National Chief Archibald holds press conference concerning COVID protocols

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald addressed the need to continue with COVID-19 protocols in First Nation communities in response to the provincial government's plans to lift restrictions during a virtual National Chief Press Conference.

'We have so many underlying conditions and social determinants of health and living conditions and some communities don't have proper drinking water, so I've always been an advocate of erring on the side of caution when it comes to measures for First Nations in order to protect our most vulnerable people, especially our Elders and our knowledge keepers," Archibald says, noting that she recommended that First Nations lock down their communities in March 2020 when she was the regional chief. "So despite Ontario lifting restrictions, I believe that each First Nation has to determine for itself what they will do in terms of their own restrictions and how they will slowly open up."

Grand Chief Derek Fox also called on provincial and federal agencies to respect all community pandemic protocols that remain enacted in First Nations across Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory in a press release.

'While numbers may be in decline in some parts of the province, we continue see extremely high numbers of COVID-19 across our nation," Fox says. "This virus and its variants remain a serious threat to our people and our communities, with some experiencing their highest numbers since the beginSioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority 5. Average number of new and active COVID-19 cases over past week in Sioux Lo

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority's Dr. Lloyd Douglas highlighted the active COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 vaccine coverage over time in Sioux Lookout area First Nations during a SLFNHA Chiefs Meeting on March 2.

ning of the pandemic. The move to lift restrictions may be justified based on data from some areas of the province, but this decision does not consider the significant impacts that will be experienced by our communities."

Fox adds that strict protocols have been enacted in many NAN communities and will remain in effect at the discretion of local leadership.

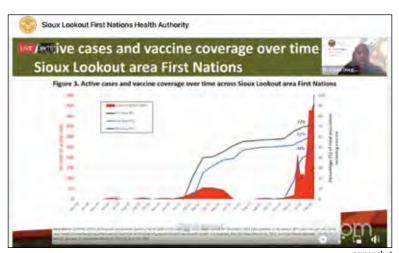
"Our communities are self-governing, and their decisions regarding pandemic restrictions do not have to be made in step with the province," Fox says. "The decisions made by our leaders are final and must be respected by everyone concerned."

NAN noted that there were 651 active cases of COVID-19 reported in 25 NAN communities as of Feb. 17, with five NAN communities under

a state of emergency and with suspended non-essential and inter-community travel.

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) also stated that there were 438 active cases and 57 new cases of COVID-19 in 22 First Nation communities in its region and the Jeremiah McKay Kabayshewekamik Hostel in Sioux Lookout during a SLFNHA Chiefs Meeting on March 2, including 89 in Mishkeegogamang, 69 in Lac Seul, 64 in Kasabonika, 42 in Pikangikum and 35 in the hostel. SLF-NHA serves 33 First Nation communi-

"We had that outbreak in Bearskin and then we had a number of outbreaks in other First Nation communities, and you can see that the number of active cases is somewhere around



Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority's Dr. Lloyd Douglas highlighted the number of active and new COVID-19 cases in Sioux Lookout area First Nations and the Jeremiah McKay Kabayshewekamik Hostel in Sioux Lookout.

450 and we're getting a significant number of new cases per day as well," says Dr. Lloyd Douglas, public health physician at SLFNHA. "To kind of look at it in another way in terms of the active cases, the seven day average, you can see that increase over time, that's an exponential increase, and you can see that we're probably inching up again. Hopefully we will be coming down shortly based on the new case seven day average. I know that we had a bump yesterday and possibly today as well, but we're keeping track of the numbers and we're not out of the woods just yet."

Douglas says the coverage rate for the third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is about 47.5 per cent for adults 18 years and older in the Sioux Lookout area First Nations.

"When we look closer at those individuals needing hospital care in adults who were eligible for the (COVID-19) booster shot who were hospitalized, no one had the third dose," Douglas says. "It's very important that individuals, especially in our context, individuals over 50 with underlying medical conditions, it's very important that they get vaccinated, especially getting that third dose (COVID-19) booster shot."

Douglas says of those individuals who were hospitalized, 36.8 per cent had received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine and 42.1 per cent had received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

"It's very important that we continue with our (COVID-19) vaccine campaign," Douglas says. "We need to get that (COVID-19) vaccine coverage

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Politics

AFN holds 5th annual Water Symposium

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald stressed the importance of water sovereignty during her opening presentation at the Assembly of First Nations 5th Annual Water Symposium, held virtually.

"Today we gather as water keepers and stewards of the land and the focus of this year's gathering is charting a path to water sovereignty," Archibald says. "We as First Nations continue to protect our treaty and inherent right to water for generations to come. As we all know, during this (COVID-19) pandemic access to clean, safe water and proper sanitation is more important now than ever. This pandemic has exacerbated longstanding challenges facing our people with access to clean drinking water at the top of the list. We have seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that First Nations on long-term drinking water advisories are more vulnerable to COVID-19 outbreaks."

Archibald says the pandemic underscores the important role that clean water plays in helping to ensure that diseases and viruses are contained in ways that will keep communities safe and healthy.

"First Nations deserve certainty and peace of mind knowing that their water supply is safe," Archibald says. "Guaranteeing access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water and adequate water and waste water infrastructure better protects our most vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to see action and it must be done with the full involvement of First Nations. With 36 long-term drinking water advisories still in effect in 29 First Nations, it is clear there is still a tremendous amount of work to do. It's unacceptable to have decades-long boil water advisories in First Nations when non-Indigenous municipalities often right next door have access to clean drinking water."

Archibald says the AFN welcomes the decision of the Fed-

eral Court and the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba to approve the \$8 billion settlement in the national classaction lawsuit between Canada and First Nations related to safe drinking water in First Nations.

"This victory includes a minimum amount but the focus of the settlement is addressing the full and true cost of ending all drinking water advisories," Archibald says. "Looming legislation, the impacts of climate change, questions around sustainable funding and the implications of a new national water agency has only fuelled uncertainty and prompted further questions - First Nations need to be active participants and partners in the proposed federal government action plan and timeline as it relates to clean drinking water."

Archibald says work done during the 5th Annual Water Symposium is important for First Nation efforts.

"It's my hope that by sharing experiences and best practices, delegates can identify potential solutions and together we can chart our own path forward toward water sovereignty," Archibald says. "Most importantly, it's time for us to assert and actualize First Nations sovereignty. Water is sacred, it's key to the health and wellbeing of First Nations people and all living things."

Archibald says the AFN continues to advocate for fair and equal access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water for all First Nations.

"This includes the AFN's request to the federal government to repeal the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and replace it with legislation developed by and with First Nations," Archibald says. "We must work together in the spirit of reconciliation and partnership and ensure that no First Nation is left behind. I look forward to seeing the outcome of this important gathering may your work and vision continue to heal the generations ahead."

The 5th Annual Water Symposium also featured opening comments by a range of speak-



submitted photo.

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald spoke about the importance of water sovereignty at the Assembly of First Nations 5th Annual Water Symposium.

ers, including Anishinabek Nation Chief Water Commissioner Autumn Peltier, Regional Chief Glen Hare and Indigenous Services Canada Minister Patty Hajdu, and a variety of presentations and workshops.

Grassy Narrows advocates for more water protection

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Presentations by Grassy Narrows' Judy Da Silva and Honor the Earth executive director Winona LaDuke were featured at the Assembly of First Nations 5th Annual Water Symposium, held virtually. Da Silva spoke during the Women and Water Stewardship Panel Presentation and LaDuke delivered a video keynote presentation.

"We face a lot of things that hurt Mother Earth," Da Silva says, noting logging and mining issues in her community's traditional territory. "I was just thinking back to Bolivia when they said that Mother Earth is alive as a person, and I feel like we have a long ways to go in Canada for people to understand that Mother Earth gives us life."

Da Silva says Grassy Narrows has been at the forefront of the destruction of the Earth, but also the protection of Mother Earth.

"We're a really small community, semi-isolated and we have a history of mercury poisoning in our water, the main river system being the English-Wabigoon River system," Da Silva says, noting that about 10 metric tonnes of mercury was released into the Wabigoon River at a paper mill in Dryden. "And we live with that every day. People may think, OK, the mercury is dumped, let's move

on but actually we still live with the effects of the poison."

Da Silva says they are planning to hold a virtual rally in March to remind people that they are still fighting the effects of mercury.

"We got \$85 million from Ontario to do a river cleanup," Da Silva says. "They're still doing studies on the river system, how are they going to clean up this 10 tonnes of mercury."

Da Silva says people who have been poisoned with mercury are described as mercury sufferers in Japan, not mercury survivors.

"We are mercury sufferers because each day we suffer with the effects," Da Silva says. "I'm also one that suffers from mercury poisoning."

LaDuke, an Indigenous activist, economist and author from the White Earth Nation in Minnesota, stressed the importance of water protectors during her video presentation, noting that she has been a water protector for her whole life.

"It's so important to be these water protectors in our territory, and I'm proud of all the people, Anishinabe people, all the people all throughout our territories that have been standing with our water," LaDuke says. "The very land that we belong to is also the land that has the water in it, so we're these people of the water — that is why we are water protec-

LaDuke also stressed the importance taking care of water resources to protect manomin (wild rice), which needs a generally stable water habitat to grow.

"All we've got to do is take care of the water and that will take care of us," LaDuke says. "For us, our manomin is sacred — in our instructions we were told to follow the shell that appeared in the sky to the place where the food grows on the

LaDuke says the White Earth Nation affirmed in 2019 the rights of manomin to flourish, continue to exist without genetic transformation or contamination, live in non-contaminated water and to be able to

continue to create, expand and flourish.

'Those rights my tribe takes seriously, and this year we took that up with the State of Minnesota," LaDuke says, noting that Enbridge's main pipeline runs through the middle of White Earth Nation territory. "Our tribe sued the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in Tribal Court in August 2021 saying that the United States in this case represented by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources had violated the rights of (manomin) by stealing the water of our (manomin), five billion gallons of water for Enbridge to drill under our riv-

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Arts and Entertainment

Indigenous artists paint new Maamawe city bus

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

A group of Indigenous artists were proud to see the artwork they created for Thunder Bay's new Maamawe Art Bus during the official launch ceremony.

"I just hope whoever sees this bus will fall in love with it and they will adore everything about it," says Athena Hudson, one of the Indigenous youth artists and a Bearskin Lake citizen. "I'm just really happy and proud of my crew and I."

Hudson says the Maamawe Art Bus project was "absolutely amazing" and a memorable experience.

"It was a lot of great work," Hudson says. "This project was really scary for me but I am really happy that I powered through it and I stayed despite all my fears. I mainly paint in acrylic and watercolours so this was quite a learning experience. I never knew how much went into digital artwork so it was really amazing to see the process and all the work."

The Maamawe Art Bus project was led by local Indigenous artists Shelby Gagnon and Morningstar Derosier with guidance from the City of Thunder Bay's Anishinaabe Elders Council in partnership with the Youth Inclusion Program, Cultural Development and Public Art Committee and Indigenous Relations Office. Graphic artist Chelsea Reid of Earth and Sky Studio also helped with the final concept of the artwork.

"Thank you to the incredibly talented artists that were part of this project with us," says Gagnon, an Aroland citizen. "Creating is medicine, art is healing and I think that's the purpose in which we are trying to come together and create a work of art together is to focus on healing, what is needed for our community, what is needed for ourselves and what is needed for just Turtle Island. There is a lot of healing that needs to be worked on and cultivated through this life that we live, but it's coming together to do beautiful things like this that impacts me and impacts the work that I do. I hope that people have a spark of passion or a drive to maybe create when they look at this bus and this art and the stories that go behind this."

Derosier, an Eagle Lake citizen, thanked the Thunder Bay councillors and the youth artists for their support and work on the Maamawe Art Bus project.

"We are so privileged and honoured to have worked with you all," Derosier says. "This has been a year in the making — it was about last February when Shelby and I were approached and it's been a really hard year. There's been a lot of challenges for everybody and then to be able to witness all of the artists we got to work with on this bring in their strength and their wisdom and their love for this community, it was just so incredible, so we are just so thankful."

Thunder Bay Mayor Bill



Indigenous lead artists Shelby Gagnon and Morningstar Derosier, centre and second from left, and three of the five Indigenous youth artists involved in Thunder Bay's Maamawe Art Bus project gathered to celebrate during the official launch ceremony.

Mauro says this was the third city transit bus that had Indigenous artwork installed on the exterior since 2015.

'So this is continuing what's becoming a bit of a tradition here in Thunder Bay, and it's wonderful to see," Mauro says. "As a country, Canada is at, what I call when I have these discussions and conversation with people, a tipping point, a watershed moment when it

comes to its history with the Indigenous populations right across the country, including here in the City of Thunder Bay. It is overdue, it's necessary and these projects are small steps forward as we deal with reconciliation right across the country, and I'm proud to be part of this on behalf of the City of Thunder Bay."

Louisa Costanzo, supervisor cultural development and events at Thunder Bay, says the main focus for the Maamawe Art Bus project was healing and reconciliation.

"The goal was to create a safe space to unify and empower Indigenous youth while also creating an art piece that would embody the creativity of the vouth, expressing both healing and celebration of Indigenous culture," Costanzo says.

Tanis Thompson, manager

Indigenous relations at Thunder Bay, says the city's journey together towards reconciliation is a process.

We are all a work in progress and each of us are in different stages of that process,' Thompson says. "I hope this will be the first of many more steps forward that are needed as we continue to progress in the spirit of reconciliation 'maamawe,' all together."

Magnus Theatre students receive youth award

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

A group of Magnus Theatre 2019-2020 Collective Creation Project students were recently recognized with 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards in the Youth Achievement Group Awards category for The Reconciliation Project (STOLEN, AZHEN). Collective Creation Project students Joshua Audley, Cornelius Beaver, Keira Essex, Emma Kaminawash, Chase Lester, Brook Malone, Jasmine Mcguire, Asia Polhill, Alexa Sagutcheway and Calli Thompson were among 126 youth aged 24 and under from across Ontario who were recognized with Youth Achievement Awards for their exceptional voluntary contributions to heritage conservation.

"It was so exciting to find out that we received the award and to know that the work we spent two years doing really made an impact in our community and in Ontario's community as well," Essex says. "There's been a lot of excitement all around - everyone's pretty proud of the work that we've done."

The Reconciliation Project (STO-LEN, AZHEN) is about a teenager from a First Nation community who attends high school in a larger urban centre and confronts the ongoing impacts of residential schools on both her immediate family and her community. The story explores themes of racism, colonization and cultural appropriation and highlights the rates of violence against Indigenous women and

"This play — which in itself is an act of reconciliation - highlights a few of the struggles Indigenous people face because of the colonial attitudes and violence that has been ingrained into our society for hundreds of years," Essex says. "It is a call to action for the public to think more deeply about reconciliation and to work harder to achieve it. Reconciliation is the responsibility of everyone. It is something Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must work on together so that we can begin healing.

Essex says the Collective Creation Project provides an opportunity for high school students to write and perform a play about a social justice topic. "It's a really great program you get to build a really good community over the course of the year, in our case the two years, that you write and perform (the play)," Essex says. "And it's definitely a thing for the community as well because usually we have a one night performance and then two more day performances that classes. usually Grades 7-12, are able to attend."

The students worked on The Reconciliation Project (STO-LEN, AZHEN) from November 2019 to March 2020 under the guidance of Elliott Cromarty, cultural consultant at Magnus Theatre, and Danielle Chandler, former education director at Magnus Theatre. Although the project was originally slated to be staged in June 2020, it was instead performed as a filmed

virtual read-through production due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has since been viewed more than 1,000 times and distributed to junior high schools and high schools province wide with an accompanying study guide. "We are so proud of the achievement of these young people," says Jordan Blaxill, education director at Magnus Theatre. "To produce such a highly affecting and important piece of work against the background of a global pandemic and shifting to a virtual performance is a testament to their resilience and creativity. They are a credit to themselves, the theatre and the city."

The 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards were presented by Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and John Ecker, chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust, during a virtual ceremony on Feb. 24.

"I am delighted to join the Ontario Heritage Trust in celebrating individuals and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to preserving Ontario's heritage," Dowdeswell says. "As the future of our province, it's essential for young people to appreciate and understand our collective history - both the good and the bad. That is why I am particularly moved by the curiosity of the more than 120 young people receiving awards this year who have sought out marginalized stories and experiences and have helped make them part of the fabric of our province."



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Commentary

Winter Ice Road Built By Experts



inter ice roads have been a big part of life on the James Bay coast for decades. The road has existed in one form or another since the 50s and 60s when the American and Canadian military sent men and material north to the Hudson Bay coast to build the Mid Canada Radar Stations for the Cold War effort. Since those early years, the seasonal ice road has been maintained as it was the only means to transport heavy material over land from the rail head in Moosonee to places north like Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Ka-shechewan.

My dad Marius Kataquapit was always an adventurous spirit and as a young man, he took part in the workforce that travelled up and down those first ice roads. After many years of work, he bought a modern Ford New Holland farm tractor with a heated cab in the early 1990s. It was powerful enough to hitch and pull a loaded wagon and a custom built heavy snow sled caboose. At the same time, he got his first contracts for constructing the winter road. These first contracts simply involved the use of snowmachines and a small troop of workers. Dad did not have any heavy duty machines back then.

These days the building of a winter road starts after a good layer of snow and ice have built up. Snowmachines are still used to tramp down the snow to drive the frost deep into the ground to pre-pare the surface for the next phase.

Once the snow has been set, small tractors and trucks begin to move over the road. In successive waves, larger tractors smooth the road, grade it and keep it as level as possi-ble.

In the late 1990s, dad began to hand over the family equipment business he had built up over the years to his youngest son Paul and in the early 2000s they purchased their first modern Caterpillar front end loader. Paul went on to acquire and purchase other pieces of heavy equipment including additional front end loaders, tracked tractors, excavators, graders, dump trucks, transport trucks and other support vehicles and machinery.

Our older brother Lawrence Rose has also developed a substantial transport trucking business and another brother Antoine Kataquapit has turned into a skilful operator and

business partner. Their work has also brought employment and experience for dozens of young people in the community including my nephews Willie, Joshua, Ekwan and Liam.

Over the past 20 years, Paul has taken on several contracts to build the winter road from the ground up.

The work has turned into a major effort using modern equipment, custom built pumps, water-ing trucks and new methods in constructing a winter road for use by all types of vehicles small and large.

To meet the challenge of river crossings and to deal with muskeg, bulk pumps spread hun-dreds of gallons of water on the ice.

Many of the river crossings also feature high steep banks that require constructing major ramps made of ice and snow. The winter road experts actually build snow ramps us-ing tons of packed snow and then pump many gallons of water on to it to transform it into a solid block of ice that is capable of supporting a heavy tractor and its load.

Tanker trucks which have been specially built and prepared for cold weather are used to ice most of the road surface. The water tanker trucks transport their thousands of gallons of water and spread it over the road surface across the tundra and frozen swamp lands.

Much of the land is mushkeg and is dangerous in that it can swallow any vehicle if not properly frozen to form part of the winter road.

If a heavy vehicle drives over a thinly frozen layer of mushkeg it can disappear and there is great difficulty in extracting it. Even once the frozen winter road is in place there are still possibilities for severe accidents as huge transport trucks sometimes slip and slide on the icy ramps and hills.

Thankfully my brothers, nephews and local workers have been having a good winter even though it has been very cold with -40 degrees and there has been heavy snowfall. We owe a huge Meegwetch (Thanks) to these ice winter road experts as they work long hard hours to provide for the movement of goods.

There are also other heavy equipment and transport companies in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan that are owned and operated by local Indigenous people to build and maintain these roads. I salute all the winter road companies and workers that deal with demanding work in such dangerous and hostile conditions. Stay safe boys.

www.underthenorthernsky.com

The faces behind winter road construction



A day of winter ice road construction with his crew is Paul Kataquapit (front right) with his nephews Willie Wesley (front left), Joshua Kataquapit (back left) and Jonah Kataquapit (back right).

A Persistent Winter



e are more than two months into 2022. It is not a big surprise for people that live in Northern Ontario ... winter conditions can continue into March. Maybe it is just the company I keep but many people are grumbling about the persistence of this particular winter.

Let's begin with a recap of February. The entire region experienced temperatures well below normal. The cold was especially pronounced in Northwestern Ontario and most locations recorded February mean (no pun intended) temperatures 4 to 7degrees Celsius below normal. Some daily record low temperatures were set across the region. Fort Frances had record lows on February 3 (-43.2° C) and 24 (-43.9° C). Thunder Bay set record lows on February 24 (-36.0° C) and the 25th (-34.5° C).

Daily temperatures across Northeastern Ontario during February were highly variable. They ranged from near-record lows to well above normal. Many record highs were set in mid-February including Sault Ste. Marie (7.6° C) on Feb. 16.

More about Alberta Clippers

The parade of clippers has continued, much more frequent than usual this winter. These fast-moving low-pressure systems, originating in the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains can travel more than a 1,000 kilometres per day and reach Ontario quickly. They often bring some hours of windy conditions and warmer temperatures. This is followed by gusty winds and snow, usually in small amounts.

Beginning in early January, one or two Clippers per week passed through the Northwest and often tracked across open water on Lake Superior. Some continued over to the Northeast and into Quebec. Alberta clippers do not typically evolve into powerful winter storms but can interact and pick up moisture from Lake Superior if there is open water.

Each of those Alberta Clippers brought light or occasionally moderate amounts of snow resulting in above normal precipitation across much of the North this winter. Some areas have experienced record amounts. Enhanced snowfall occurred east of Lake Superior with 2 metres on the ground in February and into March. Areas near Lake of the Woods received over 150% of their normal February precipitation.

The conventional definition of the winter season groups December, January and February, the coldest months in the year on average. In 2021 December was warmer than typical with some new maximum daily records (Thunder

Bay, 10.1° C on Dec. 16). Both January and February were cold months and dragged the average temperature down and produced the coldest winter in several years across most areas in Northern Ontario.

Our winters can be profoundly different year-to-year. This does not tell you anything that you do not know already. Sometimes the contrast requires a few numbers for perspective. I examined some statistics for 3-month and 5-month versions of winter.

• December through February (DJF)

December 2021 was 2° C warmer-than-average (1971 to 2000 normals), but mean temperatures were 3° C below normal in January and 5° C below normal in February. The overall DJF winter was 2° C colderthan-average. It was the coldest winter since 2017-18 and 4° C colder than last winter.

b. November through March This is longer than the conventional definition of winter and is my own invention but often describes the reality of a Northern Ontario winter. The previous winter (November 2020- March 2021) was one of the warmest in records dating back to 1940s. There were numerous days with melting (warmer than 0°C), especially in March.

This March, days with melting have been scarce so far, but read on.

A Look at Lake **Superior**

Ice cover was well below average during January and most of February. This was a

combination of warmer than seasonal water temperatures in December and January, and then windy Clippers that likely disrupted ice formation. Persistent cold air temperatures into early March resulted in more ice coverage. It is now about 50 percent of the Lake which is a little above average for this time of year.

Outlook for March

The anticipated shift of warmer temperatures has been a little delayed. Currently March is expected to have above-normal temperatures after the middle of the month. Forecasting precipitation is even riskier than temperatures but I venture at least an occasional Alberta Clipper.

In Cree tradition, the March moon is Onaabdin-giizis, the Snow Crust Moon. The Sun is higher in the sky every day and is likely to combine with warmer air temperatures to melt the surface snow in the day. Overnight temperatures likely remain below zero. This melt/freeze process allows people on snowshoes to walk on the snow crust in the morning.

Usually, with sunshine and warmth in early afternoon, the crust becomes "rotten" and the walker breaks through. Each step can be difficult, especially if the snow is deep. It is motivation to enjoy the morning.

I saw the Weather Network poses a question their spring forecast, "Will the polar vortex be here to stay?" Hopefully they are just trying to attract attention.

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Technology





submitted photos

Matawa First Nations Management used a WingtraOne drone this past fall to gather high quality imagery from the nine Matawa First Nation



Jasmine Baxter, Four Rivers Environmental technologist and Marten Falls citizen, was the lead Wingtra pilot for Matawa First Nation Management's environmental information collection project last fall, and Dinesh Gunawardena, Four Rivers Environmental information and systems specialist, was the lead for data accuracy, verification and

Matawa launches drone mapping project

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Matawa First Nations Management's Four Rivers Environmental Services recently signed on as a distributor for Wingtra's drone equipment after discovering the value of the WingtraOne drone for gathering high quality imagery.

'We're the first Indigenous group in the world to be a distributor of the Wingtra drone," says Sarah Cockerton, manager at Four Rivers Environmental Services. "We are now the supplier for the Wingstra (drone) in Canada, and specifically our kind of service piece is to serve Indigenous communities and groups or anyone who wants to get involved in it."

Cockerton says they had to switch their focus last fall to using drones to collect environmental information, including high quality imagery, from the nine Matawa First Nation communities because they were no longer able to talk with Elders to collect traditional values information due to the COVID-19 pandemic protocols.

"We quickly appreciated the value of the WingtraOne images to support First Nation communities in ways we had not even imagined," Cockerton says. "The drone's data helps communities revolutionize environmental monitoring in vast northern Ontario lands by providing quantifiable information with every flight."

Cockerton says the Wingtra-One, which is a fixed-wing commercial drone that requires an operator with an advanced pilot certificate, flies like a plane but takes off and lands vertically like a traditional drone.

"It's very fast and it really made the difference for us in actually being able to get the work we wanted to get done this fall in our communities," Cockerton says, noting that they currently have six Four Rivers staff with advanced pilot certificate qualifications. "It allowed us to fly all the nine Matawa communities and get extremely high resolution images, and now we're building out models and maps from those images for the Matawa communities."

Cockerton says the high quality images can be used to create infrastructure maps and other types of maps.

"People usually look at the imagery and digitize the maps and create those layers of say roads and where all the building are from the images," Cockerton says. "Having a really high quality image for generation of accurate maps related to infrastructure in the community is really important, so that was actually our main objective, to get this high quality image to create very accurate infrastructure maps and actually get an idea of the infrastructure itself in the communities to aid with planning and also climate change vulnerability assessments.

Cockerton says they also realized after seeing the quality of the images that they could be used for environmental monitoring.

"We're kind of working at a resolution of one centimetre, so we go to a lot of work to get that accuracy beyond just having excellent drones," Cockerton says. "We have already been able to use the images and the maps coming back to help with environmental investigations."

Cockerton says one example is when they used the images to find areas of wood deadfall for a Matawa community because it was "really important for them" to locate those areas this winter.

"There was no way of doing it because of the amount of snow, but we were able to go and look in the images and very easily find and locate everything," Cockerton says.

Cockerton says they have also used the images to find scientific equipment that was washed away from where it was laid out on the land.

"Because we have the drones and we now have a program,

the idea will be to continue to capture (images)," Cockerton says. "That will allow us to, in great detail, be able to see changes that are occurring not only on the land, like to water and water bodies, but within communities, buildings and things like that."

Cockerton says one of their future goals is to capture more images of the Matawa communities with a different camera angle to create three-dimensional models of the communi-

"We think that will be really helpful for community planning and monitoring infrastructure,' Cockerton says. "And of course we just want to expand the areas outward from an environmental monitoring perspective to a great extent."

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Education

Lakehead University hosts Water Justice presentation

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Indigenous researcher Kelsey Leonard highlighted the importance of wampum beads during her Indigenous Water Justice for Planetary Wellbeing presentation on March 9 during Lakehead University's Research and Innovation Week. The presentation was part of Lakehead University's Global Indigenous Speaker Series.

'We are known for harvesting wampum — it comes from quahog and whelk shells that are (present) in our estuary and waters along the Atlantic seaboard," says Leonard, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Waters, Climate and Sustainability, assistant professor in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo and Shinnecock citizen from New York State. "As Indigenous peoples of the east, of the Great Lakes, some of our first transboundary water treaties were constituted with those wampum beads. I think it is very important to understand the connection that we have across all of the water, from our oceans to the Great Lakes."

Leonard says the concept of Indigenous water justice was borne out of an Indigenous gathering held in 2016 at the University of Colorado Law School.

"We had Indigenous peoples from the Columbia River basin, the Colorado River Basin and the Murray-Darling basin in Australia coming together to talk about what some of the water injustices were that they were facing in their particular parts of the world and how we might create a collective vision



screenshot
Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Waters, Climate and Sustainability Kelsey Leonard delivered a presentation on Indigenous Water Justice for Planetary Wellbeing on March 9 during Lakehead University's Research and Innovation Week.

through international law that would support Indigenous rights and rights of the water itself to thrive, exist and naturally evolve," Leonard says.

Leonard says her presentation focuses on some of the key findings from the paper that was created by participants at the gathering.

"What we found, that the sort of elephant in the room was colonialism, was the way in which institutional discrimination and how water decisions are made was not being accounted for in the contemporary definitions and concepts related to water justice," Leonard says. "And so when we delved even further we also noted that the specific and explicit notion of water colonialism as the dispossession of Indigenous lands for water projects and the normalization Global Indigenous Speaker Series:
Lakehead University

Indigenous Water Justice for
Planetary Wellbeing

Dr. Kelsey Leonard (Shinnecock Nation)
Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Waters, Climate and Sustainability
School of Environment, Resources, and Sustainability
Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo

of settler modes of land and water use is what is the marked nature of Indigenous water injustice."

Leonard says they also saw that despite these aspects of water colonialism, Indigenous nations were creating resilient and innovative pathways to respond to colonialism.

"They were saying, well, if you won't let us into your institutions, we'll create our own institutions," Leonard says. "Here in the Great Lakes region that emerged after a series of legal cases fighting for Indigenous treaty fishing rights that formed the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (an agency of 11 Anishinabe nations in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan), which is now one of the preeminent climate and fish science entities and institutions in the Great

Lakes basin."

Leonard says they also noted that there needs to be a path forward, adding that they documented the ways in which Indigenous nations had responded to colonialism historically through the 1990s and 2000s

"For us it was this identification that there was a potential for international law, in particular the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), to be a leverage point to support Indigenous water justice, to support our autonomy and our self-determination in our efforts to protect the water," Leonard says. "So this meant that Indigenous water justice actually is about the socioeconomic, the cultural and the political institutions that we as Indigenous peoples have that are put forward to protect water.'

Article 3 of UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

"There is no way that Article 3 can be fully realized without the ability as nations to protect the water," Leonard says. "And there are other Articles (20, 24, 26, 28 and 32 of UNDRIP) where we saw these deep and embedded connections of water and self-determination in meeting our basic human needs as Indigenous peoples. When we think about the boil-water advisories, the drinking water advisories, the no-water advisories that have been persistent and consistent across so many of our nations for decades, there are

ways in which UNDRIP protects our international right to basic human needs like health and sanitation, water for meeting those livelihood needs as well as for economic development, employment opportunities and other conditions."

Leonard says UNDRIP also has protections for cultural rights to water and self-determination.

"And then in the political sphere, UNDRIP also notes that internal governmental autonomy over water resources is an inherent right that we hold as Indigenous nations," Leonard says. "And that external participation in water-related decision making, including our right to free, prior and informed consent is a protected right under international law."



Education

Lenore Keeshig gives Stories From The Land presentation

Rick Garrick

Wawatay News

Indigenous journalist and storyteller Lenore Keeshig delivered a Stories of the Land from Residential and Indian Day School to Present Day presentation on March 8 during Lakehead University's Research and Innovation Week.

"I dedicate this to the survivors of residential school to those children in resistance who would rather have been punished for speaking the language than to stop using it, children who would hide so that they could use the language, and children who survived residential schools to pass down stories to us even though there were times when they thought these stories were quaint and primitive," says Keeshig, a Chippewas of Nawash citizen from the Saugeen Peninsula. "They did not realize that these stories actually held bits of truth and

Keeshig recalls speaking at one of the late Chippewas of Nawash Elder Rose Nadjiwon classes many years ago about how she was able to connect Anishinabe traditional stories with geologic research.

"Afterwards she came up to me and she had her hand over her mouth and she was giggling," Keeshig says. "She said: 'I didn't know those stories were true — I thought our parents just told us those stories to keep us quiet and to make us laugh."

Keeshig says her father also didn't think the traditional stories were true, and that she herself thought the advice of an Elder to only tell traditional stories during the winter was "quaint."

"Nevertheless I listened to her and I asked her why and she said: 'It's because black flies and mosquitos like to hear those stories, so we tell them in the wintertime when those little creatures are not around," Keeshig says. "And again this little voice went 'quaint.' It wasn't until years later as I was working my way through this myself that I came to understand that it is Mother Earth, when she is at rest and covered in her beautiful white blanket, that she is protecting the stories, she is ensuring the quality

Keeshig highlighted some geological findings by scientists that confirm some of the information provided in traditional stories, such as Lake Huron and Georgian Bay once having significantly lower water levels that were split up into separate sections, which was featured in a story that Nadjiwon told about Nanabush.

"She said his favourite nephew died — and Nanabush grieved, his tears fell like boulders, like rocks, and he cried so much that his tears turned the water in the bay salty," Keeshig says. "And yes, at one time the water level in Georgian Bay and Lake Huron was so low that it was like standing water, it was like a big swamp or a series of swamps, and swamp water is brackish water. Brackish water is slightly saline so we have a connection here."

Keeshig says she was told time and again by the teachers in Indian day school that traditional stories were "mere fabrications of a primitive mind."

"It has taken me a long time but I was able to find the truth in these stories," Keeshig says. "And I'm sure that other people can find the truth in their stories as well."

Keeshig's presentation was part of Lakehead University's Truth and Reconciliation: Community Dialogues series that began with a March 1 presentation by Marten Falls' Eli Baxter on Anishinaabay Tay-bway-win: Anishinaabay Truth.

The Truth and Reconciliation: Community Dialogues series also features presentations by Chippewas of Georgina Island's Brian Charles on Stories of Wampum: Weaving

us Together on March 15 and Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, chair on Truth and Reconciliation at Lakehead University, on Enacting Reconciliation: Building on Truth to Make a Difference on March 22 and an Activists and Allies Panel - Mike DeGagné, Karen Kun, Ry Moran and Tracee Smith on March 29. Information about the series is posted at: www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus/community-programs/community-dialogue.



screenshot
Indigenous journalist and storyteller Lenore Keeshig spoke
about how geological findings
about Lake Huron's lower levels
in the past confirmed facts in
an Anishinabe traditional story
about Nanabush during her Stories of the Land from Residential
and Indian Day School to Present Day presentation on March
8.

INSPECTION

Inspection of Approved 2022-2024 Contingency Plan and 2022 - 2023 Annual Work Schedule for the Lac Seul Forest

The Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF), Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc. and the Sioux Lookout Local Citizens' Committee (LCC) advises you that the 2022 – 2024 Contingency Plan (CP) for the Lac Seul Forest has been approved by the NDMNRF Regional Director. The CP and the associated April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023 annual work schedule (AWS) for the Lac Seul Forest are now available for inspection.

Availability

The approved CP (including the supplementary documentation) and the AWS are available electronically for public inspection by contacting the Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc. Company Office during normal office hours and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online beginning March 15, 2022 and throughout the period that they are in effect. Implementation of the CP and AWS will commence April 1, 2022.

Why is a Contingency Plan Required?

The CP is required to ensure that forest operations can proceed on the Lac Seul forest management unit while the development of the 2024 to 2034 forest management plan takes place.

Scheduled Annual Operations

The AWS describes forest operations such as access (e.g., forestry aggregate pits, road and water crossing construction, maintenance, and decommissioning), harvest, renewal (e.g., site preparation, tree planting), and tending that are scheduled to occur during the year.

Tree Planting and Fuelwood

Obishikokaang Resources Corporation is responsible for tree planting in the Lac Seul Forest. Please contact the Forest Company listed below for information regarding tree planting job opportunities.

For information on the locations and licence requirements for obtaining fuelwood for personal use, please contact the NDMNRF staff listed below. For commercial fuelwood opportunities; please contact the Forest Company listed below.

More Information

Interested and affected persons, organizations, and First Nation and Métis communities can arrange a remote meeting with the appropriate NDMNRF office to discuss the approved Contingency Plan. For more information on the AWS, to arrange a remote meeting with NDMNRF staff to discuss the AWS or to request summary information, please contact the NDMNRF staff below.

Kevin Pruys, R.P.F.

Management Forester
Ministry of Northern Development,
Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
Sioux Lookout District Office, P.O. Box 309,
Sioux Lookout, ON PST 16A
tel: 807-738-4937
e-mail: kevin.pruys@ontario.ca

Genevieve Hennessey, R.P.F.

Obishikokaang Resources Corporation 33 3rd Avenue, P.O. Box 38 Hudson, ON POV 1X0 tel: 807-285-3496 e-mail: info@obishcorp.ca

John Hall

Sioux Lookout Local Citizens' Committee c/o NDMNRF
Sioux Lookout District Office, P.O. Box 309
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 16A
tel: 807-737-2904

Lac Seul Forest Management Unit ** Community First Nations Lac Seul Forest Management Unit Highway Local Street **Slate Falls Nation Outstaken Lass Slook Lockout Slate Falls Nation Nation

Stay Involved

Further information on how to get involved in forest management planning and to better understand the stages of public consultation please visit:

https://www.ontario.ca/document/participate-forestmanagement-ontario/how-get-involved-forest-management

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF) is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority provided by the Forest Management Planning Manual, 2020 approved by regulation under Section 68 of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*, 1994. Any personal information you provide (home and/or email address, name, telephone number, etc.) may be used and shared between NDMNRF and/or the enhanced sustainable forest licensee to contact you regarding comments submitted. Your comments will become part of the public consultation process and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may also be used by the NDMNRF to send you further information related to this forest management planning exercise. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Seanna Landry, A/District Business Co-ordinator, NDMNRF, at seanna.landry@ontario.ca or 807-738-5461.

Renseignements en français : Derek Johnson au 807 220-4273.



Education





submitted photos

Ginoogaming celebrated the opening of its new 550-square metre Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility.

Ginoogaming opens new Aboriginal Head Start facility

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Ginoogaming recently celebrated the opening of its new Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility with a smudge ceremony by Elder Victor Chapais on Feb. 22. The community plans to hold a ribbon cutting and grand opening at a later date when COVID-19 protocols allow for a full celebration.

"We're really happy, this has been something we've been working on for some time," says Ginoogaming Chief Sheri Taylor, who was the manager of the Aboriginal Head Start when it first started in 2000. "To see it come to fruition, it's just a very big, happy positive feeling in the community, and it's well

Taylor says the capacity of the new Aboriginal Head Start, which is about 550 square metres in size, is a "lot bigger" than the previous building. The new facility can accommodate up to 71 children in regular programming, and the community plans to provide summer programs for school-aged children. Once the COVID-19 restrictions are eased, the community also plans to welcome children from the surrounding area.

"Our previous head start had a two-level type building and it didn't have accessibility for children or Elders that had physical disabilities," Taylor says. "Now that we have the new one, it's all on one floor — it's a big

open concept type facility so it's really nice."

Taylor says the Aboriginal Head Start has six components, including cultural and language-type programs. "We get Elders involved and

"We get Elders involved and we have our staff that can bring in their own stories, legends," Taylor says. "They also invite people in from the community to share that knowledge with the children."

The \$3,850,423 Aboriginal Head Start facility was funded through \$3,080,423 from Indigenous Services Canada, \$750,000 from the Ginoogaming First Nation Timber Claim Trust and \$20,000 from Greenstone Gold Mines.

"We are more than pleased with the opening of our new

Aboriginal Head Start facility, and although it took some time to get to this point, the hard work and dedication put forth from both the First Nation and its funders ensured this would happen," Taylor says. "It is so important for our children to have the environment needed to support their early learning years, for we know it helps to build a solid foundation for life-long learning. We know how crucial it is to support our children and youth with education programs and facilities. As we continue to look at ways to reduce the gap in First Nation infrastructure for our community, this marks the first of many projects we hope to get under way for Ginoogaming First Nation."

Shelley Franceschini, program supervisor at Ginoogaming First Nation Aboriginal Head Start, says the new Aboriginal Head Start facility is state-of-the-art and spacious with tall ceilings.

"It is bright, it is airy, it is welcoming," Franceschini says, adding that safety is not a concern as they are now located on one floor instead of the two floors in the previous facility. "We still have to make it our own — we need to fill the walls with new memories and art. The children have been resilient, they are happy, they are laughing, they are exploring their new environment, they think it's beautiful. We're just going to continue promoting an environment for our children

that promotes respect and kindness, embracing our culture and language."

Franceschini adds that due to the COVID-19 protocols they plan to do private tours of the Aboriginal Head Start facility for parents

for parents.

"I congratulate Ginoogaming First Nation on their vision and work to design and build a new Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility," says Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu. "This new space will play a key role in providing rich and culturally appropriate early learning that fosters a strong sense of identity and belong-



July 13, 2022 is the last day you are able to submit a claim. It's free and confidential.

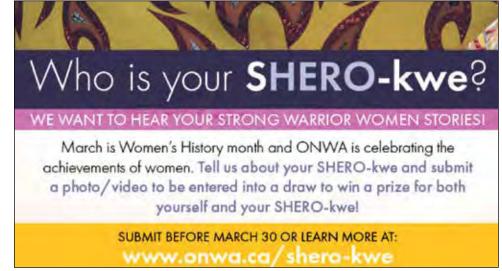
For information or legal support visit: indiandayschools.com or call 1-844-539-3815 Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310





screenshot

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women's Council shared a social media posting about standing strong together to celebrate and promote women's leadership at all levels on International Women's Day.



screenshot

The Ontario Native Women's Association asked people to share stories about their shero-kwe and to submit a photo/video for a draw during Women's History month in March.

International Women's Day celebrated through social media campaigns

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum and ONWA executive director Cora McGuire-Cyrette recently stressed the importance of acknowledging and celebrating International Women's Day on March 8.

"There are certain reasons as to why this particular International Women's Day (was started) by the United Nations, and the main objective was to address gender violence," Achneepineskum says. "Throughout the world women and girls have been the target of many injustices, including violence and other types of discrimination, so the purpose of that was

to bring that awareness. Nishnawbe Aski Nation continues to acknowledge that day and to promote wellbeing and equality for women and girls."

Achneepineskum says the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Women's Council also acknowledged International Women's Day with a posting on the NAN social media sites.

"They did a poster to acknowledge the day," Achneepineskum says. "We need to continue really supporting and continuing with those campaigns and those efforts. It's not only International Women's Day that we can take advantage of, it's any day like the Valentine's Day Memorial Walk that we can utilize, the Take Back the Night or the memorial day

of the Polytechnique Montreal (Technological University on Dec. 6)."

Achneepineskum says there should also be a day where people can honour, celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of women and hold a community feast for women.

"I hear about that happening in some communities, so I think that every community should be doing that," Achneepineskum says. "A lot of people utilize social media — you can have virtual events."

Achneepineskum encourages people to repost social media postings on International Women's Day and other days of recognition.

"We always appreciate when men share these posts and share these pages on social media," Achneepineskum says.

Achneepineskum adds that it is important for communities to have women and youth advisory committees that can provide their viewpoints and recommendations to the leadership and to be part of building wellness strategies.

"We have a lot of women who are frontline workers who really contribute to the community, but in terms of those particular roles of leadership we still have a very few percentage of women," Achneepineskum says. "It has improved, with the national chief (election) you must remember that a majority of those individuals that were part of the election were male leadership so that

is very encouraging. It is good that change is happening but we must continue to ensure that those particular roadways and pathways for women are there and that they are respected and held with integrity just as their male counterparts."

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) celebrated the achievements of women on International Women's Day, and throughout Women's History Month in March by asking people who the shero-kwe is in their life and by calling on people to share strong women stories about those who have made a difference in their life, community or nation.

ONWA states that a shero is defined as a woman admired or idealized for her courage, out-

standing achievements or noble qualities, a heroine, noting that the term first came to fruition in 1836 during the suffrage move-

"We acknowledge the resiliency of Indigenous women who courageously continue to reclaim their voice, their spirit and their leadership," McGuire-Cyrette says.

ONWA also encouraged people to submit a photo/video about their shero-kwe to a draw for prizes. Information about the shero-kwe draw is posted online at: www.onwa.ca/shero-kwe. Submissions for the draw close on March 30 with the winners to be announced on March



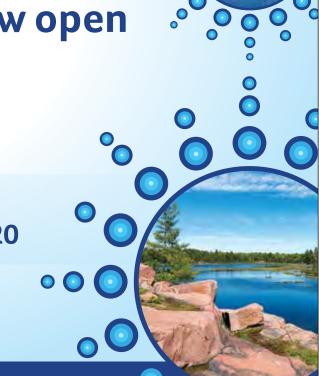
First Nations, the Drinking Water Settlement claims process is now open

If you are a First Nations member impacted by a long-term drinking water advisory, you may be eligible for compensation.

This is the first drop in recognizing those communities impacted.

Submit your claim at

FirstNationsDrinkingWater.ca • 1-833-252-4220











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LEFT: A group of Gwich'in youth wear parkies during the Origin team's recent trip to the Northwest Territories to help the Gwich'in people to create an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience. TOP: The Origin team worked with a group of Gwich'in people in the Northwest Territories to create an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience for the community to access with Oculus headsets.

Origin Team makes trip to Northwest Territories

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The Origin team recently worked with a group of about 15 Gwich'in people in the Northwest Territories on the creation of an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience in partnership with Arctic Indigenous Innovations.

'We had a 15-year-old boy, Rylan, who was actually the caribou harvester, so he had gone out on a hunt the night before the scene, got caribou and then showed us and explained to us how to clean and skin (the caribou)," says Charmaine McCraw, lead of Indigenous engagement and training at Origin, which has a head office in Fort William. "He was part of the food preparation process too, so showing

was really kind of a beautiful opportunity to get to know the Gwich'in people."

McCraw says they also flew to the top of Tsiithaah Mountain in a helicopter with two Elders to capture video for the interactive virtual Gwich'in experience project.

"They spoke in Gwich'in about that spot and the importance of it to the Gwich'in people," McCraw says.

McCraw says the Origin team travelled to Fort McPherson, NWT, to work with the Gwich'in people for about a week to capture two-dimension and 360-degree footage for the

"We were out on the land for about a week," McCraw says. "We got to see how quickly the weather can change in the

us how to make dried meat. It mountains, why safety is of utmost importance and how the community worked together to prepare for the day, set up the tents, set up the fires. We got out there, cut poles and worked together, created snowshoe paths so people could walk in the snow. It was quite the amazing experience."

McCraw says the purpose of the project was cultural and language preservation for the Gwich'in people and to inspire the Gwich'in youth to continue on traditions that are sacred to the Gwich'in people.

"And to allow Elders, most of whom are between 80 and 100-years-old, to be able to virtually travel to the places that they grew up in within the territory," McCraw says, "and continue to carry on those traditions and tell those stories of those locations that are sacred to their identity as a people."

McCraw says the interactive virtual Gwich'in experience will include Porcupine Caribou harvesting, food and dried meat preparation, traditional Gwich'in clothing and sewing and the art of snowshoe making and its purpose to the culture.

"It will also host a 3D interactive map of historical Gwich'in travel routes," McCraw says. "That will all be put together within an interactive experience in the Oculus headsets."

McCraw says the Origin team worked with a group of Gwich'in youth to introduce them to the world of 360-degree film during the

"We had the youth help prepare, participate and assist in the actual filming of the activities while we were up there as part of our Indigenous perspectives project," McCraw says. "We gave them 360 cameras and

headsets — it's really to inspire a generation to kind of create their own stories and experiences using this technology.'

McCraw says they will continue to meet with the youth on a bi-weekly basis to help them create their own stories with the three 360-degree cameras that were left with the community.

"Should we go back, because this could be a potential phased project, they would actually be some of the people capturing the footage and being part of that entire production on their own instead of outside people having to come in and do it," McCraw says.

McCraw says the experiences that were captured for the interactive virtual Gwich'in experience will be placed on Origin's newly developed interactive experience platform called ImmersiveLink Tours.

We captured scenes on top of Tsiithaah Mountain, which is a sacred place for the Gwich'in people, we captured camp scenes near Sheep Creek past the Rock River in the Yukon and scenes on the height of land just before the Windy Pass,' McCraw says. "The Gwich'in territory spans across the Northwest Territories, Yukon and up into Alaska."

McCraw says it will take about three to four weeks for the post-production phase to be completed, after which the Gwich'in community will be able to use the Oculus headsets to access the interactive experi-

OUR WAY FORWARD

Advancing Indigenous Relations in Thunder Bay

Do you want to see more Indigenous spaces?

Increased cultural awareness? More responsive City services? Additional community supports? A focus on anti-racism education?

Share your feedback on these and other initiatives.

Our new Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Strategy has identified important areas of focus. Your feedback will help us plan our yearly path forward as we make change in our community.

Complete the survey online or at any branch of the Thunder Bay Public Library.



Community **Partner** Sessions

Register for a virtual session this May to join the conversation.



Help us prioritize actions and discuss how MAAMAWE (all together) we can collectively implement change in Thunder Bay.

SURVEY AVAILABLE FROM MARCH 14 – APRIL 17

Take the survey. Attend a session. Milgwetch for getting involved.





Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation

Federal Indian Day School Assistance

Are you from a NAN First Nations community? Do you have questions about the Indian Day School Settlement form? Do you need Legal Assistance in submitting your claim?

If you need legal assistance with your Federal Indian Day School Claims Form, contact Nishnawbe Aski **Legal Services Corporation Staff:**

Megan Wood Staff Lawyer

Thunder Bay Office Phone: 1-807-622-1413 Direct: 807-627-8083 Toll Free: 1-800-465-5582

Email: mwood@nanlegal.on.ca **Cheryl Suggashie**

Public Legal Education & **Communications Coordinator**

Thunder Bay Office Cell: (807) 620-9253

Email: csuggashie@nanlegal.on.ca *Who can assist in Direction and Resources

Adam Mack

Public Legal Education

Timmins Office Cell: (705) 262-3389

Email: amack@nanlegal.on.ca

*Who can assist in Direction and Resources

Mental Health Support and additional helpful resources

With the recent and on going discoveries of the unmarked graves across the country, and even when you are filling out your "Indian Day School" application form, please know that talking or thinking about painful past experiences can trigger intense thoughts, and or feelings. It really helps to talk to a trusted person, such as a friend, family member or an Elder. In some cases you may not be aware of your own Trauma, and it can resurface. Triggers can happen at anytime time. If your feeling overwhelmed, anxious and or upset, please reach out to someone immediately. Take time out, practice self care, especially through these trying times.

Please see below for free available Mental Health Resources:

Argyle Community Support Program (For Indian Day Schools only)

One-on-one support by a trauma informed Claims Assistant

for help completing the Claims Form

Phone: 1-877-515-7525

Monday through Friday 8am - 9pm Eastern (Interpretation services provided upon request) Email: idscommunitysupport@argylepr.com

https://indiandayschools.com/en/support/community-support-

program/

Talk 4 Healing: Talk, Text, Chat

Services in Ojibway, Oji-Cree, Cree, English, French 24/7 culturally sensitive counselling, advice, and support to Indigenous women.

Toll Free: 1-855-554-4325 www.talk4healing.com

Hope for Wellness Help Line

24/7 Services in English, Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut, French Toll Free 1-855-242-3310

www.hopeforwellness.ca with Chat Feature

NAN Hope

Toll Free 1-844-626-4673 Text: 1-844-626-4673

www.nanhope.ca with Chat Feature

24-hour Residential School Crises Line

For immediate emotional assistance

Toll Free: 1-866-925-4419

Access Health Support Services & more information

Toll Free: 1-888-301-6426 www.healthcanada.ge.ca/irs

Indian Residential Schools Survivors and Family

Toll Free: 1-800-721-0066

www.irsss.ca

Native Women's Association of Canada

In-house elders offering support, Monday to Friday 9-11am and

1-3 p.m. Eastern Time Toll Free: 1-888-664-7808

www.nwac.ca

MMIW Crisis Line

24/7 support to family, friends and community members impacted by the loss of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman, girl, or Two-spirit person

Toll Free: 1-844-413-6649 https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/



Toll Free: 1-800-465-5581 Phone: (807) 622-1413 Fax: (807) 622-3024

Email: info@nanlegal.on.ca Website: www.nanlegal.on.ca

Please stay tuned for our future "Virtual Gathering" as we will be discussing; Indian Day Schools, mental health topics, and the discoveries of the unmarked graves. More information to follow!

For more information and or assistance on "Indian Day School Settlement" claims form, with Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, please visit our website:

https://nanlegal.on.ca/federal-indian-day-school-class-

action/

Canadian Ranger from Muskrat Dam awarded top Canadian honour

Peter Moon

Special to Wawatay News

When a friend told her 20 years ago that the Canadian Army was about to start a new Canadian Ranger patrol in her small First Nation in Northern Ontario Kathleen Beardy decided to go to the first organizing meeting and volunteered

"My friend told me the army and the Rangers were coming to Muskrat Dam," she said. "I didn't know what the Rangers were but I went along and joined. It's been interesting. The army teaches you how to be organized and to be on time. Being on time was the hard part. That was hard sometimes. But I've learned a lot."

Two decades later she is the master corporal in charge of her community's Junior Canadian Ranger patrol and a new recipient of the Order of Military Merit, the military equivalent of the civilian Order of Canada.

The prestigious award was created in 1972 to recognize outstanding service and devotion to duty by members of the Canadian Armed Forces. She has already been awarded the Special Service Medal and the Canadian Forces Decoration for her military service.

"The Order of Military Merit is an honour she deserves," said Lieutenant-Colonel Shane MacArthur, the Canadian Army officer who commands the 700 Rangers in 29 mostly remote and isolated First Nations across the Far North of Ontario. Rangers are part-time army reservists.

"She has many years of service, is an active Ranger, and a non-stop volunteer in her community," he said. "She has also served on her band council."

Two years ago five people – an adult and four young children - died in a house fire in the nearby First Nation of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, devastating the community, which declared an emergency to try and cope with the resulting



photo submitted by Sergeant Peter Moon, Canadian Rangers

Master Corporal Kathleen Beardy, right, participates in a group training discussion in a 2020 file photo

widespread mental stress. The community asked for help from the Canadian Army and Master Corporal Beardy was a key part of a Ranger team that went to provide support.

"Her compassion, dedication, and support for the families and support for the community was outstanding during the emergency." Lt.-Col. McArthur said.

Master Corporal Beardy is

one of four female members of the 10-person Ranger patrol in Muskrat Dam, a small Oji-Cree settlement of about 250 people 590 kilometers north of Thunder Bay. Her lead job as a Ranger is running the community's popular Junior Ranger patrol. The culturally appropriate program teaches safety on the land and water and in personal life styles for boys and

girls aged 12 to 18.

She was raised on her father's trap line. "We were raised on traditional food, moose, beaver, rabbit," she said." I snared rabbits for food and I started doing that when I was five years old."

As a child she used a .22-calibre rifle to shoot ptarmigan and grouse for food. When she joined the Rangers the army

taught her to shoot with a larger calibre rifle and she harvested her first moose with a .308 rifle.

"She's a really good shot, we hunt together, really good on the land, and very good at getting the kids on the land," said Sergeant Emily Beardy, a distant relative and the Muskrat Dam Ranger patrol leader. "She's well liked in the commu-

nity. She's a good Ranger."

Governor-General Mary Simon will present her with the insignia of the Order of Military Merit at a future date.

(Sergeant Peter Moon is a Ranger with the 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at Canadian Forces Base Borden.)

Military airlift takes Canadian Ranger supplies to 29 First Nation communities

Peter Moon

Special to Wawatay News

The Canadian Rangers are in the midst of a major resupply mission to get military supplies to Ranger patrols in 29 First Nations across the Far North of Ontario.

Because o f the COVID-19 pandemic they are the first supplies the Rangers have received in two years.

"Some of the supplies are much needed," said Major Tom Bell, a company commander at 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which is headquartered at Canadian Forces Base Borden near Barrie. "A lot of work has gone into the planning to get all that equipment to those communities. They are usually driven into the First Nations on the winter roads. Because we've been so busy with COVID flying them in was the fastest way to get it done this year."

The supplies include equipment for search and rescue and a range of items that include food and fuel, miscellaneous items such as shovels and glow sticks, and small items such as mosquito repellent, and specialized equipment, such as bows and arrows for archery for Junior Canadian Rangers.

mior Canadian Rangers. There are 700 Rangers, who



photo submitted by Master Warrant Officer Fergus O'Connor, Canadian Army Canadian Rangers Eli Owen and Rob Turtle begin to unload a resupply aircraft in Pikangikum.

are part-time army reservists, in 29 mostly remote and isolated communities across Northern Ontario as well as 800 Junior Rangers. The Junior Rangers are a popular Canadian Army culturally appropriate youth program for boys and girls aged 12 to 18.

The supplies were assembled

and driven 1,830 kilometers by truck from Borden to Pickle Lake, a small community 540 kilometers north of Thunder Bay. Pickle Lake is on the most northerly section of paved highway in Ontario.

A team of soldiers loaded the supplies onto planes which flew them from Pickle Lake to the

Ranger patrol communities.

"Master Corporal Michael Foster led a team of four soldiers who co-ordinated the loading of charter aircraft in Pickle Lake," Major Bell said. "They worked at the Wasaya Airways hanger, ensuring that all of the different communities got what they needed. The plan



photo submitted by Major Tom Bell, Canadian Army. Master Corporal Michael Foster, left, led a team of s soldiers who loaded supplies onto cargo aircraft at Pickle Lake airport.

changed several times while they were up there and they did a great job reacting to the changing situation.

"COVID has been a hindrance. Some First Nations refused us entry over fears about COVID. The weather has also been a factor, causing some delays. Working in the North

can be challenging. Getting the supplies out has involved about 40 soldiers and Canadian Rangers. They are doing a great job getting those supplies to where they are needed."

(Sergeant Peter Moon is a Ranger with 3CRPG at CFB Borden.)



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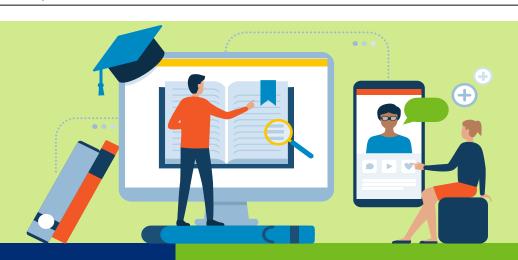
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KIRK CUTFEET



JOSHANE, OF SANDY LAKE FIRST NATION, COMPLETED GOOD LEARNING ANYWHERE'S FIRST STEPS FOR NEW LEARNERS. HIS GOAL IS TO RETURN TO POST-SECONDARY STUDIES.

JOSHANE FIDDLER

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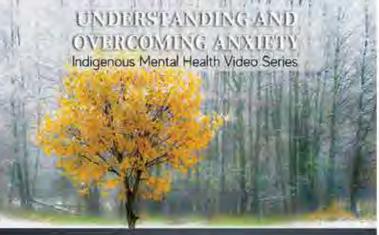
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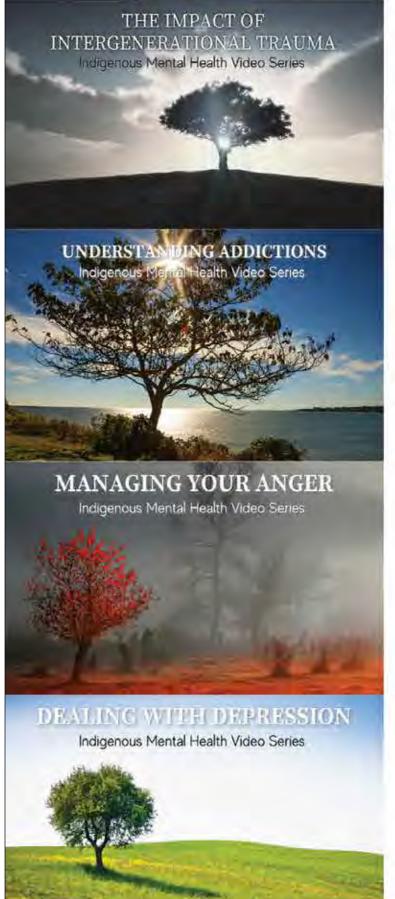




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Indigenous Mental Health Video Series

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: SULLIVAN + ASSOCIATES

About the Series

presented by Jasmine Peterson

The Indigenous Mental Health Video Series was designed to provide additional support for Indigenous people who have difficulty accessing mental health services due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, infrastructure limitations (i.e., poor telephone/internet connections), etc.

This video series discusses the impact of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous people and communities and how this has contributed to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, addictions, and anger. This series provides important education and practical coping strategies, presented in a friendly, conversational manner by Jasmine Peterson.

Jasmine Peterson is a mental health professional of Indigenous descent. She has worked extensively with Indigenous clients over the past seven years at our clinic and in remote Indigenous communities. Jasmine works with children, teens, and adults, providing psychological assessments and counselling/psychotherapy.





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Tikinagan celebrates Foster Parent Month

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Tikinagan Child and Family Services recently celebrated the commitment of 235 foster parents across 30 First Nations and urban areas during Foster Parent Month in March.

"Foster Parents play an important role in the lives of our children and youth, and they are essential to successfully delivering our services," says Thelma Morris, executive director at Tikinagan. "This March, we are showing our appreciation of our foster parents for Foster Parent Appreciation Month, and we invite our communities to join us in honouring the time, effort and energy they selflessly give to raising our children."

Tikinagan's foster parents come from all walks of life, including homemakers, band councillors, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and they often work at the community store, nursing station and school.

"Many of our foster parents have been with us for five, 10, even 15 years," Morris says. "Many of them will tell you they foster because they want to make a difference. And they do. They really do."

Mishkeegogamang's Jolene and Sims Roundhead began foster parenting with Tikinagan about six-and-a-half years ago with the care of a baby boy.

"We still actually foster him today," Jolene says. "It has been

amazing. To us, this little guy feels like our son."

Jolene says she feels like she was meant to be a foster parent, and she really enjoys foster parenting.

"You get to help the kids,"
Jolene says, noting that some
have learning difficulties and
others do not talk when they
arrive. "I enjoy working with
Tikinagan. They have a lot of
really good workers and after a
while you get to know them and
it just feels like you're one big
family."

Jolene says the important part of being a foster parent for her is about helping the children who need help and providing them with a loving, stable home.

"And showing them that there are people out there that do love them and care about them," Jolene says. "That's what it is to me."

Jolene says one of her foster children would not smile or laugh not matter what she did, but eventually the girl smiled when she started dancing around in a Sponge Bob halloween costume.

"So I just kept doing it, like putting on a different silly halloween costume until eventually she started laughing," Jolene says. "And that's when it started to turn around for her."

Jolene says they had to provide "a lot of love" to get her up and going.

"She is what I call my golden star," Jolene says. "She is one of the most beautiful children I



submitted photo

Foster parents Jolene and Sims Roundhead, from Mishkeegogamang, have been foster parenting with Tikinagan Child and Family Services for about six-and-a-half years since taking care of a baby boy.

have ever met in my entire life, after she came out of that shell. She is beautiful inside and out, that girl."

Morris says the key requirement for a foster parent is their willingness to help a child.

"It's often the simple things that the children remember, such as a meal, a place to sleep or just a listening ear," Morris says. "It's about doing life with them. And like any child or youth, foster children need stability, guidance, structure, love and understanding."

Tikinagan provides support and services for families who are experiencing difficulties and works to help those families find resources to heal. Whenever possible, they work to keep children and families together and to help parents care for their children.

"We believe the answer lies within the communities, and we are committed to keeping our children within their communities," Morris says. "But to make this happen, we need the help of individuals and couples who have a desire to make a dif-

ference. We need Indigenous foster families who want to help raise children while assisting them in maintaining their connections to their family, culture and community."

Information about becoming a foster parent or services at Tikinagan is available by calling 1-800-465-3624 or visiting tikinagan.org.



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Matawa planning to open new family crisis shelter

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Matawa First Nations Management plans to create supportive housing accommodations for families and youth shelter bed spaces through \$1,581,000 from the provincial government's Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF). The funding was part of \$2,936,000 from the SSRF that was announced by the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) for seven initiatives from six organizations on Feb.

"On behalf of the Matawa First Nations Management Board of Directors, Matawa First Nations and our (citizens) residing in the city of Thunder Bay, we would like to acknowledge the paradigm-shifting efforts the TBDSSAB have been beginning to make as one of Ontario's local system manag-

ers," says Frank Onabigon, vice-president at Matawa First Nations Management. "With today's investment into these two capital projects, we will be in a better place to be able to realize the goal of assisting families and youth in an innovative way that makes sense to us. Our gratitude is fully extended."

Matawa First Nations Management will receive \$981,000 to support the Matawa Family Crisis Shelter project and the creation of a new community kitchen teaching facility to promote life skills and stabilization and \$600,000 support the creation of six new youth shelter bed spaces and support areas.

"(The Matawa Family Crisis Shelter project) was identified through the Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin program, that's the Matawa Social Services program," says Paul Capon, political advisor at Matawa First Nations Management. "Homelessness among families is a real challenging issue because that poses a threat to families losing their children to the child welfare system, so our goal is to try to keep families together, to keep them stable and support them and then transition them into appropriate housing so that families can be kept together."

Capon says one of the issues they have identified is that single fathers with children do not have a place to stay.

"Whatever circumstances people are in, it was felt by having this type of service for the Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin program, they could support those people and then transition them to other accommodations thereby keeping their family together and helping them on broader counselling or other socioeconomic issues,' Capon says.

Capon says the Awashishishewiigiihiwaywin program will provide modular units for

families in the Matawa Wellness and Training Centre building on Algoma St. N., which was a former long-term care home that Matawa First Nations Management bought in 2020 to house the program along with Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services and Matawa Health Cooperative.

"These modular units will support families to keep them together and provide some stability and support as part of the overall Awashishishewiigiihiwaywin program," Capon says. "The number of bedrooms and beds can be somewhat flexible because sometimes you might have a family of four and then other times you might have a family of three or six, so they can be adapted to the family circumstances.'

Capon says the six new youth shelter bed spaces and support areas will be located at the Matawa Education Care Centre building, which was a former long-term care home in Thunder Bay.

"The Matawa Education Care Centre ... has long identified the needs of youth accommodations and youth homelessness issues," Capon says, noting that the Matawa Education Care Centre has had to deal with a range of crisis situations with students, including boarding home, health or financial issues. "They need a place to stay, so that's something for the Matawa Education Care Centre of having homelessness beds for youth that hopefully can be directed towards having some stability in their life and then by extension connecting to the education system for their future growth and develop-

Capon says the need to keep youth safe and off the street was identified during the Seven Youth Inquest into the deaths of First Nation students in Thunder Bav.

'So that is something the Matawa Education Care Centre has been really promoting and helping to identify that need," Capon says.

The \$2,936,000 in funding also included \$800,000 for Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, \$231,000 for Grace Place, \$195,000 for Urban Abbey, \$77,000 for Marjorie House and \$52,000 for John Howard Society.

"Our government is providing immediate housing and homelessness program relief in communities across northern Ontario," says Steve Clark, minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "By investing \$2.9 million in the Thunder Bay area, we continue to support local innovative housing solutions to protect our most vulnerable in every corner of our province."



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Gaagige Zaagibigaa announces food security grants

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Gaagige Zaagibigaa recently announced grants for 248 households to increase their ability to grow, hunt, harvest, process and store food through its 2nd Sovereign Household Support Program Ziigwan (Spring).

"Remote First Nations (households were) eligible for \$2,000 and urban or rural First Nations (households were) eligible for \$1,000," says Jessica McLaughlin, co-lead at Gaagige Zaagibigaa. "Some of the projects are around gardening, around getting their gun licence, buying smokers, buying dehydrators and canning (equipment)."

McLaughlin says Gaagige Zaagibigaa is a granting organization for northern Ontario First Nations people with three streams of grants: community grants, planning grants and the Sovereign Household grants.

"What we believe at Gaagige Zaagibigaa is that when you empower a household to do traditional activities like hunt, fish, gather, grow, produce on your own or choose the means of the way you put food on the table, you are also doing many more things," McLaughlin says. "You are not only solving food insecurities but you're also arming households with families that spend time together on the land, that reconnect with their culture, that learn how to fish, hunt, grow. So you're teaching

generations things that were lost in the colonization pro-

McLaughlin says some of the 60 households that were provided with Gaagige Zaagibigaa grants last year bought freezers or sugar-bushing equipment or fishing equipment or nets.

"So those are the kind of things we are supporting we're not supporting the direct purchase of food," McLaughlin says. "Our way of life has been degraded and we want to provide those means for people to be able to do that again."

Rock Indian Band butcher shop is an example of the community

McLaughlin says many of the funders for the Gaagige Zaagibigaa grants are foundations.

McLaughlin says the Red projects they have supported.

"They have a butcher shop there that they can offer to their (citizens) when they catch a moose," McLaughlin says. "They don't need to have their own hang and they can butcher all of their stuff right there."

They give us chunks of money that we can just give to communities and they do amazing projects like the Red Rock Indian Band butcher shop," McLaughlin says. "We're also working with Aroland First Nation on a kitchen there that's similar to the butcher shop but it isn't a butcher shop, it's a community kitchen so they can do their blueberries and they can have community gatherings in the kitchen, women can cook there and maybe sell their food



Gaagige Zaagibigaa co-lead Jessica McLaughlin recently announced grants for 248 households through the 2nd Sovereign Household Support Program Ziigwan (Spring).

- it's a certified kitchen."

McLaughlin says they also held a wilderness first aid course for youth last fall.

"They're all actionists in their communities but now they're trained in first aid in the bush," McLaughlin says. "So we are thinking with some of the communities that we would do

group food safe handling or things that cost money like getting your gun licence that could support people, families and communities in getting back on the land and therefore getting more food on their table.

McLaughlin says they are currently planning to hold a gathering in July at the Red Rock Indian Band.

"We're bringing some of our household people, some of our community partners and we're going to do a whole bunch of workshops on all of these things we are talking about to try to help families garner skills, to share that with other families and also with their kids,"

McLaughlin says.

McLaughlin says Gaagige Zaagibigaa will be holding another round of grants for fall activities in August.

The plan is that yearly we will do two of these, and then we also do community granting," McLaughlin says.



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Community





photo submitted by Dryden Native Friendship Centre

A group of Indigenous mothers, children and Dryden Native Friendship Centre staff participate in cultural activities with J&S Farms as part of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound program in Dryden.

Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound program offers opportunities for employment

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The Dryden Native Friendship Centre's four-year Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound program has provided sole-parenting Indigenous mothers with opportunities to obtain education and find gainful employ-

"The Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound program is a relatively new program in this area — it's actually a pilot for urban Indigenous women with children," says Cheryl Edwards, executive director at Dryden Native Friendship Centre. "It's a four-phase program and it's a job readiness program that integrates key local supports to help single Indigenous mothers enhance their lives."

Edwards says the program participants are unemployed or underemployed mothers who are motivated to make changes in their lives through post-secondary education and employment.

"We've definitely seen an increase for Indigenous people coming to live and work and educate in Dryden, and that's one of the key components when we looked at this," Edwards says. "There were many urban Indigenous women that had difficulty trying to access services in Dryden and quite simply not getting the type of support they needed ... in order to be successful."

Edwards says some of the key outcomes they were looking at for participants were increased independence and control in their lives, stabilized or improved health, sustained social networks of supports within Dryden, increased involvement in education or training, enhanced employment opportunities and increased income and access to the amenities that are available in Dryden.

'Phase one (of the program) is skills training and academic upgrading, and that includes life skills, computer skills, financial literacy and academic upgrading program for postsecondary entrance and planning," Edwards says. "Phase two is the formal education, so the Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound women attend a post-secondary program in a discipline geared to meet current demands of the labour market and what their goals are."

Edwards says phase three is an on-the-job placement and apprenticeship, noting that Homeward Bound has their own industry council with the private sector to provide professional job placements to help participants gain work experience in their chosen profession.

"And phase four is the employment, so opportunities for full-time employment with private sector or industry partners and support in transitioning into their new lives are offered in this final phase," Edwards says.

Marilyn Meekis, one of the program participants who is now a health outreach worker at Dryden Native Friendship Centre and a Deer Lake citizen, says the program was challenging and overwhelming at times but also exciting.

"There has been a lot of growth on my part and also my son's part," Meekis says. "My son gets to participate in a lot of activities that they have for him over there too."

Meekis says the post-secondary education part of the program was overwhelming at times because she had not been in school for many years.

"There were some days I wanted to quit but I just kept going," Meekis says. "Once I finished college that's when I started looking for a job, and then I applied here for the health outreach worker. My diploma was in the Social Services Worker program and now I am a registered social services worker."

Meekis says she previously worked in the hospitality industry in restaurants and retail

"Now I'm on my way to getting more independent," Meekis says. "I also have a career now, which is pretty awesome. I have benefitted from this program immensely."

Edwards adds that Meekis was able to use her Anishininiimowin (Oji-Cree) language skills to help Elders with organization and the intake process during forest fire evacuations to Dryden.

"We see that strength in Marilyn every day here at the Friendship Centre," Edwards says. "We know if someone is in need to express themselves in the language, she's our go to person when it comes down to (Anishininiimowin)."

Cartoons















Cartoons









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THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

We have more than 30 offices throughout our region. While we have many opportunities in city/town based locations, we also have many community-based positions in the First Nation communities. Our formal head office is located in Sandy Lake First Nation. The administrative office is based in Sioux Lookout, because it is a major transportation centre for the Tikinagan communities. The agency continues to increase the numbers of community-based staff in order to provide more responsive services at the local level.







TIKINAGAN.ORG

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Committee
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Sioux Lookout, ON P8T
1B1

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Faxing your resume and cover letter to (807) 737-4550.

In Person

You can drop by any Tikinagan community office/unit and bring your resume/ cover letter to the receptionist. Let them know you are applying for a job and ask them to fax it to Human Resources.

Ontario to expand addiction services

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The provincial government recently announced an investment of \$3.8 million to enhance access to addictions treatment supports in Thunder Bay on March 14 through the new Addictions Recovery Fund.

"Our government remains steadfast in our work to provide Ontarians in the north with access to safe and effective mental health and addictions services as close to home as possible," says Michael Tibollo, associate minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "Investing in mental health and addictions services in Thunder Bay is iust one more way our government is continuing to support vulnerable populations across the province with high-quality mental health and addictions care that addresses their unique needs on their journey to recov-

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group will use the funding to expand access to a total of 34 new addictions treatment beds and help hundreds of people in Thunder Bay and the surrounding region to access specialized addictions treatment. The funding will support 20 new supportive treatment beds at Dilico and access to 10 new addictions treatment beds and four new withdrawal management beds at St. Joseph's Care Group.

"This new investment will

provide a safe space in the local continuum of addictions treatment for Indigenous young people to address personal difficulties related to substance misuse," says Darcia Borg, executive director at Dilico. "They will be able to engage with other young people transitioning in to adulthood in a supportive living environment that is inclusive and provides other on-site support services such as cultural and land-based activities, life skill building, coping skill development, as well as access to individual and group counselling and supports with entry to education and employment opportunities."

The provincial government states that studies have shown that opioid-related deaths surged by 79 per cent during the first two waves of the pandemic, with rates being three times higher in northern Ontario.

"There is urgent and immediate need in Thunder Bay for people living with addiction, and the pandemic has added to what can only be described as a crisis," says Kelli O'Brien, president and CEO at St. Joseph's Care Group. "Today's investment of \$1.1 million through the Addictions Recovery Fund recognizes and helps meet that need. With our partners, we will ensure that funding is put to use by expanding access to care right now, and adding new withdrawal management and addictions beds. It means we



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fort William Chief Peter Collins, pictured in 2017, says his community celebrates the provincial government's recent announcement of \$3.8 million for 34 new addictions treatment beds at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group in Thunder Bay.

can offer more to people who are struggling with addictions and their families."

Fort William Chief Peter Collins says his community celebrates the announcement of additional resources to help support those struggling with addictions.

"Our leadership, faced with the devastating impacts that addictions have on children and families, continue to work to enhance the support available for our people," Collins says. "This additional support will be vital in our effort to provide young people a safe space to access culturally appropriate programs and services."

Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Judith Monteith-Farrell says people in Thunder Bay have "fought so hard for mental health and addictions services."

"Unfortunately, many loved

ones have died from opioid overdoses in Thunder Bay while Doug Ford waited to provide them help over the last four years," Monteith-Farrell says. "I recently told Mr. Ford that Thunder Bay had 15 overdose deaths in two days. It should not have taken four years for him to take this first step towards the mental health and addictions beds we need."

Monteith-Farrell adds that

there is plenty more that the provincial government can do, such as the funding of a Community-Based Crisis Centre that mental health and addictions stakeholders have called for.

"Families across Thunder Bay deserve access to mental health and addictions services," Monteith-Farrell says. "We cannot let more families be torn apart and more lives lost to the opioid crisis in our community."





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One Women's Journey

One Women's Journey within the collective Indigenous Women's movement: The Reclaiming of self, voice and community

"Every day is ceremony" Mariea Linklater





screenshot

Ontario Native Women's Association executive director Cora McGuire-Cyrette and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Métis Nation president Melanie Omeniho delivered the One Woman's Journey: Reclaiming Self, Voice and Community workshop on the second day of the Trent Elder's Gathering.

ONWA highlighted at 2022 Trent Elders Gathering

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) Executive Director Cora McGuire-Cyrette highlighted the importance of individual and collective responsibilities during the Trent Elder's Gathering One Woman's Journey: Reclaiming Self, Voice and Community workshop.

"When we re-envisioned ONWA and who we are as an agency, what the membership and the board had directed us to do was to reclaim leadership," McGuire-Cyrette says. "So we held this conference and that is where we took this picture — it's always been one of those profound pictures where it's like this is leadership, Indigenous women working collectively together from generation to generation. It always brings me back and centres me because at the conference what all the Indigenous women collectively said there was that yes, there's political leadership and there's also all of this other leadership that we need to recognize. It's about holding the world together, it's about supporting each other, it's about reclaiming healthy ways of

McGuire-Cyrette says one of the other teachings that she received over the past few years was from Mariea Linklater.

"She spoke to us about how every day is ceremony," McGuire-Cyrette says. "And that every day, she spoke about, we have an opportunity to take up our roles, to start again, to start anew, and every day is that gift. So for me it was just another one of those teachings that I carry with me in the work that I do."

McGuire-Cyrette says she was raised by leaders, noting that her grandparents were residential school survivors, who didn't let their trauma define them.

"Yes it was there and yes we did learn some colonial ways, and yes there was trauma that interrupted pieces of growing up but overall they gave me values of living off the land, they gave me values of caring for the Earth and speaking on behalf of those that are voiceless or speaking to the truth of issues that we're facing," McGuire-Cyrette says.

McGuire-Cyrette says her work is based on the leaders that have come before her, noting that her great great great grandmother witnessed the signing of the 1850 Treaty.

"She was a child when she witnessed this and her grandfather made sure that she was to be there at the signing," McGuire-Cyrette says. "To me it spoke to how agreements were not made in our communities without women and children being present, because it was

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for the whole community — everybody has their own important roles and responsibilities."

McGuire-Cyrette says her grandfather Patty McGuire also made sure that she went with him to meetings when she was a child.

"That was him making sure I was there to understand what was going on," McGuire-Cyrette says. "One of his biggest pieces of advocacy was supporting Indigenous women's rights, especially because he was Métis and when my grandmother married him she lost her rights. He was at the constitutional talks and he gave seats to the women at ONWA to participate in those talks."

Melanie Omeniho, president of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Métis Nation, also spoke during the One Woman's Journey: Reclaiming Self, Voice and Community workshop, which was held on the second day of the Feb. 11-13 gathering. A descendant of the historical Métis community of Lac Ste Anne and a Métis Nation of Alberta citizen, Omeniho also attended meetings as a young person with her mother and other strong Métis women role models.

The gathering also had scheduled keynote presentations by National Chief Rose-Anne Archibald and Niigaan Sinclair, from St. Peter's/Little Peguis, Sylvia Maracle, from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, and Rick Hill, from Six Nations.

GENERATIONPGM

News BriefClosure Planning at Marathon

Generation PGM Inc. (Gen PGM) is dedicated to a progressive reclamation strategy with a focus on end land use information from communities. Rehabilitation objectives to reclaim land within the Project footprint will focus on physical and chemical stability to prevent acid generation and metal leaching.

Closure Timeline

Year 1: Construct channels to re-establish natural flow patterns and de-water the constructed ponds on site. Construct a boulder fence around the open pits and begin revegetation.

Year 2: Sell remaining equipment and continue revegetation efforts. Focus on re-establishment of the wetland environments in the water management ponds.

Year 3: Remove grid connection and complete building demolition.

Year 4: Close roads and remove pumps as active water pumping is complete

Year 5: Complete the site revegetation.

Year 25: Flood and water monitoring continues.

Revegetation programs will be implemented to optimize end land use efforts leading up to Year 5. This enhancement of terrestrial habitat will be beneficial for local community land use but will also benefit the various animal species that use the Project site.

Please send us your comments if you have any suggestions or ideas for the GenPGM Closure Plan.

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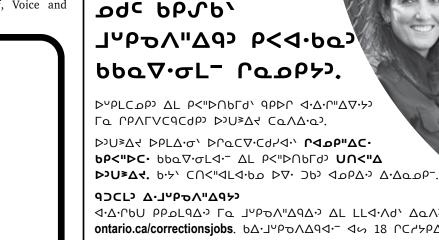
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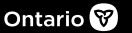
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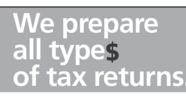
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Business

Matawa submits 2022 pre-budget to the Feds

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) recently highlighted their submissions to the federal government's 2022 pre-budget consultation process.

Matawa First Nations Management stated in a Feb. 23 press release that they delivered their submission to the offices of Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu and Thunder Bay-Rainy River MP Marcus Powlowski calling on Canada to begin a collaboration, negotiations and investment process in partnership with Matawa First Nations to maximize the benefits of the development of the

"The Matawa Chiefs Council have consistently stated the position that the development of the north including the Ring of Fire mineral deposit will require the participation of our people of the Matawa First Nations, the governments of Canada and Ontario, industry and investors to maximize the potential multi-generational benefits that are anticipated," says David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO at Matawa First Nations Management. "Now is the time for Canada to demonstrate its commitment to reconciliation and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its approach to its relationship with the Matawa First Nations, Canada's economic recovery and major project development.'

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald says she supports regional initiatives driven by First Nations such as the MFNM submission for the 2022 prebudget consultations during a virtual National Chief Press Conference on Feb. 23.

"The Ring of Fire is going to be one of the biggest developments in the history of Ontario so having them lead discussions tant," Archibald says.

also made pre-budget submissions and talked with the federal government about major investments into economic development in all areas.

"One area that we have been advocating for is a national prosperity table similar to the Ontario prosperity table that I began when I was the regional chief in Ontario," Archibald says. "So it would be a national table to look at national funding for First Nations and to also look at ways of rebuilding economies in First Nations. It's important to note that economies did exist prior to contact and those were decimated by colonialism, and it is incumbent upon governments to help rebuild those economies that they destroyed.'

submission calls for Crown-

around prosperity and building their economies is really impor-Archibald says the AFN has

The first point on MFNM's



Matawa First Nations Management CEO David Paul Achneepineskum stressed that the development of the north including the Ring of Fire mineral deposit will require the participation of Matawa First Nations citizens, governments of Canada and Ontario, industry and investors.

Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller to be designated as the lead federal minister to work alongside Matawa First Nations on the development of northern Ontario's storehouse of natural resources, with a specific recommendation for the establishment of a Matawa/ Canada Northern Development

The second point on MFNM's submission calls for "the role of the Crown of Canada, the prime minister and the minister responsible for Indigenous-Crown Relations must be more transparent as our Treaty partner," noting that the demands of the provincial government and the mining industry are secondary.

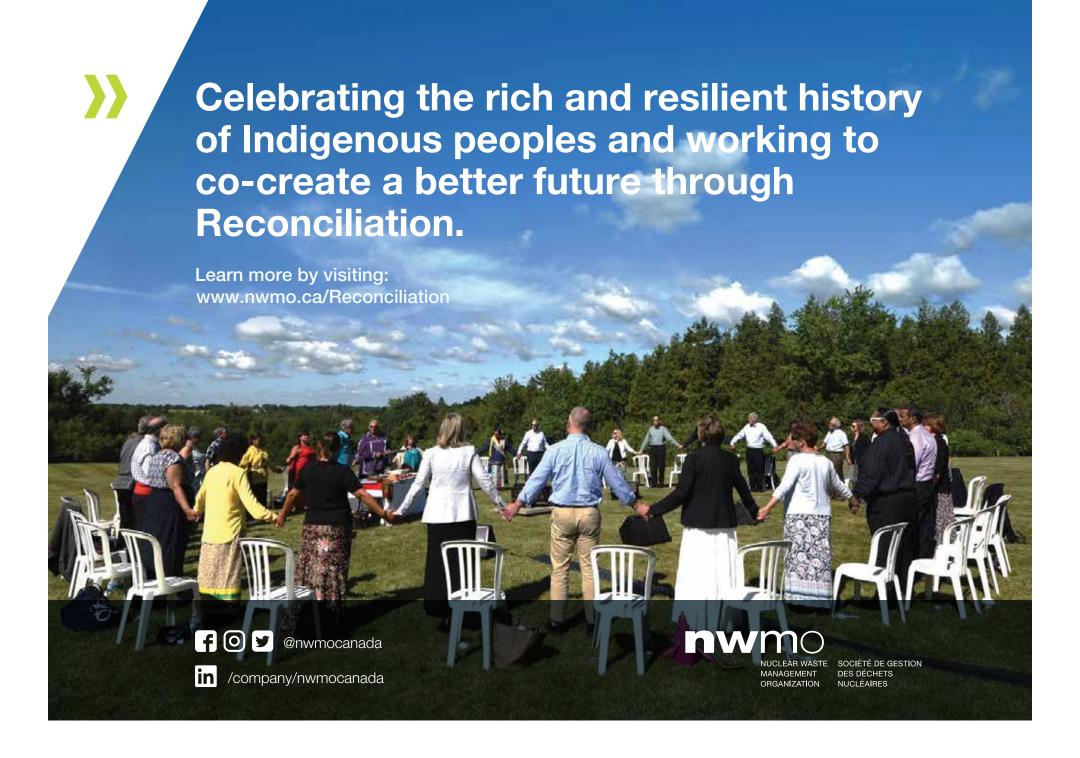
MFNM also recommends that the federal government commits to ongoing funding for the collaboration, negotiations and investment process as part of Matawa First Nations reestablishing their governance over lands and resources.

"As a Treaty partner - First Nations must be funded to ensure equitable decision-making processes in this new era of partnerships and regional development," the submission states.

"Economic recovery that benefits all Canadians ...' must include the Matawa First Nations as equal and joint partners in development, enabling

investor certainty and participation in the emerging new northern Ontario economy from within the Matawa traditional territories and homelands.

Canada's commitment to begin this process would be a substantial legacy for Matawa First Nations - and all Canadians - on our joint efforts towards reconciliation and forging a new path forward for Indigenous-Crown relations.'



Let's Lobby For Safer Roads



This has been a very difficult winter. The combination of the pandemic along with very cold temperatures hovering around -30 most of the time has made life a challenge for all of us in northern Ontario. On top of that we have had a very snowy winter so far and there are 10 foot snowbanks out side my front drive.

As northerners we love our four seasons, the tranquility of life in the far north and the benefit of living close to wilderness areas with many lakes and rivers that provide recreational and sporting oppor-tunities.

However, most hearty northerners still yearn for warmer temperatures and less dangerous road conditions. Highway 11 from North Bay heading north than west to Thunder Bay is notorious in the win-ter for accidents and this year is proving to be very dangerous with many accidents causing death and in-jury.

When the temperatures are very cold the sand and salt spread on the road does not stick and the wind blows everything away leaving ice rinks to drive on. Friends from other parts of the world can't be-lieve that we northerners drive on these slippery ice rink highways in the winter. It's shocking even for me to describe this kind of driving as being no better than playing a game of Russian Roulette. It is nor-mal to drive on this ice and meet huge transport trucks traveling a hundred kilometers an hour in the opposite direction only feet away. The slightest mistake by a driver as result of blowing, blinding snow and rough roads ends up in tragedy.

As a teenager on the James Bay coast, I grew up working with my family hauling freight and car-go with half ton trucks and tractors on a winter ice road. That road ran from Moosonee up the James Bay coast to my home of Attawapiskat and past other communities like Fort Albany and Kashechewan. I spent many hours driving a tractor pulling a caboose and trailer along this remote winter road. There were many challenges on this icy route, however most of the time there was little traffic and we travelled at a slow speed. This northern ice road which is still in use today is no where near as dangerous as Highway 11 in the south.

There are so many transport

trucks on the Trans Canada highways these days that often they seem like long trains and in poor weather conditions it is frightening to meet them. Myself and most of my friends these days choose to stay away from the highways in winter if the weather and road conditions are poor. In bad weather the risk of being involved in an accident with one of these huge transport trucks is too great. I know many people who have been killed and injured in accidents over the past decade on our northern highways.

To make matters worse the transport truck drivers are usually trying their best to stay on time and move their freight and supplies to our grocery, hardware stores, mines and businesses. Many are on cross country trips. The pressure these drivers face is enormous and often they are tired and stressed out and that presents

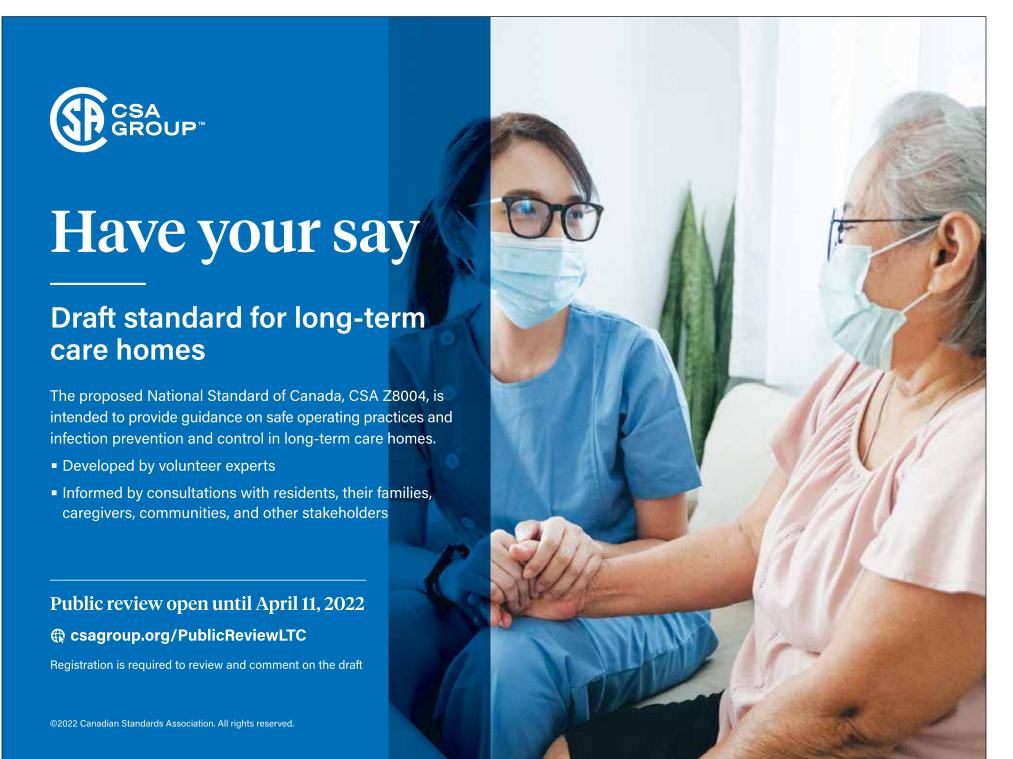
a problem on icy roads. These trucks take a very long time to stop and once they lose control there is little chance of gaining it back. Many new truckers are not trained sufficiently, especially for ex-treme cold weather driving, before heading out onto icy northern highways.

There are some developments that are helping to make things more safe on our roadways. The Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber Of Commerce's Going the Extra Mile for Safety (GEMS) com-mittee is a group that was formed to address the safety of Highway 11. The GEMS committee has suc-cessfully convinced the Ontario government to conduct a pilot project for a 2+1 highway system. This highway design has been popularized in Sweden, which is another northern first world country that deals with dangerous winter roadways similar to ours.

The system has been proven in Sweden and over the past 20 years, they have reduced their highway fatalities by an estimated 50 percent.

My friends and family here in the north have also been wondering why we don't simply improve our train transport system so that most of our goods can travel by rail rather than by road. Perhaps that is something we should be lobbying for as it makes sense economically and safety wise while also creating less damage to our roads. The trucking lobby is huge so it would take some political will to start to make the change. However, if the public lobbies for less trucks on our roads, more rail and safer highways, I think it would have a good chance of happening. Let's lobby for safer roads.

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