

Education

KKETS holds grand opening in Matawa Training Centre

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) held the grand opening for its move to new learning areas on July 10 in the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre in Thunder Bay. The new areas include a Resource Room for clients, KKETS Adult Education Classrooms and a Driver Education Simulator Room and Classroom.

“I carry with me the belief that when we invest in our people through language, wellness, education and opportunity, we build a strong future for all,” says Sharon Nate, CEO at Matawa First Nations. “It is my privilege to welcome everyone as we come together in ceremony and celebration for the official grand opening of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services at our newly transformed Matawa Training and Wellness Centre. This represents a new chapter where healing meets training and where the land supports the growth of new skills, new confidence and a new future for our people — it is a place where our language, culture and career pathways come together and where every foot-step forward honours those who came before us.”

David Neegan, executive director at KKETS, says they found out about six years ago that their biggest employment barrier was issues with post traumatic stress disorder and unresolved trauma. KKETS recently launched the two-year Mino-Ayaawin Maamawi (Leading in Health and Wellness Together) project led by Lakehead University’s Anita Vaillancourt and Athabasca University’s Lana Ray on May 14 through \$392,800 in funding from the TD Ready Commitment that aims to develop and implement a culturally grounded, community-led wellness model that addresses urgent mental health, trauma and addiction-related



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Neskantaga Chief Gary Quisess cuts the ribbon during the grand opening of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services’ (KKETS) move to new learning areas on July 10 in the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre in Thunder Bay.

needs in the nine Matawa communities.

“What we’re doing basically (is) we have to kind of reinvent that wheel, we have to build everything right from scratch,” Neegan says. “Word for word, we’re putting the manuals together, in terms of training the staff as well we’re training all of our frontline workers. Not only that, in terms of the experiences we learnt here within KKETS, we’re actually transferring that to our communities, starting with Constance Lake.”

Neegan says he has been blessed in terms of working with Vaillancourt and Ray, noting that their next step is to go into the communities to find those quality of life indicators to see if they actually made a difference.

“And if we’re able to make that difference, then we want to share those results with everybody,” Neegan says. “And this is the blueprint that we could

move forward in terms of creating healthy communities, not only within Matawa and Ontario but as we talked about, right across Canada. And once it’s published and we can share those results, we’ll be able to get more and more people healthy and that’s our ultimate goal here.”

Vaillancourt, assistant professor at Lakehead University, says what they are looking at is an Indigenous approach to mindfulness.

“(The research) says that bringing in traditional thinking, traditional teachings have been instrumental in changing the outcomes for Indigenous communities,” Vaillancourt says. “In one Indigenous community that totally subscribed to traditional healing, the suicide rate among First Nations youth went from in the 90s to nothing, this is how powerful it can be. But also recognizing that

not all Indigenous people want to engage in spiritual methods, that’s why mindfulness is such a great approach — it really is a reclaiming of Indigenous teachings.”

Roseanne Green, a student at KKETS, says the mindfulness practice has worked for her with her studies and life as well.

“Going through that program, it was scary the first time because there were emotions I felt just simply through breathing,” Green says. “After that first day I felt lighter and I was happy, I was smiling, things seemed easier to get up in the morning. The next time I did it, it was easier to focus on my school work and before you know it I’m just zooming through these essays that I never thought I could get through. And not only just with school work, but personal life as well, having more patience for your kids, being able to have the

confidence to speak up when you know you should.”

Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu, minister of Jobs and Families, says Green’s comments were a good example of ways people can learn to deal with the ongoing trauma of colonization and experiences of trauma that Indigenous people have.

“She talked about how important it was for her to continue on her studies and how important it is for her in her future endeavours,” Hajdu says. “The role of KKETS is critical in making sure that we have the right skilled people in place as we try to grow our economy here in northern Ontario as we have major projects being considered. First Nations people have to have an opportunity to take part and to benefit from those projects.”

Kristan Straub, CEO at Wyloo Canada and a Henvey

Inlet citizen, says it was amazing to see the work that KKETS was doing with the wellness program. Wyloo Canada is the proponent of the Eagle’s Nest project in the Ring of Fire.

“I think that the work that KKETS is doing on the wellness program and the wellness training for Indigenous students is amazingly powerful to prepare students for learning and for a lifelong journey in continuous learning,” Straub says. “And the work that they’re incorporating now to be able to transition from the wellness program into the additional learning and the training and the programs that KKETS has set up, be it for the construction, the heavy duty equipment or the other training programs, I think are welcome for First Nations and welcome for industries who will ultimately be there to support with jobs into the future.”

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Education



MECC graduation 2025

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Matawa Education and Care Centre's (MECC) graduation ceremony for 16 graduates from the Matawa communities featured valedictorian speeches by Everett Baxter, Lyn (Kayla) Spence and Landon Yellowhead.

"My time here at Matawa has been great, I got to meet people here that are now my friends and got to meet wonderful teachers and staff along the way — they have made me feel welcome and I want to thank you all for making my time here meaningful," Baxter says. "I used to be afraid to ask for help because I just wanted to be right but being at Matawa, it has made me realize that even if you get something wrong you can learn from your mistakes. It is OK to ask for help when things get tough, even outside of school, there are people you can reach out to such as your friends, family or your teacher."

Baxter also encouraged others to try doing activities they haven't done yet such as volleyball.

“I know it can be hard at first but if you just don’t give up,

you will get used to it," Baxter says. "I wouldn't have been a volleyball player if I didn't take a risk, so be confident, be brave and don't let anything get in your way."

Spence says she was anxious when she first went to MECC but soon realized "how great of a school it was."

"The love and support I get from the staff is overwhelming. I've never felt that feeling before while attending school," Spence says. "The opportunities I've been given, the help and assistance through the programming and the push and the motivation to meet my goals was nothing that I've ever experienced before. Some of the staff taught me to embrace challenges as chances to learn and grow and see my potential, through their support I have realized I have the power to achieve anything I set my mind to."

Spence says she has been inspired to start her own business when the time is right but for now she wants to focus on pursuing post-secondary studies.

"I'm standing on the stage today graduating from MECC because I have spent a lot of

time working on myself, I've overcome struggles and am picking up what I let fall," Spence says. "Don't get me wrong, it has been frustrating and difficult but I finally feel like I'm in the place where I can move forward."

Yellowhead says he had a good time at MECC, including on trips for dog sledding, goose hunting, moose hunting and canoeing and a dual credit course at Confederation College.

"The canoe trip is the one that really stands out to me as my friends got to go alongside me," Yellowhead says, adding that the dual credit course was also fun. "That's where I learned the fundamentals of welding."

Yellowhead says he also faced his addiction to substances while at MECC.

"What really helped me with getting sober was finding myself in my culture," Yellowhead says. "Finding myself through the drum has given me the guidance I was needing for myself. The culture team here at Matawa has welcomed me to drum whenever they host a drum session during lunch

or at the NAN (Nishnawbe Aski Nation) building. It was through these events that I could really feel good afterwards for I am learning not only about my culture but who I am."

Sharon Nate, CEO at Matawa First Nations Management, says the challenges of transitioning from her former role as education director have been challenging and exciting in many ways, noting that her transition to CEO mirrors the journey the graduates are about to take after graduating from

MECC.

“You’re stepping into something new, something unknown but also something full of potential,” Nate says. “Whether you’re heading off to college or university, a skilled trade, your years here at Matawa have prepared you for your next steps. Today we not just celebrate your achievements but also your strength and your resilience.”

Webequie Chief Cornelius Wabasse also congratulated the graduates, adding that he encourages them to continue with their education.

"As leaders we are also working to make sure that we have jobs and opportunities for them as they move up the ladder to become good leaders for our communities," Wabasse says. "I encourage our young people to try and be bilingual because our identity is very important as well too as First Nations people. So I am glad that we are moving forward in a good way and hope to see more of our young people graduating in the near future and then become leaders for our communities."

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Education

Confederation invests in practical nursing program

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Confederation College announced a \$1.2 million investment by the provincial government for its recently expanded Practical Nursing program at the Thunder Bay campus. Launched in March 2025, the expanded program includes 10 Indigenous students out of the 50 students who are learning in a condensed format that enables them to complete their training by summer 2026.

“We have 10 students that are in the program out of the 50 that are self identified as Indigenous,” says Shane Strickland, dean of Health, Negahneewin and Community Services at Confederation College. “But we’re also working directly with a number of communities around northwestern Ontario so students will have direct access into long-term care or other community placement agencies both in towns across northwestern Ontario but also within Indigenous communities so it’s an exciting opportunity for real experiential learning working with Indigenous populations.”

Wendy Landry, vice president of Indigenous Affairs at Confederation College, stressed the need to have more Indigenous nurses in the communities.

“What’s important for our Indigenous students to get involved in this program is that the need is in our First Nations and our communities,” Landry says. “To have someone working in our communities that is used to our culture and our ways of life and our traditions is very vital for our communities and for the health care to be available in the communities.”

“By creating more opportunities for learners to train close to home we’re strengthening the future of health care,”

– Michelle Salo, president at Confederation College

Michelle Salo, president at Confederation College, says the expansion of the Practical Nursing program with funded and fast-track seats is a critical step in addressing the health care human resource needs across northwestern Ontario.

“This expansion responds directly to the health human resource challenges faced by many of our local health care providers,” Salo says. “By creating more opportunities for learners to train close to home we’re strengthening the future of health care across our communities. We are incredibly grateful to the Ministry of Health and the government of Ontario for recognizing and acting on this urgent need, your commitment to growing ... a skilled health care workforce is making a real lasting difference.”

Salo adds that the provincial government’s initiative isn’t just about numbers, it’s about people.

“Each student in this program represents a future nurse who will contribute to the health and well-being of our region for years to come,” Salo says.

Thunder Bay–Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland says the provincial government’s investment of about \$1,228,440 to expand the capacity for nursing pro-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
Thunder Bay–Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland and Michelle Salo, president at Confederation College, gathered with a group of officials for the announcement of the expansion of the Practical Nursing program.

grams at Confederation College was truly needed in the region.

“We know the communities in northern and rural Ontario face unique challenges when it comes to accessing timely, high quality health care,” Holland says. “One of the most pressing issues we hear about from hospitals, long-term care homes and community health providers is the shortage of skilled health care professionals, especially nurses.”

Holland says the training will take place on Confederation College’s campuses across northwestern Ontario.

“And the fast tracking of the program means that the nurses are going to be able to get out and start practicing quicker,” Holland says. “We know that in our hospitals and our long-term care facilities, for example, the shortage of nursing is a real problem so we’re really happy to be able to make this investment to address those human health care shortages across all sectors.”

Holland adds that it is vital to have Indigenous students in the practical nursing program.

“It is absolutely vital to have the Indigenous participation in these programs and in the training so that they can take that knowledge back to their communities and provide that level of care that otherwise may not be available to those communities,” Holland says.

The provincial government is investing \$56.8 million over the next three years to support an enrolment increase of nursing spaces at publicly assisted colleges and universities by more than 2,200 registered practical nurses and nurse practitioners.

“By investing in education and training for nurses, our government is protecting Ontario and building on our progress to grow our nursing workforce for years to come,” says Sylvia Jones, deputy premier and minister of Health. “This investment will help ensure families can connect to the care they need no matter where they live, while also supporting the next generation of health-care professionals.”

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Education

Lakehead announces new veterinary building

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Lakehead University held a ground blessing ceremony led by Elder Gene Nowegejick for the Gakina Awesiinyag animal education facility for its newly launched Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program on June 24. The program is scheduled to start in the fall of 2025, with the initial northern cohorts doing their studies at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph, and the Gakina Awesiinyag facility is scheduled to open in 2027.

“The Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program at Lakehead University is a partnership with the University of Guelph’s Ontario Veterinary College — this innovative collaboration represents a landmark investment in the future of northern Ontario,” says Gillian Siddall, president and vice-chancellor at Lakehead University. “It is the first expansion of veterinary education in this province in over a generation, and more importantly, it’s a promise to the people and communities of the north that their needs, educational pursuits and potential matter. This program will help ensure that farmers no longer wait weeks for veterinary care, that people in northern Ontario communities can access medical care for their beloved pets and that students from northern Ontario can study, train and stay here, contributing their skills to the communities.”

Siddall says they heard loud and clear from the north that more veterinarians should be trained where services are needed.

“The Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program signifies something profoundly personal to northern communities — it’s about fairness, access and addressing a critical issue,” Siddall says. “Thanks to the Ontario government, our partners, donors and supporters, we’re answering that call — not with a temporary solution, but with a legacy that will serve generations of people and animals across northern Ontario.”

Denise Baxter, vice provost Indigenous Initiatives at Lakehead University, says the first cohort of 20 veterinary students will begin their studies this upcoming fall.

“So in four years we’ll have 20 veterinarians and then every year after that we’ll have 20 veterinarians from the north,” Baxter says. “Part of the work that the veterinary students will be doing is actually working with organizations that are already working out across the region and also in the north. So I would imagine say with the neuter and spay program we’ll have veterinary students going up with veterinary doctors who are going to do work in communities.”

Baxter says the Gakina Awesiinyag animal education facility will have a variety of farm animals on site.

“And one of the things we



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A group of dignitaries gathered for the ground blessing ceremony led by Elder Gene Nowegejick for Lakehead University’s Gakina Awesiinyag animal education facility for the newly launched Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program.

also learned with the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (program) is they’re actually trained in wildlife care as well, so if there are birds of prey or animals from the region that are injured, they’re also learning how to care for the wild animals in the region as well,” Baxter says.

Lakehead University is receiving \$4.5 million in provincial government funding to support their capital build requirements for the Gakina Awesiinyag animal education facility, and they are also receiving an additional \$2 million from The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation to support their delivery of the Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program.

“Once completed, the animal

education facility at Lakehead University will serve as a key hub to train future veterinarians serving northern Ontario,” says Trevor Jones, minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. “By investing in this program, our government is helping address vet shortages across rural and remote communities while keeping the northern agri-food industry strong.”

Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland says the project marks a transformative investment in the future of northern Ontario.

“By bringing veterinary education closer to home, we’re addressing critical gaps in care for livestock, pets and wildlife needs that are essential to both

our agricultural sector and the overall well-being of our communities,” Holland says. “I’m proud that our government is supporting this first-of-its-kind program at Lakehead University, which will train skilled veterinarians and help strengthen the fabric of our rural and northern communities for generations to come.”

Lakehead University also set a philanthropic fundraising goal of \$12.9 million, with 95 per cent of that goal already achieved through major gifts from individual donors, and the final five per cent to be raised through a public, community-driven campaign that will launch this fall.

“Today, we celebrate and

acknowledge the many philanthropic supporters, government funders and community partners who have come together with a shared belief in this innovative solution to the complex challenge of veterinary access in northern Ontario,” says Michael den Haan, vice-president, University Advancement at Lakehead University. “Their collective generosity is what makes this program possible. It’s more than funding — it’s a statement of confidence in Lakehead University and the power of education to transform animal care and agriculture across northern Ontario.”



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Community



Participants in the rally and march against nuclear waste storage and transportation in northwestern Ontario crossed Water St. on their way to the Spirit Garden on Thunder Bay's waterfront on July 4.

RMYC Youth Council march in nuclear waste rally



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Regional Multicultural Youth Council peer mentor Summer Spade speaks during the rally and march against nuclear waste storage and transportation in northwestern Ontario.

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of about 24 Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC) members participated in the rally and march against nuclear waste storage and transportation in northwestern Ontario on July 4 in Thunder Bay. The rally and march, which began at Waverley Park and ended at the Spirit Garden on Thunder Bay's waterfront, was organized by citizens from Grassy Narrows and representatives from Fort William.

"I wasn't asked to speak or anything but I just went up to the coordinator (and said) I recognize there's not many

youth speaking up on it and I would like to talk about it from my perspective,” says Summer Spade, a peer mentor at RMYC. “I made it known that I did not come up there to talk about statistics or anything like that, so I instead approached it with a more empathetic and more personal viewpoint. I was trying to get them to understand from a viewpoint from later in the future — do they want their kids to not experience the same thing they did growing up, like would they want their kids to swim in nuclear rivers or would they want their kids to not experience the same things like camping just because it’s not safe out on the lands no more.”

Spade says during her com-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Participants in the rally and march against nuclear waste storage and transportation in northwestern Ontario crossed the railway tracks on their way to the Spirit Garden.

ments at the end of the march at the Spirit Garden that she wanted to “share my heart and my courage to protect our ways of living and our culture.”

"When we think about the nuclear waste, we're thinking about a future where we can not live our ways, where our children are being robbed of our identity and where we cannot continue on as Indigenous people," Spade says. "Today I'm very proud to be here to inspire the youth to continue fighting as well alongside our adults and alongside our Elders. And I want you to keep standing up even if your voice shakes like mine."

Spade says the marchers caused a disturbance to the traf-

fic while they were marching to the waterfront along the city streets.

"It felt really good to cause a disturbance because you need to let people know that this is happening and it's not good for you for our future," Spade says.

Kamryn Woloschuk, a peer mentor at RMYC, says participating in the march was powerful.

"It was something that as youth we'd never done before, stopping traffic and making ourselves known in a very public way," Woloschuk says. "It was interesting to listen to the variety of speakers on topics like climate change and how that interacts with Indigenous rights. I felt that I both learned a lot

and like I was able to contribute to something important, and I think our younger youth had a moving experience being part of something like that for the first time.”

Woloschuk says it is important for youth to have a say in their own future, to be listened to and also to be educated.

"It was interesting at the rally learning from people who are very experienced about what the shipping containers would look like, what the testing process has been for nuclear waste," Woloschuk says. "Just to be more involved in making the choices is really important, I believe, and having like proper

education on what these choices mean rather than being overlooked since we are just young now.”

Harmony Fiddler, a mentor for the Mother Earth project at RMYC, says it was important to raise awareness during the march.

"We walked down Pearl St. and ... we stopped the traffic on Court, Algoma and Cumberland," Fiddler says. "Being involved with community stuff like that, I hope to inspire the youth to come forward and speak about what's going on and how this is going to affect our future."

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Sheila Marcinyshyn
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Margaret Mark-Wesley
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Rebecca Arthur
Program Coordinator



Ann Magiskan
Training Coordinator



Donna Koski
Administrative Coordinator

Booshoo Wachiye, as Deputy Grand Chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, I am filled with both gratitude and a deep sense of honour to continue to serve our communities. This year has presented significant challenges, from governance hurdles to navigating the complexities of our changing world. Despite these obstacles, my commitment to building strong and resilient communities across our nation has remains steadfast. We are reclaiming our ways of taking care of our children, ways rooted in our languages, cultural identity, love, kinship, and community responsibility, after generations of harm caused by colonial practices.

We continue to advocate for essential programs like Jordan's Principle, Choose Life, and Family Well Being ensuring that our community members receive the care and support they deserve. Additionally, our work through the Community Wellness file has been pivotal in supporting our communities during crises, demonstrating our commitment to the well-being of all our people.

With the Ontario Final Settlement Agreement on Child and Family Services and its upcoming implementation, our communities can be stronger and will be. This is more than a shift in policy; it is a movement toward restoration, healing, and empowerment. Our team at Nishnawbe Aski Nation will be there every step of the way to support communities through the implementation process. We will walk alongside our leadership, families, and youth to ensure this transition is community-led, culturally grounded, and sustainable for generations to come.

We also are moving ahead to establish partnerships with our First Nation Child welfare agencies and First Nation Band Representative initiatives and other prevention programs to ensure coordination of programs and services for nation members wherever they may reside.

We are constantly seeking better ways to support our communities, especially in the face of escalating crises. We are committed to advocating for stronger, faster, and more culturally appropriate services during times of crisis, because our people's lives, safety, and dignity must always come first.

Together, we will continue to strive for a future where our communities thrive, our traditions are honored, and our collective voice remains strong.

Meegwetch!

Bobby Narcisse
Deputy Grand Chief



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Arts & Entertainment

Moth film screening highlights nuclear waste issues



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fort William Chief Michele Solomon speaks about her community's opposition to nuclear waste being transported through their traditional territory during The Moth film screening and panel discussion on July 3 at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law building in Thunder Bay.

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The nuclear waste issue was highlighted during The Moth film screening and panel discussion on July 3 at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law building in Thunder Bay. The film, which was co-directed by Michelle Derosier and Zoe Gordon and premiered at the 25th anniversary imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival this past June in Toronto, is about an Ogichidaa-kwe surviving in isolation on land that was consumed by lithium mines and 100,000 tonnes of buried nuclear waste.

"This is the second time I've had the opportunity to watch the film and the thing that really

is striking to me is the way that the film depicts Sara and this isolated space ... trying to stay away from this danger that is outside of her room," says Fort William Chief Michele Solomon during the panel discussion. "And how, 'We shouldn't have taken the money, we shouldn't have taken the money, we shouldn't have taken the money.'"

Solomon says there was information during the panel discussion about how the nuclear waste could be transported by rail or highway to the proposed nuclear waste site near Ignace.

"First Nations along the highway that this would pass through, many of them are in strong opposition to the trans-

portation of this through their traditional territories," Solomon says. "They should be concerned given the situation of our highways and the accidents that happen. I'm certainly no expert on nuclear waste and I'm not an expert on the deep depositories, but we do know that if humans come into contact with this (nuclear waste), then it's going to have grave consequences. And we know that if it gets into our waterways, it's going to have devastating consequences to our drinking water, to animals and plants, to everything."

Solomon says her community's leadership has taken a strong stand against the transportation of nuclear waste through their traditional terri-

tory.

"And we also hear from many of our citizens that they are also in strong opposition to nuclear waste being transported through our territory," Solomon says.

Aroland's Shelby Gagnon, one of panelists and an artist who was involved with the film, says as an artist she has been transitioning the nuclear waste issue into her artwork.

"I've done a couple of paintings of the nuclear waste in general," Gagnon says. "And especially this film too, I was as we were filming thinking about this dystopian future and as I was creating the mural, like I was saying on the panel, I was reflecting on the land and the waters and how they could be totally affected and wiped away and toxic for millions of years. Thinking about time in that concept, it's just terrifying

because you can't even think that far in the past and how humans will be and how animals will be."

Derosier, an Eagle Lake citizen, says the film starts with the Ogichidaa-kwe in prayer.

"And every morning this woman wakes up and she does her offering and she does her prayers to the land — so I think that is full of hope, the character in the film is making art, she is creating," Derosier says. "The act of creating is hope, that's what gives us hope as artists, making this film, that's hope, ceremony, prayer, that's hope, that we get up every day in the face of things that are very difficult for us to understand sometimes, and we keep getting up, we keep coming together and we keep creating together and doing ceremony together and having conversations together just like we are this evening,

that's hope."

Gordon says the character in the film has so many resources to keep her going in a very devastating situation.

"So for me that's her art and expression, and that's something that I wanted to share with the public is that we will always have the arts, we will always have expression, we will always have music, we will always have expression with our hands, expression with our bodies and that is what is going to help us get through all kinds of hard situations," Gordon says. "So for me there was a lot of hope in there."

A rally and march opposing a nuclear waste storage site near Ignace was held the next day by citizens from Grassy Narrows and representatives from Fort William from Waverley Park to the Spirit Gardens on the waterfront in Thunder Bay.

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SCAN ME

Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
Anishinabek Nation Regional Chief Melvin Hardy and Lac Seul's David Wilkinson-Simard speak during the Indigenous Survivors Day Community Gathering on June 30 at Hillcrest Park.

Indigenous survivors day held at Hillcrest Park

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Thunder Bay held an Indigenous Survivors Day Community Gathering at Hillcrest Park featuring a sacred fire, flag raising and cultural offering and leadership and survivor reflections on June 30. The day began with an Indigenous Survivors Day Proclamation Signing and Flag Raising Ceremony at City Hall and also featured education and awareness activities such as all-day educational displays and workshops and community information booths.

"I remember my grandparents, they used to live on Lake Nipigon and used to travel on Lake Nipigon and when the residential school people were looking for their family they would travel on Lake Nipigon, in the wintertime especially, so they were always moving, but eventually some of my family members ended up going to residential school," says Anishinabek Nation Regional Chief Melvin Hardy, noting that he learned the traditional teachings as a child. "For the longest time when I joined the army and got out of the army I was lost, I couldn't find my way. But it's those colours, it's my Indian name, it's my colours and actually my nation where I came from — I had to learn that to understand who I was, and then I learned that was my identity. So I look around here today and I see our survivors and I remember those teachings, I'm so glad and proud to be here today looking at the survivors being dressed in their colours."

Hardy encourages people to

always remember their identity, who they are and where they came from.

"Let's make this day a memorable day that every year we'll come back and we'll acknowledge this day," Hardy says. "Our survivors, we learn lots just from your stories and your storytelling. I've heard a lot of stories from our survivors — when they tell their stories, there's also teachings within their stories, that we have to listen and learn."

Lac Seul's David Wilkinson-Simard, a member of Thunder Bay's Indigenous Advisory Council and a member of the Thunder Mountain Singers, says it is important to acknowledge all the survivors, including the residential school survivors, Sixties Scoop survivors and the veterans who gave up their status.

"We also had veterans that went to war and they had to give up their status in order to go to war," Wilkinson-Simard says. "And when they came back home they weren't welcome in their community any longer and they weren't welcome in the cities, so they had to make their life somewhere else. Lots of them had to make their lives in the bush, outside of community, and then after that residential school happened and then they lost their children, they lost their families, and this went on for generations."

Wilkinson-Simard also stressed the importance of those people who are knowledge keepers, who are singing, who still know their language and who are practicing and trying to recover their language and history.

"It's really important that we continue to keep on going and that we hold space wherever we go," Wilkinson-Simard says. "I'm really thankful for the community and all of the workers before, we had many people that worked here in the city that have gone through a lot in order for us to hold space and I want to acknowledge them. I really appreciate all the work they have done and all of the sacrifices they had to make in order to have space for ourselves."

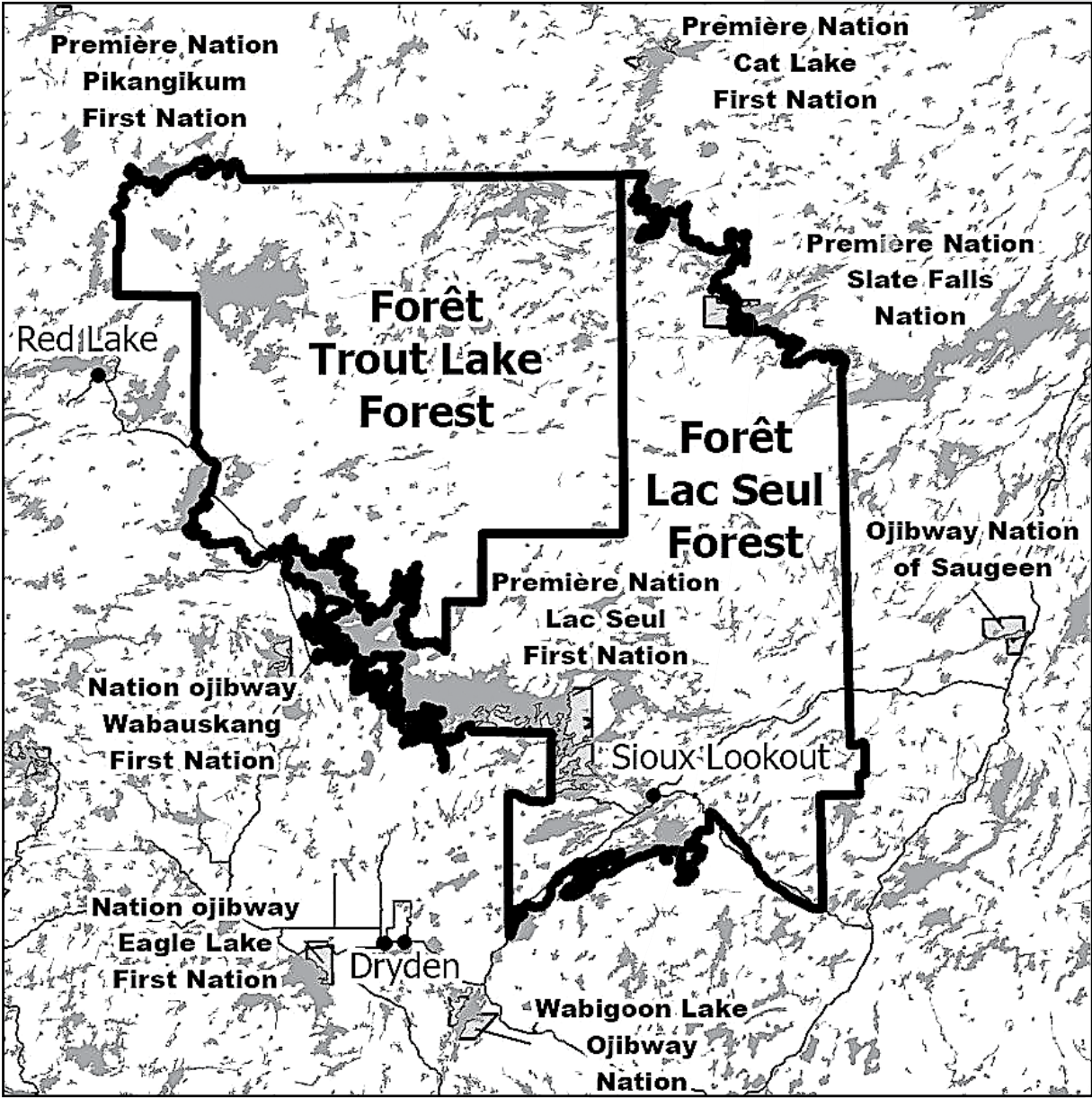
Wilkinson-Simard says the flag that is located at Hillcrest Park represents the survivors.

"We see our people on the streets, we see all of the things that they have gone through and that we still are here and that we're not going anywhere, no matter what happened in our past, how many times they tried to wipe us out, we're still here and I want to acknowledge that and we're going to sing a song here about this flag," Wilkinson-Simard says. "Wherever you go in North America, we always sing flag songs that represent our people. Our songs are still relevant, we're still singing these songs despite all of the things that have happened to us, that at one time were banned and we weren't allowed to sing. We weren't allowed to carry our drums, we weren't allowed to carry our language but they always found a way to keep going."

Inspection

Inspection of Herbicide Projects for Lac Seul and Trout Lake Forests

The Ontario **Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)** invites you to inspect the planned herbicide projects for the 2025 season. As part of our ongoing efforts to regenerate and protect Ontario's forests, selected stands on the **Lac Seul and Trout Lake Forests** (see map) will be sprayed with herbicide to control competing vegetation, starting on or about: **August 4, 2025**.



The project descriptions and project plans for the herbicide projects are available electronically for inspection by contacting the SFL contacts listed below during normal business hours and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> beginning **July 2, 2025 until March 31, 2026**, when the Annual Work Schedule expires.

First Nation and Métis communities and interested and affected persons and organizations can arrange a remote meeting with MNR staff to discuss the herbicide projects. For more information, please contact:

Lac Seul Forest	Trout Lake Forest
Kevin Pruys, R.P.F. Management Forester Ministry of Natural Resources Sioux Lookout District Office 49 Prince Street Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A6 tel: 807-738-4937 e-mail: kevin.pruys@ontario.ca	Karen Bayduza Assistant Management Forester Ministry of Natural Resources Red Lake District Office 227 Howey Street, Floor 2 P.O. Box 5003 tel: 807-728-0649 e-mail: karen.bayduza@ontario.ca
Jared Binguis, R.P.F. Operations Forester Obishikokaang Resources Corporation 33 3rd Avenue P.O. Box 38 Hudson, ON P0V 1X0 tel: 807-737-9644 e-mail: jbinguis@obishcorp.ca	Lylalee Soley Management Forester Dryden Fibre Canada 1 Duke Street Dryden, ON P8N 3J7 tel: 807-323-3303 e-mail: lsoley@drydenfibre.ca

Renseignements en français : Michele Kan, aménagiste forestier au MRN, 807 728-0177, michele.kan@ontario.ca.

NIPD strong event a success with youth

"I was really nervous at first but I had a lot of fun," Lyon says, noting that she has been lifting for about a year. "My dad is a power lifter. It was very fun and I really like seeing community come together to celebrate Indigenous strength."

A photograph of two young children, a boy and a girl, smiling and looking out from behind a blue window frame. The boy is on the left, and the girl is on the right, with her hands resting on the white windowsill. The image is framed by a large, stylized orange and yellow circular graphic on the left side.

Fort William Summer Powwow 2025



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

ABOVE: The Rolling Thunder drum group performed their songs at the Fort William Summer Powwow on July 5.

ABOVE: Biigtigong Nishnaabeg's Kaitlyn Moses won the women's dance special.

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e-mail: info@occc.ca, www.occc.ca

Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The focus of our programs and services is to retain, maintain and preserve the culture, tradition and languages of the Indigenous people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

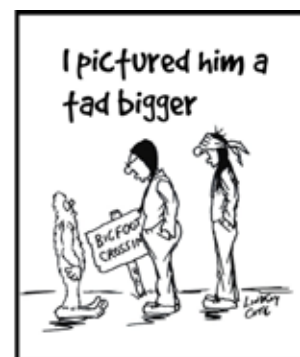
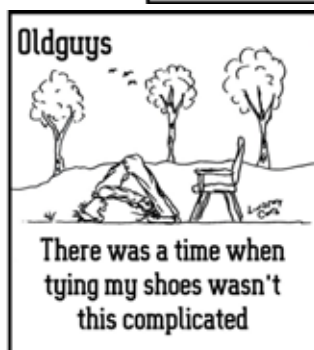
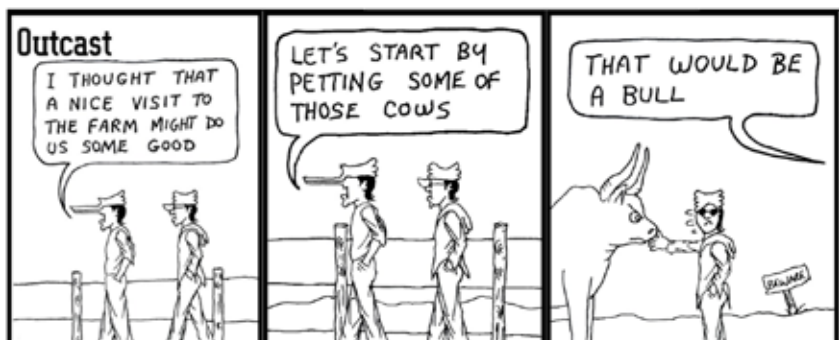


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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

Wawatay Communications Society is currently looking for a dynamic and results-driven Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who brings management expertise and embodies the mandate and mission in service of Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities.

Wawatay Communications Society serves the communication needs of First Nations people and the communities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. It does this through the distribution of a monthly newspaper, daily radio programming, other communication services and a multimedia website that seeks to preserve and enhance indigenous languages and cultures of Indigenous people in northern Ontario.

Mandate

“Wawatay Communications Society is a self-governing, independent community-driven entrepreneurial Indigenous organization dedicated to using appropriate technologies to meet the communication needs of people of Indigenous ancestry in Northern Ontario, wherever they live. In doing so, its founders intended that Wawatay would serve their communities by preserving, maintaining and enhancing Indigenous languages and culture.”

Mission

“To provide media capabilities and content that address the unique needs of the Nishnawbe people.”

The membership of the Society – 49 First Nation communities within the territory of Nishnawbe Aski Nation– formally adopted the above mandate and mission statement at an Annual General Membership Meeting on May 5-6, 2004.

Location: Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Timmins

Position Summary:

The CEO serves as the chief executive of Wawatay Communications Society and in partnership with the Board, is responsible for the success of the Wawatay Communications Society. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for creating and implementing a clear sense of direction for the Wawatay Communications Society and its related businesses by defining, communicating, and overseeing the Corporation’s mission, goals, operating principles, and strategic actions.

This position is the senior management position in Wawatay Communications Society, with responsibility for:

- The overall management of the business including its overall strategic direction, preparation of agendas and background information for Board meeting and Executive Committee meetings.
- Keeps the Board fully informed of the conditions of Wawatay Communications Society and on all important factors influencing it.
- The development of annual works plans and related capital and operating budgets.
- Development of operational policies and procedures.
- The day-to-day operations management, human resources recruitment and management and budget and financial oversight and monitoring.
- Overall planning, design and implementation of projects and programs within the mandate; and
- Communications and marketing for the purpose of business development

Governance, Strategy Development, Planning and Reporting

- Formulates and updates annual business plan and strategies, policies and procedures for Wawatay Communications Society and brings these to the Board for input, and decision as to ratification.
- Ensures strong strategic and annual planning processes and procedures are undertaken and effective budget and plans are prepared for Board approval.
- Seeks out and develops business opportunities and presents such opportunities to the Board for consideration and decision.
- Oversees fiscal activities, ensuring that all financial and non-financial reporting requirements are met on a timely and accurate basis, and
- Ensures that reports to the Board are always transparent and timely basis.

Community and Relationship Management

- Initiates, develops, and maintains effective strategic relationships and networks with key stakeholders including the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, government agencies, business owners, contractors, customers, potential customers, partners, suppliers, residents, and the business community in relation to their interests in the Corporation.
- Examines and recommends partnerships with private and public entities in support of projects that will assist the Corporation in fulfilling its mission and objectives; and
- Promotes and advocates the profile of the Wawatay Communications Society.

Operational Management

- Schedules Board meetings, prepares agendas, information and reports for consideration and decision by the Board, and ensures

the completion of minutes of all Board meetings.

- Ensures the operation of Wawatay Communications Society follows all appropriate legal, regulatory and internal policies as approved by the Board, and are not contrary to policies, bylaws, and relevant government legislation and regulation.
- Prepares an annual performance management plan for approval by the Board.
- Analyzes, prepares reports, presents information and recommendations, and ensures timely completion of all activities.
- Implements the decisions of the Board in an efficient and effective manner,
- Ensures the day-to-day operations of Wawatay Communications Society are effectively and efficiently coordinated, implemented, and conducted within the policy and procedure framework approved by the Board.
- Implements stringent project management processes to ensure the timely, cost effective and profitable development and completion of projects.
- Determines limitations of authority for employees of Wawatay Communications Society covering expenditures, contracts personnel actions, etc.; and
- Establishes policies and procedures for Board approval in relation to consultants and contractors being retained by Wawatay Communications Society and exercises appropriate controls to ensure their use is managed cost effectively.

Staff and Contractor Management and Leadership

- Builds and maintains a high-performance culture through effective performance management, communication and coaching of staff,
- Recruits appropriately skilled staff to all positions and establish appropriate remuneration levels and performance-based conditions for each employee.
- Establishes performance management plans with employee and undertakes performance reviews, recommends salary and benefit changes, promotions and dismissals as appropriate within the authority of the position; and
- Recruits and appoints with the approval of the Board, where necessary.

Financial Management

- Prepares and presents an annual budget to the Board for approval complete with all supporting background information and

documentation; and

- Establishes financial controls in relation to undertaking and monitoring the activities of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget and provides monthly (or more frequently, as necessary) reports to the Board on the performance of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget.

Job Knowledge:

The work requires the following knowledge, skill and/or abilities:

- Significant and proven leadership skills developed through at least five (5) years in a senior management role and experience related to media, communications and business.
- Substantial knowledge of business operations, asset management, marketing, finance, and business processes related to economic and business development activities.
- Proven ability to build effective relationships with external stakeholders and collaboration, inspire and motivate high performance and effectively resolve conflict.
- Knowledge and experience with the First Nations of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.
- Ability to speak and understand one of the languages of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Post Secondary MBA in Business Management, Commerce or Finance.
- 5 – 10 years of experience in Business Development and Senior Management.
- The ability to communicate in English and Ojibway, Cree or Oji-Cree is an asset.
- Ability to work with both Macintosh and Windows computer platforms.
- A valid Ontario driver’s license and cell phone.
- A combination of education and/or experience will be considered.

The Position will be Posted until Filled Start Date: ASAP

Applicants can send their resume, cover letter and contact information for references (in confidence) to:

Board Chair Nick Day nickday@sandylakefn.com

Board Vice Chair Vivian Waswa vivianw@wunnumin.ca

Note: Only applicants considered for an Interview will be contacted.

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