Interviewer: Kim Gillcrist  
Location: Conne River, Newfoundland and Labrador

Jeddore: My name is Phil Jeddore. I'm a band member of Conne River. I'm presently a researcher with the government dabbling in GIS [Geographic Information Systems].

Gillcrist: Perfect. In what ways has the community’s path to self-overnance touched your life?

Jeddore: Well, I always knew it as self-governing, so... the only changes I guess was that it became more legalized. There is no direct impact except that you don’t have to go outside of the community to other government departments and other things. We go to our own band for anything we want. They are our people that we deal with and if there’s anything that has to do with other governments that are provincial then it’s their responsibility. So personally on a personal level, that’s meant that I deal with my own government on my own time.

Gillcrist: OK So how and when did you come to be a part of the process?

Jeddore: I was never a part of the process except to be interviewed today and to be asked here and there I guess on things. I think I participated in a focus group a while back; I think that’s what we did. And I’ve contributed I think at band government meetings as part of the band government as a Tetpagnisk’s Group that they have there which is part of the government structure, and that’s it. [Here he is talking about the “challengers arm” from the documents].

Gillcrist: Perfect. So in your opinion, what have been some of the best experiences with self-government?

Jeddore: Right now we do by our own laws; I guess that’s the best experience because I have some involvement with that. The best experience is participating in information of by-laws and drafting of by-laws and the hunting and local by-laws.

Gillcrist: OK. So on the flip side of that coin, what have been some of the more challenging obstacles or barriers of self-governance?

Jeddore: The most challenging thing is dealing with elected officials who don’t know how to act like government.

Gillcrist: OK. And what does self-government in Conne River mean to you?

* Interview conducted for the Aboriginal Community Development Centre at Mount Allison University, and transcribed in Sackville, New Brunswick.
**Jeddore**: Self government in Conne River means making our own laws, having a nation-to-nation relationship with the Government of Canada, dealing with provincial government on various issues, and having our own land base.

**Gillcrist**: What would you envision for the future of a self-governing community for Conne River, for children and for grandchildren and the community itself on a day-to-day basis?

**Jeddore**: Overall I guess that the future of self-government is we have a land base and to have our own government with this nation-to-nation relationship with the Federal Government. On a day-to-day basis, we have a very big government structure with more government members, with more people in various departments instead of having one person in one department; that there be more assistance to the directors and things like that so that more things can be done, regular and open meetings, that’s all I can think of right now.

**Gillcrist**: OK. Are you familiar with the exploratory process that your community’s gone through with the negotiations for self-government?

**Jeddore**: That’s got to do with what Judy [White] did, I guess? With the focus groups I wonder, and meetings?

**Gillcrist**: That, and correspondence between your chief and the Department of Indian Affairs and INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada].

**Jeddore**: No, I’m not privy to that – that’s mostly the band government. Some things might have been made available to us through notices to the community.

**Gillcrist**: OK. What advice would you offer to other First Nations communities that are thinking about attaining self-governance themselves?

**Jeddore**: First thing, I guess you’ve got to increase nationalism within your own community because most people it seems like they’re not as vocal about issues that affect the community as a whole and they only want to fix themselves. So more nationalism in the sense that this is our band government and this is our land and we have control over it and express themselves and any time the opportunity comes up to make sure they express themselves. Another thing I guess is to learn how to act as a government, know that there’s supposed to be a constitution, there’s supposed to be by-laws, there’s supposed to be policies, procedures. You need to get all of that down on paper and have it all well drafted and available. Have your government meet regularly once a week for sure, have all government members paid positions, so that the workings of government are not just a part-time process or a hobby or theory. Have their office where they’re aware of day-to-day activities, and I guess someone to act like a government should act, which is what I believe like the people want them to.
Gillcrist: OK. So that answers my next question about what communities would need to have in order to successfully achieve self-governance. I think you touched on that well. If the process were to begin again from the very start would you make any changes to anything?

Jeddore: Not that I can remember about. We did the most important thing of course, which was to bring the people in at the beginning and have focus groups and stuff like that. We could probably have a lot more communication with the community and explain the issues and what it means, like if you got an issue and you’re asking people to agree with it, well try to go a little bit farther and say once we agree with this... once we do this... this is going to follow, or this could be the consequence, or this was good but something bad is there... something like that. I guess to inform people a lot more which was probably was done to an extent that I’m not aware, but I think that I would say that would be a good idea.

Gillcrist: OK. Well, as I mentioned at the beginning of our interview, we at Mount A are involved in documenting your process of self-governance and who do you think will benefit from this initiative and why?

Jeddore: Our own people, primarily. And Canada as a whole I guess because eventually everybody will know where everybody is and what page we’re on, because right now the provincial government is... many people from the provincial government just believe it was a mistake that we were even made into a reserve and stuff like that, and don’t believe we have any rights and all those kinds of things, or rights of land or self government rights and all this. It will benefit the Newfoundland public because once we’ve got self-government and things happen there, the local areas will benefit from the things we do, employment opportunities and the things that we get involved in. A lot of people will benefit from self-government.

Gillcrist: OK. So I think I’m about ready to wrap up, but is there anything else that you would like to add that I haven’t touched upon through the interview?

Jeddore: Nope, nothing I can think of.

Gillcrist: OK, well that’s great.