

LBN finances improved

By [Rebecca Billard - Burns Lake Lakes District News](#)

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Since 2004 Lake Babine Nation has been working under a remedial management plan which was required by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) policy when the band reported financial troubles to the tune of a negative 15 per cent deficit.

According to Blair Carlson, INAC's acting regional director general for the B.C. region, a remedial management plan is a plan to get out of a financial deficit position.

"A deficit could be as a result of a number, or combination of things from dealing with emergency housing or infrastructure repair issues to overspending on government and administration," he said.

Carlson said the remedial management plan also helped Lake Babine Nation to deliver, at the very least, a minimum standard in essential programming to its band members.

"Lake Babine Nation is required to ensure that health and safety needs as well as the right to basic social assistance along with education for students are all provided," he said.

Since being under the remedial management plan Lake Babine Nation's financial situation has greatly improved.

"Last week I met with Chief Wilf Adam and council of Lake Babine Nation to congratulate them on reducing their deficit from 8.57 per cent to 4.26 per cent as of April 1, 2010," Carlson said.

"This is an achievement considering the competing demands from [Lake Babine Nation] community members [residing] in multiple communities," Carlson said.

He went on to say that the fact that a council with multiple communities could work together, setting aside their competing pressures to meet this goal is a demonstration of their leadership.

INAC will not have the final numbers available for the 2010/2011 financial year until an audit is completed, which is due by July 31, 2011.

Chief Adam said he was happy to receive the good news during a meeting with Carlson in Prince George last week.

We met with Blair Carlson and for once it was good news as we have greatly improved our financial situation," Chief Adam said.

"We will keep the remedial management plan in place until the deficit is eliminated." Chief Adam said.

He went on to say, "We have reduced the deficit by cutting waste and eliminating unfunded positions and strong cost controls on our finances. Also we made sure that we got funds owed to Lake Babine Nation from governments particularly INAC."

"We got nearly \$1 million back as some of it dated back since 1995," he added.

According to Chief Adam, the most difficult thing Lake Babine Nation had to do was making sure that they stayed within the budget allocation and making sure that the funds were spent for the programs that they were intended for.

"We also put in financial controls that we made sure that no spending was done if it was no budget in place. This meant we had to say no to a lot of things when there was no funds to pay them. We also made sure there are budget and work plans in place of everything that we do."

"It has been tough as there is a lot of pressure on us for all kinds of financial needs and we made sure we always stayed within budget," he said.

"We should eliminate the whole deficit within two years but need policy changes from governments to make this happen. By this I mean for our social housing program, as we will continue to lose money unless the policies of government change."

"Now that our finances are in very good shape we can concentrate in other areas like jobs and the well being of our communities," Chief Adam added.