
Clifford Hunter

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

If you asked Clifford Hunter how far you could go with your dreams he might say, “the sky is the limit!”

Hailing from the community of Nisichawayasihk in northern Manitoba, Clifford enrolled in flight training school at Harv’s Air in Steinbach. The majority of the funding he received to attend the school was raised by his family and help from the Residential School funding. The ASETS funding from his home community’s employment and training program covered his travel and accommodations and this was a big help for him.

“I rented a room at the flight school right in Steinbach with the ASETS funding support,” he explained. “There was people there from all over the world.” He stayed for a full month and completed all of his hours for cross country flying. He is studying to complete his written flight test online and will achieve his private pilot license after passing that test. “My goal is to get my pilot license so that I can do what I love to do - prospecting up here in northern Manitoba,” he said. “My family members and I would like to develop our local businesses and getting this pilot training will assist with our plans. We have goals to develop a trucking business and a mini-bus transit service in the community. We also want to look into a tow truck operation and a local garage,” he said.

Clifford recounted that one of the biggest challenges he faced was to secure funding to pursue his pilot training. His family was his best support along with the employment and training program in Nisichawayasihk. With the family supporting him they are looking into the possibility of buying a 185 or 206 Cessna float plane that could be utilized for prospecting in the area. Currently, he is able to access the use of a plane through a friend in Thompson.

Clifford advises employment and training initiatives to focus on building up the local trades such as welding and automotive mechanics. This would ensure that people from northern communities would not always have to travel to larger places like Thompson to get their vehicles repaired or for other services.

“I believe in building up the local economy and businesses so that we are more self-reliant,” he said. “This is the kind of thing we need to do in the north to ensure we are helping one another become entrepreneurs and self-employed rather than relying on others...it’s the way of our future and we are well on our way.”
