



2012 World Indigenous Housing Conference

Vancouver BC Canada June 2012

CLARENCE LOUIE



Since first elected Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) in 1984, part of the Okanagan Nation in British Columbia, Clarence Joseph Louie has emphasized economic development as a means to improve his people's standard of living. Under his direction, the OIB has established nine businesses—including a championship golf course, a construction company, retail stores, forestry activities, and the first Aboriginal winery in North America, Nk'Mip Cellars, a joint venture with Vincor International—and employs hundreds of people. The Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation was formed in 1998 to lead existing businesses and seek out new economic opportunities. (www.oib.ca)

"Native people must change their mindset from spending money to making money. Socioeconomic development is the foundation for First Nation self-reliance and community improvement. Our communities need to become business minded and create jobs and revenue sources, not just administer underfunded government programs. Each of our First Nations must take back their inherent and rightful place in the economy of their territory."

Chief Louie and Council also focus on maintaining the Okanagan language and culture in all aspects of the band's activities, including business. The Nk'Mip Desert & Cultural Center is a testament to balancing business while investing time and money in culture. This eco-cultural center gives visitors an opportunity to experience the Okanagan culture and explore the desert lands that are part of their traditional territory.

Chief Louie is Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, and has received numerous awards, including the Order of British Columbia, the province's highest honour for outstanding achievement.

At the 2012 World Indigenous Housing Conference, Chief Louie will lead a workshop called *Foundations for Success* on a leadership model Indigenous communities can use to preserve language and culture through economic development and wealth creation, developed by Harvard University.