

Emma: Hi everyone. Thank you for joining us. I see I've got someone else waiting to join there. Good evening, and welcome to the first of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project firesides. Thank you for making the time to join us this evening. So before we get started, I'll introduce myself. My name is Emma and I am a contractor on the NIFSC project. And I'm speaking to you today from Traditional Secwepemc Territory near Kamloops, BC. And I'm going to provide an overview of the project and some of what we've done so far and some of what we are going to do. Sorry, I've just got to admit more people here.

And then after the presentation, we're going to have Blaine Wiggins, who's the executive director of the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada and he's going to speak or answer any questions that people have. And so if you would like to ask a question, you can use the chat option and send me a message. And then once we get to the chat section, then I will ask those questions of Blaine.

And unfortunately, our Elder has not been able to join us this evening, so Blaine is going to step into that role. So I will hand over to him and then we will get going in a moment.

Blaine: Brilliant. Thank you. So yes, on behalf of the Aboriginal Firefighters Association in Canada and apologize for Elder Allan Peters, who's going to do the introduction. That's why I want to welcome everybody here from coast to coast to coast, and then the Traditional Territories that you find yourself in. I'm currently located in T'exelc First Nations Territory near William Lake, BC. It's where we live and work here and it's great to be on this territory. And just welcome you all to the session this evening. Hope you come with an open mind and lots of questions. There's been a lot of work on this initiative. Great team that's been put together. It's been collaborative, not only with our Indigenous organizational partners, but our partners ISC and we welcome the ISC participants who've taken the time this evening to join us. So thank you again and enjoy the session. And again, bring your questions, we're happy to have them. Thank you and I'll turn it back to Emma.

Emma: Okay, great. Thank you Blaine. So, first of all, I wanted to cover off who is the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada so that you can understand how they fit in with the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. So the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, known as AFAC, was established in 1991. And it's a united body of regional Indigenous emergency and fire services organizations from across Canada. And you can see here, some of AFAC's priorities... And really, AFAC is committed to raising awareness of the fire and life safety challenges in Indigenous communities and improving the outcomes.

They work with national, regional, local, Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and individual communities to bring about change. The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project is really the culmination of many years of hard work by AFAC to get meaningful backing from the government so that they can create an organization that will then allow communities to determine their own fire and life safety outcomes.

So, the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project, the NIFSC Project, is going to create an Indigenous organization that is for Indigenous communities. Sorry, I got to see someone else waiting to come in. So yeah, really this 'for us by us' is key to the project, it's fundamental that the NIFSC is created by Indigenous communities for Indigenous communities. Everything that the project does is grounded in information from Indigenous communities about what you want and what you need.

Also, what's been successful in the past, and also what hasn't worked well in the past so that we can use that information to learn from and to build on to create an organization that can then bring about the meaningful change. And examples of some of the ways that the project is supporting communities and that the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council, once it's stood up as an organization will support communities, is helping communities to understand how fire and life safety standards are beneficial, like why would you even need them. So understanding what those actually offer, and then providing the training to be able to achieve, monitor, and maintain standards. The project will also provide support for communities to access adequate funding to have sustainable services, and helps communities to ensure that their capital infrastructure is of quality.

And it's important to cover off what we mean when we say Indigenous communities. The AFAC Board of Directors is committed to the inclusion of all Indigenous Peoples. And that means both in AFAC's current inception and in the development of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council. At the moment, the AFAC board is undergoing governance changes and that's going to include extending invitations to Inuit and Métis to serve on the Board, and then also to participate in the strategic development of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council.

Ultimately, the governance goal of the NIFSC is to reflect all Indigenous Peoples. Because of limitations of federal policy, we can currently only deliver programs and services on reserve. However, all of the programs and services that are being developed by the NIFSC can be used by anyone, so you can take them and use them off reserve. And we're working with the government to help remove those barriers around where we can actually deliver the services.

Oh. Sorry, another person joining and actually, it's Allan... Is joining us. So I'll just check in with him when he joins. If he... Hi Allan. He's... This is our Elder. So we will take a pause here and let me get him online. Sorry, got too many people joining at the same time as well. Hi, Allan. Okay... I'm trying to get you to unmute here. There you go, you are unmuted. So we started without you because we weren't sure if you're able to join us but I will hand over to you... Blaine did a little bit of a welcoming but if you are able to do that for us, that would be wonderful.

Allan: Holy man. I had the roughest time getting in. [inaudible 00:09:04] with everything. [inaudible 00:09:06] even different sites and they said my password was wrong.

Emma: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Allan: I was arguing with the computer, I said, "I know my password." My laptop almost went flying. But anyway, I'm here.

Emma: Well, I apologize that we started without you. But if I can hand over to you to offer an opening, that would be wonderful.

Allan: Okay. Yeah, everybody's on and ready?

Emma: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Allan: Great. [Non-English 00:09:42]. Okay, so basically thanking the Creator, that we are able to get together and do something that's really spectacular for all the Native communities across Canada. We thank the Creator, that we are able to get this technology and there is no possible way for anybody to get in contact with the COVID or any diseases. So by basically taking the creative progress that has been given to us. All right.

Emma: Thank you very much, Allan, appreciate that. Thank you. Okay, I will put you back on mute and resume, people can listen to me some more. The NIFSC Project has been and always will be driven by community needs. As I said before, it's designed by Indigenous communities for use by Indigenous communities. You can see here, this diagram shows the cyclical nature of how we will work that will be driven by community needs, design the programs, test them, get the feedback, and improve them, and that that will constantly be ongoing.

Between October 2018 and November 2019, we ran engagement sessions and that provided information on the project and gathered information. And through that we listened to communities to better understand the challenges, the gaps, and also some of the successes. One thing that we heard loud and clear is that immediate action is needed to bring about change. And that is driving our activities and developing our programs to get them out into the communities and start... Actually, we're adding communities at the moment, testing programs, and then taking that feedback and incorporating it to change the programs to produce the best possible product that works for the communities and also to meet the goals of the project and of that particular program. And as a whole, the project is committed to continuous improvement. So the programs will constantly evolve as needs evolve as well.

Some of the ways that the NIFSC Project can make a difference for communities. By being an organization that has sustainable funding, it means the NIFSC is always going to be around so communities can be confident that you can reach out to the NIFSC and you're going to get answers to your questions that are good, reliable advice, and that you're going to get access to quality programs and services.

By having our National Incident Reporting System, that's going to make a huge difference. Currently there's no data being captured, so that means that when we design fire prevention programs, we're doing that based on our best guesses to what

the causes of the fires are. If we actually have data, we can design fire prevention programs that are targeted to address the issues that actually are causing the fires.

The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council will be an independent national organization that's going to be able to decide what programs it will offer based on the reality on the ground and the actual needs of Indigenous communities. We'll use the data captured in the National Incident Reporting System and be able to actually plan to address foreign life safety issues according to fact-based priorities. The current offering, the fire and life safety programs and services is mainly designed for urban populations. We are going to create programs and services that are appropriate for all Indigenous communities, both from a geographical and cultural perspective. So programs that are suitable for rural and remote communities, that work for the many different variations of the reality of the situation that people are living in. And all of our programs and services are being developed so that they can be used by all Indigenous communities across the country.

Indigenous communities across Canada are experiencing an unacceptable number of fire-related injuries and deaths. As of a 2008 report by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the CMHC, they found that Indigenous peoples in Canada are 10 times more likely to die in a fire, and 2.5 times more likely to be affected by property loss per capital. Now, if you've been involved in this project, you've heard that same statistic from us over and over, and you might be wondering why? Well, that's because that is the only data that we can reliably cite. And that is shocking and unacceptable. So that is why it's so important that we need the National Incident Reporting System so that we can actually have data that is current and accurate.

Currently, there's no national fire protection act that mandates fire safety standards, and there's no enforcement. There's no mandated enforcement of occupational health and safety on reserve. There's no national coordination of Indigenous fire service standards, programs, or of minimal delivery of level of service standards. Each ISC region can provide programs or fund regional services at their discretion. So supporting each region will vary depending on how that region wants to provide funding. As we know, there is no established fire incident reporting and any data collection that was occurring was inconsistent and was really focused on the capital assets rather than fire loss reporting.

The fire service funding and fire protection is based on suppression, not prevention. And the funding is based on formula funding and it's flexible funding, which means that communities aren't actually required to utilize their fire protection funding for fire protection. Also, housing and capital infrastructure isn't subject to national building inspection process. And so the liability for the build is on the community, not the builder. And capital projects are required to be built to national code, but there's no inspection process to make sure that that's happening. So, by taking a national-level approach to fire and life safety, we can address the gap in national fire protection standards and working collaboratively on a national scale to coordinate fire service standards, programs, and services in Indigenous communities.

Sorry, I got messages popping up on my computer here. So, some of the gaps that we're talking about addressing between the fire service in Indigenous communities and outside... So Indigenous fire services assume responsibility for departments and for community safety, but they're doing that with really limited training and with no national standards. There's inadequate funding and inadequate expertise and inadequate training. So that really hinders the adoption of any equipment standards. All jurisdictions except on reserve have established building and fire codes. So provinces, territories, federal jurisdictions like military bases, airports all have building and fire codes. And these make sure that infrastructure is built and maintained to established standards. That is not the case on reserve. And there's no national standards for the delivery of fire prevention or public education.

So how is the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council going to bring about change? We're going to work collaboratively, we're going to share our expertise and our resources. We're not going to duplicate existing programs and services, we're going to share our research. And our goal is to help communities to make communities safer. The NIFSC Project is all about supporting internal capacity.

So brief look here at the project areas. So the governance and corporate development is really all about figuring out how what the actual organization will look like. What the footprint is of the organization, what the governance structure should be. Our research is all about getting actual qualitative and quantitative information, so that we can have informed programs and services. The Indigenous Fire Marshal Service is the operations arm, and they're responsible for program development and delivery. And then the National Incident Reporting System is the database where we're going to capture information, not just about incidents, but you can also use that to gather information about the training and the fire department assets.

We are using the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service. Sorry, got another, someone joining. So, the name of the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service is used because the role of a fire marshal is well understood and obviously it directly relates to what the delivery arm of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council is doing. We're going to work with communities to identify and meet the individual needs of those communities, and develop and test culturally appropriate programs and that's going to be in fire prevention, education, home safety, governance, fire department administration, and also leadership training... And those are just a few of the areas. The IFMS programs will be delivered in both English and French and in three different formats. The requirements of each program may dictate which delivery formats are available. And the program development is guided by our National Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee.

So the project is working with Indigenous communities and is really focused on developing and testing programs that are related to fire prevention and public education at the moment because that is the area that has the greatest impact on public safety. The program areas, you'll always see them listed in this same order. And that's very deliberate because that's the order that will have the greatest impact on saving lives.

Our community safety education programs look at specific fire safety issues, and they're designed to increase awareness. These are programs addressing things such as cooking and heating. And there's programs designed for everyone in the communities, but we targeted programs for youth and for Elders, for example. Some examples of those kind of programs that you may have heard of are the Youth Fire Setter Intervention, Getting to Know Fire, Learn Not to Burn, those kind of things.

Our fire service governance programs are designed to support community decision makers and leaders with developing policies and bylaws and things like communications plans, fire and emergency plans. And really to help lead us to identify the issues in that community and find ways to mitigate those risks. So some of those programs, Community Fire Safety Assessment, Community Risk Reduction, and Risk Mitigation Analysis Services.

The next is the community infrastructure and engineering support programs. And that's really looking at designing and planning fire-related infrastructure. So that's things like water systems and hydrants and also helping communities to identify their needs and then put appropriate people in place to design and build the necessary infrastructure. So some of the programs in that area are our Fire Protection Research Services, Plans Examination Services, and also Plans Examination Training. The fire department management programs provide support for fire chiefs and officers at the administrative level, helping them with creating policies, guidelines, planning, and acquiring equipment and apparatus. And so the programs that we have on that area, our Fire Department Assessment, Fire Officer Training, and Policy and Operational Guidelines Support.

Then there's the inspection services... So that's looking at fire-related risks in communities and helping leaders to minimize the risks and also providing building and equipment inspections. So that'll be things like Fire Code Inspection Services, Fire Extinguisher Inspection and Maintenance. Next is the investigation programs. And that looks... That's about providing communities with support for fire investigations, but also for data collection. And that's going to be training investigators with accredited training, but also training non-investigators. So that's things like fire investigation services to examine the fire cause and origin, collecting fire reporting data, fire investigator training, and then fire scene preservation training.

Finally, the fire department operations, so training, equipment, repairs and maintenance, education... Really, programs that support firefighters and responders at the incident level. And we will offer accredited training using NFPA standards and fire prevention program training.

So what have we been up to? What have we done? If you haven't visited our website, I invite you to please do so. It's indigenoufiresafety.ca. And there's a dashboard there where you can view the status of the various project components... So this is a snapshot of that. And I'll run through some of what we've done in the various areas. So in terms of governance, we've performed extensive research and analysis to identify really the most appropriate options for the NIFSC governance and organizational structure.

Our research team has been busy and created an evaluation instrument that will allow us to measure program delivery outcomes, so we can actually measure our performance. And they've also conducted a study to help in collaborating with local communities to develop evidence-based fire risk reduction strategies. We've developed 14 programs, and we've got hundreds of different deliveries in progress. And we're going to be continuing to develop and deliver programs. And the National Incident Reporting System is being implemented. We've currently got data from over 2000 incidents in Indigenous communities, that's being added to an interim database.

Underpinning all of the work that we do, we have the National Advisory Committee who helped us to maintain an inclusive approach that meets the needs of all Indigenous communities, and they provide advice on the project as it evolves. And we also have our Technical Advisory Committee, who give technical advice on the development and the delivery of the fire safety programs. And part of this is that they review the programs from a regional and a national level, and they bring together a wide range of education and experience and expertise to share best practices. And it also allows Indigenous fire safety experts to guide the NIFSC programs. And there's actually an open invitation to all the regional technical organizations to participate on the Technical Advisory Committee.

The NIFSC office will open its doors on April 1 2022, which really isn't that far away. So there's a lot of work to be done between now and then. We wanted to give you a little bit of an idea of what it's actually going to look like. So there's going to be a head office and there will be a presence in each of the seven regions... So BC Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic.

And the main component of the NAFSC is going to be the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service, the IFMS, which will be responsive to regional and community needs for fire and life safety program delivery. The project is going to be finalizing funding to make sure our funding is adequate, and that it doesn't compete for funding with Indigenous communities and organizations. We're going to determine the footprint of the organization. So how many people and where they will be located, and get the policy infrastructure and assets in place, the actual office space, computers, vehicles, that kind of stuff.

Our research team is going to be busy... They're developing collaboration memorandums of understanding, MOUs, sorry, to work with other research organizations and to share relevant information. They're looking at mortality and morbidity in Indigenous communities to establish baseline data of fire-related casualties, so that we have something to measure our performance against. And they're examining insurance and grading costs to develop a business case for residential sprinklers. We're going to continue to develop and deliver programs in the seven program areas, community fire safety education, fire service governance, community infrastructure and engineering support, fire department management, inspections, investigations, and fire department operations. And the National Incident Reporting System team will be developing and implementing the permanent and evolving system.

Now for those of you that like to get into details, we do actually publish our contribution funding agreement. And so that is on the website. And if you're on the website, if you click on project, and then Document Library and you can search in this. The quickest way is just to type CFA, and you can have a look and see a lot more detail about what we're actually contracted to do.

Now, I really cannot overemphasize how important it is for us to work with communities and organizations. So please reach out. You can email us or we have a toll free number there, so that our team can collaborate with your community or your organization. And we can start making a difference together. Now I'm going to hand over to Blaine here in just a moment. But first, I just wanted to show you in case you are not familiar with zoom, there's an option for the chat window there. And if you don't see a menu, if you just move your mouse around usually then it'll pop up. And so you can chat and ask your question. And I will present that to the Board. Oh, I'm so sorry, to Blaine. And first of all, though, I am just going to hand over to Blaine and have him introduce himself. So let me just make sure. I think Blaine you should be unmuted. So over to you.

Blaine: Thanks Emma, and thanks Allan for the introduction. That was fantastic all through the welcoming. So yes, we're happy to, again, as noted earlier, take questions. This is a good opportunity and one of the things we're looking for is opportunity to reach out on a regional basis, talk about the project as a whole, ask questions in real time, and pilot these sessions so we can get a better way to get the information out to community. So I will hand it back to Emma just to feed me any questions that are coming in.

Emma: I muted myself. I'm doing the classic talking while on mute thing. And so I do actually have a couple of questions that have come in. So first of all, how does the NIFSC work with regional organizations?

Blaine: That's actually probably one of the... I'd say it's a good question. So right now we have many regional organizations and national organizations that we're collaborating with, manage just go from east to west. We have organizations that are part of AFAC right now. And we've got organizations that operate from a delivery perspective. So the regional, we call technical services organizations. Starting in Ontario is the Ontario Technical Organization, I'm so sorry... The name just popped into my head, it was right there with ONTC, Ontario First Nations Technical Corporation. And in Saskatchewan, we have Prince Albert Grand Council, which is also called Saskatchewan First Nations Virtue Management. In Alberta, we have the TSAG, Technical Services Advisory Group. And in BC we have First Nations Emergency Services.

There's some other national organizations like First Nations Building Officers Association, AFAC, ourselves, and the Government of Nunavut Fire Marshal's Office, who represents an Inuit fire interest. So they're all have been invited to work collaboratively with us in various forums. So the Technical Advisory Committee, we work through and develop programs and services collaboratively. But for the four specific regional organizations that provide services, we've been reaching out directly to those organizations, working with them to ensure that we are sharing our operational information around deliveries. Now, at the end of the day, that's a voluntary

relationship. So we've had really good collaboration in BC, Ontario, and Saskatchewan. And we hope to have that same level of collaboration and cooperation, in Alberta.

But we are working also with the ISC regional partners, so that we are sharing our information because we recognize that there's some centralized activity, that they're aware of what they're funding. Again, we continue to collaborate not just only on the design of the project, but also operationally. And that's going to be even more meaningful as we move forward to ensure we get to the point as an example, before we go into our funding cycles, we're ensuring that we're not duplicating funding [inaudible 00:36:53]. So that we can actually work collaboratively together and focus efforts, and then also share resources share information.

And I'll use another example of how we're working with the regional organizations and national organizations. So all of our research that we're doing now, we actually present and we have input through the Technical Advisory Committee, from our regional partners to make sure that if there's a regional lens or a question that we're asking that they want us to adjust, that we do that. It's a multifaceted, multi-level process of working with our regional partners. We stand behind our commitment, not to create duplicate service, support our regional partners, and do what we can to ensure that they are receiving the adequate funding that they need. And we recognize that funding is always going to be a challenge facing each organization and the gaps that we have. So I didn't get lots of questions, so I'll limit my response there. Hopefully, that was helpful.

Emma: Great, thank you. Hopefully an easy one for you here. Who is on the AFAC Board of Directors?

Blaine: We have a great Board. Other than Allan and myself, we are the pretty young Board and Billy Moffatt from Quebec. But I'll go west to east. So I mentioned that we have regional organizations that do deliveries and I mentioned those. We also have regional organizations that have formed and can speak and work on behalf of their region. So, BC FNES is one of the TSGs. They provide services but they also sit on our Board. So that's Anthony Moore from the [inaudible 00:38:31] government who sits on the FNES Board and he sits on our board on behalf of FNES.

In Alberta, right now we have a vacancy and hopefully we can work with one of our esteemed team members, Leon Smallboy, and we can help get a presence in Alberta going. In Saskatchewan PAGC, Michelle Vandervoort, who is our president. It's great to have a female presence... Have that feminine warrior power on our board. Manitoba, we also have a vacancy and again, we've been reaching out to the tribal officers since the devolution of the Manitoba Association of Native Firefighters. There's been a big gap there. But again, we're aware of it and at least, we've been able to reach out to individual tribal officers. The Ontario Native Firefighters Society... Melvin McLeod is a representative from the honors Board.

Quebec, Aboriginal Fire Chiefs, Billy Moffatt, one of our elder statesmen is from that Board. And then we have the Atlantic First Nations Fire Chiefs, Allan Peters is currently representing the Atlantic Fire Chiefs. But Allan sits as our collaboration director, and

we're hoping to have another director from the Atlantic Board, come on Board and fill our Board membership. As noted in the presentation, the AFAC Board has extended an invitation to the Government of Nunavut Fire Marshal's Office, to get that Inuit voice. And we are literally going to be sending an invite to the Métis National Council in the coming days, to have representation from our [inaudible 00:40:23] across the country. So that's currently our Board composition.

Emma: Great, thank you. Now, I've got a couple of questions here about hiring. So I'm going to combine them together. And so really, essentially, are there any employment or contract opportunities? And then also, what about for people that don't necessarily have the training that would like to get into those kind of roles?

Blaine: So yes, we definitely... resourcing both the project and the ongoing operations is going to be important part of our success. And of course, having First Nations individuals take those roles on is important. So our website... And we actually have a standard policy, all of our positions, be resource or contracted or hired term employees, all are posted, we actually are working with our research department to improve our posting reach inclusive to friendship centers, First Nations communities, academic environments, where students will be studying. And so that's actually in play right now. And so we'll have not only our process for recruitment, but also a broader reach for getting the information out there and the awareness out there, including paid advertisement for our positions.

We recognize that we are starting... We're paying catch up across the board when it comes to fire services. And so really, our intent is to create an environment where it's a learning environment, not only learning organization, but a learning environment where we can take somebody who's just very keen about the fire service... May have been a volunteer firefighter. Recruit them, and basically train them to a point where we're where we most likely will lose them to a municipal fire department where wages are a little bit more competitive than we will be able to offer. But in that is, we'll have a process to hire, recruit, train, and if we lose an individual, we can then repeat the process. And it means more employment, and more specialized training.

So the ability to train is there, the ability to mentor is there. And right now we have a role in our delivery called a delivery specialist and this is our top tier. And our delivery specialist, not only are they really good at working with communities, they're actually very experienced very... They've got the certification and they'll act as mentors for these new employees... The young or old, that want to take a shot at a fire service career. So say I'm [inaudible 00:43:14] actually see my colleague and friend Leon Smallboy, one of our delivery specialist based out of Alberta and our goal this year to actually have a delivery specialist in each region. So that as we recruit, we've got a mentor in each region that can help guide individuals training and their careers.

And so if they do stick with us and give them the experience that they've got then move up through our basically a entry level fire officer up to the capacity of a delivery specialist. So that's our goals... Is to make sure that we have that cyclical process, where

we can mentor and there's no barriers to employment opportunities, but also no barriers to getting the expertise that we need.

Emma: Great, thank you. So yes, definitely, please do go to our website and check out the opportunities and please share them far and wide, because we definitely encourage as many people to be part of this amazing thing. And so...

Blaine: And if I'm not mistaken... I'm going to add to that, right now we are recruiting for programming developers. And we actually have an open call for communities to do delivery work under our guidance with and working with delivery specialists. So that's one of the things that we've been able to do is adapt during COVID. So that we've got employment opportunities actually being created within communities right now, or the communities can then put volunteer firefighters who are out of work due to COVID into these positions in the short term, it certainly it does, it's both... You're creating that opportunities locally too.

So again, it's about being, having an organization that can adapt and be flexible right now. And the way we are going about it has actually been very interesting. And I know some of the regional organizations are looking at the way we're doing deliveries, and are looking and adapting some of their programs to be able to do the same thing. Because we know, with COVID, we're in this for a little bit longer than we all expect it. So at the end of the day, the fire safety and fire life safety challenges are not going down, if anything they're going up, especially with us relying more on our infrastructure and when that infrastructure is taxed the way it is, we are going to see those pressures. So it's going to be interesting to see what the data shows us. As we start collecting it, we see an increase or spike in fire-related activities in communities.

Emma: Thank you. So yeah, I briefly pulled up here and you can see on the website then add opportunities. And that's where you would go to keep an eye on the various different postings.

Okay, we've got more questions coming in. So in addition to the AFAC board, can you tell us a little bit about what the NIFSC board and any kind of advisory groups related to the NIFSC project and ultimately the NIFSC, when it actually exists?

Blaine: As noted, AFAC is building the new organization. And again, the key to building new organizations around the collaboration work and having it be really designed at the end of the day... AFAC is facilitating, but it's the communities that are really designing this new organization. As part of that process, part of the engagement process, part of the advisory process, is about building a governance model that will be reflective of this new organization. AFAC certainly recognizes that we have a history directly linked with on-reserve First Nations communities and our funding model, our [inaudible 00:47:16] delivery since our [inaudible 00:47:18] has been that. So that's part of the reason why we wanted to build a new organization that could address challenges in a different way. And again, let's say, just noting how we're dealing with COVID being able to adopt and do something a little bit different that meets the needs of communities.

So that model is currently being evaluated and worked on and adjusted. We're actually going to the next step. We have a National Advisory Committee that was noted. So the National Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from different organizations, both political and non political. And they're there to give us wholesale advice and give the board wholesale advice on a suite of issues, one of them being the governance model. We're basically going to the next step now that we've got that internal advice within the project from the board and the knack is now reaching out and reaching back to our NIO partners to go, "Okay, here's what we're proposing. Does this resonate to ensure that we've captured both the comments and design of what would be the new Board of Directors?"

So we see a transition again with the need to do deliveries right now. So we are as we like to... We've said, "We're building, we're building a plane and we're flying it at the same time." So we're out there doing deliveries, and we're doing development while actually building the whole organization. And so what we see is with the delivery arm, once the NIFSC is operational, then AFAC will just wholesale hand over the assets and the intellectual property that's been developed thus far to the new organization. So what the world may see is, the AFAC lights go out and the NIFSC lights come on. And once that's finalized and determined by the AFAC Board, but from a wholesale, the community's working with us, they shouldn't see much of a business transition there. They'll basically see the same people that they've been working with. Leon in Alberta, Arnold in Quebec. Larry Laviette in Ontario... Different people that have been working with will basically formalized under a different umbrella. But, yeah, very minimal impact or transition once we go through that threshold.

Emma: Great, thank you. Another question here asking about, is there a plan to include wildland firefighting in addition to structural firefighting?

Blaine: Yeah. That's a very interesting topic. So as we all know that wildland firefighting and interface... So there's wildland, there's interface, and there's structural firefighting. And there is a threshold where the two cross, and that is the interface. We do have a strategic long-term goal, and it's not in our immediate work plans, but the strategic long-term goal around training and supporting equipment and standards for interface firefighting. Once a fire department is trained at that level, then it's basically the mission of what they're on, if they're not on an interface fire, but they're on a wildland fire.

But we recognize right now there is a gap in national coordination for First Nations wildland firefighting. So we've recognized that, we put it on our future to do list. And one of the things that we would like to see, and we envision the need for it, and then matching the goal and the capacity, is to provide national coordination that already exists for non-Indigenous wildland firefighters. But create that national coordination so that those firefighting teams, they can serve both on a structural firefighting team, an interface firefighting team, or it's just a straight up wildland firefighting team, can be integrated into the Canadian wildland firefighting scheme that's going on right now. And a good example that we see in every province is, when there's high wildfire activity, you see municipal fire departments, full-time firefighters, literally driving by First Nations communities to go fight wildland firefighters, or do interface, or do structural

protection. What we want to do is promote and support First Nations firefighting teams to be able to do the same thing, so that they least can play at the same game that non-First Nations firefighters do. So we recognize it. And we certainly want to address that.

So yes. And then, of course, the supporting through the training, and training goals. So the training exists which really is about the coordination. So we're not reinventing the wheel there, but creating opportunities.

Emma: Great. Thank you very much. So that is all the questions I have so far. So if anyone else has any think that's like, they're wanting to ask, I'll just give you a few moments to put together your thoughts. The people are interested in finding out more information, that really helps us with our work too. And I'll take this moment to let you know that you will be receiving an email with a survey. Please take the time to complete the survey. That kind of information, we do actually read it and use it. And it helps us to better design our programs that we're offering and events like this, and how we can best share information with communities. So we very much appreciate you taking the time to do that.

And I also wanted to let you know that this presentation is going to be posted on our YouTube channel. So that won't be right away, but keep an eye on our Facebook as a really great place to stay up to date with things that are going on and then you'll be able to revisit it if you like, or indeed to share it with people that weren't able to join us. Sorry, were you trying to say something Blaine?

Blaine: Yeah. No, I just want to add to round some future state objectives and goals that are not part of our current work plan and are not currently funded. We've identified them and want to introduce them into the planning moving forward. So one of the things that not a lot of non emergency services personnel are aware of is that, for Volunteer Fire Services, one of the biggest gaps that exists is dispatching services. And that is a paid for service offered. Fire department wants to be dispatched, and be notified, and have the communications and infrastructure around dispatching. The fire department usually has paid for it. And depending on where the fire department is cross country, that dispatch batching service can range from \$10,000 to \$150,000 a year just to be dispatched.

So, we recognize that there's a gap there where First Nations cannot access this service. So one of the services that we envision is developing a National Dispatching Center for First Nations fire departments. The benefit of that is, if we've got a dispatching center, a National Dispatching Center, what can mirror that is a National Emergency Operation Center that can help coordinate these emergencies. So, as an example, if the West Coast is raining, and the East Coast is burning up, you know you have wildland firefighter teams that you can move from one jurisdiction to another, fire investigators that you can move from one area to another as needed. But also, we've certainly envisioned an opportunity to say, work with the Canadian CFC, the National Wildland Firefighting Center to say, "Well, we First Nations have the capacity to be able to host a National Fire Coordination Center." And I think that would be a huge national step and a huge piece of pride to say, "We can do something and take something on nationally, not only for First Nations, but non-First Nations, through a contracted type of service."

We are starting to create capacity opportunities, that helps showcase that we are professionals, and we can take not only a role within First Nations, but a national role and leadership in some of these areas and gaps. So, there's other areas as an example, search and rescue right now is working on developing national coordination. This is non-First Nations search and rescue that does include First Nations search and rescue teams. So there's many public safety opportunities out there to advance the level of service that is there. So I'll just use that as a future state idea that we've been contemplating and looking at, and taking advantage of the capacity that we'll have through having a national head office, and the infrastructure to be able to host a site like that. So just gets the ideas floating and flowing about where we can just go beyond just helping an individual community, and coordinating national efforts to where other communities can take advantage of that and will benefit from that.

Emma: Great. And in that time that we had another question come in. And so, it's a company that is actually currently training Indigenous staff in emergency response, Heli-Ops, and taking wildland firefighters. They're currently working on projects and providing experience for their staff. So they want to know, how can they get more engaged? And how, as a private company, can they help support the NIFSC Project?

Blaine: It's great. I'd say, for us, any partner is a good partner. Private-public partnerships are how things are done. Anybody that wants to work with us to help advance the causes for the communities... And at the end of the day, we're not in the empire building business, we are in the supporting communities build capacity business. So I would strongly encourage the company to reach out and talk to our project manager and be put in the right, whether it's our delivery, or development team. And we do have discussions with industry all the time. Whether it be trainers, service providers, equipment vendors, we're always open for those discussions. Like say, if it will benefit First Nations then absolutely, that's the goal.

Emma: Right. Well, that is all of our questions. So we want to thank everyone once again for your time. And perhaps invite... Blaine, if you don't have anything else to say, I'd like to hand over to Allan.

Blaine: Please.

Emma: Okay, Allan, let me get you unmuted here on this.

Blaine: While that's happening, I forgot to mention not only is Allan a respected Elder for us which we rely on, but he's also our secretary treasurer. Spends a lot of his spare time reviewing financial and corporate information. So thank you Allan

Emma: And he's in the Atlantic, so it's way past bedtime. So thank you. So over to you.

Allan: Okay, well, what [inaudible 00:59:34] is this? Is it the closing ceremony?

Emma: Yes indeed.

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Allan: Okay. All right. [inaudible 00:59:39] can create for the direction that we're getting and working with people across Canada and sending out all the information that's very important for our people to help them get their safety life. [inaudible 01:00:17]

Emma: Beautiful. Thank you. Well, with that, I will close the meeting. Thank you all for your time and please stay safe.