



DARE TO DO

Jerome Conaty is the new Northern Director/entrepreneur-in-residence for North Forge.



Photo via Facebook

Forging new ground in the north

Trent Allen
Editor

North Forge Technology Exchange is a growing platform to help encourage growth in new and existing businesses and after years of discussion and planning it is now on its way to the north.

Jerome Conaty, Northern Director/entrepreneur-in-residence for North Forge, was hired in late October and will be working to bring the North forge experience to The Pas and the Norman region. Conaty, owner and operator of Funky Threadz, is excited to be helping to lead the way for North Forge in the area.

"I said what a huge opportunity for Norman (region) to have a contact into such an amazing network," said Conaty.

North Forge is, according to their website, "an innovation-based economic development agency and a powerhouse community to fuel Manitoba's innovation economy providing entrepreneurs with award-winning mentors, rockstar subject matter experts and a four-stage startup program."

Effectively, it is a business incubator that combines funding and mentorship connections with technology to help ensure business expansions and new startups are given as many tools as possible to succeed.

"In started out with really simple roots, a couple business people just said let's buy some equipment and make it so some other business people can it use it and we'll just create a network of entrepreneurs supporting entrepreneurs," said Conaty, noting a lot of what north Forge does is still volunteer based.

There is a fabrication lab in Winnipeg that can help with the technical side of things, such as helping to 3-D print a model or provide expertise on designing a website or app. A similar version, done to scale, is being planned for University College of the North's campus in The Pas.

UCN, along with the Arctic Gateway Group, are partners on the project and Conaty noted his office is not yet firmly set in a location but could bounce between the two in The Pas.

"They reduce the risk and the cost of innovation or of any business startup, stated Conaty. "The focus in Norman is not simply tech; it's any business development, so any trucker that's looking to expand into different markets or a mom and pop who's making First Nations art in their basement right now."

Conaty added it can also work with larger businesses as well, including the largest employers in the region such as Canadian Kraft Papers Industries.

Conaty hoped one of the benefits of the North forge project is seeing a better view of doing business in the north, particular in a day and age where there is so much technology at our fingertips.

"Why do we always think I need to get away from The Pas, I need to get out of the north succeed," questioned Conaty. "No you don't, this is the day and age where you can have a 3-D printer in your basement, you can run a website and have an app and you could be selling your product -whatever it is- all over the world from the luxury of your home or from your home area."

Conaty went on to say if North Forge had been in place when he started into business in 2002, the process to get his business up and running would have been reduced from seven years to just one.

"We're going to have it all here, there's literally zero excuse now," said Conaty. "A lot of intelligent people stay here but we also see an exodus, we also see people that say the grass is greener (elsewhere)."

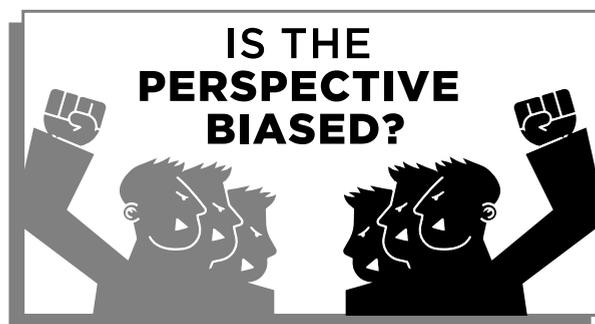
Conaty added that with this comes an expectation to see the north seize it and use it.

"Now that we're getting thrown a bone, now it's up to us to run with it. Now the resources are going to be here so are we going to squander it or are we going to actually take advantage of it?"

North Forge isn't just for Manitoba; it is all over the country and beyond and has been involved in helping many businesses find their footing. One prominent example of this is Skip the Dishes.

Conaty said the goals is to have the Norman region's North Forge started and functional in the next few months and from there slowly expand it outward to the rest of the Norman region. The goal is also to partner with existing programs and organization in the area, such as the Community Economic Development Fund and The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce.

"I'm really excited to take on this project for Norman, I'm really honoured people are excited on this because I had the same level of frustration as most northerners. We needed to get our act together and we needed to get some assistance from the south to be plugged into that network and get things moving up here and now it's here. The only excuse now is us; it's on us now so if it doesn't work it's on us."



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Thursday - Nov 28th, 2019
5:30pm
1559 Gordon Avenue

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**Wed., November 20th, 6 pm
Sam Waller Museum
Everyone Welcome!**

DISPLACEMENT

Karen Cornelius and Peter Tittenberger
A Travelling Exhibition By Manitoba Arts Network



Displaced Pieces 66
- Peter Tittenberger

On display at the Sam Waller Museum from **Nov. 4 —Nov. 29, 2019.** Museum open daily from **1:00pm to 5:00pm.** Standard admission rates apply and includes entrance to the Museum as well as the Children's Discovery Centre.

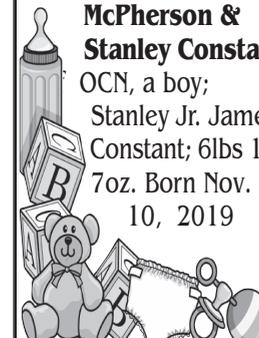
Sponsored by The Pas Arts Council & the Sam Waller Museum.

Sam Waller Museum 306 Fischer Ave. The Pas, MB
204-623-3802 samwallermuseum.ca
contactus@samwallermuseum.ca

New Arrivals

Born to **Wes & Janet Cook** of OCN a boy ; Ronni Kamari Amedeus Braylon Cook; 9lbs 5.8oz, Born October 20, 2019

Born to **Taylor McPherson & Stanley Constant** OCN, a boy; Stanley Jr. James Constant; 6lbs 10.7oz. Born Nov. 10, 2019



New Arrivals

Born to **Robin Lagimodiere & Curtis Mayer** of The Pas, a boy; Gage Theodore Mayer; 6lbs 5 oz, Born August 29, 2019

Born to **Cheyanna Demchynski & Justin Lamontagne** of The Pas, a boy; Reed Russell Sterling Lamontagne; 8lbs, 3.8 oz. Born Sept. 17, 2019

