



# Help celebrate National Aboriginal Day

June 21, 2013

Ottawa (21 June 2011) - The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is pleased to encourage all members to join with Aboriginal Peoples and Canadians across the country in celebrating National Aboriginal Day on June 21.

National Aboriginal Day is marked each year on the same date to honour the achievements of Aboriginal Peoples in all areas, including the arts, language, reverence for the land and spirituality.

NUPGE president James Clancy says the holiday is a celebration that benefits Canadians on many levels.

"We value the partnerships we have formed over the years with Aboriginal workers and Aboriginal communities," Clancy says.

"NUPGE champions full human rights for all citizens, including the right to organize and bargain collectively. We believe this includes a national network of community-based services that allow us to fully participate in society. We must forever strive to end poverty and homelessness and to eliminate discrimination in all areas of employment."

## **Proclaimed in 1996**

June 21 was first proclaimed in 1996 as an annual occasion to recognize the diverse cultures and outstanding contributions to Canada of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Collectively these groups make up the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.

The date was selected for several reasons, including the fact that it coincides with the summer solstice.

In 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations) called for the creation of a National Aboriginal Solidarity Day to be celebrated on June 21. In 1995, a similar recommendation was made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It called for a National First Peoples Day to be designated.

Also in 1995, a national conference of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, known as The Sacred Assembly, called for a national holiday to celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canada.

The first National Aboriginal Day was proclaimed by the Governor General the following year. It is now part of a series of 'Celebrate Canada' days beginning on June 21 and followed by St-Jean Baptiste Day on June 24, Canadian Multiculturalism Day on June 27 and Canada Day on July 1.

## **NUPGE**

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is one of Canada's largest labour organizations with over 340,000 members. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families and to build a stronger Canada by ensuring our common wealth is used for the common good. NUPGE

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