Thunder Bay hosts evacuees from Sandy Lake

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay International Airport served as a hybrid evacuation hub for the Sandy Lake evacuees who had to leave their homes and pets due to the Red Lake 12 forest fire.

"People are worried about their pets, a lot of them are concerned about their houses, the condition they are going to come back to," says Jennifer Kakegamic, an All My Relations prevention worker at the Sandy Lake Band Representative Program in Thunder Bay. "In Sandy, there's a new cultural centre that's being built, there's new buildings, and that's where all of our worries are because it's beautiful and we're scared that it's just going to go away. I would really like for some rain, no lightning, no thunder, we need a lot of rain and I just hope the wind shifts and I pray for everyone's safety."

Kakegamic says they have been helping the evacuees as they arrive at the Thunder Bay International Airport and leave for accommodations at locations across Ontario.

"I believe we had nine (Canadian Forces) Hercules planes yesterday and I think two already today," Kakegamic says on June 9. "And we had a bunch of the smaller planes as well."

The Red Lake 12 forest fire, which started on May 28 near the Deer Lake airport and has since led to the evacuation of Deer Lake and Sandy Lake, was listed at 175,962 hectares in size and not under control on June 14. Information provided by Sarah



A group of Sandy Lake evacuees arrive at the Thunder Bay International Airport on June 9 due to the Red Lake 12 forest fire near their community.

Allen, provincial information officer at the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre, states that FireRanger crews have consolidated a fire break around the Deer Lake community and, assisted by heavy equipment, have also established a fire break around the west

side of the Sandy Lake community as of June 14.

Isabel Fiddler, a Sandy Lake evacuee, savs the situation was like chaos all over during her stopover at the Thunder Bay International Airport on June 9.

"Two days ago it was very bad,"

Fiddler says. "We couldn't even stay on the west side of the reserve where we live, we had to get out of our houses and go to the east side of the reserve."

Valentino Noon, a Sandy Lake evacuee, says it was smoky everywhere in the community.

"I could barely breathe," Noon says on June 9. "It feels a lot more better being out here."

Noon says they could see the forest fire at night in Sandy Lake.

"It was really close by," Noon says.

"It was really bright over there." Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa

says he was in Sandy Lake on June 12.

"That was a big fire, they're so lucky, it could have gotten worse because one of those fires moved over 35 kilometres overnight," Mamakwa says on June 13. "The wind changed when it was eight kilometres away from the community."

Mamakwa says they need bigger runways in the fly-in communities across Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.

"We need to have no more gravel runways," Mamakwa says. "And I think the infrastructure for airports, we need to improve them so we can move the evacuees really fast. I'm just happy that they're safe. It's a complex issue when you evacuate because people have to look at their medications, their appointments, and there are social issues that happen so it's lots of work to be able to try and coordinate all the people. I was able to spend some time with the leadership, the chief and council, just to kind of listen and be there for them to be able to understand what is happening and tell others in Ontario what happens when they're in evacuation."

As of June 14, the www.ontario.ca/ page/forest-fires webpage states that there were 24 active wildland fires in the Northwest Region in various stages of control, including seven not under control, two being held, five under control and 10 being observed.

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Arts & Entertainment





Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery held a Four Horses + THIS, &, CASSANDRA contemporary dance performance on May 29 at Confederation College's Dibaajimogamig Lecture Theatre.

Four Horses dance performance held at Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery held a Four Horses + THIS, &, CASSANDRA contemporary dance performance on May 29 at Confederation College's Dibaajimogamig Lecture Theatre as part of its Edward Poitras: Big Iron Sky exhibition.

"This is an exciting event—this is something bold and ambitious for the gallery, working with acclaimed artist Edward Poitras and acclaimed dance artist Robin Poitras and two national dance companies, New Dance Horizons in Regina and The School of Contemporary Dancers in Winnipeg," says Penelope Smart, curator at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

"We worked with these artists and organizations to bring this event, and especially the dancers, including professional dancer Krista Solheim and nine student dancers, to Thunder Bay."

Smart says Edward created the Big Iron Sky installation in 1983. Part of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery's permanent collection, it calls into consciousness the arrival of horses on the prairies and Plains Cree legends foretelling forces of change.

"This work, and you'll see images of it tonight, comprises four ornamented horse skulls levitating on wooden beams," Smart says. "A fascinating (aspect) about this huge art installation by Edward Poitras that's up in the gallery right

now is that it originated alongside or accompanied by a dance work, known as the Horse Dance. When we were talking to Edward about this (exhibition), we got really excited about the idea of bringing dance back together with Big Iron Sky and we are so honoured and excited to have incorporated some of the original choreography in the gallery space with this work. Tonight, this is the first time that the Big Iron Sky (installation) and the Horse Dance ... have been reunited in time and space in more than 40 years and this is a really beautiful thing for us all to witness along with Edward Poitras and Robin Poitras here with us tonight."

Edward, from George Gordon

First Nation in Saskatchewan, says the Four Horses + THIS, &, CASSANDRA contemporary dance performance was very abstract.

"The newer works are very abstract," Edward says. "In the initial pieces, horse dances that we did, it was more ritualistic with an intention. The intention here is more visual entertainment than anything."

Robin says the Four Horses + THIS, &, CASSANDRA contemporary dance performance was an extraordinary occasion.

"We've been working together for over 40 years and our collaboration started with Big Iron Sky in a studio that we shared and we've been developing this work with many different dancers over the last

40 years," Robin says. "And to be able to bring the work that stimulated the (Horse Dance), that inspired it from the beginning to be part of this moment was really special."

Edward says his family was involved with horses, noting that his grandfather was a cowboy and his father was very interested in horses.

"Because of my family, I was interested in horses but at the same time I was interested in living in the city," Edward says. "I was trying to maintain that connection to horses, but I was also interested in these horse visions, Black Elk's vision and also other visionary works and even Revelations. I saw a similarity with the four horses in Black Elk's vision and the four horses in (the Book of)

Revelation and I was curious about that, what the links were."

Edward says he travelled across the country with the Big Iron Sky installation in the 1980s.

"I had these horse skulls that I had found on the reserve and I started working with them and the idea of creating this piece, which looks like an airship, like a jet, with these horses on it," Edward says. "The piece itself became a vehicle, it took me across the country to different venues and exhibitions and then finally brought me here and will probably take me to a few more places in the next few years."

The Edward Poitras: Big Iron Sky exhibition was scheduled from April 19-June 15 at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

Thank You, Airlines!

Your fast, courteous delivery of Wawatay News to our northern communities is appreciated.













Culture

NAN holds Land-Based Learning gathering

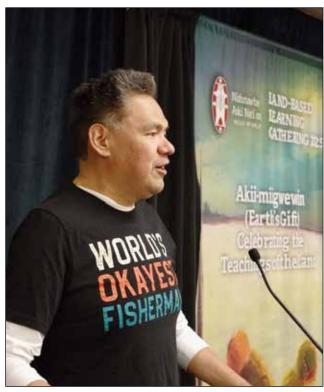
Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Land-Based Learning Gathering 2025 focused on Akii-miigwewin: Celebrating the Teachings of the Land on May 27-28 at the Best Western Plus NorWester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

Bay.
"I am originally from a small village on the Albany River called Marten Falls, and it's a home to me that was a home during the summertime," says Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum in her opening comments at the gathering. "My parents were fur harvesters and in the wintertime, this was before I attended school, I would go and spend the winter with them and it was a good life. It was a life that required a lot of hard work and effort for us to survive out there, but for me, I didn't define it as hard work because it was a life that was given to us and every person in the family had to contribute to sustain us, including myself. Even at the age of two I already had things I had to do in order to sustain my family."

Achneepineskum says she had been taught at a very young age about the importance of connecting with and respecting the land and all of the living things.

"Because those all



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Bobby Narcisse speaks about importance of involving Elders and knowledge keepers within the education curriculums during Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Land-Based Learning Gathering 2025, held May 27-28 at the Best Western Plus NorWester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

contributed to sustaining life for us, and including that connection to spirituality those were the very strong foundations that my parents instilled in me and I still remember their words and their actions," Achneepineskum says. "We were taught that we were never to take any life for no reason at all unless we were going to use it, and when I say that I'm talking about killing a tree, a branch, a bird, a fish. And we were taught at a very young age that there are certain animals, when they are going through their cycle of life, that we are not to harvest them, that we have to respect that continuation of life and that we must respect that cycle."

Achneepineskum says it is so important to maintain respect for what Gitchi Manitou has given First Nations people to live on the Earth.

"It's so important that we learn that in modern day because with everything that is happening in our life, whether it's resource extraction and all these other things, it also helps us to live and to adapt to those changes but keeping in mind that we have to be land protectors as well and that we have to revitalize our language and our ways because that's what's going to save us," Achneepineskum says. "It's so important that we share that with our younger generations."

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse also highlighted the importance of the land in his opening comments at the gathering.

"I'd just like to echo Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum's comments as well, that the land is our classroom, the land is a formidable teacher, it can show you many things about yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses, and it also gives you opportunities to really grow, it gives you life lessons, it rewards you with beautiful vistas and sunrises," Narcisse savs. "Sometimes it can punish you with various storms and all those different areas and hardship on the land — it's quite the teacher, it really makes you see inside yourself in terms of who you are and what your strengths, what your weaknesses are and what rooms of improvement that you can have out there."

Narcisse says he enjoys going out on the land, noting that he doesn't hunt but does lots of fishing.

"I've got the World's Okayest Fisherman t-shirt on, but that's alright because like I said, the land is a great teacher and it really enables all of us to get out there," Narcisse says.

Narcisse says there is a lot of great work happening throughout the communities across Nishnawbe Aski Nation with respect to land-based education involving land-based curriculum.

"It's a lifelong learning process as well, and we wouldn't do this without the knowledge of our Elders, our knowledge keepers," Narcisse says. "It's really important to involve our knowledge keepers within our curriculums as we move ahead, so I know we come from a vast array of different backgrounds and we have a lot of knowledge

here in this room. I'm very interested in looking forward to all of the discussions that's going to be happening in the next couple of days because we really want to harness your knowledge as well, we really want to encourage you to speak out and share some of your experiences as well and what you see would be very beneficial perhaps to other communities. It's basically an opportunity to really share best practices across our communities."

Narcisse says many of the communities across Nishnawbe Aski Nation are so diverse.

"We have to celebrate that diversity in terms of our language, our way of life, the beautiful land that we all inhabit and the fact of the matter that that land needs to be protected and really encouraged and integrated into our educational systems," Narcisse says.

Narcisse says he has also heard some great stories about Adopt a Hunter or Adopt a Child to go out on the Land programs in the communities.

"I think it's a very important initiative as well because many of our families are very vulnerable and some of our children are struggling," Narcisse says. "I think by harnessing this curriculum for land-based education, it would really change a lot of lives and really continue on with building that resiliency in many of our children, youth and families."



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WAWATAY NEWS

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Commentary

And It Burns, Burns, Burns That Ring Of Fire



The government of Ontario is pushing through Bill 5 which aims to designate the Ring of Fire as a socalled "special economic zone". This bill is intended to reduce regulatory processes across major infrastructure, mining, and resource projects. The bill affects several key Acts, including: Ontario Heritage Act, Ontario Energy Board Act, Environmental Assessment Act, Mining Act, Environmental Protection Act, Electricity Act, Endangered Species Act and Rebuilding Ontario Place Act. The Ring of Fire is located in northern Ontario just west of the James Bay lowlands and my home community of Attawapiskat. The proposed development that is being pushed in this region is basically the head waters of the Attawapiskat River which would directly affect all the water flowing out to James Bay.

According to the Chiefs of Ontario, 'Bill 5 significantly weakens environmental protections, reduces oversight of mining and development projects, and limits opportunities for First Nations consultation and consent.', First Nation leaders are protesting this development and they are being led by political organizations including Chiefs of Ontario, NishnawbeAski Nation and Anishinabek Nation. At Queens Park, Sol Mamakwa of the New Democratic Party has been leading opposition to the bill and supported by the Liberal Party.

The rise of global warming and our changing global environment is an example of what happens with unregulated and unrestricted corporate growth. Just look at the sky this summer. Recently, I looked up at the afternoon sun to see a red glowing ball in the sky in an orange haze of light. Forest fire smoke is obscuring the sky with unhealthy amounts of particles from the ash of an estimated 1.7 million acres of forest that are currently burning in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This is a direct result of global warming mostly brought about by our world's use of fossil fuels. The atmospheric pollution is changing our world to make it hotter which goes on to dry up our forests, make our summers hotter, making warmer weather last longer and in general creating the right conditions to set our Canadian forests on

fire. Of course the other results of global warming and climate change give us huge storms and floods globally.

In a report by The Guardian in 2017, they highlighted a report that estimated that just 100 major global companies had been responsible for an estimated 70% of greenhouse gas emissions from 1988 to 2017. In 2024, Oxfam reported that 'Fifty of the world's richest billionaires on average produce more carbon through their investments, private jets and yachts in just over an hour and a half than the average person does in their entire lifetime'. It's clear to see that all of us may be responsible to a degree for global warming but it is the activities of the most powerful and influential companies, corporations and investors who drive the causes of our global warming crisis.

These are the main reasons why our Indigenous leaders are fighting against government programs like Bill 5. Unrestricted and unregulated or poorly controlled or poorly regulated corporations, especially in resource development has a track record of environmental devastation. That devastation is mostly left for those who live on the land to deal with. When the companies finish their work and have made their money, it is the people, especially the local First Nations who are left to deal with the after effects and contamination.

My home community of Attawapiskat has already dealt with the development of the DeBeers diamond mine just west of the community in what was once pristine wilderness. In a short space of time from 2008 to 2019, the company carved out a space in the James Bay mushkeg, dug past the swamp and deep into the rock. After all that work and effort, the company left a deep scar on the land and contributed to negative affects on the general environment of the area.

In the long run of human history, it will be all of us who will deal with the after effects of global warming if we continue to not properly deal with unrestricted and uncontrolled exploitation of our natural resources and disrespect of Mother Earth. How many poisoned rivers, burning forests and toxic air will it take for us to realize that we need to take better care of our world, the land, the water, the air and the creatures who live there? Are we to trust government and corporations to do the right thing in the wake of a Bill 5? I don't think so.

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Sportswriter recipient of the 2025 Debwewin Citation



submitted photo

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige is pleased to announce that this year's Debwewin Citation recipient for Excellence in Journalism is Sam Laskaris. Laskaris began his writing career in 1980 during his first year at Bowmanville High School. For five years, he covered the sports team and other school happenings for his hometown newspaper. He went on to study journalism at Ryerson University, now named Toronto Metropolitan University, and graduated in 1988. He has been a freelance journalist ever since.

The Risk Of Wildfire Remains High



Cather In Northern
Ontario often moves
from west to east.
Temperatures both hot and cool
this rule last month.

The first week of May was warm enough to initiate the growing season for native vegetation, especially in the western part of the region next to the border with Manitoba.

The second week featured a heat wave, most pronounced in a broad band from Lake of the Woods to Fort Severn next to Hudson Bay. The warmest temperatures in May were recorded during this week. Fort Francis recorded 34.1° C on 11 of May. Somewhat unusual was the extension of this warmth all the way north to Hudson Bay then James Bay. Peawanuck had a high maximum temperature of 29° C and Attawapiskat farther to the east 31° C. The highest temperature, 34.4° C, in the province of Ontario was recorded in Neskantaga First Nation (also known as Lansdowne House).

An air mass of high pressure over this part of the region featured seasonally warm temperatures and set many high temperature daily records (examples include Red Lake (32.3° C) and Sandy Lake (30°

I was surprised how confined temperatures of 30° C were to the far west of the region. The hottest temperatures recorded in Thunder Bay and the northeast were around 28 or 29° C.

Hopefully gardeners postponed spring planting of flowers and vegetables this year. The frost-free season did not begin till middle of June in many locations. Frost was recorded in Thunder Bay on June 1st () and then again on June 14 (-0.2° C). A light frost, such as on June 14, may have not done major damage most garden vegetables. On the same morning, it was -1.4° C in Timmins, which may have done some damage.

Precipitation for May

Precipitation for the month varied considerably across Northern Ontario. The Northwest experienced significantly drier-than-normal conditions. Kenora recorded a mere 9% of its normal May total. Other parts of the north and the Far North were also drier than normal. In the northeast, precipitation totals were relatively close to normal.

Wildfire update

Volatile wildfire conditions and smoke have prompted the evacuation of several First Nations in the area. As of mid-June:

- Kenora 20: evacuation of 800 people from Wabaseemoong First Nation (100 kilometres northwest of Kenora), 36,043 hectares has burned and the fire is "being held".
- Red Lake 12: evacuations of more than 2000 people from Deer Lake and Sandy Lake, 175,962 hectares has burned and the fire is "not under control".
- Nipigon 5: evacuation of many from Webequie First Nation (525 km north of Thunder Bay), the wildfire measures more than 8,500 bectares
- 21 wildland fires remain active in the Northwest region, 7 were out of control as of midlune
- several fires are burning in northeastern Ontario, being held or observed.

On June 16 the wildfire hazard is mainly "high" across the southern portion of northwestern Ontario, and high to extreme across the northern half according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry fire map. The link to the "interactive fire map" can be found at https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-fires. The Ministry of Natural Resources

and Forestry (MNRF) is a government ministry in Ontario responsible for wildfire management.

Wildfire smoke began to be experienced in the region in early May. The source region for the smoke has changed from Alberta. Then smoke in the Thunder Bay area was from Minnesota followed by fires in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

"As of June 15, 2025, there were 202 active wildfires burning in Canada, with 109 of these considered to be "out of control," according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. "The wildfires had burned four million hectares, killed two, forced over 30,000 people to evacuate, and destroyed at least 191 structures. The area burned is now the second-largest on record for this time of year."

The record fire season for all of Canada was 2023. More than 17 million hectares burned which is 5% of the forested land of Canada.

Weather outlook

Both Environment Canada and the American Weather Service are predicting that temperatures will be warmer than normal until mid-July. Long range prediction for precipitation is not very reliable in the summer season. Rainfall totals typically range from about 70 – 100 mm in summer months.

CONTACT US

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Culture

Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre's Annual Two-Spirit Pride Powwow

















Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
The Walking Bear drum group performed at the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre's Annual
Two-Spirit Pride Powwow on June 7 in Thunder Bay. Hoop dancers, women and men traditional dancers,
jingle dress dancers and fancy shawl dancers all danced their styles. A candy dance was also held for
the young participants.

Sports

Underground Gym's Keenan Flett boxes in Quebec tournament

Rick Garrick

Wawatay News

The Underground Gym's Keenan Flett, a boxer from Sandy Lake, enjoyed participating in the Quebec Open boxing tournament in Quebec City where he picked up a silver medal.

"The second match I got a fight and I got silver," Flett says. "I got the third round stoppage but in the finals I lost, so that's when I got silver. It felt amazing, it was my first boxing tournament."

Flett says one of his friends recommended him to join the Underground Gym.

"I didn't really like it at first but then when the years went by I came back and I started to love it a lot," Flett says. "It helps me become stronger, it builds self-esteem and I just like being with people."

Flett says the boxing tournament was an opportunity to show his work and dedication in the ring.

"I just went in the ring and I just boxed," Flett says about the boxing match he won. "I just gave it everything I got, and I did that and I made the guy stumble. I got standing eight counts and I felt so amazing in the ring."

Flett says he works out at the Underground Gym on every day he can.

"If there's an opportunity to hang out with Peter (Panetta), I would always take it," Flett says. "Always respect your opponents, training partners and your coach."

Brooklyn Fox, a boxer from Mishkeegogamang who coached Flett at the boxing tournament, says it was a cool experience.

"It makes me want to go to the next Quebec Open next year," Fox says, noting that she gave Flett advice on what to do during his matches at the tournament. "I was reading the other boxer and gathering what I could to tell him what to do. It was a cool experience, I was happy for him, I was proud that he won that match, especially the third round stoppage."

Fox says she travelled with the Underground Gym on their trip to Mishkeegogamang.

"I've coached there twice," Fox says. "It's nice coaching my relatives, getting to know them."

Fox says she encouraged them to just try out boxing and if they liked it to keep on doing it

"Your confidence will grow over time and your self-esteem," Fox says

Fox says she got involved with the Underground Gym after her mother showed her a video of one of her friends doing pad work.

"That really encouraged me to try it out and ever since I've really liked it," Fox says. "I've been doing boxing on and off for about two or three years."

Peter Panetta, who runs the Underground Gym, says the Quebec Open boxing tournament turned out exceptionally



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Sandy Lake's Keenan Flett, pictured at the Underground Gym in Thunder Bay, recently won a silver medal at the Quebec Open boxing tournament in Quebec City.

"Keenan managed to get a silver medal, which was quite an accomplishment because it's international, this tournament," Panetta says. "There's fighters from everywhere, all over Canada, the United States. To compete at that level, for a beginner, is quite impressive."

Panetta says they have been

invited to Aroland at the end of June to introduce them to box-

"And with Aroland and some of the others like Ogoki (Marten Falls) and Mishkeegogamang, there's the prospect of setting up something permanent," Panetta says.

Panetta says there is a disci-

pline that is involved with boxing.

"It builds up confidence and self-esteem," Panetta says. "And then they have opportunities to compete against someone and they get to travel. We just came from Quebec, they've gone to the States, they've gone to Toronto, they've gone to Winnipeg."

Panetta says there is also a lot of technique involved in boxing.

"Like these subtle little moves so that you don't get hit and waiting for them to come in for counterpunches," Panetta says. "It's very technical, boxing"



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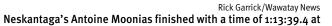
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New Beginnings



Sports







Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Naicatchewenin's Lenora Smith finished with a time of 1:34:36.4.



Neskantaga's Angela Wapoose and Kasabonika's Chris Mamageesic finished with times of 1:56:58.4 and 1:47:44.3.

Sandy Lake runners join fire fighters in 10-mile race

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

A group of 15 Sandy Lake runners enjoyed participating with hundreds of other runners in the 89th Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race on May 19 in Thunder Bay.

the 89th Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race.

"There's four of them running the 10 and two relay (teams)," says Ralph Bekintis, principal at Thomas Fiddler Memorial High School in Sandy Lake. "We're trying to keep them in shape — it's a good exercise."

Bekintis, who finished with a time of 2:06:06.9, says two of his granddaughters also participated in the 89th Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race. The Sandy Lake First Nation Running Club team finished with a time of 1:43:35.0 and the Thomas Fiddler Memorial team finished with a time of 1:47:08.5.

"Our family is into running," Bekintis says. "We try to always take about two teams with us, it gets very expensive now to come down but this year we budgeted."

Bekintis says some of the runners from previous years have now moved on to play

"They're really doing well ere," Bekintis says. "They there," Bekintis says. have a lot of stamina."

Angelo Kakegamic, one of the runners from Sandy Lake who finished with a time of 1:42:56.1, says this was his third time at the Fire Fighters Ten

Mile Road Race.

"It's been good," Kakegamic says. "The first five miles was easy, but I started feeling it on the last four miles."

Cullen Goodman, one of the runners from Sandy Lake who finished with a time of 1:29:32.9, says this was his first time at the Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race.

"It was great," Goodman says. "I passed (Bekintis) at the five-mile mark."

Lenora Smith, a runner from Naicatchewenin who finished with a time of 1:34:36.4, says this was her second time at the Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road

"It was good weather, the vibes were good and it was great," Smith says. "I actually did a faster pace this time, which was good. I'm actually doing a full marathon in October so this is a nice little warmup."

Smith says she also ran a half marathon last fall in Toronto.

"I feel good after running, I feel like I've definitely run off everything I'm thinking about and it's just good, it's a good

Mamageesic, runner from Kasabonika Lake who finished with a time of 1:47:44.3, says he enjoyed the Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road

"It was challenging but in the end I finished it," Mamageesic says, noting that he began training in February for the Toronto Marathon, which was held on May 4. "I just got back from that so I just entered into this one."

Mamageesic says there were about 3,000 runners in his grouping at the Toronto Marathon.

"The Toronto one was the same as this, it wasn't as cold though, it was nice and warm," Mamageesic says. "But after a while your body adjusts to the temperature and just gets used to it. (The running) just keeps me motivated, it keeps me on track, it's part of healing - it builds some self confidence, motivation. I just run for myself and I love doing it, I like the challenge of it."

Angela Wapoose, a runner from Neskantaga who finished with a time of 1:56:58.4, says she also enjoyed the Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race.

"The run was great," Wapoose says. "I enjoy running, I've been doing this for a couple of years now.'

Wapoose says she started running after losing three brothers.

"I had to find a way to make myself feel better, so running made me feel better," Wapoose says, noting that she feels like she is letting go of her emotions during her runs. "At the end it really feels fantastic and I feel good."

Wapoose says she also ran in the Toronto Marathon on May

"I finished it and I felt great," Wapoose says. "So I'm here now and it feels good."

Antoine Moonias, a runner

from Neskantaga who finished hobby and as a testament to test with a time of 1:13:39.4, says his run was hard at the Fire Moonias says he usually runs

"I just focused on finishing and doing it for my story, not for a placement," Moonias says, noting that he began running to get his anger out. "But now it's turned into something that I

just do every now and then as a

Fighters Ten Mile Road Race.

my ability in how far I can go."

for about five miles once a

"It definitely helps to build my resilience," Moonias says. "I did it for God."

Moonias's father Ryan Moonias and grandfather William Moonias were proud

of him for completing the Fire Fighters Ten Mile Road Race.

"I'm very proud of him," Ryan says. "Having family here to support him in the end is what it's all about."

"This is my grandson here and I'm very proud of him," William says.

Ogoki Forest

2025 Independent Forest Audit



Forest management activities conducted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agoke Development Limited Partnership are being audited. If you have any comments on forest management activities between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2025, please submit your concerns or praise before August 1, 2025 via email (ifa@forestcheck.ca) or by phone 807-220-2638



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Education

Oshki holds 2025 graduation ceremony



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg's Chalynne Courchene was recognized with one of two Goyce Kakegamic Bursary awards.

Rick Garrick Wawatav News

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute celebrated the graduation of 113 graduates on June 13 at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium.

"This was our largest graduation ever, we came to a new venue and it was so spectacular and so many people came," says Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Wenjack. "We are so proud of our students and I hope we just keep growing for each grad for each year. It was nice seeing all the families enjoying themselves — it was all about our grads

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg's Chalynne Courchene was recognized with one of two Goyce Kakegamic Bursary awards during the graduation ceremony.

"(Goyce) was a Keewaywin band member and he was an educator, an artist, a teacher and a politician and a leader in forwarding education initiatives in the NAN (Nishnawbe Aski Nation) territory," says Anna Fern Kakegamic, Goyce's daughter. "Once my dad had an idea in his head, he never let it go, he wanted to see it to fruition for his people. When we grew up in (our) home, education wasn't an option, it was what we were going to do."

Anna Fern says Goyce was impacted by a quote that he saw written on the wall in Wapekeka.

"He said, 'Without education is like a bird with no wings," Anna Fern says. "Today, the reality for the Oshki graduates is



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa delivers his keynote address during Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute's graduation ceremony.

they have earned a set of wings, and I just want to acknowledge their accomplishments, their hard work."

Courchene, a Business program graduate, says it felt unreal and shocking to be recognized with one of the two Goyce Kakegamic bursary awards.

"It feels so good that my hard work was recognized because I worked very hard," Courchene says. "Oshki did an amazing job of accommodating me because I myself have struggles learning, just in general, but Oshki went out of their way to make sure I was successful."

Courchene says the majority of her studies were done online.

"So I was able to match up my son's schooling with my schooling and then just living life together," Courchene says.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's Melissa Morris, a Basic Radiological Technician (BRT) program graduate, says the graduation ceremony was

"There was a lot of people and it was so crowded," Morris says. "Our program was done in four phases, and Phase 4 was when we had to come out for two weeks. It was fun meeting the other BRTs here that are in the program from other communities.

Morris looks forward to doing more X-rays back home now that she has graduated.

"I like helping people get their proper diagnoses," Morris

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler says he was extremely proud of all the Oshki-Wenjack

"I know they worked so hard to finish their programs and I'm sure they had some rough moments and some difficult days but they persevered and it was so great to see them get their (graduation) papers today," Fiddler says. "It was pretty moving to see the Kakegamic family honour their dad's legacy by creating these (Goyce Kakegamic) Bursaries and giving them to students that I am sure are so well appreciated."

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa says it was amazing to see the graduates from across NAN territory as well as other communities.

"Oshki-Wenjack become very multicultural it's all people from different backgrounds," Mamakwa says. "It just shows who we are and where we come from, that we are very accepting. It's important that we begin to see our people graduating with different diplomas, and I acknowledge the people that support the people in education."

Mamakwa says he spoke to the students about not forgetting who they are and where they come from during his keynote address at the graduation ceremony.

"And I spoke about the language, the identity, that is also important and that's all part of the education that we need to do," Mamakwa says.



Education

JP Gladu recognized with honorary degree

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Neyaashi Bingwi Anishinaabek's JP Gladu was recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Commerce degree at Lakehead University's convocation ceremony on May 29 in Thunder Bay.

"It's a huge honour, especially to be recognized by your hometown university for the work that one does in their chosen field, which for me has been the Indigenous economy," says Gladu, founder and principal at Mokwateh and former president and CEO at the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. "So having a fantastic prestigious university like LU to recognize the importance of this work and the history of where we're going as a community, as a nation with the Indigenous people, it's a beautiful recognition.

Gladu says his advice for the graduates is that experience is the best teacher.

"Experience life, push your

boundaries a little bit, don't get too comfortable, obviously work hard," Gladu says. "Find your passion and live it — when you find your passion, work doesn't feel like work, it just feels like a life journey when you've got that purpose in life. I've been so lucky to have that benefit of living that every day."

Gladu says he has done work with Indigenous communities across the country and around the world.

"I actually do a lot of work across the globe with Indigenous communities in bridging the relationships with communities, entrepreneurs," Gladu says. "It's aptly said, the economic horse pulls the social cart and empowering Indigenous nations through economy has just been what I've been so passionate (about) and spent my whole career working on, sitting on the boards of major companies as well as communities, bridging those economies and improving the lives of Indigenous nations, countless speeches every year, engagements with communities and corporations to make sure we're working together in a more functional way. I also have a consulting firm (Mokwateh) of some decent size across the country, continuing to have that impact day in, day out is my

Gladu says he is the second resident to move back to his community, which is being reestablished since they received the land back in 2010.

"Norval Morrisseau is from our community, we've got a lot of great economic activity and it's a wonderful place to be back in the region after being away from home for over 30 years," Gladu says.

Gladu says education is incredibly important, whether it's at the college level, the university level, masters and doctoral degrees, continual continual learning experience.

"The late Murray Sinclair has been quoted, it's education that got us into this mess with Indigenous people, it's edu-



Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek's JP Gladu was recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Commerce degree at Lakehead University's convocation ceremony on May 29.

cation that's going to get us out," Gladu says. "To see these young people with their whole life ahead of them, it was me 30 something years ago and I've been very grateful and I'll be able to take my learnings and my experience back home to my

community, and there's nothing

Bingwi Nevaashi Anishinaabek Chief Paul Gladu says he is very proud to see his son being recognized with an Honorary degree.

"Like any proud parents,

we're very happy and proud of him of all his achievements he's made throughout his life," Paul says. "It gives me a good feeling and happy feeling to see my son receive awards like this."

Paul says his son has had his house built in the community, which is located north of Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek along Hwy. 11.

"He's well established now and he's looking to share his experience and helping other people in the community," Paul

Gladu was one of three First Nations people who were recognized with Honorary degrees at the Lakehead University convocation ceremonies: North Caribou Lake's Margaret Kenequanash was recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree on May 29, and Redcloud Studios CEO Jennifer Podemski, an award-winning film and television producer. creator and actor, received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree on May 30.

Margaret Kenequanash honoured with Doctor of Humane Letters degree

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

North Caribou Lake's Margaret Kenequanash was honoured to be recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at Lakehead University's convocation ceremony on May 29 in Thunder Bay.

"I'm honoured privileged to receive the recognition and will accept the Honorary degree on behalf of myself and my people," says Kenequanash, ČEO at Wataynikaneyap Power. "I need to include the people because of the work we have done in the area in bringing reliable energy into the north."

Kenequanash says they completed about 1,800 kilometres of power lines and 22 substations and connected 15 First Nations across Nishnawbe Aski Nation through Wataynikaneyap Power. She was the first female chief of her community and was also the executive director at the Shibogama First Nations Council, where she worked for about 14 years.

"I really acknowledge Shibogama leadership and the communities and thank them for the opportunities," Kenequanash says. "I consider the mentorship and the training that they gave me all these years to learn more about the teachings and the people in the area and to work with them on their needs — I miss them a lot sometimes because I really loved working for the communities."

Kenequanash says the best part of her time at Shibogama was working with the Elders.

"I worked with 22 Elders, they ingrained a lot of teachings and instilled a lot of knowledge in me," Kenequanash says. "As well, I worked with the leadership, who were always there to guide and support me in the mandates that I received from them, and the people themselves, I always feel welcome in all of the communities of Shibogama, and it was a great working environment to be in."

Kenequanash says she wanted to acknowledge the Creator and the homelands of Treaty 9, Treaty #3 and Treaty 5 and adhesions during her address at the convocation ceremony.

"Thank you for honouring me today, and I accept this recognition with my people," Kenequanash says. "My parents set benchmarks for me and my siblings, they taught us that we must work hard to realize our goals and achieve our gifts and learn about patience, tolerance and balance. This gift and privilege presented will be a stepping stone to pursue my dream.

Kenequanash congratulated the graduates for their success during her address.

"As you accept your degrees in education and health and behavioural sciences, you have accomplished a goal through perseverance, dedication and commitment," Kenequanash says. "To become a professional expert in education and health is a huge achievement, and greatly needed. There are many challenges to recruit and retain professionals in our area in many sectors, therefore creating an obstacle to build capacity and develop a strong northern workforce.'

Kenequanash says the Elders teach that education is a lifelong



North Caribou Lake's Margaret Kenequanash delivers her address to the convocation after being recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at Lakehead University's convocation ceremony on May 29.

experience. "As you continue in your lifelong journey, I want to encourage you to inform yourselves to understand and learn about our people," Kenequanash says. "We Indigenous people have suffered many forms of abuse, mentally, physically and spiritually, from colonizing governments and external agencies. The hurt and trauma are multi-generational. Our experiences broke our communities and the kinship structure as we understood it.

We are slowly crawling out of that hole."

Kenequanash says Indigenous learning is integral to any work they are doing.

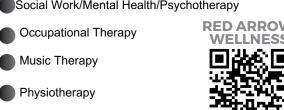
"Learning of these experiences is key to understanding and taking action to make a difference and influence change," Kenequanash says. "How we conduct ourselves today, all of us, will tell the story of our commitments to bring healing, truth and reconciliation."

Kenequanash was one of

three First Nations people who were recognized with Honorary degrees at the Lakehead University convocation ceremonies: JP Gladu, from Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, received an Honorary Doctor of Commerce degree on May 29, and Redcloud Studios CEO Jennifer Podemski, an award-winning film and television producer, creator and actor, received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree on May 30.





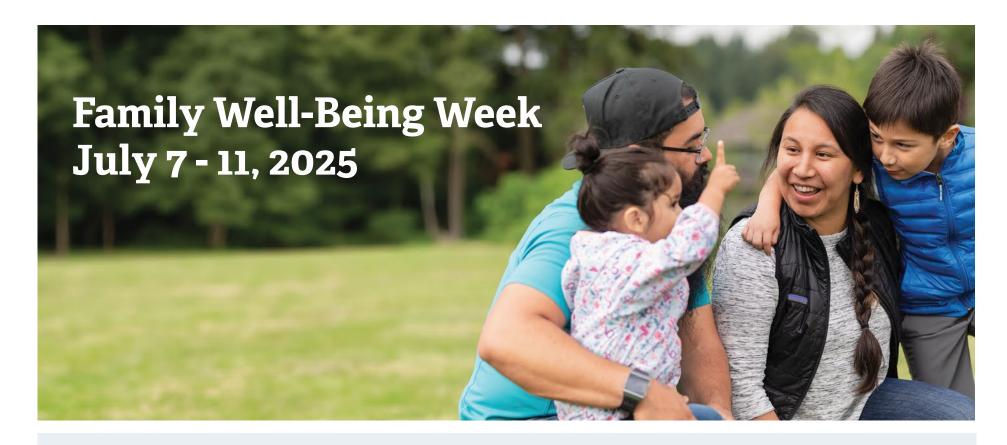


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We proclaim July 7-11, 2025 Family Well-Being Week to honour families, celebrate all people and creation. Celebrating family is one way we can come together to strengthen family bonds and build healthy relationships creating harmony and healing to build a better future.

A Message From Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse

I am honoured and proud to recognize Family Well-Being Week and to celebrate the strength, resilience, and spirit of the families across Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

The Family Well-Being Program is grounded in our commitment to creating safe, healthy, and supported families in every NAN community. This program provides culturally based supports that promote healing, prevent violence, and strengthen family and community connections.

Our Family Well-Being workers are on the front lines every day, walking with families through times of crisis, helping to restore balance, and building programs that reflect the values, traditions, and strengths of our Nations.

During this important week, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the dedicated staff and community partners who lead this work with compassion and determination. Your efforts are making a difference in the lives of our children, families, and future generations.

Please know that we see you, we stand with you, and we remain committed to ensuring that every family in NAN has access to the supports they need to thrive.

In unity and strength,

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse





Honouring Family Well-Being Week

The Social Services Department honours Family Well-Being Week as a time to reflect, reconnect, and recognize the healing power of family.

In our families, through laughter, story, and care, we find strength and belonging. We honour not only those we are born to, but also those who walk with us through love, grief, growth, and healing.

This week reminds us that wellness begins in relationships, with ourselves, with each other, and with the land. We lift up the caregivers, knowledge keepers, and children who guide our journey forward.

May this be a time of gentle reflection, where we remember the importance of family in all its forms and the sacred responsibility we carry to care for one another.

With gratitude,

Robin Quachegan

Director of Social Services Support and Implementation RQUACHEGAN@NAN.CA



Summertime brings another year celebrating Family Well-Being Week to honour families, all people and creation across NAN territory. When we gather, we connect with one another, share stories, strengthen family bonds, build friendships, good fellowship, visit with family and friends and create new memories.

We proclaim July 7-11th, 2025 Family Well-Being Week honouring families, communities and creation. Celebrating family is one way we can come together to pass on our traditions from our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, build healthy relationships, connect with the land and our ancestors, create a sense of belonging, harmony and show compassion towards others on their healing journey creating safe and healthy communities.

NAN acknowledges and commends the FWB Community Coordinators for their dedication, passion, endless hours of ongoing support and resources they provide to families. Coordinator's play a vital role in supporting wellbeing approaches, bringing people together and working towards healthy communities.

Contact your local Family Well-Being Program Coordinator to find out about programs and activities during Family Well-Being Week.

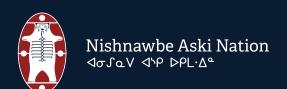
May the Creator and God continue to watch over our families and communities.

Miigwech & God Bless

Sheila Marcinyshyn

Family Well-Being Program Manager





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Education

Siigwan 2025 Education Directors Forum

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Siigwan 2025 Education Directors Forum, held May 21-22 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay, featured a range of presentations including Flying Post's Randi Ray on how her community uses economic development revenue for education.

"Our chief and council made an intentional decision to say, we're going to put the money in from ecdey, from all of the joint ventures we're creating, the money we're generating on mining or any of that side, and we're going to dump it into post-secondary education," Ray says during her May 21 presentation. "And we've been doing that for 20-25 years, so that was our strategic goal."

Ray also highlighted the importance of understanding the best way to support students through the education system.

"We need to understand from our youth, we need to understand from our education directors, from our families the best way to support our youth and children through the education system and really make sure we're getting to some of the root challenges or barriers that are created in education," Ray says. "The biggest things when we talk about barriers are some of the things that aren't education related but they really impact education such as infrastructure, such as housing, such as food insecurity, because if you're hungry, how do you learn, if you don't have a safe place to live in, how do you learn safely."

Chris Mercer, co-founder and principal consultant at Miikana Consulting, delivered a presentation on education budgets.

"At the end of the day every community is unique and different, so there's no one size fits all approach to making a budget for education," Mercer says. "Some of the things I've seen go really well is making sure you do have a good process in place, making sure that you understand that the key prin-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Flying Post's Randi Ray speaks about the importance of understanding the best way to support students during her presentation at Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Siigwan 2025 Education Directors Forum, held May 21-22 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay.

ciple that guides all the budgeting processes is what the community needs, not the way ISC (Indigenous Services Canada) necessarily sets up the way that they do the calculations, and making sure that drives it, staying anchored in your community plan, your strategy, your education vision, and making sure that's shaping the goals and making sure of course that you're always hearing from the community."

Mercer says the families with children in school know what their needs are.

"So working with them actively to make sure that you can address as many of those needs as possible is a huge opportunity and a challenge too," Mercer says. "There's a lot of amazing directors and people working in education, whether that's at the community level, at the tribal council level, at the regional or territorial level, and it's making sure that those folks are talking and working together and doing everything they can to support the amazing youth that are in the communities."

Nishnawbe Aski Police Service Cst. Miles Orakwelu delivered a presentation on anti-bullying awareness.

"We use a lot of animation and video to keep the kids' attention going, so that's how I'm presenting to you today," Orakwelu says. "Cyberbullying is bullying but its mostly on devices, social media platforms, messaging, gaming platforms. This video is a silent video on how punches from the Internet don't leave a mark but it still hurts."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Brian Edwards, who is also a volunteer firefighter, delivered a presentation about opioid awareness and harm reduction.

"We're responding to so many mental health emergencies and substance use emergencies in my little community than ever before so this is very relevant training," Edwards says. "I'm not only going to show y ou what a typical (opioid) poisoning looks like, but I'm going to show you how to reverse that poisoning using lifesaving measures, which includes nasal naloxone and the Save Me Steps."





National Indigenous Peoples Day, 2025

Mayor, Councillors and the staff of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout extend best wishes to all aboriginal residents, stakeholders, neighbours and friends on the occasion of National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2025.

We recognize and appreciate the value of aboriginal peoples' contributions to our community, including those who visit and do business here, and wish to foster continued relationship-building opportunities and ongoing efforts to work collaboratively on joint ventures.



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Community

Chef Zach Keeshig cooks up the potato dumplings.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News



A group of seniors and Elders dine on the pickerel and dumpling meal prepared by chef Zach Keeshig and a group of high school students.

Chef Zach Keeshig prepares meals for local Elders

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

First Nations chef Zach Keeshig gathered food ingredients from Anemki Wajiw and worked with high school students to prepare and serve an Elders meal on May 30 through a Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre-Roots Community Food Centre program. The Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) and Roots Community Food Centre usually prepare and serve a traditionally inspired Seniors and Elders meal on the last Friday of the month at Roots Community Food Centre in Thunder Bay.
"I wanted to incorporate

ingredients that were from Thunder Bay, things that we harvested off the land," says Keeshig, owner of the Naagan by Chef Zach Keeshig restaurant in Owen Sound. "So we have a potato dumpling that we filled with stinging nettle and dandelion greens, and then we foraged some fiddleheads that we roasted in there too. And then we just made a simple sauce with pesto from the garden here."

Keeshig says they served fish with the meal.

"We seasoned it with sumac and sweet gale that we foraged up in the mountain (Anemki Wajiw)," Keeshig says. "And then we just grilled it outside over burning birch charcoal."

Keeshig says they also served sorbet made from apples.

"We flavoured it with a tea made from cedar and wild ginger that we went out and harvested," Keeshig says. "And on top is a little bit of rhubarb compote, some spruce tips that are just coming into season, and then on the bottom we made an oil out of white pine needles."

Keeshig says the meal was like the cooking he does back home.

"I'm trying to use the skills I've learned from working in Michelin star restaurants and (Canada's) 100 best restaurants, incorporating ingredients that may be more traditional to Anishinabe culture," Keeshig says.

Keeshig says it was great to work with the students, noting that he travels across the country to pass on his knowledge to the next generation.

"I don't want this knowledge to die with me," Keeshig says. "We can pass it on to the next generation and hopefully it lasts for years to come."

Keeshig says he enjoyed the response from the people who attended the meal and clapped when he visited with them after completing the cooking.

"It's always a positive feedback when we're able to cook things people may never have eaten before," Keeshig says. "I think this was a great showcase of not only Indigenous food but Thunder Bay ingredients."

Genevieve Desmoulin, cultural resource coordinator at TBIFC, says they had a lot of amazing feedback from the diners.

"Some people (were) saying they would never be able to afford to eat that kind of dining — it was definitely fine dining," Desmoulin says. "(The students) received instructions from one of the kitchen supervisors on what needed to be done and they held up to the task really well."

Lucius Thompson, a Westgate CVI student, says he served as the host for the meal.

"The only challenging part was finding seats when everyone started rolling in," Thompson says, noting that he helped to prepare the meal the day before. "The only part I struggled with was deboning the fish but after

that I got myself into a rhythm and stuck with it. I also helped set up the dessert too."

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's Charlotte Marten says the meal was delicious.

"I felt I was in a very fine restaurant," Marten says. "It was very tasty, I love how the pickerel was prepared and also the dumplings. As Aboriginal people, we need to go back and learn about what is on our land and use that for our diet."

Lac Seul's June Gordon also enjoyed the meal.

'Ít just takes your breath away," Gordon says. "Everything was just perfect. It was a real pleasure today, I'm really blessed to have taken part in his

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Community







Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Indigenous Service Providers Gathering, held June 4 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

Indigenous Service Providers gathering counteracting oppression

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Seine River's Sandi Boucher highlighted the importance of counteracting oppression and internalized oppression during her presentation at the Indigenous Service Providers Gathering on June 4 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

sion at the Indigenous Service Providers Gathering.

"For example, I caught myself recently — I'm carrying dishes into the kitchen and I accidentally dropped one and my automatic response in my head was, 'Of course I dropped one,'" says Boucher, emcee at the gathering and an Indigenous engagement speaker. "And it was like, no, don't say that because that implies I always do

this. This was just an accident, that's not the message we want to have. So it's unpacking that kind of stuff, why did I say that, why did I think that, why do I use that phrase, where did that phrase come from. Am I creating good soil or am I creating a situation that is unhealthy for me to grow in."

Boucher says oppression and internalized oppression are like invisible forces acting against a person.

"Whether it's the actions and words of other people or it's the actions and words he hears in his head or in his own community, these are preying against him and if you don't do something to counteract it, you don't have the conversations, you don't have the education,

over time this person starts to feel incredibly small," Boucher says. "So they don't have their voice, they don't speak up for themselves anymore — this is where the advocates and the activists really step in and try to help bring this person back, as our Elders say, 'Loving them back to health,' that is how we do things."

Matagami Elder Gerry Martin stressed the importance of continuing on with the Indigenous Service Providers Gatherings

"This is the fourth (gathering) and we still need these kind of events to bring people together to network and to share ideas," Martin says. "It's a good thing."

The gathering was held to

provide participants with an opportunity to build connections and to discover more about the Indigenous health and social services in Thunder Bay and area.

"Being able to host a space like this really allows for (Indigenous leaders) to come to a place where they don't have to explain the type of works they do, they don't have to explain the pressures that they're under," says Shelly Livingston, manager of health at Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg and Indigenous co-chair for the Noojmawing Sookatagaing Ontario Health Team. "The content of the event is geared towards people in their positions and to help fill their medicine cups and give them tools

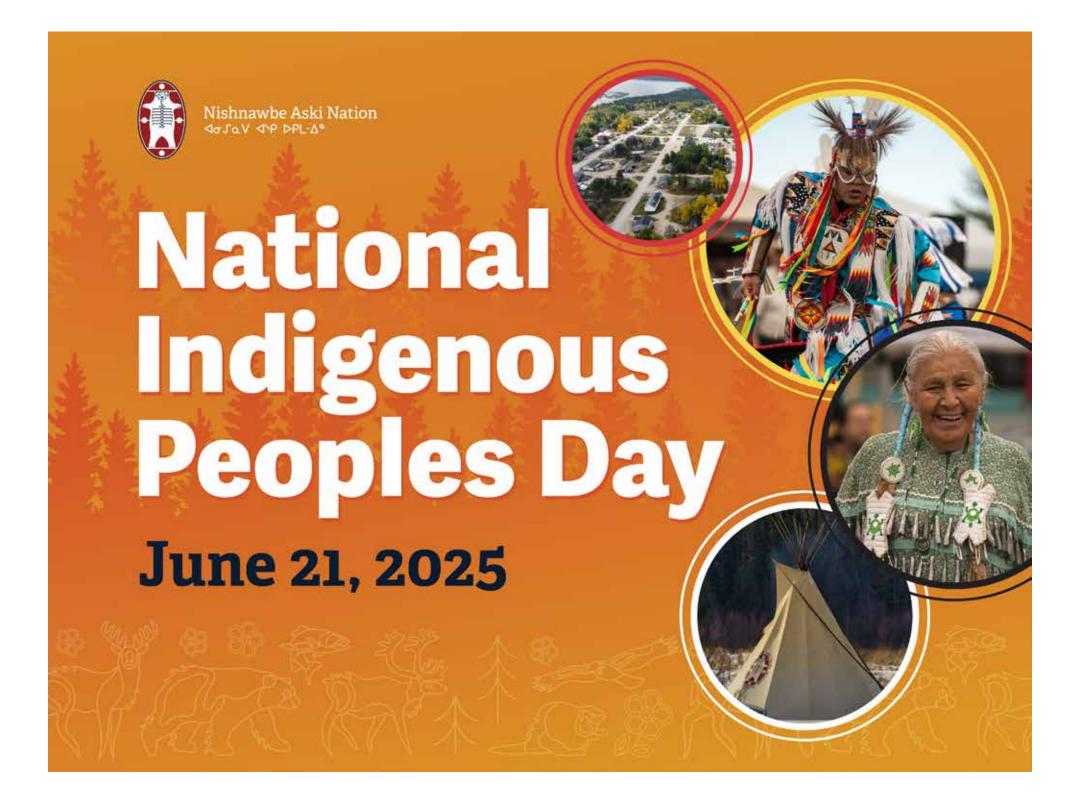
and just to help them do what they do in a good way."

Brittany Stinson-McGee, Indigenous partnership development lead for the Noojmawing Sookatagaing Ontario Health Team, says the gathering has grown over the past few years into a larger scale exhibit of Indigenous service providers from both the health and social service fields.

"It's pretty incredible to see all these wonderful services come together, share (and) seeing them establish connections within themselves but also being able to get those services out to the greater community, who is going to be accessing them," Stinson-McGee says. "The first event ... had roughly around 300 people

from the public attend the exhibit whereas last year we had about 1,200. We're anticipating we're going to grow past that point this year, so it's had some extreme growth."

The Noojmawing Sookatagaing Ontario Health Team was officially announced in 2022 as part of the fourth cohort of the Ontario Health Teams. It brings together partners to create equitable, connected, wholistic community-centred care across the District and City of Thunder Bay. Information about the Noojmawing Sookatagaing Ontario Health Team is posted at: www.noojmawingsookatagaing.ca/.





Class of 2025























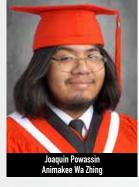






























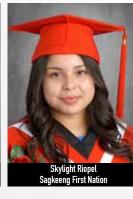


















The staff of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School are proud to recognize the achievements of this year's graduating class. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

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Community

Kill Bill 5 protests held in Thunder Bay

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's (NAN) Oshkaatisak (All Young People's) Council members Ramon Kataquapit and Kohen Chisel highlighted the concerns youth have about the provincial government's Bill 5 during the Kill Bill 5 rally in Thunder Bay. The rally was held on June 12 in front of Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland's constituency office on James St. Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, was passed on June 4 but has not received Royal Assent, meaning it is not yet in force.

"I just got in today after spending my entire last two weeks with the people at Queen's Park," Kataquapit says. "I was in those rooms and I've seen how our leadership was treated by this government, and I also saw the pain and the weight that our leadership felt in that room. And I've watched my own leadership of my community stand up and use their voice, and they got kicked out and fined."

Kataquapit says the "youth and our mothers" are still at Queen's Park.

"They're still currently in Queen's Park and have been 24/7 watching the sacred fire," Kataquapit says. "The one thing that was made clear to me is that our youth are moving faster than the leadership now, and that's a clear sign that we are



Rick Garrick/Wawatav Nev

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Oshkaatisak (All Young People's) Council member Kohen Chisel speaks during the Kill Bill 5 rally, held June 12 in front of Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland's constituency office.

now in the Seventh Fire. For the Seventh Fire, it's up to the youth to clear the way for our Eighth Fire generation to go."

Chisel says the youth have proved that they are strong.

"We're the first ones to jump, we're the first ones to speak up and speak loud because in this world we have to fight twice as hard," Chisel says. "I encourage all the youth to reach out to me and Ramon so we can come together as a collective and figure out ways we can move ahead. As the grand chief said, there will come a day where our children will stand up, and today is that day. As long as the

sun shines, the river flows and the grass grows, this is treaty land."

Chris Moonias, former chief at Neskantaga, says he is a rights holder who values his land and what it has to offer during his comments at the rally.

"And that is what I want to protect for my future," Moonias says. "For the longest time Neskantaga has been one of the sole voices to continue protecting our rights. Our position is based on our principle to protect and preserve our inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights, that is where we come from, and Bill 5 is an attack on those rights that



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Kill Bill 5 and Honour the Treaties banner signs were raised at the Kill Bill 5 rally

we continue to protect."

Shelby Gagnon, one of the rally organizers, says she focused her energy on creating signs for the rally, including a large Kill Bill 5 banner.

"A lot of Indigenous people and allies are just so mad about this (Bill 5), and it's really beautiful to see the turnout here today," Gagnon says. "My heart is feeling heavy, it's feeling scared for the future but it's also feeling hope because there is such a great turnout here — there is a lot of people that are wanting to fight for this and change what is happening."

Fort William Chief Michele

Solomon says it was important to have the rally outside Holland's constituency office so he would know that they stand opposed to Bill 5.

"It's not just Indigenous and First Nations people that stand against this Bill, Ontarians stand against this Bill," Solomon says. "They (the provincial government) are undermining and finding ways around rules and laws that were put in place to protect human and Indigenous rights."

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler says NAN has been pretty vocal about their opposition to Bill 5, adding that it was powerful to see how the youth and community members are rallying against Bill 5.

"That was pretty powerful to see young people, to see community members rally in their own communities, to make videos," Fiddler says the day after the Kill Bill 5 rally. "There's some moving images and videos. One of them I saw a couple of days ago was by a young man from Attawapiskat, Jeronimo Kataquapit. (They) were pretty moving, and we will need these voices to be amplified as we head to the summer because it was a fight to fight Bill 5 and now (with) Bill C-5 (An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act), the federal one, we will need to continue."

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa says First Nations still do not have the infrastructure they need in their communities.

"In my riding of Kiiwetinoong I have 12 long-term boil water advisories and we do not have high schools in most of the communities and we do not have hospitals in some of the bigger First Nations and we still have gravel runways," Mamakwa says the day after the rally. "And then, never mind the housing, never mind the healthcare services, those are some of the things we struggle with and it's important that we need to focus on those first before trying to get us to be part of the economy."



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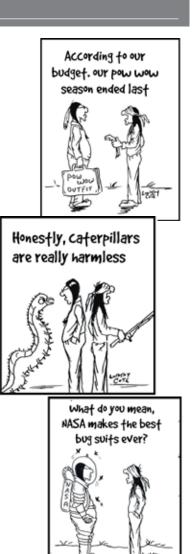
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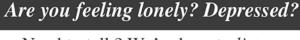
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Job Posting



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 nonfinancial 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.

FIRST MINING GOLD

National Indigenous Peoples Day

Today June 21, we join in celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day. This is a day for all Canadians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. It is a day for all of us to reflect and honour the Indigenous people who inhabit their traditional lands since time immemorial.

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