2018 was a difficult year. Hearing the news that McArthur River and Key Lake would not be back online in the fall as we had hoped was a big blow. We are facing some of the highest unemployment rates than we’ve seen since the early 90’s.

Yet our collaboration with Cameco and Orano continues to support so much of the work and efforts we are proud of. We’ve seen 11 carpentry students reach the end of their apprenticeship program, dozens begin their education journey in a new Arts & Science program offered here at home, and our infrastructure continue to grow. Our partners remark each time they visit, they see something new. Progress continues here in spite of our challenges.

A lot of that progress stems from the community-minded focus of PBN. Even in a limited economic landscape they adapt and make the most of all resources and opportunities. Their work resulted in 102,266 hours of employment for Pinehouse residents, the construction of the Hilltop Triplexes, and the completion of 12 major projects. Of particular note and importance to Orano and Cameco, PBN made huge strides towards its safety goals improving its ISNet World Safety rating, now maintaining an “A.”

Through this partnership we’ve learned what it means to be a partner, and we’ve gotten good at it. As such, we continue to expand our work with other industries and government.

We also appreciate the work of the JIES and the important link it creates between industry and the community. It’s allowed for key updates and ongoing communication so we can feel comfortable that ecosystem in our traditional territory remains healthy.

Mike Natomagan, Pinehouse

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Pinehouse photos courtesy
Dre Erwin Photography
Our people...

Joint Implementation Committee (JIC)

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Jonathan Huntington
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Kristin Cuddington
Cameco

Walter Smith
Pinehouse

Joint Implementation
Engagement Sub-Committee (JIES)

Our progress...

Workforce development
Providing Opportunity at Home...

Having to leave the community for education and training can be a huge barrier for residents in Pinehouse. Over the past several years many efforts have been made to use the resources flowing through the collaboration agreement to provide opportunities at home.

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This year allowed for some important reflection and celebration of this direction. The apprenticeship program which began in 2013 saw 11 carpenter students pass the final level of their four-year program and move towards writing the journeyman exam.

"Not only have these people gained skills and training, Pinehouse has seen a significant change in its infrastructure," said Walter Smith who was working as the Manager of Trade and Labour Services for Pinehouse Business North.

In that time 13 stand-alone homes have been built, one six-plex, four triplexes, a 12-unit elder complex and an arena.

Business development

In light of the difficulties facing the uranium industry and limited capital project opportunities in northern Saskatchewan, PBN approached 2018 with focus on restructuring to be the most efficient. Changes included moving away from CEO committee in favour of a full-time CEO with expertise in core business units and adding project management staff in Pinehouse to serve highways and waste management clients.

Major projects included the tailings management facility stage two liner at Mclean Lake, the west freeze pad and final grading at Cigar Lake, and the lagoon expansion at Sucker River.

PBN’s limited partnership with EMW provided northern Indigenous residents with opportunities to learn specialized trades and transferrable skills. A few highlight projects included the fabrication of 12 dust falls stands for Denison Mines, the supply and installation of manways on a precipitation reaction tank for Orano, and the supply and installation of ground rods at Cigar Lake.

See PBN’s full report for more information.

Community investment

The Trust Advisory Panel (TAP) that receives money through the collaboration agreement continues to invest in the community by supporting people and initiatives that make Pinehouse a better place to live.

Its greatest impact is in providing dollars to leverage funding and investment that help build key infrastructure for the community.

It also provides for the scholarship program and cultural events such as the Elders’ Gathering, community net fishing and moose hunting in the fall. All three help teach traditional skills and feed the members. In 2018 1100 lbs of moose sausage was made!

Arrangements were also made in 2018 to begin to offer a first year liberal arts program in Pinehouse. It is a partnership between the Village of Pinehouse, Kineepik Metis Local, University of Regina, and the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

"It allows the students to build a base capacity for university and the confidence to take their education further," said Smith, "This first year can lead to teaching, nursing, management, and much more…It opens the door."

47 community members applied, and most were accepted, including Jolene Durocher.

"I felt super blessed to have been able to attend university classes in my hometown. If my children got sick i was able to drop them off with family members and if I ever ran into any problems my family was just a phone call away to help me."

Community engagement and environmental stewardship

The highlight for the subcommittee (JIES) was an environmental workshop held in Saskatoon at the beginning of June.

It focused on the role of the subcommittees and their key part in the collaboration agreements and sharing information with the community.

Cameco announced its continued suspension of production at McArthur River and Key Lake and reaffirmed its commitment that the environment will be protected. Routine environmental monitoring continues.

Updates have also been provided to the JIES about increased uranium in the groundwater under the mill terrace at Key Lake. The groundwater is localized to the mill area and the uranium is not affecting nearby lakes or any water used for drinking. Cameco is working with third-party experts and provincial and federal regulators to develop a corrective plan.