



**FIRST NATIONS TECHNICAL  
SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP INC.**

# **Fiscal 2022–2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

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TSAG provides technical services and training to First Nations in Alberta in the areas of Circuit Rider Training, Asset Management, Environmental Management, Housing, Rural Addressing, Fire Safety, Information Technology, and Virtual Healthcare. .

[www.tsag.net](http://www.tsag.net)



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# A Message From Our CEO

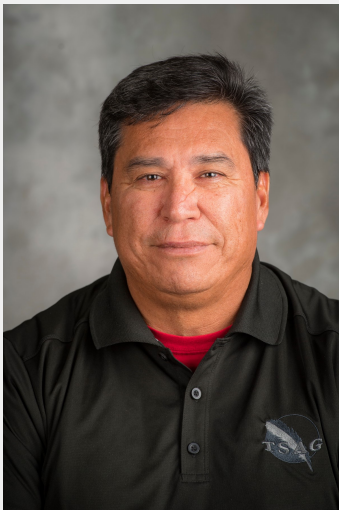
Dear friends and supporters,

I am delighted to present First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group Inc. (TSAG's) Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

It fills me with immense pride to witness the impact of our not-for-profit First Nation organization. Our unwavering commitment to building bridges, embracing traditions, and empowering our communities has led us to achieve significant milestones this year.

With the generous support of our partners, communities and dedicated team members, we continue to nurture the future of our Nations, preserve our rich cultural heritage, and uplift the lives of First Nation individuals and families.

Thank you for standing beside us on this incredible journey. Together, we are creating a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



Great thanks,

Vaughn Paul CEO, TSAG

[www.tsag.net](http://www.tsag.net)

# TSAG Objectives

First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG) was established to:

1. Create awareness of the issues related to technical services that Tribal Council and First Nation staff require to better advise the Alberta Chiefs concerning the management and funding of community infrastructure services.
2. Administer an effective communication network among First Nations Technical Service providers and a variety of personnel throughout Alberta.
3. Develop the capacity of technical services staff of Tribal Councils and First Nations.
4. To create value-added services based on economies of scale.

## Our Mission and Values

### Our Mission

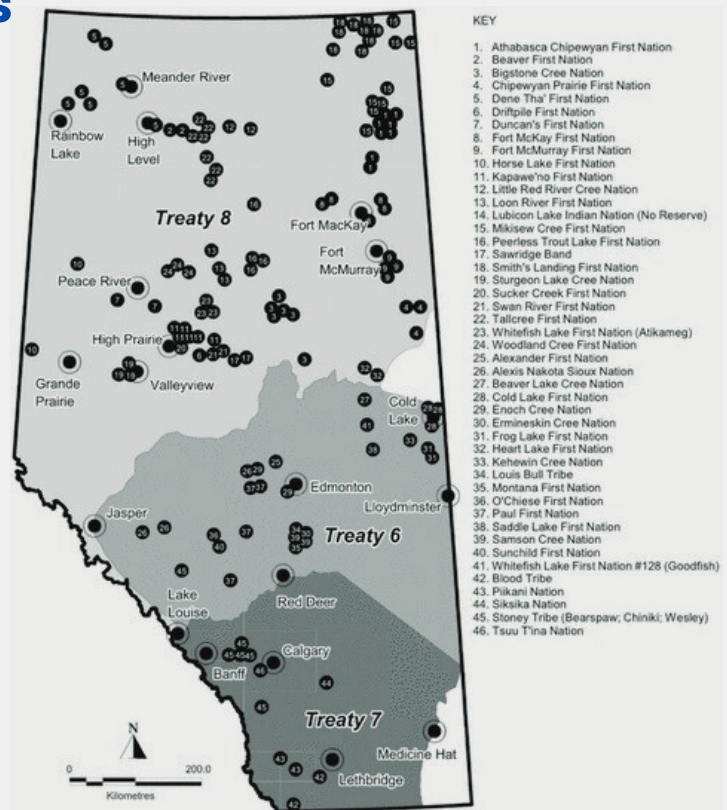
TSAG is a not-for-profit provider of quality technical service and training for First Nations in Alberta.

### Our Values

Our vision is simple – to support strong community.

### How Do We Strengthen Communities

To help create safe and strong communities, we provide technical services plus train, mentor, and guide community members in multiple areas.



# Key Achievements

## Extended Asset Condition Reporting System (E-ACRS)

- The Extended Asset Condition Reporting System (E-ACRS) Program was utilized throughout this Fiscal year with the delivery to 19 Alberta First Nations throughout the Treaty 6 & Treaty 8 regions
  - Alexis, Sunchild, O'Chiese, Duncan's, Enoch, Sturgeon Lake, Loon River, Lubicon, Horse Lake, Bigstone Cree Nation, Whitefish Lake (Atikameg), Sucker Creek, Kapawe'no, Driftpile, Woodland Cree, Smiths Landing, Fox Lake and Garden River
- TSAG completed inspections for 1,911 assets
  - Of the 1,911 active assets inspected, there were 136 assets (7.12%) in new condition, 634 assets (33.18%) are in good condition, 956 (50.03%) are in fair condition and 185 (9.68%) are in poor condition.

## Circuit Rider Training Program (CRTP)

- This year 11 new operators completed and passed TSAG's Introduction to Water and Wastewater Systems (IWWS) course.
- Eight new operators were provided the TSAG Fire Hydrant course early in the year, this year the course was provided online and was well received.
- In addition, the CRTP has provided numerous on-site and hands-on training sessions to operators and assisted with feasibility and design projects on multiple First Nation capital projects, mainly by way of online video calls.

## Fire Protection and Prevention

- TSAG performed fire inspections, fire department assessments, and fire hydrant flow testing in 18 communities during the 2022-2023 season
  - Across these 18 communities, 119 facility fire inspections were performed by TSAG Safety Codes Officers
- TSAG completed 75 Fire Alarm System (FAS) Inspections over 15 Alberta First Nations
- TSAG hosted a Phase I of the Fire Team Workshop which brought 27 Nations together to discuss the basics on how to run a fire department. Fire topic areas were focused on throughout the workshop as the group worked together through each topic area offering advice and suggestions to the teams and allowing for open floor discussions with subject matter experts.
- TSAG has visited 13 Nations to discuss their needs and provided support for Fire Departments; reaching 3094 students across 23 schools

# Key Achievements

## **Personal Rural Addressing Program (PRAP)**

- TSAG reaches out annually and provides updates to 10 communities that we have launched the program in.
- TSAG provides the Nation with updated mapping so the Nations can be acclimated to their newly assigned addresses. They then can purchase signage to match the new digital addressing.
- TSAG currently has 6 New PRAP projects/nations we are working with to deploy this program. An additional 9 nations have started the program and are in various stages of the charter.
- The main objective of PRAP is the development of recognized community addressing. An official recognized addressing system is one that is submitted and approved for upload to the Alberta Data Sharing Partnership (AMDSP).

## **Sustainable Communities & Environmental Management**

- The goal of the Solid Waste API's is to complete and compile an inventory of all Alberta First Nation's solid waste management systems, assets, operational practices, and other relevant data and details.
- The collected data will be used to identify ongoing needs, improve operational practices, allocate funding, and assess the impact of the First Nations Solid Waste Management Initiative (FNSWMI)
- We are developing and will deliver a guide and template for waste transfer station operations and maintenance plans that support First Nation operators and managers.

## **Building Maintenance Circuit Rider Program**

- TSAG's Building Maintenance specialist visited 14 Nations this year reviewing TSAG's building maintenance module and is working with Nations identifying what items are the biggest concern facing them as the maintenance team.
- We were happy to see that a large number of those nations visited have started to prioritize the maintenance of their assets and are ensuring they are developing or expanding on their maintenance plans.
- Many nations have expressed a desire for more budgeting training which will be a focus for next year.
- This program continues to be well-received and will be continuing into the next Fiscal year.

# Key Achievements

## First Nations Telehealth Network (FNTN)

The FNTN team produced the following activities this fiscal year:

- 2286 Clinical Sessions
- 56 Educations Sessions were created with over 43 recorded
- The redevelopment and update of the FNTN website (<https://fntn.ca>)
- The creation and deployment of a monthly newsletter
- Secured a part-time Clinical Coordinator due to the increase in volume of the network
- the new "**Remote Patient Monitoring**" was deployed in three communities and is being used by Virtual Diabetes Clinic!
- 44 zoom accounts, 225,730 Meeting Minutes, 2,919 participants,
- 646 Meetings, 56,490 Webinar Minutes, 965 participants

## Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC)

The AIVCC saw another great year of expansion and growth this year!

The following highlights capture some of the best:

- 7,279 appointments were booked
  - 6,522 of those booked were "successful" appointments
- 355 Patient Survey Responses were received
- An expansion of the Mental Health Team into 4 psychologists, 1 Psychiatrist, and 1 Provisional Psychologist
- An expansion of Mental Health Services to include Adolescents age 13 or older, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Group Weekly, and ADHD Testing
- An increase in Physicians to 31 from 24
- 202 locations were served across Alberta

## CMHC On-Reserve Inspection Program

TSAG's inspection team completed 400 inspections in 34 Alberta First Nations and 6 Yukon First Nations this fiscal year.

The breakout is as follows:

- Completed 149 Physical Condition Reviews (PCR's)
- Completed 101 RRAP Progress Inspections (RRAP)
- Completed 118 Section 95 Inspections.
- Completed 32 RRAP Initial Reviews (RRAP)

# Programs and Initiatives

## Technical Services:

- Extended Asset Condition Reporting System (E-ACRS)
- Circuit Rider Training Program (CRTP)
- Fire Protection and Prevention
- Personal Rural Addressing Program (PRAP)
- Sustainable Communities
- Environmental Management
- Building Maintenance Circuit Rider Program

## Information Technology & E-Health:

- First Nations Telehealth Network
- Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC)

## Additional Initiatives:

- CMHC On-Reserve Inspections for:
  - Section 95's,
  - Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), and
  - Physical Condition Review (PCR)
- Housing Condition Assessment Program (HCAP)
- Home Maintenance Program (HMP)
- Skills Link Programming



# Impact Stories

## **Everyone's a winner when we work together!**

*Utilizing the expertise of the TSAG Circuit Rider Training Program, the Horse Lake First Nation extended an invite to TSAG to sit on the project management team responsible to help design, construct and commissioning the new water treatment plant. By including the CRT team, the nation gains additional assistance and support from a Rider (and the whole CRT team) who have extensive years of experience and past successes that can bring new opportunities.*

*Having the opportunity to work with our nations on a new design not only provides support to the Nation, but also gives the Circuit Riders a different relationship with the operators and the Nation members. It provides new networking opportunities fostering new relationships as they work to achieve a new goal! This becomes an important milestone in the CRT's career as it helps them be part of the development team as well as providing them additional training and a new skill set!*

## **We got the right stuff!**

*Because of TSAG's expertise and experience in Solid Waste, TSAG's Solid Waste team was asked to sit on the National Advisory Committee on First Nation Solid Waste Initiative team to assist and provide feedback on the new Solid Waste API Collection form and application. This allowed TSAG to ensure that pertinent information was being collected that would be useful, relevant and easily accessible and as well as ensuring the app was easy to use for those collecting information!*

*Strong data at your finger tips is pertinent to assist in making supported decisions and strong strategic plans for the future.*

## **Transforming Lives Through Virtual Connection**

- "I don't need to take time off of work to speak to a doctor. The walk in clinics are always so busy at times when I am not working and you can only discuss one concern if you do get in to see the doctor at the walk in clinic."*
- "To be an indigenous person accessing mental health providers i felt safe to discuss my needs and felt totally understood and accepted and safe to express myself"*
- "Really appreciated how caring doctors were and their ability to respond to complex situations."*
- Patient was sent for screening for cancer and actually was found to have colon cancer she sent this message to Dr. Simms "sincerest gratitude towards you for saving my life"*

# Financial Overview



Edward Cheung, CPA, CA\*  
Scott T. Mockford, CPA, CA\*  
Allen Lee, CPA, CMA\*  
Jason Bondarevich, CPA, CA\*  
\*Operates as a Professional Corporation

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Chief Steering Committee and Board of Directors of First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group Inc.

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group Inc, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of change in net assets, operations, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group Inc. as at March 31, 2023, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report.

We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing these financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to a going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

# Financial Overview

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT CONTINUED

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

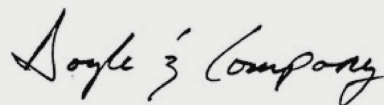
As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

July 6, 2023  
11210 - 107 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 0Y1



Chartered Professional Accountants

# Our Partners and Supporters

We extend our sincere thanks to the organizations and individuals who collaborated with us on our journey to empower First Nation communities.



*"Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) works collaboratively with partners to improve access to high quality services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Our vision is to support and empower Indigenous peoples to independently deliver services and address the socio-economic conditions in their communities."*

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada's national housing agency.

*"CMHC exists for a single reason: to make housing affordable for everyone in Canada. We know that housing helps people stay employed, do better in school and participate more fully in society. Housing affordability and a stable housing finance system support a stronger, safer Canada where everyone can live with dignity. "*

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/>



*"Arrow provides comprehensive end-to-end IT Services tailored to your needs."*

*"We specialize in providing network, computer systems, technical support and data communication solutions to meet your community and business needs."*

<https://atg.net/>



[www.tsag.net](http://www.tsag.net)

# Looking Ahead: Goals for 2024

## **Our Asset Management team's initiatives for the year include:**

Delivering the E-ACRS Inspections to 10 First Nations including:

- Paul First Nation
- Tsuut'ina Nation
- Fort McMurray First Nation
- Fort McKay First Nation
- Stoney Nakoda Nations
- Piikani Nation
- Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
- Mikisew Cree First Nation

## **The Circuit Rider Training Program's Objectives for the year include:**

- Increasing certification numbers for water and wastewater operators
- Identifying and working with the nations to mitigate deficiencies in water and wastewater facilities
- Developing Annual Operator Training Plans to project certification completion, milestone achievements required and resources required to provide Nations and their operators a strong plan to follow and achieve.
- Updated the Annual Performance Inspection Template for stronger data collection.

## **The Fire Protection & Prevention's Targets for the year include:**

- Increasing the certification rate of First Nation Fire Teams
- Identifying and working with the nations to mitigate deficiencies
- Developing stronger processes, policies and procedures among fire teams to ensure our Nations are protected and ready for any emergencies
- Deliver Part 2 & 3 of the Fire Team Workshop to assist Fire Teams in readiness and preparedness for fires and fire related emergencies

## **Personal Rural Addressing Program's Fiscal Initiatives include:**

- Completing 10 Rural Addressing Programs with Alberta participating Nations
- Complete updates and provide new mapping to all participating Nations as continual updates and completions are finished
- Potential expansion on the current program delivery to enhance features

## **Building Maintenance Circuit Rider Program Initiatives for the year include:**

- Increasing the building maintenance portfolio within Nation to ensure it is a priority to extending the life of assets within the Nation.
- Identifying new processes and practices with the nations to alleviate deficiencies
- Create new networking opportunities amongst Nation to work toward bulk buying of supplies or establishing relationships with vendors for a collective group of Nations or a Tribal council.
- Create and/or update templates to be customizable for each Nation.

# Looking Ahead: Goals for 2024

## **The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic's sites are set on:**

- Expansion of clinicians to include:
  - Patient Navigators,
  - Registered Nurses
  - Additional Physicians,
  - Psychologists, and
  - Psychiatrists
- Expansion of Mental Health services to include some new group therapy opportunities, couples therapy and Psychoeducational testing
- Expand our services by reaching new patients who require support

## **The First Nation Telehealth Network's goals for this fiscal year include:**

- The expansion of Remote Patient Monitoring into an additional community
- Evergreening of older equipment

## **CMHC On-Reserve Inspection Program aspirations include:**

- Continuing to deliver efficient and timely inspections as per CMHC's inspection guidelines
- Continued completion of Physical Condition Reviews before expected delivery date
- Continue to deliver a gold-standard product to our trusted partner and Alberta First Nations
- Continue to increase efficiencies, where possible.
- Develop effective tools to make the inspection process more streamlined

# Contact Information

You can find out information about TSAG , our programming and upcoming events on our website at: [www.tsag.net](http://www.tsag.net)

Additionally, TSAG is active on the following social media platforms:



FirstNationsTSAG



@fnTSAG



@firstnationstsag

## Contact Us

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First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group Inc. is a First Nations non-profit organization.

- TSAG operates under the guidance and direction of a Chiefs Steering Committee and a Board of Directors always respecting the spirit and intent of the Treaties.
- TSAG currently employs approximately thirty five fulltime staff comprising of water and waste water trainers, system and network analysts, civil engineers, civil engineering technologists, environmental technicians, including managerial, administrative and communications personnel.
- TSAG provides advisory and technical support to 47 Alberta First Nations, nine Tribal Councils and three unaffiliated First Nations.