitoba provincial election.

To qualify as a student absentee voter you must:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be 18 years old on or before election day
- intend to return to live in Manitoba when you have completed your studies *
- The six-month residency rule is waived for students, the military and some public servants.

What are the rules for voters to get time-off to vote?

- Every employee is entitled to three consecutive hours to vote at the discretion of the employer (i.e., not any three hours you want) [s. 13 of EA]. If you are off work at 5 p.m. then you automatically have three hours (5 p.m. to 8 p.m.).
- If an employee is normally scheduled to work the hours that the employee needs to take off to vote [s. 13(4) of EA]. "The discretion of the employer" means employers may adjust work hours to accommodate time off for voting (i.e., change in shift hours from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Does an employee get paid for time off to vote?

- Yes, if an employee is normally scheduled to work the hours that the employee needs to take off to vote [s. 13(4) of EA].

Messages from Manitoba Leaders/Political Parties

(Messages were requested by DOTC for this Newsletter)

Manitoba Conservative Party

Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives have a positive vision for our province. We are concerned that we are falling behind our neighbours, and we want that to change. With a strong, open and growing economy, we will be able to support strong public services.

During this campaign, we have focused on issues of importance to Manitobans, including health care, education, supports to families, dealing with crime, increased training opportunities, supporting investments in infrastructure and protecting the environment, to name just a few.

To support families a McFadyen government would implement a new Manitoba Universal Child Care Benefit. This benefit would start up when the federal Universal Child Care Benefit ends, supporting children from age six to 12. It would provide families with \$100 a month for each child.

Manitobans deserve a responsive, effective, reliable health care system, one that puts patients first. Our Front Line Commitment will put a focus on increasing the key professionals we need across our entire front line system as well as improving morale. A McFadyen government would hire 2,165 net new front line health care positions over the next six years, including nurses, doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, mental health workers, addictions counselors and other health professionals.

Manitobans deserve to feel safe in their homes and their communities. We have developed a comprehensive justice strategy that will provide our crime fighters with the tools they need to tackle the gangs, and provide social programs the room and time they need in order to really strengthen the community in the long term. It includes new police resources, the restoration of the gang database, supports for the court system, and improved monitoring of sex offenders.

Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives want to ensure the fundamentals are in place: a vibrant economy with opportunities for all to participate; a health care system that puts patients first; a justice system that protects citizens and is tough on criminals; a safety and productive learning environment for our youth; and, protection of our natural landscapes and our natural resources for future generations. That's vision, change and progress. For additional details about our platform, please visit: <http://www.pcmnitoba.com/>

Manitoba Liberal Party

In 2011 we have an election about choice. Manitobans can choose the same old, same old way of doing things that we get from the NDP and Conservatives, or we can choose a direction that will help all Manitobans.

For generations it's been all talk and no action from Conservative and NDP governments in Manitoba. And yet there are so many folks in Manitoba who get left behind. I was in Camperville recently and saw just what years of neglect from the other two parties can do. While the people there remain strong, government has left them behind with sub-standard health care and educational opportunities from our government.

It's time government understand that everyone here is Manitoban and deserves to be treated with care, not just because of who you know or because it helps politically. Government should do the right thing because it helps.

I recently announced a Liberal policy what would implement an Opportunity Fund for Aboriginals. This will help Aboriginal youth attend school and get ahead. I've also made an announcement about diabetes which affects everyone in this province. This is an issue that continues to be neglected by the NDP and yet people continue to suffer.

Manitoba Liberals want a province that cares for everyone in this province. Everyone deserves to be treated fairly and with respect.

Jon Gerrard

New Democratic Party of Manitoba

Message from NDP Leader Greg Selinger

Manitoba is a great place to live, work and raise a family, and we want to keep building. Our province is very diverse and each region has different needs, but by working together we can address those needs by investing in the things families count on and making life even more affordable.

Health care is a top priority for many Manitobans, and it is for us too. That's why we are making it easier for Manitobans living on First Nations to get the health care they need, when they need it. We brought more diabetes treatment and support to First Nations reserves so patients can receive treatment close to the support of their family and community. We're committed to expanding this and ensuring they have access to cancer treatments too.

We all know healthy lifestyles start at home, and they require education. We've expanded healthy living supports such as Healthy Baby and Healthy Child on reserve.

As part of recognizing the diversity and vibrant culture of our First Nations, we created the Aboriginal Languages Act to officially recognize Manitoba's aboriginal languages. It was our government that brought treaties into our curriculum. Showcasing culture and recognizing traditions is important to pass on to our younger generations. We established the very successful Manito Ahbee festival and brought in support for PowWows, winter festivals and other cultural events. .

To keep our local economies growing, we're creating new jobs and training opportunities to ensure communities get the maximum benefit. This means using Aboriginal set-asides opposed by Hugh McFayden and community benefit agreements, and hiring local workers. In partnership with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs we created Aboriginal Child Authorities the first in Canada and established the \$20 million First Peoples Economic Growth Fund to help establish and grow First Nations businesses. The investments we've made in apprenticeships programs are giving youth more opportunities for jobs in skilled trades, and that's the key to keeping our youth at home. They need to have more opportunities.

We also have to continue building stronger relationships. By working with First Nations we've seen unprecedented First Nation involvement in jobs, training and economic opportunities in major development projects.

This election is about choice, and it has never been clearer. Can your family risk Hugh McFadyen? With his plan to cut half a billion dollars out of the budget and jeopardize the investments we're making on First Nations, the answer is simple. We can't turn back now, we have to keep moving forward. Together we can keep Manitoba on the right track.

Greg Selinger

Wooing the Aboriginal Vote

Merelda Fiddler | CBC News Online | Oct. 22

Can Any of Saskatchewan's Political Parties Change the Face of Politics?

(adapted for the Newsletter)

The Deiters: Politics in the family

Today it the provincial election that's on the discussion agenda. Anthony's mother Gloria Deiter and his uncle Merv Deiter have popped by for a visit.

Gloria Deiter is retired, but she as a sixties political activist, politics is still in her blood. She used to march in protests against the war in Vietnam, rallied against apartheid and lobbied for civil rights. Deiter says that during that time she didn't realize that she didn't have rights in Canada as a First Nations person. Now she knows better.

Deiter says she doesn't see a political party in this provincial election that is dealing with justice and human rights issues she thinks are so important.

"Voting is very important to me because I think that is the only way that maybe they'll hear us," she says. "In all honesty, out of complete frustration, I haven't voted in the last three years, but it's not because I'm not interested. I watch the news, I read the papers, I see who's running, but I've had some real setbacks and disappointment in the party that I'd joined in the last few years and I approached the leader of the next party, which I probably would've voted for and left a message for him to call me back because I had some questions regarding his party. I also let it be known that I was an Aboriginal person, and they never did get back to me. So I thought, okay you're not interested in talking to me, why should I even vote to begin with. So I haven't voted for three years."

"I don't think we as First Nations people have enough representation, especially from the urban areas. Now, how that can come about - the changes? I guess if the next government would take more interest in the urban people and have some public meetings with us we'd probably

DOTC Member First Nations & Electoral Constituencies/Ridings

Sources: Winnipeg Free Press, September 17, 2011

Elections Manitoba Website

**Birdtail Sioux First Nation,
Canupawakpa Dakota Nation & Sioux Valley Dakota Nation**
Riding- Arthur-Virden
Cliff, Murray/ Manitoba Liberal Party
Draper, Garry/New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Maguire, Larry/The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
Yvonne Sheane
227 3rd Ave. S, Virden, R0M 2C0
Telephone: (204) 748-4780, Toll-free: 1 855 234-7946
Email: ROArthurVirden@elections.mb.ca

Dakota Plains Wahepton First Nation & Long Plain First Nation
Riding- Portage la Prairie
Cudmore-Armstrong, Michelle/Manitoba Liberal Party
Kostuchuk, James/New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Wishart, Ian/The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
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Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation
Riding-Emerson
Belliveau, Michelene/Manitoba Liberal Party
Fiddler, Lorie/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Graydon, Cliff/The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
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Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation
Riding-Agassiz
Briese, Stu/ The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba
Sagness, Amity/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Sallows, Gary/ Manitoba Liberal Party
Storey, Kate/ The Green Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
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Swan Lake First Nation

Swan Lake First Nation-7 & Indian Garden-8
Riding-Midland
Jeffers, Leah/ Manitoba Liberal Party
Pedersen, Blaine/ The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba
Theroux, Jacqueline/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
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Swan Lake First Nation-7A
Riding-Spruce Woods
Cullen, Cliff/ The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba
Szczepanski, Cory/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Zazalak, Trenton/ Manitoba Liberal Party

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Swan Lake First Nation-8
Riding-Morris
Alli, Mohammed/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Mailhot, Janelle/ Manitoba Liberal Party
Taillieu, Mavis/ The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

Returning Officer
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Waywayseecappo First Nation
Riding-Riding Mountain
Hyde, Carl/ Manitoba Liberal Party
Knutson, Signe/ The Green Party of Manitoba
Parsons, Albert/ New Democratic Party of Manitoba
Rowatt, Leanne/ The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

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be happy. I suppose that would be a step forward for us to be able to voice what goes on in the community. And, the first nations people in the urban settings seem to be in the same boat they've always been in. So sometimes I wonder is it even worthwhile voting. I've been hoping to become employed by voting - but being First Nations people it's a tough situation no matter who you vote for because the programs just don't seem to be available for us. I know there's a lot there for aboriginal people. But it comes down to as people you're from different reserves and the setting seems to be - and I can't say or speak for anybody else - but we seem to be without a voice."

Back at Anthony Deiter's home, the family is split on whether or not to vote.

Merv Deiter says he doesn't know which party he will cast his ballot for. In fact, the last time he voted the party he voted for joined the party he was voting against. In the end, Merv says he will exercise his right because he wants to set an example for his children and his grandchildren. He hopes if they see how involved their dad/grandfather is, they will become involved and possibly even change the current system.

For Gloria and Anthony, they have some other things to consider. Anthony has been out of the province for several years, and his mother says she's becoming more and more frustrated with the political system.

"I'm more interested in human rights," explains Gloria Deiter. "And not to slight a cattle farmer or grain farmer. I know those are very, very important issues. But I'm not a cattle farmer or grain farmer. But this is what seems to be taking the spotlight in all political parties provincially and federally. And it would be nice to see one of them come out and say look we have to look at justice issues, human rights issues are not being addressed - the problems are escalating in this province. And nobody's stepping forward to say we have to address these issues to say we have to address these before we have a real catastrophe on our hands and we get to throwing stones at each other."

Anthony questions any of the parties ability to lead First Nations people they, for the most part, don't really understand.

"Who's talking for us? Who really knows us? Rural or urban," asks Deiter. "Do these people that we're voting for provincial and they say they're speaking for all of Saskatchewan and they're looking for a better tomorrow - Are they looking for a better tomorrow for us? And have they ever been out on a reserve? Do they even know what treaty 4 means? What is treaty 4? So if they don't know anything about us I don't think we can realistically expect they're going to represent us. And that's what it takes to represent people - you have to know the people you're representing. If you only know one cross section of society that's who you're representing? I suppose that's a little pessimistic but..."

So the question of whether or not to vote remains a hotly debated one, with First Nations people falling down on both sides of the debate. Traditionally, there is a low voter turnout in both federal and provincial elections. This year may be no different. But, Gloria Deiter says just because some people don't vote, doesn't mean they're not informed or interested. In fact, she has this piece of advice for those running the race to lead Saskatchewan in 2005.

"I guess I wouldn't want the status quo to think that we're apathetic and always were - I think some of us are becoming apathetic - because not being heard and issues not being addressed," says Deiter. "And you just kind of throw up your hands and say what's the use. We're knocking on your door and you're not saying anything. But, I'm really listening, I'm really, really listening, and I want to hear something before I'll vote."

DOCFS: 30TH ANNIVERSARY & GRAND OPENING

