

Indigenous Radio

CHON FM

The beat of a different drummer



Our Peoples Voices is an audio adaptation of HaáShagoon, a television program produced years ago by Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon.

A Message from the Chair

On behalf of Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon (NNBY) and CHON-FM, I proudly present our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, which sets out our mission and priorities for the next five years. This plan also identifies the strategies that we will implement to ensure a strong and vibrant future for CHON-FM, one that builds on the original vision set out in the early 1980s by those who recognized the critical importance of Indigenous, community-based broadcasting in Yukon and across the North.



CHON-FM – ‘the beat of a different drummer’ – is an important part of the social and cultural fabric of Yukon First Nations and Yukon communities, a vehicle through which Yukon First Nations citizens can share, communicate and celebrate a common bond of community connection that is steeped in our shared languages, history, traditions, culture, art and traditional stories. As a community radio station, CHON-FM plays a quintessential role in helping Yukon communities to stay connected, and is an important lifeline for those residing in our more remote communities.

I believe that radio is a means to keep people connected and conversations going on how to revitalize our culture, traditions and languages and integrate them into the modern world.

NNBY Chair, Judy Gingell

As a long-time and proud Indigenous Yukoner, I believe that Indigenous community radio contributes to, and is a reflection of, the vibrancy of Yukon First Nation cultures, histories, traditions, teachings and languages.

In this strategic plan we are committed to achieving a new and exciting vision for CHON-FM by creating a healthy environment for our cultures and languages to thrive. This vision reflects what we have heard from listeners over recent years, from community focus groups and surveys, to the views expressed by Yukon First Nation leaders who believe in the power of culture, language and music to connect people and communities. What we have most frequently heard during the consultations is the need to revitalize the original mandate by providing culturally- and community-relevant programming – and in entertaining and engaging ways. We believe this approach is key to protecting, preserving and revitalizing the languages and cultures of Yukon First Nations people on a local, national and international level.

I would also like to recognize and celebrate the hard work and incredible contributions of staff who are helping to restore CHON-FM to the forefront of Yukon cultural broadcasting. We are committed to diversity in employment, and believe in developing and maintaining strong and effective governance through sound policies and processes. It is also critical that we continue to find ways to enhance our financial sustainability by diversifying our revenue streams so that we can continue to develop and publish Indigenous programming and content.

This strategic plan finds CHON-FM at a new, hopeful stage of its development as an important voice in Yukon for First Nations people, and for those who appreciate a unique blending of Indigenous cultures and languages with quality country and classic rock music. I look forward to working with you to achieve our vision, together.

On behalf of the Board and staff of Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon,
Shàw níthàn,

Judy Gingell
acting Chair of Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon

About Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon

Established in 1981, and an original founding member of the [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network \(APTN\)](#), NNBY is a non-profit organization owned and operated by Yukon First Nations to produce and distribute Indigenous radio programming and content aimed primarily but not exclusively at Indigenous audiences in Yukon. CHON-FM is dedicated to protecting, encouraging, enhancing and showcasing the languages and cultures of Yukon First Nations people at a local, national and international level, which is now possible due to technologies such as online streaming and podcasts.

NNBY, through its radio station CHON-FM, is the only First Nation-dedicated broadcaster in Yukon. The radio network consists of studio, production, transmission and state of the art satellite distribution facilities in Whitehorse, as well as 29 rebroadcast sites in all Yukon communities, northern British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. Much of CHON-FM programming can now be found on the website and streamed online for those who enjoy that medium.

NNBY OBJECTIVES (AS PER OCTOBER 2000 CONSTITUTION)

To establish and carry on a non-profit broadcasting and communications operation, including the production and distribution of First Nations radio and television programming, aimed primarily at the provision of a communications service for Yukon First Nations people.

To protect, encourage, enhance and perpetuate the language and culture of Yukon First Nations people on a local, national and international level.

To develop and produce radio and television/multi-media programs to strengthen and enrich the cultural, political, social and economic values of Yukon First Nations people.

To train and employ Yukon First Nations people in the planning, production and distribution of broadcasting and communications operations.

To develop and formulate such programs in conjunction with various groups and organizations in other branches of media in relation to the cultural, political, social and economic values of Yukon First Nations people.

To broaden social interaction with other First Nation, Metis and Inuit groups on a national and international level.

Community broadcasting is a vital part of the Canadian and Yukon media landscape, and plays an important role in providing a platform for communities that otherwise aren't adequately serviced. This is particularly true in Yukon, where people and communities are spread over a vast and isolated distance. Community broadcasting provides many things to many different groups. For example, it helps to provide a diverse range of viewpoints that enrich the social and cultural fabric of Yukon society and contributes to public interest outcomes. It also provides opportunities for participation in free-to-air public broadcasting and content production, and contributes to media diversity by ensuring that Indigenous audiences have a voice and can express their cultural and community identities.

CHON-FM listeners come from a variety of backgrounds to listen to First Nation-themed news and programming, along with an eclectic blend of new and old country, and classic rock. CHON-FM is unique in that it strives to balance the interests of Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. In this sense, CHON-FM is able to connect listeners to each other in ways that are both engaging and informative, while also entertaining and current.

Another key aspect of CHON-FM's work is to partner with media and cultural/Indigenous-based organizations to develop and produce programming that strengthens and enriches the cultural, political, social and economic values of Yukon First Nations people.

Governance

NNBY is fully owned by Yukon First Nations. Reporting to ownership is the Board of Directors, which sets out the overall strategic direction of the station. This direction is reflected in a five-year strategic plan, which is updated annually to reflect changes in the operating or strategic environment or to address new opportunities. Reporting to the Board is CHON-FM's General Manager, who provides leadership to staff in implementing CHON-FM's strategic direction and operational policies.

A Bright Future Ahead

While CHON-FM has had a challenging past few years, much progress has been made in a short period of time. Recent successes that bode well for a strong and vibrant future include:

- a complete revitalization of and commitment to CHON-FM's original mandate of representing the cultural and language interests of all Yukon First Nations, thereby preserving and giving a voice to the cultural, political, social and economic interests of Indigenous people in Yukon;
- stabilization of CHON-FM's governance through a committed Board and the hiring of experienced General Manager and supporting staff;

- the development of exciting new cultural-based and interactive programming that gives voice to the issues of interest to First Nation Citizens and their communities;
- the building and strengthening of relationships with Indigenous organizations, such as new partnerships with the Yukon Native Language Centre and KRFF-Fairbanks, which allows CHON-FM to promote, exchange and distribute indigenous language programs across borders;
- a reintroduction of on-air live broadcasting and streaming of important Indigenous cultural, social and sporting events, which go beyond capturing the event to showcasing individuals, their communities and their stories;
- a focus on enhancing CHON-FM's social media presence that can reach and connect listeners and audiences across Canada and the world;
- a revitalization of CHON-FM's commitment to Indigenous content, including Indigenous music, interviews with First Nations people that bring attention to important social and political matters and events, and the development of new and engaging language segments that both educate and entertain listeners;
- the resolution of a suite of on-site technical issues that previously affected signal strength and on-air consistency, thereby ensuring that CHON-FM reaches every community in Yukon; and
- a comprehensive re-imagining and re-branding of CHON-FM's sound and image.

Most importantly, CHON-FM is continuing to serve *all* listeners in ways that are professional, informative, current, engaging and entertaining. The future is very bright indeed.



Our Mission and Values

Our MISSION

To use the power of community radio and social media to connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to Yukon First Nation cultures and languages in a spirit of community and connection.

Our VALUES

INCLUSIVITY: We are committed to bringing culturally-diverse communities together through the sharing of Indigenous languages, stories, perspectives and cultures as a means to foster connection and promote understanding with non-Indigenous audiences. We are also committed to ensuring that everyone can see themselves in what CHON-FM brings to the airwaves, particularly for people and issues not adequately represented in other media.

APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY: We are dedicated to providing Indigenous People in Yukon a voice in matters affecting their community or Nation.

A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY: Whether it be our news, music or our cultural programming, we believe in providing top quality radio and multi-media programming that is engaging, informative and entertaining.

FOCUS ON LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS ARTISTS: As a community broadcaster, we are committed to showcasing local and Indigenous talent in hopes of inspiring Yukon and Indigenous artists and storytellers to reach their full potential, and to inspire others to follow their artistic dreams and visions.

SUPPORTING AND MENTORING YOUTH: We understand that today's youth are tomorrow's leaders, which means a commitment to providing youth with training, mentoring and employment opportunities to help them learn new skills and prepare for a media or culture-based career.

PARTNERSHIPS: We seek to establish effective two-way partnerships and collaborations with Yukon First Nations, cultural- or media-based organizations.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: we believe in the power of community broadcasting to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Yukoners together in the spirit of building stronger cultural bridges and understanding.

Our Strategic Priorities and Key Actions

Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon/CHON-FM, through a comprehensive strategic planning process, has identified three main strategic areas of focus:

CELEBRATION OF AND CONNECTION TO YUKON FIRST NATION CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

This priority speaks to CHON-FM's ability to connect Indigenous people with their unique histories, cultures and languages, and in engaging, informative and in-depth ways. This also includes Indigenous language revitalization through greater promotion and access, connected to the teachings and perspectives of Elders. This priority supports the goals of reconciliation by integrating, through the power of community radio, Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, stories and traditional knowledge in ways that promote a more-informed connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This priority is also about creating a welcoming space for Yukon Indigenous people to hear music, community news and events, positive stories and cultural programming relevant to them and their community – and at times in their Indigenous language. This also means providing a platform whereby youth, and local and Indigenous artists can showcase and share their musical talents with local, Yukon and even national audiences.

QUALITY RADIO, NEWS AND ONLINE PROGRAMMING

This priority speaks to the ability of CHON-FM to provide a 'product' that is competitive with other stations in the Yukon radio market, while also appealing to those who currently listen to online and satellite radio alternatives. CHON-FM currently provides a unique blend of mostly 'old and new' country and classic rock music, supported by professional and engaging on-air personalities. This priority is also about CHON-FM's commitment to go beyond merely reporting the local and national news by providing Yukon-relevant analyses and perspectives on matters that affect our communities. A key aspect of this priority is reaching listeners who prefer podcast and other multi-media formats.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

This internal priority examines how well-positioned CHON-FM is to be an effective and sustainable organization. This priority in part speaks to the need for diversity (Indigenous, female, youth) in employment and Board representation, and the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. It is also important for CHON-FM to facilitate and foster a positive, inclusive and engaging work environment. This priority also speaks to ability to be financially sustainable over the long term through securing new sources of funding, partnerships and collaborations and identify new revenue streams, as well as having strong governance and accountability processes and mechanisms in place. This priority also reflects the importance of social media to reach broader audiences and using analytics to better understand what listeners want from community radio.

A. CELEBRATION OF AND CONNECTION TO YUKON FIRST NATION CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

Strategic Considerations

A key strategic priority relates to CHON-FM's ability to develop and provide listeners with informative, educative and engaging cultural programming. By providing Indigenous people a voice in matters affecting their families and communities, we are all better able to learn about and connect with vibrant First Nation cultures and perspectives in the spirit of reconciliation. Strategic considerations include:

- How best to increase and incorporate programming that showcases and informs about the cultures, stories, language and histories of Yukon First Nation people.
- How to facilitate CHON-FM as a radio and social media platform that informs and communicates the impact of self-government and land claim agreements, and other matters of social, economic and political importance to Indigenous people and their communities.
- How to significantly increase the exposure of local and Indigenous artists, story-tellers and musicians using CHON-FM's radio, social media and online programming platforms.
- How best to create and broadcast positive stories that showcase the achievements of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Yukoners in ways that foster pride and community connection.
- How to incorporate Indigenous live cultural, event and sports programming into CHON-FM's broadcasts.

Impact-Based Objective

- A1. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation Yukon First Nation people and communities have a voice through Indigenous and language-based programming and content that showcases their unique cultures, histories and stories

Supporting Strategies

1. Develop or strengthen partnerships with cultural- and traditional language-based organizations such as the Yukon Native Language Centre and the CAFN Language School to develop programming to revitalize the use of Indigenous languages in CHON-FM programming.
2. Develop daily community-focused, Indigenous programming and content in ways that are educative, informative and engaging.
3. Livestream and cover Indigenous sporting and cultural events that showcase the achievements or daily life of Yukon First Nation citizens.
4. Continue to explore ways to partner with and share cultural programming content with APTN, CBC North and other Indigenous radio stations in Canada and Alaska.

B. QUALITY RADIO/NEWS AND ONLINE PROGRAMMING

Strategic Considerations

While the language and cultural component of CHON-FM's mission is critical, so too is the ability to maximize listenership by offering locally-relevant news and quality music programming that connects Indigenous and non-Indigenous listeners. Based on a review of current operations, strategic considerations include:

- How to increase CHON-FM's market share in relation to market competitors by attracting new listeners as well as expanding CHON's reach outside of Yukon through satellite and online distribution channels.
- How best to support and market CHON-FM's on-air personalities to ensure consistently engaging, dynamic, informative and entertaining programming, while also being knowledgeable of Indigenous cultures and perspectives. This is critical to ensuring that listenership receives a consistent and professional broadcasting experience that adheres to identified standards and protocols.
- How best to expand or adapt CHON-FM's music and multi-media programming to appeal to a wider audience, recognizing that there are listeners with musical tastes outside of CHON-FM's country-classic rock dynamic.
- How to ensure that CHON-FM's technology and equipment is efficiently maintained to ensure a consistent, quality sound and appropriate signal strength to best serve all Yukon communities.
- How best to effectively develop and promote CHON-FM's multimedia capabilities to ensure broadcasts, features and podcasts can be accessed by listeners who prefer their music and news in these formats.

Impact-Based Objective

B1. CHON-FM's diverse music, news and multi-media programming connects with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences in ways that are informative, engaging, relevant and accessible in different formats.

Supporting Strategies

1. Re-evaluate CHON-FM's musical identity and block format approach in order to best support CHON-FM's mission as an Indigenous, community-based station.
2. Develop an online, multi-media strategy to increase listenership nationally and world-wide.
3. Develop practical, technical processes and manuals that allow CHON-FM to respond quickly and effectively in troubleshooting and resolving technical issues.
4. Establish ways to provide timely feedback on CHON's programming and broadcasts to facilitate improvements and continual learning.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Considerations

The third strategic priority relates to CHON-FM's ability to position itself to ensure that the two previous strategic priorities can effectively be met. Strategic considerations include:

- How to increase the representation of Indigenous persons, women and youth at CHON-FM.
- How best to increase the proportion of CHON-FM's revenues from sales, government funding, sponsorships and advertising revenues, including advertising from Yukon First Nation governments and associated entities.
- Similarly, how to expand, develop or monetize new revenue or funding streams to ensure CHON-FM's long-term financial sustainability.
- How best to enhance CHON-FM's visibility and visual/aural identity, public relations and media exposure to generate new advertising dollars and increase listenership.
- How best to revitalize commitments of financial and other support on behalf of ownership to ensure that CHON-FM is relevant and supportive of Yukon First Nation objectives and ideals.

Impact-Based Objectives

- C1. Effective and trained staff.
- C2. NNBY is financially sustainable.
- C3. Diversity in NNBY staff and Board representation.

Supporting Strategies

1. Partner with the Yukon Mentorship Program, Skills Canada, Yukon College and others to develop a co-op program whereby Indigenous youth can be mentored and supported to pursue a career in media, sound engineering and other technical careers.
2. Develop a suite of human resource policies and processes with respect to compensation and benefits, leave management and tracking, performance management (including progressive discipline and grievances), hiring practices and succession planning.
3. Develop and implement a community outreach and branding strategy that revitalizes and provides consistency for CHON-FM's online, social media and radio platforms.
4. Develop and implement a diversified and sustainable revenue generation strategy that includes, among other things, the reintroduction of community radio bingo, exploration of new core and project-based funding sources (Heritage Canada, Yukon government), monetization of social media and web-based advertising, and sponsorship opportunities.
5. Develop a Board recruitment plan to ensure a full complement of Board members, with increased youth, female and Elder representation.

6. Conduct a human resource review to determine which positions, skills and experience are needed to develop and implement new programming, including ensuring that job descriptions that accurately reflect what is required in terms of roles and responsibilities, and the skills and experience needed for the position.
7. Partner with Yukon Tourism to ensure CHON-FM is represented at Yukon Tourism events and in advertising.



For more information, please contact

Northern Native Broadcasting/CHON-FM

2237 2nd Ave, Unit 260, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 0K7

General: 867.668.6629

Newsroom: 867.668.6851 | chonnews@nnby.ca

Sales: 867.668.6629 | sales@nnby.ca

<http://www.chonfm.com>



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