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COLUMNS

LaDuke: Hemp and the New Green Revolution

The global industrial hemp market was estimated at \$5 billion in 2019, and is expected to reach \$36 billion by 2026. Anishinaabe Agriculture is interested in making sure that Native farmers have a place at the table, not on the menu.

Written By: Winona LaDuke | 11:00 am, Jun. 2, 2021



Roman Vyskocil, left, Alex White Plume, Winona LaDuke and George D. Weiblen at the recent New Green Revolution Pre Party in Minnesota. (Submitted photo)

Mid May's New Green Revolution Pre Party went well. Alex White Plume, known as the "Hemperer" took a road trip with grandson Mato White Plume to see new Indigenous hemp projects, many inspired by White Plume's Hemp.

Alex White Plume's work in hemp restoration has been inspirational to many projects nationally and a number of people were very

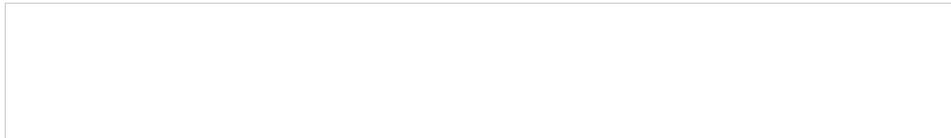
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Revolution.

White Plume served as a co-host of the gathering, sharing stories of his work in hemp, community healing, and offering suggestions as the various projects were demonstrated. White Plume built a house in rural Manderson in the 1990s out of hempcrete, had the Drug Enforcement Agency seize his crop and is now heralded as the “Hemperer” as the plant is part of a renaissance.

Roman Vyskocil finished off a hempcrete greenhouse, putting some plaster on the outside of the greenhouse, dug into a hill.



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“I’m really pleased with how it turned out,” he told us, and then tracked down White Plume for another picture.

Hempcrete is a valuable alternative to concrete in many forms of construction, and produces about four times the amount of fiber in a fraction of the time of wood. That has good opportunity and potential for not only construction, but also the pulp and paper industry. This spring, the cost of framing lumber, OSB plywood and other materials has increased steeply, adding an average of \$36,000 to the home. That’s causing the building industry to take another look at the centuries of hemp building, and new innovations in hempcrete blocks which add structural integrity as well as create a reduced carbon house.

“We have been working to decarbonize the construction sector for 10 years now and we remain 100% convinced that the hemp block has a crucial role to play,” Charlotte De Bellefroid, spokesperson for Belgium-based IsoHemp, wrote in an email to Hemp Build Mag. The company manufactures 1 million hemp blocks per year and will increase production to 5 million blocks per year with a new robotic factory to keep up with demand. It will be “impossible” to halve U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 “without rapid decarbonization of the building sector,” Alliance to Save Energy (ASE) President Paula Glover said in a statement recently.

Henry Red Cloud sent along a hempcrete block maker, and the participants worked with various block making compositions. The hope is to make an adobe-like block for construction. Red Cloud called in over the phone and gave instructions. With the more glamorous cousin — cannabis sativa — in recreational and medical form, going through major expansion, industrial hemp has been sidelined.

That’s about to change. According to a recent Facts and Factors research study, the global industrial hemp market was estimated at \$5 billion in 2019, and is expected to reach \$36 billion by 2026. Anishinaabe Agriculture is interested in making sure that Native farmers have a place at the table, not on the menu.



George D. Weiblen, Science Director at the University of Minnesota’s Bell Museum, came to the conference to meet White Plume and other Native farmers in the region. White Plume is a hero to the museum director. Weiblen has been working on hemp and cannabis varieties for the past decade, and is keen on building new collaborative relationships with tribes, starting at Sisseton, S.D., where his department has helped the Sisseton Oyate with their hemp work, and another colleague, has been working with Red Lake.

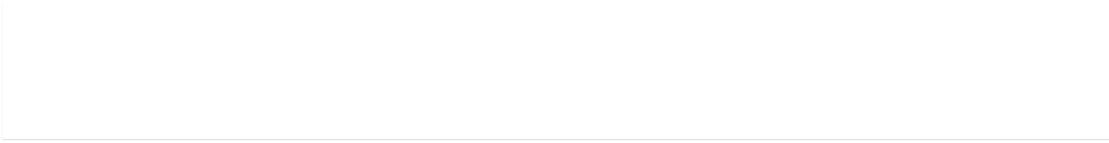
Indeed, Weiblen represents a new era of collaboration between universities and Indigenous peoples. That’s what the hemp economy represents well: The need to learn together and work together. An integrated hemp and cannabis economy represents a multi billion

dollar industry, which is a brand new industry. That is a game changer.

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The pre-party was this spring, let's see what the fall brings to the North Country for the hemp economy.



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