

Some kids cut their entrepreneurial teeth by selling lemonade. But Terry Bird cut his by flogging parking spots.

It was the 1980s, and money was tight growing up with a single mom and four brothers and sisters. The family rented a house near Regina's Taylor Field, home of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. "We had some room in our backyard, and our mother would let us park cars," says Bird, who would hail game-goers with a cardboard sign promoting the \$3 spots, trying to fill the yard.

Fast forward three decades and Bird, 42, is now channelling that resourcefulness and enterprising spirit into his career. As First Nation and Métis business and human resources coordinator at K+S Potash Canada in Saskatoon, he develops and implements strategies that engage Aboriginal communities and businesses in the firm's activities.

Since Bird joined the company in 2012, he has focused on its Legacy Project, a potash mine and production facility being built near Moose Jaw on traditional First Nations hunting lands. "It's an opportunity (for Aboriginal suppliers) to be a part of something that's going to be around for the next 100 years," says Bird, who is a member of the George Gordon First Nation.

Serving as a liaison in this way is particularly gratifying for Bird,

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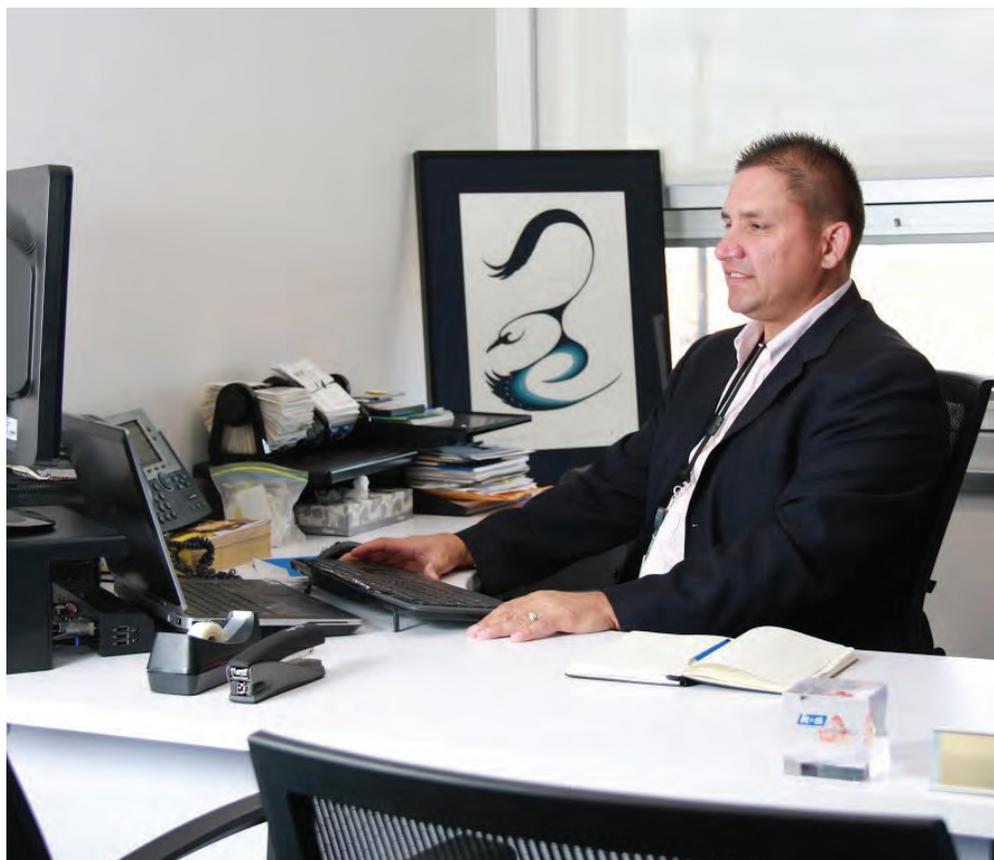


PHOTO BY BILL STEVENSON

## DRIVING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

From parking cars to leadership building: **Terry Bird** is focused on the success of Aboriginal businesses

BY SARA BEDAL

who was previously manager of Aboriginal affairs in SaskTel's human resources department and now sits on the board of the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment. "I like to see outcomes," he says, which not only include the creation of local jobs and representative workforces,

but often the chance for Aboriginal businesses to bid for lucrative contracts and crack established supply chains.

It's Bird's focus and drive that also characterized his experience at Saskatchewan Polytechnic (then SIAST). After giving some serious thought to his future (and toughing it out as a roofer for a stint), he enrolled in Business Administration at age 23. It was an intensive, but engaging, program for the aspiring businessman, who earned an award for his leadership, professionalism and dedication.

Bird believes strongly that this kind of public acknowledgement of success can go a long way in building the leaders of tomorrow.

That's why he co-chairs the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence, which recognizes the achievements of teens aged 14 to 18.

"We didn't get that recognition growing up," he says. "It's nice to have a role model who's the same age as you. Personally, I love seeing the excitement and anticipation in the eyes and smiles of the nominees." ■