

KITSAKI NEWS

December 2023

The Future is Bright — Celebrating the Women Driving Growth & Change at Kitsaki

Andrea Harrabek, AGI Envirotank

Kelly Wells, CanNorth

Sienna McKenzie, Kitsaki Management

Alison Lea, FNIS

Tammy McKay, FNIS

Ritu Malhotra, March Consulting

Sherry Mossman, NRT

Prudence McKenzie, PLATO



Kitsaki Group of Companies

Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership has managed the economic development activities of Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) since 1981. Dedicated to investing in long-term sustainable businesses that meet strategic goals and profitability, risk and employment criteria, Kitsaki has built a diverse and growing portfolio, with investments in many sectors including transportation, hospitality, environmental, mining, engineering, vegetation management, insurance, technology, forestry, and more.



Lac La Ronge Indian Band

With more than 12,000 members, LLRIB is the largest First Nation in Saskatchewan, rich in Woodland Cree culture, language, and connection to the land. Located in north-central Saskatchewan in Treaty 6 territory, LLRIB includes six communities:

Little Red River, Morin Lake (Hall Lake), La Ronge, Sucker River, Stanley Mission, and Grandmother's Bay.

The Nation is governed by an elected Chief and 12 Councillors. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson has served in her role since 2006.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tammy Cook-Searson

As 2023 draws to a close, I find it humbling and inspiring to look back at the remarkable strides we have made by working together as a First Nation and with our Kitsaki group of companies, over the past year. Our journey, deeply rooted in community and driven by a shared vision, has been extraordinary.

Recently, Kitsaki and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band have celebrated significant milestones: the acquisition of NRSI by CanNorth, the forging of a new Urban Reserve Agreement with the City of Saskatoon, the strengthening of NRT's leadership with the appointment of a new COO, the unveiling of Kitsaki's first Impact Report, and more. These accomplishments are markers of progress and testaments to our collective resilience and determination.

Stepping into the role of a new member on Cameco's Board of Directors, I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of respected northerners like Don Deranger and former Chief and current Senator Harry Cook. This role is much more than a position; it is a responsibility to uphold the unique values and aspirations of our northern communities. My commitment is to ensure that the diverse voices of Northern Saskatchewan are not only heard but are influential in shaping the decisions that impact our future, particularly in creating sustainable job opportunities.

The Urban Reserve Agreement, a collaborative achievement between the City of Saskatoon and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, stands as an example of what we can accomplish by working together. This agreement is a significant step forward, opening up more professional opportunities for Indigenous individuals, particularly in the field of sciences through CanNorth Environmental Services.

As we step into the Christmas season, I extend my warmest wishes to you and your families. May this Christmas be a celebration of joy, unity, and a reflection of all that we have achieved together. Let us carry this spirit of collaboration and pride into the new year and beyond.

Tammy Cook-Searson



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Ron Hyggen

As I sit down to write this message, I am thinking about the journey of Kitsaki from its beginnings in 1981. I would like to recognize the past and present leaders who have carried the torch of our organization to make it what it is today. The foresight and tireless efforts of these leaders have blazed a trail for us, toward a brighter future. It was through those leaders and their early aspirations that enabled Kitsaki to release our first-ever Impact Report, a testament to the hard work and dedication that has shaped our journey. This report and what it represents is an example of what can come from a vision and dedication.

Since the pandemic, we have more than doubled our employee complement, a clear indication of our resilience and adaptive strength. Our targeted growth has been strategic, focusing on bringing balance and diversity to new sectors and national markets. Currently, our team is diligently working towards fully integrating the five new companies added to the Kitsaki group of companies, a step that promises to bring new synergies and opportunities.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Kitsaki's Circle of Elders, our Board of Directors, our business partners, contractors, clients and staff. Your hard work, dedication, and unwavering support are the backbone of our success. In this issue of our newsletter, we wanted to highlight some of the incredible women in Kitsaki's group of companies. Their dedication and leadership are foundational to our success. They serve as a powerful reminder that through hard work, anything is possible.

As we approach the festive season, I extend my warmest season's greetings from my family to you and your families, and I hope this time of year brings joy, peace, and prosperity to each one of you.

Two decades of growth at AGI with Andrea Harrabek



When Andrea Harrabek stepped into the role of AGI receptionist in August 2001, she had no idea it would grow into the dynamic, fulfilling career she has enjoyed for the last 22 years. "Looking at the date now, it seems like a VERY long time," she laughs.

Harrabek's journey with AGI mirrors the growth and evolution of the company. Each role she has taken on has been a building block for the next, as she has embraced new challenges with enthusiasm and expertise. Today, she is AGI's Office Manager.

"I wear a lot of hats in this position," Harrabek says. "Quality assurance, design coordination for a team of seven drafters and five engineers-in-training, document control for all projects, client relations, project coordinator assistant... and then, of course, the general office managerial duties. It sounds like a lot, and it is, but I LOVE it!"

Harrabek says her organizational and prioritization skills have played a key role in her success, crucial to her ability to manage AGI's diverse and constant flow of projects.

"This is a crazy busy place," Harrabek says. "No day – and no tank – is ever the same. It keeps us on our toes!"

Known for going "with the flow," Harrabek juggles whatever comes her way while always prioritizing the client. She says she hasn't struggled with decisions or barriers because Jeff and Wade Burton have created a supportive culture and a cooperative, inclusive environment with fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees, including women.

"You know, it goes by fast, and I really appreciate being able to have a career and also to be present with my family."

"We all try to work together to get the job done," she says.

Away from AGI, Harrabek is a mother to three incredible children, grateful for AGI's support of work-life balance.

"Field trips, activities — AGI has given me the flexibility to be involved in all those important moments," she says. "You know, it goes by fast, and I really appreciate being able to have a career and also to be present with my family."

AGI Envirotank is a leading manufacturer of environmentally safe steel storage tanks for the oil, gas and mining sectors. [Find out more at envirotank.com](https://www.envirotank.com)

From Aquatic Biologist to Division Manager: Kelly Wells' journey at CanNorth



Joining Canada North Environmental Services (CanNorth) as an Aquatic Biologist was a dream come true for Kelly Wells, especially as it meant summers in northern Saskatchewan.

"Those first summers I worked up around Lake Athabasca and in the Uranium City area were amazing," Wells remembers. "I learned so much from the locals and fell in love with the North, its lakes, remoteness...."

Fast forward two decades and you'll find Wells mentoring the next generation of biologists and playing an integral role in CanNorth's operations and management as Division Manager.

Wells' vision of a career in the environmental field began when she was a kid. Summers at the family cabin developed her love of fish biology and tranquil waters. Wells is also grateful for early guidance from a senior fisheries biologist, a colleague of her father's.

"My conversations with her inspired me to delve into this field," Wells says. "I love the pace, the diversity, the blend

of field and office work, and the applied science aspect of what I do."

CanNorth was a modest venture in 2001, with just four employees when Wells joined the team, which meant a broad scope of work. It was a perfect fit right from the start.

"I learned quickly, diving into cost estimates, project management, and client relations," she recalls. "I also found myself mending fishnets, and conducting fish surveys....."

Wells credits this diverse work environment for sustaining her interest in the field.

"I love the pace, the diversity, the blend of field and office work, and the applied science aspect of what I do."

While she acknowledges the many challenges women face in the workplace, Wells is proud of the many talented women on CanNorth's team. The majority of the company's 90+ employees are women, many of them occupying senior positions. Wells also recognizes the positive impact of being part of the Kitsaki Group.

"Kitsaki and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band are hugely supportive," Wells says. "Of course, Chief Tammy Cook-Season is a major role model for women, and I'm grateful to be part of a company with such strong leadership, sustainable hiring practices, and a commitment to personal growth."

CanNorth maximizes Indigenous community involvement, integrates traditional knowledge, and prioritizes investment in Indigenous talent.

Interested in a career with CanNorth? Email us at hr@cannorth.com or find out more at cannorth.com



First Nation Insurances Services, Tammy McKay, on embracing change



In a world where change is the only constant, FNIS Managing Director Tammy McKay's mantra 'embrace change' is more than a philosophy; it's a guiding principle for her role as Managing Director at First Nations Insurance Services (FNIS).

"The world is constantly changing," says McKay, as she reflects on her journey to her leadership role at FNIS. "And I believe there is always opportunity in that change."

McKay's transition from finance to leadership came in 2017, when she made a big pivot in her career. Before joining the team at FNIS, McKay's diverse career spanned two decades in public practice, industry, and government. Her breadth of experience led to a consultant position overseeing the accounting department at FNIS that became a permanent position in 2016, paving the way for her appointment as FNIS Managing Director in 2017.

For McKay, leadership is a journey defined by how a person navigates tough decisions.

"Every decision a leader makes reverberates through an organization's strategic planning, finances, and operations," she says. "These decisions impact employee livelihood, as well as the future trajectory of an organization."

McKay credits her career challenges as the catalysts for some of her best decisions and strategies—including her dedication to creating and supporting the solid team that propels FNIS forward in the fiercely competitive insurance industry today.

"The world is constantly changing... I believe there is always opportunity in that change."

While celebrating progress, McKay acknowledges gender disparity in leadership. She advocates for the creation and support of strong networks of mentors and colleagues for women she says are integral for a positive, inclusive environment, and shared growth for the future. Support and encouragement from progressive companies like Kitsaki Group and Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies have been pivotal in her own leadership journey.

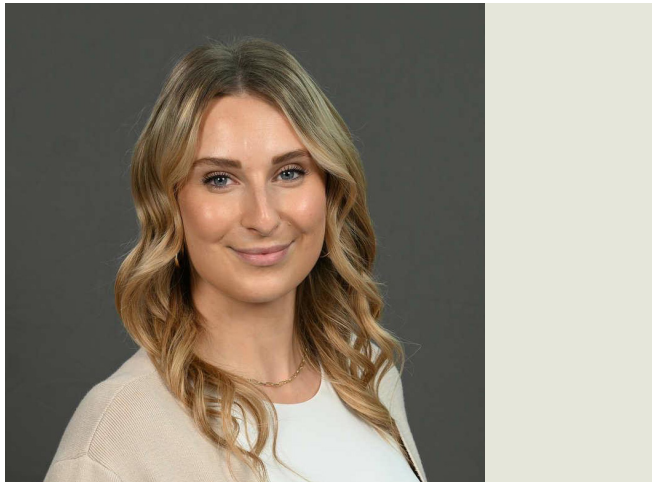
McKay's mission to mentor and elevate others is reflected by her commitment to fostering shared success in her team at FNIS, and in the wider business community. Her resilient spirit and dedication to continuous learning and self-advocacy serve as inspiration for emerging leaders, especially women aspiring to make an impact in leadership.

"It's about a balanced approach to valuing one's individual path, while also adapting to the ever-evolving landscape of change we face as we journey through a roller coaster of professional ups and downs," McKay says. "The decisions we make in those tough moments are what define us."

First Nations Insurance Services is a full-service insurance brokerage offering group benefits, insurance, pension services, and more. [Learn more at fnislp.ca](https://fnislp.ca)



Alison Lea: An accomplished asset in FNIS Employee Benefits



First Nations Insurance Services (FNIS) has yet another reason to celebrate this holiday season. Alison Lea has been honoured with the Young Professionals Scholarship of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBP) and the International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Specialists.

This prestigious award is reserved for young professionals making significant strides in the employee benefits sector. It acknowledges professional accomplishments and positive impact on the community and industry at large.

“Receiving the IFEBP Young Professional Award is a shared achievement and I acknowledge the support, leadership, and encouragement I’ve received,” says Lea. “This recognition is not just a reflection of my efforts; it’s a testament to FNIS leadership and their commitment to nurturing talent, fostering professional development, and supporting personal growth for their employees.”

Lea joined FNIS in early 2022 and it didn't take long for her dedication to client service, eagerness for learning, and commitment to the FNIS culture of teamwork, to shine through.

“Alison is continually seeking ways to expand FNIS’ client base with innovative initiatives and industry offerings,” says

FNIS General Manager Tammy McKay. “Her intelligence, dedication, and tireless work ethic are evident every day.”

While Lea's recognition by these respected organizations is a testament to her individual accomplishments and talents, she says the award is also a reflection of the exciting opportunities FNIS offers young professionals who are passionate about their careers.

“I am working toward my Certified Employee Benefits Specialist designation,” Alison shares. “I feel lucky to be in a field I'm passionate about, surrounded by a team of such high calibre every day. I’m looking forward to leveraging my expertise to support FNIS in its mandate to protect and enhance Treaty Health Rights, and to develop benefits solutions for Saskatchewan’s workforce.”

“Receiving the IFEBP Young Professional Award is a shared achievement and I acknowledge the support, leadership, and encouragement I’ve received.”



Alison Lea receives the Young Professionals Scholarship of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBP) and the International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Specialists

At FNIS, we are always on the lookout for the right people to join our team. If you are ready to be part of a company that values growth and collaboration, email your resume to admin@fnislpc.ca



Kitsaki looks forward to learning along with Sienna when she joins us in 2024!



Kitsaki values fresh and diverse perspectives and believes in the power of experiential learning. Co-operative placements like Sienna's enable participants to develop their skills and competencies, and give our team the opportunity to mentor and build the capacity of our future leaders.

Q: Tell us about your journey, what led you to your area of study for post-secondary, and when did you decide Kitsaki was where you wanted to be?

A: My journey started in Stanley Mission and then moved to Air Ronge, where I finished high school. I was always involved, like being the football medic and working with Special Olympics – La Ronge. In 2021, I started studying Commerce in Marketing at Northlands College, and later, I moved to Saskatoon for the Edwards School of Business. While there, I also started studying for an Indigenous Governance and Politics Certificate. I'm part of the Indigenous Business Student Society, helping organize events. I'm also in the Cooperative Education Program, aiming to work at Kitsaki.

When I started university, I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do, but I liked Commerce and connecting with people. I also wanted to work for my community. Growing up, I always heard about Kitsaki and saw their ads but didn't

know much about what they did. Learning about Indigenous Business in Canada at university, I understood how important companies like Kitsaki are for community support. That's why I became interested in Economic Development. The Cando Economic Development Indigenous Youth Summit I attended this summer really confirmed my interest in this field. I want to make a difference in my community like the professionals I met there.

Q: What are you most excited about in your new role?

A: I'm really excited about working for my community and knowing that my work will help improve people's lives. I'm looking forward to learning from the experienced people at Kitsaki and building relationships within the communities. It's great to learn about marketing in an environment that I'm comfortable with and where I want to be in the future. I'm also happy to learn things during my coop placement that will help me and the communities in the long run.

Q: What are your goals when you are finished school?

A: After school, I plan to work in a city marketing position for a few years. Then, I want to move back to La Ronge and start building my life there. I hope to keep working with Kitsaki after my coop term. I also want to keep volunteering with Special Olympics in La Ronge and look for other ways to help in the community. My main goal is to help Indigenous youth from Lac La Ronge show what we can do to the world. When I have more time, I'd love to get a dog, have a big garden, and maybe some pet chickens.

Kitsaki is committed to building Indigenous capacity by investing in education and training, providing an average \$50,000 per year in post-secondary scholarships for LLRIB members; a commitment matched by Cameco and LLRIB since program launch in 2013.

Kitsaki is proud to support innovative training and employment models rooted in Indigenous values with unique approaches that have helped alleviate labour shortages, generated greater capacity through genuine participation and employment opportunities, and propelled the socio-economic advancement of the communities it serves.

Steering through challenges: Ritu Malhotra's journey to the top at March



In 2012, Ritu Malhotra found herself at a career crossroads when she was offered the position of Director of Power & Controls at March Consulting Associates. After in-depth discussions with her family and March's then CEO, Malhotra decided she was ready to take on a new challenge.

Malhotra dove into managing a large team working on two significant projects that spanned the next few years. By 2015, as leadership neared retirement, she was presented with the opportunity to step into the role of March's Vice President of Operations. This opportunity came at a turbulent time, as Saskatchewan's mining and industrial sector struggled with a significant economic downturn.

Malhotra was asked to take the helm in March 2017, transitioning into the role of President & CEO within the year. Despite the slump in the market, March grew its client base, opened two new office locations, and achieved almost 300 per cent growth in revenue.

Malhotra credits the collective efforts of March's employees for laying the foundation for the robust organization that March is today. Their performance during the pandemic further highlighted the strength, unity, and resilience of the team she is proud to lead.

"Watching these talented people adapt and grow during such challenging times has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career," she says.

Outside her work with March, Malhotra shares insight with numerous organizations in Saskatchewan, contributing to crucial conversations advancing industry and regional business. She serves as Chair of the Board for the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association (SIMSA), and on the boards of SaskTel, Karnalyte Resources, and the North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA). During her tenure with the University of Saskatchewan's Board of Governors (2017 to 2023), Malhotra played an instrumental role in the creation of the USask Properties Land Trust, a long-term strategy dedicated to developing new sources of revenue.

Reflecting on her journey with March, Malhotra says her biggest lessons are the importance of seizing opportunities, and making tough decisions, even when the timing may not seem perfect.

"Standing firm in one's values is a cornerstone for success," she says, "no matter the situation."

"Watching these talented people adapt and grow during such challenging times has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career."

March Consulting provides engineering, procurement, project management and construction services for a range of resource-based industrial and commercial enterprises.

[Find out more at marchconsulting.com](https://marchconsulting.com)

NRT welcomes new Chief Operating Officer, Sherry Mossman



Northern Resource Trucking (NRT) welcomed Sherry Mossman as the new Chief Operating Officer (COO) this September. With over two decades of experience in trucking and transportation, Mossman brings a wealth of knowledge to the role and is excited about the opportunity to drive the company in new and exciting directions.

The decision to hire a new COO came as a surprise to some, given that President Dave McIlmoyl and Vice-President Glen Ertell have been fixtures of the company as long as the fleet of silver trucks have traveled between Saskatoon and the North. While there are no immediate plans for the retirement of either McIlmoyl or Ertell, hiring Mossman was part of NRT's plans for the future.

"I've been with NRT since its inception," says McIlmoyl. "I want to see the company's continued success long after I'm gone. Sherry's expertise in optimizing operations, commitment to safety, passion for innovation, and demonstrated strengths supporting growth in our industry are what NRT needs to navigate this period of rapid growth."

Hiring and training the future management of the company while its experts-in-residence are still there to share knowledge is a significant advantage. McIlmoyl and Ertell are confident Mossman will play an instrumental role in

the company's development, while also maintaining the integrity and spirit beloved by NRT's drivers, employees, and customers.

"I am thrilled to join the NRT team at this pivotal juncture," she said. "My experience in transportation and logistics will be an asset as we join forces to support NRT's mission to provide unmatched service for our clients and ensure the safety of our drivers."

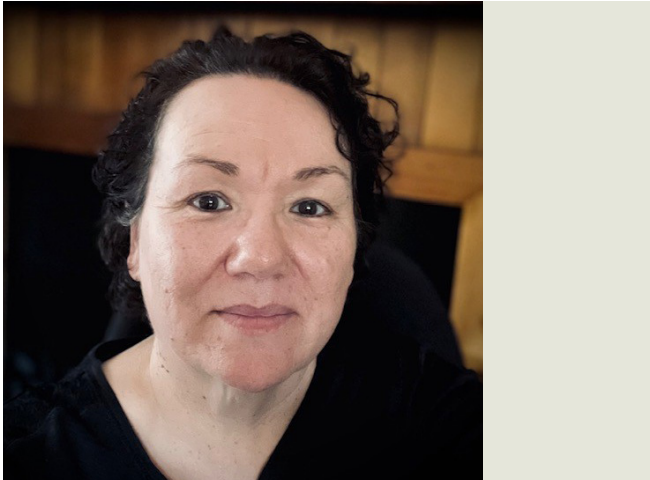
Before NRT, Mossman was Senior Vice President at Doepker Industries, where she optimized operations, implemented cutting-edge transportation management technologies, and enhanced customer satisfaction. She was instrumental in expanding the rental fleet during her time with Breadner Trailers, nurturing vendor relationships and leveraging data-driven metrics to inform strategic decisions.

NRT's rich history of service to Saskatchewan's uranium mining industry, and the growing market for its services are the ideal environment for Mossman's skills to shine. She is excited for the opportunity to share her knowledge as NRT expands and diversifies to meet growing demand.

"I am thrilled to join the NRT team at this pivotal juncture. My experience in transportation and logistics will be an asset as we join forces to support NRT's mission to provide unmatched service for our clients and ensure the safety of our drivers."

Northern Resource Trucking provides safe transport solutions with extensive heavy haul and general freight capacity. Saskatoon-based, NRT has a terminal in Winnipeg and a Truck Driver Training Centre in Prince Albert.
[Find out more at nrtlp.com](http://nrtlp.com)

Prudence McKenzie: Paving progress at PLATO



Prudence McKenzie embraced a new chapter as she stepped into the room where PLATO launched its first Prince Albert-based Software Tester Training program in April 2023.

"I was impressed by PLATO's commitment to answering Truth & Reconciliation Call to Action 92 right from the start," she says, "It's great to see companies doing their part to ensure Indigenous people have access to jobs, training, and education."

After a few months of reflection, McKenzie made the decision to leave her longstanding position with the federal government to take on the role of Indigenous Resource Advisor at PLATO. The company's mission to "change our world by building a stronger, more inclusive technology workforce" resonated with her.

"I felt compelled to explore how this new, exciting position could benefit PLATO, its employees and trainees, and my own personal career," says McKenzie.

While McKenzie has confronted many barriers women in leadership face during her career, she has always believed women are essential to navigating adversity.

"I was taught that women are the ones that lead us through difficult times," says McKenzie, "We see that everywhere, in our communities, and in business."

When asked about the highlight of her career serving as an RCMP officer, or during her 27 years with ISC, McKenzie thinks in broader terms.

"There isn't one defining moment," she says. "All of my life experiences have made me the person I am today, and I know the lessons and skills I have gained can help others."

In her new position at PLATO, McKenzie takes pride in every chance to guide students and interns as they transition into the classroom and workplace. Whether offering advice, lending an ear, or sharing resources, she thrives on the new experiences of every day.

"This isn't just a job," McKenzie says. "It's a chance to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others, to be the support they need in times of growth and change, and to embrace opportunities to make a difference."

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PLATO is a Canadian software testing and technology services company with an international client base. Interested in a career in tech? Visit platotech.com to learn more about PLATO's Software Tester Training program.

Head Office:

PO Box 527
La Ronge, SK
S0J 1L0

Administration Office:

202-335 Packham Ave
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 4S1

kitsaki.com

