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Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA)

Publications Mail Reg. No. 40063755

ISSN 0834-177X • Established 1983



Strawberry ceremony honours Indigenous women

The Toronto march for the murdered and missing
Indigenous women on Feb.14.

Please see story on page 7.

Photo: Barb Nahwegahbow

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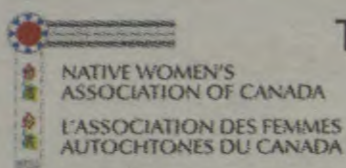
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The Native Women's Association of Canada has created a new resource for Aboriginal women escaping domestic violence.

This new toolkit, *You Are Not Alone: A Toolkit for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence*, provides Aboriginal women with community safety planning resources to address domestic violence. The toolkit also includes a *Who's Who: Domestic Violence Resource Guide* of services available to Aboriginal women in every province and territory.

Hard copies of the toolkit and additional promotional items can be ordered free-of-charge until March 27, 2015 to raise awareness about domestic violence in communities.

An electronic copy of the toolkit will be available online at: www.nwac.ca.

For more information or to place an order, please contact:

Cherry Smiley
Project Manager - Violence Prevention and Safety
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Monthly Circulation: 20,000
Windspeaker 1-year subscription: \$55.00+GST
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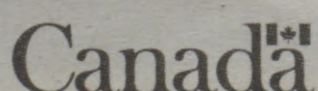
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.



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Grief and anger over injustice simmers under surface 7

Canada's missing and murdered Indigenous women were commemorated with a Strawberry Ceremony on Valentine's Day. The ceremony, held at Toronto Police Headquarters at Yonge and College streets, celebrated its tenth anniversary. More than 800 people gathered to pray, sing and remember the thousand-plus daughters, sisters, mothers and aunts whose lives were cut short by violence.

Nations at the table on Mount Polley review 8

The British Columbia government will be moving ahead with all seven recommendations that have come from a panel investigation into the Mount Polley breach.

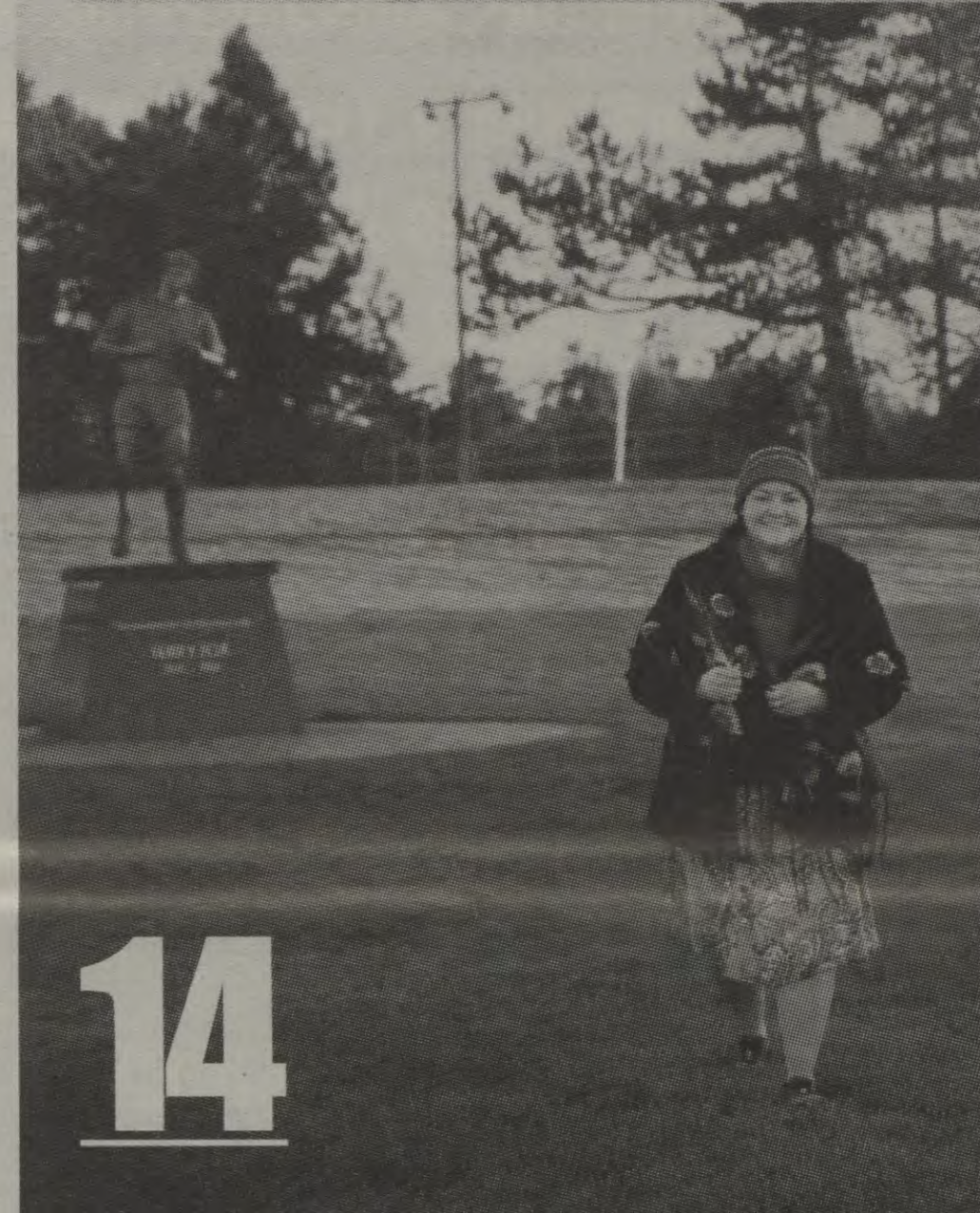
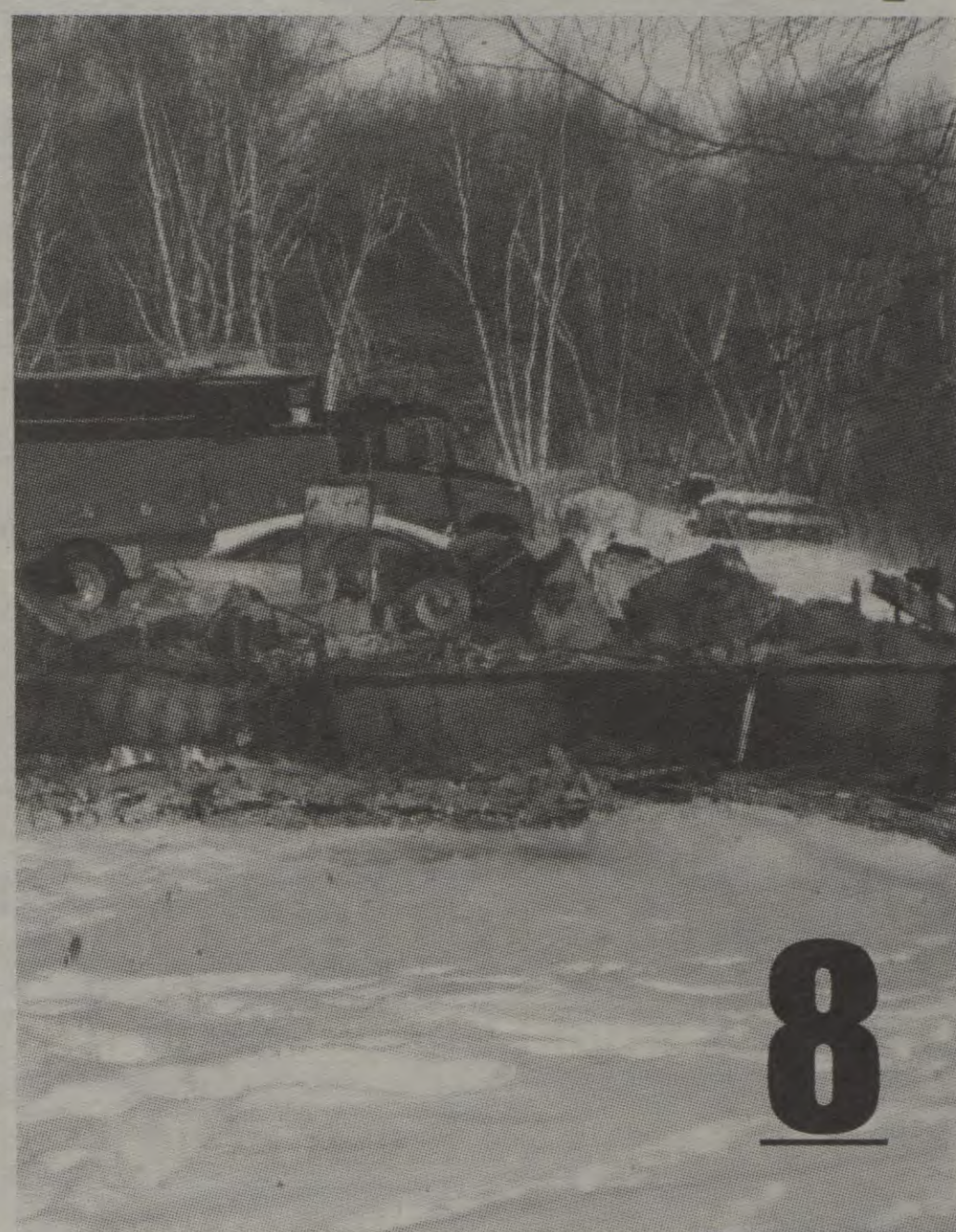
Voting becomes harder to do for First Nations 9

Changes to be implemented for the upcoming federal election could be a double-edged sword for Aboriginal voters. "It's going to put up a few more barriers and make it more difficult for First Nations people to ... exercise their opportunity to vote," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

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Flags were lowered and tributes flowed when four artists were killed Feb. 10 in one horrific car crash in Saskatchewan; sentiment justified all the more by examining why they were travelling together that snowy morning.



Lacy Morin-Desjarlais



Narcisse Blood



Michael Green

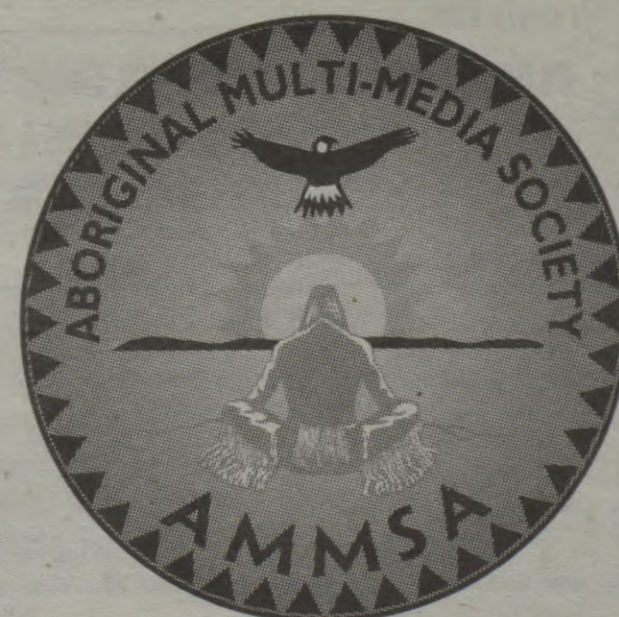


Michele Sereda

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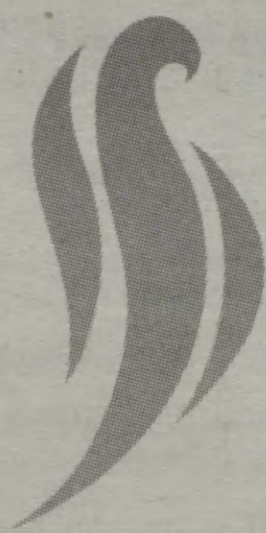
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We are pointing the finger at Ottawa

It's with a heavy heart that we report on such tragedy as the one that took the lives of two young children in a house fire on the Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation in February. Aggravating an already horrible situation is the finger-pointing that has occurred in the aftermath. The tendency, of course, is to look for someone to blame for such a senseless loss. And that seems always to overshadow real and terrible grief.

We fear, in this case, with the loss of a two-year-old boy and his 18-month-old sister, there will be plenty of blame to go around, and suspect there will be no peace in the hearts and minds of those that contributed to the circumstances. It's not an easy burden to bear. 'What if we had done this, instead of that?' The 'what ifs' are what will keep people from sleeping easy in their beds for many nights to come.

What we know is that many people failed those children. A nominal bill for fire services went unpaid. Why? A drastic decision was made to cut off an emergency life-line with just a stroke of a pen. Why? So underfunded are First Nations, rural and remote communities that they are pitted against one another over a few thousand dollars. Why? Why are neighboring communities not working together on such issues, looking each other square in the eyes and trying to work on compromise and accommodation? Why, why, why?

What we do know for sure is that Ottawa has so neglected their obligations to First Nations communities, cut so close to the bone, been so callus in their response to the needs of our communities that it has set up very dangerous situations on reserves across the country. Why is there no standard that Ottawa must uphold for the safety and security of First Nations citizens, and why is Ottawa not held to account?

And why do we put up with a minister of Aboriginal Affairs whose knee-jerk and only response is to ignore his own government's culpability? Never have we seen such a lack of compassion as was demonstrated by Minister Bernard Valcourt in response to this horrific event. His interaction in the House of Commons with NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic Niki Ashton

when she asked legitimate questions about the consequences of underfunding First Nations communities was an embarrassment. He accused her of playing politics with the deaths of these two children, but it was he who reduced the discussion to partisanship.

Why does the Conservative government side of the House, time after time, degrade and dehumanize Aboriginal peoples and their concerns?

People eating out of a garbage dump in Rankin Inlet because food is scarce and expensive? The MP responsible for the area is unworried. She heckles Opposition members and attempts to intimidate the leader in the North who speaks about the situation, alarmed. When pressed, Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq decides the issue is beneath her and ignores the discussion, choosing to read a newspaper in the House instead of responding to concerns.

Missing and murdered Aboriginal women? Instead of responding to what many believe is a demonstrated need for an inquiry, Justice Minister Peter MacKay, in a fit of anger, throws the reports and studies that have been compiled on murdered and missing girls and women on the House of Commons' floor.

This is ongoing disrespectful conduct. It's a pattern, and tells us that we and the issues we are concerned with are... oh, how should we put it, 'not high on government's radar.'

As we go to press, fire officials are telling us that the "complete burn" of the house where the children were staying has left nothing for them to determine a cause for the blaze. We don't have to know what started the fire to know that the inequities and struggles on reserve that come with underfunding contributed to it. Ottawa failed those children. And we all will contribute to that failure if we don't press Ottawa to up their attentiveness to First Nations families and communities. We expect better from this government. We insist they do better, in memory and in honour of those two tiny children.

Windspeaker

Letter: Administration put dollars ahead of Aboriginal people

Dear Editor:

As a retired school principal in urban and on-reserve communities, and a current licensed AANDC electoral officer, I have served Indian Bands across Western Canada for almost 20 years.

A good part of my work is to assess, know and work within the relationships between First Nations, their surrounding non-First Nation communities, and the larger overall community.

The recent fire in which two infant children lost their lives at Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation in Saskatchewan is a painful tragedy. Whether or not help from the nearby Loon Lake non-First Nation community's fire department would have saved the children's lives is unknown. What is known is that the Loon Lake community's administration put money ahead of First Nation's peoples' safety.

I unequivocally state that if a non-First Nation

village or town near to Loon Lake needed fire department help and had owed Loon Lake \$3,400, the Loon Lake Fire Department would have helped without hesitation.

I further unequivocally state that Loon Lake's hard-hearted attitude toward and relationship with the nearby Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation is typical of the same across much of Saskatchewan and western Canada.

An overwhelming majority of non-Aboriginals value the well-being, safety and lives of other non-Aboriginals more than they value the well-being, safety and lives of Aboriginals.

To me, that's racism, as sickening as it can get.

*Dr. D. Robert Hall, M. Ed (admin), Ph.D.
(EDPA), Saskatoon*

[rants and raves] Page 5 Chatter

THE CANADIAN PRESS REPORTS THAT A FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

at Walpole Island and Kettle and Stony Point First Nations' elementary schools has dramatically raised literacy rates. Once well behind provincial standards in reading and writing, students are exceeding those standards in some cases as of 2014. Former Prime Minister Paul Martin said he is impressed and hopes other reserves across Canada can emulate the program. He hopes the federal government will invest in similar programs as there is nothing holding First Nations children back if given adequate resources and teaching. Since leaving politics, Martin has been a vocal critic and advocate for education in First Nations communities.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA HAS VETOED A BILL THAT WOULD

lead to the construction of the Keystone XL 1,400 km pipeline that would bring oil from Alberta to join up with pipes in Nebraska that run to Texas. The pipeline has polarized positions, with Republicans and supporters saying it would create jobs, and Democrats and environmentalists saying it would contribute to carbon emissions and global warming. It's the third veto from the president, but it may not stop the project, with Republicans contemplating other ways to embed Keystone in other legislation that the president may not wish to block, reports U.S. news publications.

THE KATIVIK SCHOOL BOARD IN NORTHERN QUEBEC IS DEFENDING

a decision to send four delegates to a conference on aboriginal education in Honolulu at a cost of \$23,000, reports CBC. A local politician had accused the board of wasting taxpayers' money, but the board shot back saying the trip is justified for the development of curriculum and culture/language work, and the complaint took the travel costs in the north out of context. "You cannot really in all fairness compare our expenses on that level to that type of expense [at] any other school board in the province of Quebec," reads a statement from a public relations officer with the board, adding sending school board officials to Nunavik communities can be just as expensive as sending them to Hawaii. The board provides education to Inuit and others in the 14 northern Quebec communities of Nunavik, and has offices in Kuujuaq, Que., and Montreal.

CHIEF ISADORE DAY OF SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

sent an open letter to federal Parliamentarians in February asking that a motion and private members Bill be brought forward to make April 12 an annual day for a National Dialogue on Ending Racism in Canada.

Currently, there is "no national strategy to deal with this malady," reads the letter. "All citizens and visitors to this land deserve a society free from racism." As a background, the letter notes that racism falls into five categories – biology, ideology, culture, structure and power. "It is highly suspected that these categories will have a role in coming to a clearer understanding as to why 1,181 Indigenous women and girls have [gone] missing or have tragically turned up dead in Canada." The letter talks about Canada's nation-building history, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Peace and Friendship Treaties, the British North America Act, 1867, the Canadian Constitution of 1982, the Indian Act of 1876 and "systemic policies, programs, imposed legislations and institutional violations that are characteristic of racism."

A new narrative is an obvious goal, says the letter. "This would begin the important work of re-setting the relationship that is consistent with that of the Peace and Friendship Treaties, and ultimately bring a stronger nationwide focus on strategies to begin the arduous task of affecting the root causes of racism and its effects." The letter will be carried to Parliament by Carol Hughes MP: NDP, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing.

CRIME ON THE PAUL FIRST NATION IN ALBERTA IS SO PREVALENT

that chief and council has drafted a bylaw to evict members from the community if charged with violent or drug crimes. The idea is to restore respect for community and for people, said Chief Casey Bird. He understands that the step is a drastic one, but a sexual assault against a six-year-old girl in the community in January prompted action, reports APTN. The bylaw had been a consideration for some time, but "somewhere, we needed to say 'enough is enough', said councillor Aeron Bird. They are working closely with RCMP on the eviction initiative. "We need to provide safety for our people," said the chief. The nation is considering making the reserve dry once again, saying when the ban on alcohol was lifted, violence in the community began to increase.

THE ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS AND ALLIED INDIANS

said Senator Patrick Brazeau's help is not welcome. They say "an accused abuser" isn't fit to advocate for Indigenous women's issues. Brazeau tweeted in late January he is "open to doing volunteer work on Aboriginal issues." And he called for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. Brazeau is awaiting trial on sexual assault and assault charges. "While I understand that Mr. Brazeau has a right to his day in court," Deputy Grand Chief Denise Stonefish said in an online statement, "I find it seriously troubling that as an accused abuser he thinks it is appropriate to advocate for and work with victims and their families."

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Huu-ay-aht LNG project moves forward despite market uncertainty

By **Shayne Morrow**
Windspeaker Contributor

PORT ALBERNI, B.C.

A Vancouver Island First Nation has signed a \$30-million contract with multinational engineering firm Worley Parsons for environmental and geotechnical assessments and design work on a proposed liquefied natural gas facility.

Huu-ay-aht First Nation, in partnership with Vancouver-based Steelhead LNG, signed the contract on Feb. 6. The signing came despite the recent freefall in global crude oil prices and widespread industry pessimism about LNG developments.

On Nov. 29 last year, the Huu-ay-aht People's Assembly voted to move ahead with the project in the face of opposition from members, environmental groups and B.C. First Nations whose traditional territories are situated along the proposed pipeline route.

Huu-ay-aht First Nation is one of 14 member nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council.

The Huu-ay-aht/Steelhead partnership proposes to build an LNG export facility on Sarita Bay, which is situated on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. The plant would be capable of liquefying and shipping 24 million tons of LNG annually.

Since the People's Assembly gave their approval, the world price of oil, and by extension, the prospects

for LNG projects have declined sharply.

Huu-ay-aht elected Chief Councillor Jeff Cook said the partnership would continue to move forward despite the market uncertainties.

"We're still pretty confident," he said. "A lot of the big players, particularly up North, have shifted their thinking because they're focused on oil. We're focused on LNG only."

In the 2014 B.C. budget, projected LNG revenues figured heavily in the Liberal government's vision of prosperity for the province. On Feb. 17, however, when Finance Minister Mike de Jong rolled out the 2015 budget, LNG was hardly mentioned.

Cook said the low profile for LNG on Budget Day was not surprising.

"We know from our regular meetings with government that they are still focused on LNG projects. But they are a little slower to move ahead than they anticipated."

Likewise, Cook said the project proponents anticipated some sort of LNG announcement by Ottawa when Prime Minister Stephen Harper came to B.C. two days later, but they had no advance knowledge of the specifics.

On Feb. 19, Harper announced a series of tax breaks for new LNG plant construction, including a 30 per cent capital cost allowance on equipment and 10 per cent on buildings.

Cook said it is uncertain whether the tax measures would be enough to move the project forward any faster.

"We're (Huu-ay-aht) focused on our site, and I'm not sure if it would have any effect for us. I am sure it would have an effect along the pipeline route."

"It may help the overall picture, but there are so many pieces to the puzzle that we are dealing with, we haven't analyzed that yet."

Repeated requests for an interview were made to Steelhead LNG CEO Nigel Kuzemko, and upon Steelhead's request, Windspeaker provided a list of detailed questions, including about his view on how the tax breaks might impact on the project timeline. There was no response from the company head by deadline.

Other questions included how the current glut of LNG project proposals might affect royalties set by government, and at what stage Steelhead would enter discussions with the province and with Ottawa.

Kuzemko was also asked about how long-term prices might be affected by the abundance of countries attempting to establish their own LNG industries.

In December, Windspeaker asked Kuzemko if the partners had taken steps to assure that the assessment process does not become a revenue-generating initiative in itself. At the time, the CEO maintained that the

company was structured in such a way that there was no incentive to spin out the assessment process.

Now, with a \$30-million consulting contract in place with Worley Parsons, Kuzemko was asked if there are specific safeguards in place to prevent a self-sustaining study process. That answer is still pending.

For his part, Cook said Huu-ay-aht has been actively involved in setting up the study, and have recommended field specialists with a proven track record working on resource projects for Huu-ay-aht and other First Nations. Cook stressed the amount of human capital that exists in the region, and the emphasis that the partners have placed on innovation.

"For example, we recently sat down with the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre to see what sort of synergies we might develop," he said.

Writing about the project on Feb. 20, Julie Gordon of Reuters pointed out that the Huu-ay-aht/Steelhead partnership was unique among Canadian First Nation initiatives in that Huu-ay-aht has been a driver in the enterprise from the outset, rather than an add-on to facilitate the approval process. Still to be determined, however, Gordon reported, was how large an equity stake Huu-ay-aht would take should the project move forward.

Currently, Steelhead LNG is financing the Worley Parsons study through its investment

agreement with KERN Partners, a Calgary-based energy sector private equity firm. Cook said the financial arrangements within the partnership are still evolving.

"We still don't know to what extent we will be involved in the capital end," Cook said.

As one of five Maa-nulth Treaty Nations, Huu-ay-aht owns specified treaty settlement lands plus freehold title lands they have acquired over the years, plus cash settlements that derived from the treaty, which was signed in 2009.

Huu-ay-aht also possesses significant but less tangible equity capital in the form of land, forest and marine resource rights within its traditional territory. Cook said Huu-ay-aht's equity base has yet to be fully quantified in terms of how much capital could be borrowed, and his nation is still working on how to structure their investment. He declined to speculate on the question of future royalties and pricing structures, referring the question to Steelhead LNG.

Cook said Huu-ay-aht hopes to partner with other First Nations, particularly other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, as the project moves towards fruition.

"We haven't reached out to the broader B.C. First Nations as yet. We've been informing the local First Nations and, in general, they're pretty supportive of what we're doing. But of course, as we're going along, there will be a lot more comments and questions."

Children still falling through cracks of jurisdiction

By **Shari Narine**
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

A study recently released by the Jordan Principle's working group underscores the need for the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to take a strong stand against the federal government for the less-than-adequate care it provides status First Nations children.

The decision by the tribunal in the *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations v. Attorney General of Canada* is expected by mid-April.

But until then, First Nations children continue to lose out.

"The report is very clear that even right now there are still children falling through the gaps, that aren't getting the service," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

The AFN was one of four organizations that worked with researchers from three universities to author the report. It comprises two studies that reviewed more than 300 Jordan's Principle-related documents that indicated how the federal government dealt with First Nations children on reserve.

And despite the House of



PHOTO: ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

National Chief Perry Bellegarde joined Ottawa students and other supporters at "Have A Heart Day" on Parliament Hill on Feb. 10.

Commons unanimous adoption of Jordan's Principle in 2007, the "jurisdictional wrangling" continues, said Bellegarde.

Jordan's Principle states that in cases where jurisdictional responsibility is unclear, the level of government initially approached for the service needs to cover the cost. Payment issues between the levels of government are to be dealt with later.

The study indicates that children are still being neglected in all areas of care – social, educational, and health – as provincial departments and the

federal government argue over jurisdiction and which level of government will cover the cost of services.

"The motivation for this policy work comes from the real stories of First Nations children, the injustices they have faced, and the extraordinary courage that they, their families, and their communities have displayed in response," reads the report.

One of the issues with Jordan's Principle, said Cindy Blackstock, executive director with First Nations Family and Caring Society, is the narrow scope the

federal government has adopted in its implementation, and is one question (an upcoming) Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's decision will address.

The CHRT will also rule on whether the federal government's provision of First Nations child and family services is discriminatory.

"The real test is, if the child in question were to be a non-Aboriginal child, if he or she were to get the service, the First Nation's child should get it as well," said Blackstock.

The CHRT will outline

remedies on both issues.

"The bonus of the decision is it will put an end, hopefully, to this delaying by the federal government of doing the right thing. To me it's unconscionable the situation they've left these kids in.... I don't think we can rely at all on the federal government on its own terms to do the right thing, so that's why this order is really important because it would legally force the federal government to do the right thing for these kids," said Blackstock.

There was nothing in the latest study that surprised Blackstock.

"It reaffirmed what we already knew which was that contrary to government belief there are kids being left behind because the federal government's failure to implement Jordan's Principle all over the country," she said.

Both Blackstock and Bellegarde insist that it is important that First Nations play a role in establishing a system that sees children put first by the federal government and provinces.

"It's our children that are in the provincial care system," said Bellegarde, noting that there are more First Nations children in care now than at the height of the residential school system.

"We need to be involved."

Grief and anger over injustice simmers under surface



PHOTOS: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Maggie Cywink speaking in Toronto at the February 14 Ceremony to honour MMIW and her sister Sonya Cywink who was murdered in 1994 and her killer never brought to justice.

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Canada's missing and murdered Indigenous women were commemorated with a Strawberry Ceremony on Valentine's Day.

The ceremony, held at Toronto Police Headquarters at Yonge and College streets, celebrated its tenth anniversary. More than 800 people gathered to pray, sing and remember the thousand-plus daughters, sisters, mothers and aunts whose lives were cut short by violence.

Helyna Rivera, a Mohawk woman from Six Nations, was murdered in Buffalo on Aug. 10, 2011. Last year, her killer was sentenced to 25 years by a Buffalo court.

Rivera's grandmother, Renee Hess, addressed the crowd, promising that, "even though the grave has silenced my granddaughter's voice, I will continue to speak for her."

"When we stand up and speak for ourselves, we are looked at as terrorists here in Canada. I refuse to be called a terrorist. I am a protector of our land and our

people."

Rivera's mother, Linda John, wept as she spoke publicly for the first time. Holding up a picture of her daughter in her powwow regalia, she said "Three years ago, my 26-year-old daughter was murdered, shot down, gunned down by the only man she ever loved. She left four beautiful babies that I now take care of."

The two youngest babies, she told the crowd, witnessed the murder. John said she's learned about the violence against her daughter that took place behind closed doors and has had to rise above this for the sake of her grandchildren.

"Without the Creator by my side, I don't think I would have gone this far," John said. "Grab onto something, believe in something because without that power, you will be lost. There was a time when I thought my life wasn't worth living," she said. But when she faced her former son-in-law in court, "I looked at him and I stared and I said, 'There will come a day when I rise above my pain, above my heart, which has been broken, shattered and then I will make an awareness and I will help'."

Maggie Cywink from Whitefish

River First Nation spoke about Sonya Nadine, her 32-year-old sister who was murdered in August 1994. Her sister went missing on Aug. 26 and, four days later, her body was found about 65 kms west of London, Ont. Her killer is still at large.

In an interview following the ceremony, Cywink said her sister was pregnant.

"My sister had 32 years in this world," she said, "but her child had none and that's one of the reasons I'm so frustrated." †As far as she is concerned, it was a double homicide, "but the judicial system does not see that as being a life at all," she said.

"The big thing that really needs to change in this country," Cywink said, "is the judicial system." The system and the sentencing process fails the families of murdered women, she said. The perpetrators, she said, "get 10 years and then they're in custody for eight and get two years off for good behavior and they're out. And 10 years on a 32-year-old woman's life, that's nothing."

A recent victim of violence, Roxanne Louie, member of the Okanagan Nation in BC, was remembered by her cousin, Sunshine, a hearing-impaired



Jingle Dress Dancers in Toronto, Valentine's Day Ceremony for MMIW.

man who spoke through a sign language interpreter. Twenty-six-year-old Louie, a mother of a three-year-old son, went missing Jan. 4 of this year and her body was found several days later.

"She's gone," said Sunshine. "We know the person who was responsible is in custody, but may well be released and we're so upset by this." We want justice for Roxanne, he said, "It's not acceptable. We cannot let it go on.

Everyone who goes missing is missing from our families and our hearts. It has to stop!"

Organizer Audrey Huntley of Silence No More said this was the biggest gathering they've ever had. She estimated at least 1,000 people attended. The ceremony, led by Elder Wanda Whitebird, was followed by a march of several blocks to a feast at the YMCA prepared by the Native Men's Residence.

Treaty people hunting to care for less fortunate

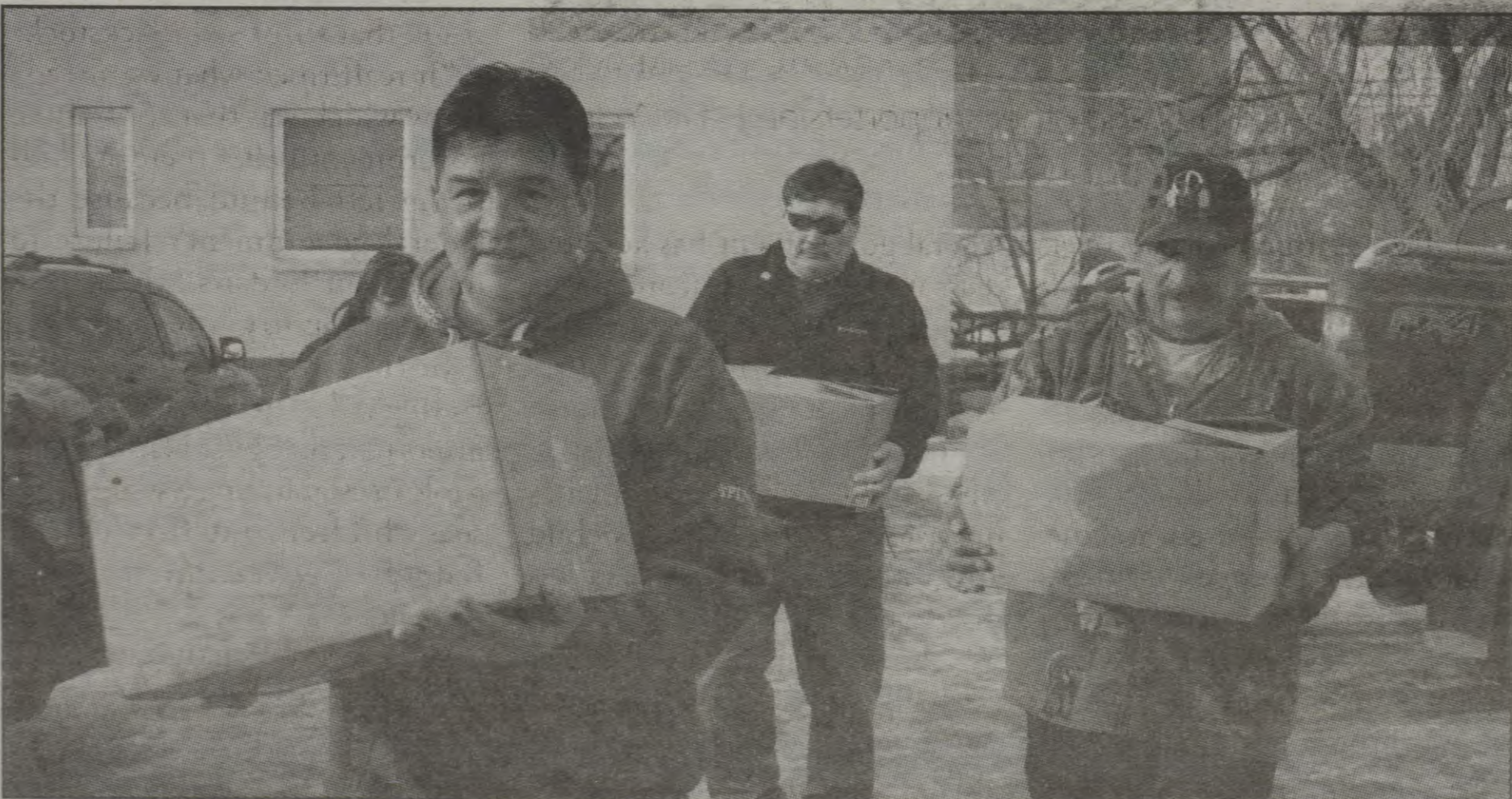


PHOTO: FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN NATIONS

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron leads the way with a box full of elk meat to be donated to the Prince Albert Food Bank.

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

PRINCE ALBERT

Donations of elk by First Nations hunters to food banks and shelters in northern Saskatchewan harken back to the days when young men hunted and provided meat for all band members.

"This is the way I was taught, ever since I killed my first animal when I was nine years old," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron. "Take a little piece for yourself, but give the rest out."

Cameron helped organize men and women in 13 First Nations

in Saskatchewan, who hunted animals in northern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. The hunters shared the meat on their respective First Nations, as well as to the charitable organizations.

Cameron, who is a member of the Witchehan Lake First Nation, shared the elk he hunted on a broader scale.

"I represent all 74 First Nations so my contribution was to the people of Saskatchewan," he said. "That was our intention. Let's implement our treaty right to hunt, take as many animals as we can and let's go back home and treat our people."

(See *Hunting* on page 9.)

Reserves under-funded for emergency response services

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

MAKWA SAHGAIEHCAN FIRST NATION

An unanswered call for help on the Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation for an early morning house fire has left two children dead, two communities reeling, and a renewed call for better funding from the federal government for emergency response services.

On Feb. 17, a call was placed to the neighboring Loon Lake volunteer fire department, but the only emergency responders were the RCMP who arrived at 1:30 a.m. to find the residence engulfed in flames. Pronounced dead at the scene were two-year-old Harley Cheenanow and his 18-month-old sister Haley. The grandmother was treated in hospital and released.

"There are more questions than answers right now at least from where I sit," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat.

"It's very tragic that two people lost their lives in that fire. Both sides of the community are very rocked at the moment," said Laurie LeHoux, administrator with the Village of Loon Lake. "The reserve is in very close proximity to the town so a lot of people know each other. It's been very hard on both communities."

Emotions are running so high that a posting on social media the same day of the fire resulted in an arrest. Tony Mitsuing, 27, was charged with Utter Threats and released on conditions to not contact the adult male from Loon Lake that he threatened in his posting. According to the RCMP, Mitsuing's threat "pertained to the non-attendance of the Loon Lake Fire Department at the fatal



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

A house burned to the ground on Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation claiming the lives of two children.

house fire on the Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation."

The 911 to respond to the fire on the reserve is the first fire call received since the village stopped delivering firefighting services in the late fall of 2014, said LeHoux. Services were ended in response to an agreement signed in 2013 that declared if fire bills were not paid within 30 days after the billing was received "the fire agreement will be considered void and all fire services will be revoked."

The band's bill, which was payment owing from March to May 2014, was in arrears. The band did not make LeHoux aware as to why the bill was not being paid. LeHoux said she sent regular inquiries to the First Nation but received no response. The last correspondence sent to the band, both by email and post was dated Jan. 30, 2015, and stated, "The band is now well over three months behind on payment for their fire bills. The

Loon Lake Fire Department will not be responding to any fires on the First Nations until this account is paid in full." LeHoux said the band has stated it did not receive the last letter.

"It's a worst case scenario in terms of the local fire department that got the call and didn't respond and children died. That's tragic and we have to find a solution as to why that happened and to ensure that doesn't happen again and to look for answers," said Lerat.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada funds \$26 million annually for First Nations fire protection services on reserve. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation received \$33,999 of federal funding for operation and maintenance of fire protection services, said department spokesperson Emily Hillstrom in an email interview.

She would not confirm whether Makwa Sahgaiehcان had

received \$11,000 in each of the two previous years nor did she respond to a question as to whether or not First Nations considered the funding they received for fire protection services to be adequate.

Lerat is adamant that the funding is "absolutely not" enough considering it is \$26 million to be shared among over 600 First Nations.

Deaths from fires on First Nations reserves are 10 times higher than in similar off-reserve communities, according to a 2010 strategy on fire protection by AANDC.

Lerat said concerns over funding have been raised with the minister.

"We haven't been getting a very positive response because in my estimation the federal government has created the situation by systematically underfunding the reserves emergency services and, to avoid being held accountable, their

strategy is to draft legislation that places the responsibility back on the First Nations without the adequate financial resources to take care of those. We're all about safety, we're all about standards, but we can't get to those standards without the resource base that's going to allow us to do that. It costs money," he said.

The funding provided needs to be used to ensure public buildings are up to code, homes have working smoke detectors, construction and maintenance of fire halls, upgrading fire equipment, operating a fire truck, training firefighters, educating members on fire hazards and prevention, or entering into fire protection services with neighbouring communities. Of 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan, 30 have fire protection agreements with neighboring communities "and in a lot of cases those are working well," Lerat said. The other First Nations operate their own fire protection services.

LeHoux said the village hopes to move forward with their relationship with the First Nation.

"Aboriginal Affairs phoned this morning (Feb. 19) and they are hoping to facilitate something after the (Makwa Sahgaiehcان band) elections are done, with themselves, the band and ourselves, the fire department," she said.

LeHoux is uncertain whether that means AANDC will provide more funding to Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation for fire protection services, will clear up the outstanding bill, or act as mediator between the First Nation and the village.

No one from Makwa Sahgaiehcان First Nation would respond to a request for a telephone interview.

Nations at the table on Mount Polley review

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WILLIAMS LAKE FIRST NATION

The British Columbia government will be moving ahead with all seven recommendations that have come from a panel investigation into the Mount Polley breach.

The announcement is welcomed by Xat'sull First Nation and Williams Lake Indian Band, who were impacted when the open pit gold and copper mine owned by Imperial Metals Corp. released 24 million cubic metres of wastewater into nearby streams and lakes on Aug. 4, 2014.

Although subsequent testing declared aquatic life to be safe, many members chose not to fish and that left communities scrambling to find substitute meat for the winter. Salmon was purchased from coastal communities, partially funded

through government dollars.

The panel, appointed by the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines, working in collaboration with the two First Nations, found that the "dominant contribution to the failure resides in the design (which) did not take into account the complexity of the sub-glacial and pre-glacial geological environment associated with the Perimeter Embankment foundation."

The panel also found no negligence in inspections of Mount Polley's tailing storage facility and stated that regulatory staff were qualified to perform their duties.

Williams Lake Indian Band Chief Ann Louie is pleased with the results of the investigative report, although she stresses it wasn't the panel's duty to find blame, only to determine how the breach was caused.

Louie is also pleased with the government's decision to implement all the recommendations, which look at

both best applicable practises and best available technologies.

The First Nations have worked alongside the government since the breach occurred, which is an accomplishment, said Louie, considering they were not included in the initial notifications when the breach happened.

Now, Louie and Xat'sull First Nation Chief Bev Sellars are at the principle table with the assistant deputy ministers of environment, Aboriginal relations and reconciliation, and energy and mines.

The collaboration came about through a letter of understanding negotiated by the two impacted First Nations, the First Nations Summit, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, and BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council with the provincial government. It was signed by Louie and Sellars.

"Through that negotiation we were able to achieve hiring experts to determine what

happened and work alongside the panel," said Louie. "We've been pretty much at the table all along. So it's been first, I think, in our province and probably Canada as far as I'm concerned."

Louie believes the BC government was forced to include First Nations.

"We were in the position, I think, at the time of the disaster, that they didn't have any alternative in front of them because we made it very loud and clear we weren't just going to sit back and them tell us how it was going to be run," she said.

The First Nations had their own expert. Jim Kuipers is internationally renowned for his environmental work in the mining industry. He critiqued the examination undertaken by the panel.

In moving forward, Louie would like to see the government work with the First Nations in revisiting existing laws, regulations and policies in relation to the mining industry.

"I think it's an excellent opportunity for the government to take a good hard serious look at the overall mining industry in Canada and not just B.C.," she said. "There have been many disasters that have happened but nothing to the magnitude of Mount Polley ... so Mount Polley brought it to the light... I think it's pushed to the forefront of the government that they have to do something, and they can no longer ignore (that) the mining industry needs reformed legislation."

In the meantime, band members remain wary about harvesting fish. While the plume sediment has cleared and Quesnell Lake and the turbidity level is classified as good, Louie says the lake is a "fjord lake. It washes back and forth all year long."

Polley Lake has 10 metres of debris sitting on the bottom, running the length of the lake, "so the unknowns there are still unknown at this time," she said.

Voting becomes harder to do for First Nations

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Changes to be implemented for the upcoming federal election could be a double-edged sword for Aboriginal voters.

"It's going to put up a few more barriers and make it more difficult for First Nations people to ... exercise their opportunity to vote," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

Bill C-23, dubbed the Fair Elections Act, has changed the requirements for identification at the polling station. One individual can no longer vouch for a number of voters, a common practise employed by many Aboriginal voters.

"The vouching is limited to only one person and that doesn't respect the authority of the chief or a respected Elder from the community," said Bellegarde.

Two pieces of identification are now required, one of which needs to include an address. Overcrowding on many First Nations reserves means numerous adults of voting age live in a single dwelling, with an addressed bill coming under only one adult's name. Treaty cards do not include addresses.

In urban locations, high numbers of homeless are Aboriginal. The new voting law also no longer accepts the voter

registration card as a valid piece of identification.

Bellegarde said the AFN is working with Elections Canada to address the issues and there is "some light at the end of the tunnel."

Elections Canada has agreed to accept a letter of confirmation from chief and council as one of the pieces of identification. The letter would include the name of the voter, his eligibility, and that he is a resident of the reserve.

"This letter, combined with status card, (it's) my understanding that should be sufficient in order to be eligible to vote," said Bellegarde.

However, that does not provide a way in to vote for First Nations people living off-reserve, which represents more than half of the country's First Nations population.

For that, Bellegarde said, he's hoping an education campaign for the urban voters on the requirements will help them put in place what they need before the Oct. 19 election.

"We want to ensure that First Nations people who wish to exercise their right to vote, their opportunity to vote, do indeed exercise that right," said Bellegarde.

That is also a goal being pushed by groups like Indigenous Vote Sask.

"Indigenous Vote Sask is a provincial, non-partisan effort to mobilize the First Nations, Metis

and Inuit vote in Saskatchewan," reads the website. "Our intent is to move Indigenous issues forward by supporting Indigenous voters to stick together in a bloc vote per electoral district or Indigenous community."

IVS is promoting what it refers to as "voting hubs" in four strategic Saskatchewan communities: Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert and La Ronge. In these central points, IVS plans to provide information about candidates to be endorsed and to encourage bloc voting.

A campaign of mobilizing Indigenous voters and promoting strategic voting is something Bellegarde supports. There are benefits, he says, to getting Indigenous issues out in the open and having candidates speak on them as well as forcing parties to establish platforms based on Indigenous priorities.

"I think more and more now, chiefs and councils are starting to recognize that if First Nations do get to vote they can't have a determination on who gets elected," he said.

Bellegarde notes that studies indicate there are 63 federal ridings that Indigenous voters could swing.

"There are some strategic things First Nations people can do and I'm really happy there is that dialogue going forward," he said.

Hunting to care for less fortunate

(Continued from page 7.)

Twenty elk totalling more than 3,000 pounds were distributed in December and January to First Nations members at a homeless shelter in North Battleford, a women's shelter in Yorkton, and three food banks in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

"This was a natural thing to do, to help our First Nations people in the cities because a lot of them do go hungry every day so what little we can provide certainly is a good feeling," said Cameron.

Wes Clark, co-manager of the Prince Albert Food Bank, says he was grateful for the donation from the FSIN and the Prince Albert Grand Council as meat is always difficult to get.

"It's always very costly for a food bank to get meat processed," he said.

PAFB received seven boxes filled with elk meat, butchered by a licensed butcher as per regulations. The cost for processing was covered by the FSIN.

As the meat was hunted by

First Nations members, it could only be included in food hampers that went to Treaty card holders. Clark said more than 80 per cent of PAFB's hampers go to Aboriginal clientele, with 70 per cent of those Treaty card holders.

"The meat was gone in a few days," he said.

PAFB serves on average 2,500 people per month. That number has doubled in the past few years, said Clarke, as people continue to come to Prince Albert, which serves as the northern gateway.

"Things are getting a lot worse and not better," he said, "and there are many, many contributing factors to that."

The northern city has limited economic opportunities. With the penitentiary as its main employer, Prince Albert offers mostly government-employment, small retail jobs and a lack of stable oilfield work.

That combined with the rising cost of groceries and high cost of rent mean an inability to put food on the table. Affordable housing is strong in the city, and "although there is always room

for more social housing," Clark said the majority of food hamper recipients live in private accommodations.

"It's really important and we're so thankful when we see people like the Prince Albert Grand Council and FSIN, Treaty (people) standing up for their urban people," said Clark.

Cameron said meat donations will become an annual event for First Nations hunters.

"This is a message to the government that our treaty rights are still there, still alive and still strong and we'll continue implementing them that way, we'll continue providing for the less fortunate who are unable to go and hunt for themselves, the way it's been done for thousands of years before treaty signing," he said.

Cameron doesn't believe a donation like this — meat to those living off-reserve — has been done elsewhere in Canada.

"This is a way our treaty people benefit off of our treaty hunting rights," he said. "A lot of folks were certainly appreciative of it."

Windspeaker News Briefs

TRIBAL CHIEF ERIC SYLVESTRE OF THE MEADOW LAKE TRIBAL Council met with senior official of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) on Feb. 19, and requested that the department work with the tribal council so that all parties can be assured that the MLTC communities either have the infrastructure and capacity in place, or operative service agreements, to effectively respond to reserve fires.

Sylvestre has asked the Technical Services Unit of MLTC to assess the current readiness and capacity of the communities to respond to emergency calls related to fires, reads a press release.

"Now is not the time to argue about funding and placing of blame," said Sylvestre. "It is important to ensure that Meadow Lake First Nations have fire protection services in place at the First Nations level or via operative service agreements with nearby non-Aboriginal communities to respond to reserve fire-based emergencies."

Currently, one of the MLTC communities, Flying Dust First Nation, has a service agreement with the City of Meadow Lake. The more northern English River First Nation is currently engaged with a construction project to build a new fire hall and acquire a new fire truck cost-shared with AANDC. "Our First Nations, like other small communities, operate their fire protection services on a voluntary basis," said the tribal chief.

MANITOBA PREMIER GREG SELINGER LIMITED THE TIME

he spent with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs at their annual general assembly held at Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation Feb. 24, reports CBC. He attended to talk about progress made to implement recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry and was there for three hours where he faced criticism. Chiefs wanted to address a wide variety of issues, such as poverty, hydro concerns and social issues. According to the report, the premier promised to meet with the chiefs at another time.

AN ABORIGINAL CULTURAL ROOM HAS BEEN OPENED AT THE

Wetaskiwin Hospital and Care Centre in Alberta. Patients will now have a dedicated space for prayer and traditional ceremonies, such as smudging. The room was opened with a traditional Aboriginal pipe ceremony. It will provide a quiet, comfortable space on the hospital's third floor where patients and families can gather with an Elder.

"It can be a bit of a culture shock to Aboriginal patients when they walk into a hospital, so having this room here also helps us in creating a culturally-safe home away from home," said Tracy Lee, with Alberta Health Services. "This room is a place that can help provide a balance between the highly-clinical world of a hospital and spiritual well-being for patients."

The room is the second of its kind in the central zone. The first opened at the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre in January 2014.

Planning for the space in Wetaskiwin began last summer. It will be accessible 24 hours a day through nursing staff, as well as through Aboriginal Health co-ordinator Claudette Yellowbird.

"Having a place like this was a major request from the First Nations clients, families and staff," said Yellowbird. Yellowbird is one of three Aboriginal Health co-ordinators in central zone. The co-ordinators are available to all Aboriginal people who access health care, and address a wide range of challenges while working with clients, including language barriers, cultural differences, transportation issues and system navigation.

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR ABORIGINAL BUSINESS (CCAB)

is undertaking its research initiative interviewing 1,100 Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs across the country as part of Promise and Prosperity: National Aboriginal Business Survey 2015. The council will gather data on the Aboriginal private economy and identify opportunities and challenges nationwide.

In the fall of 2014, the CCAB convened a research advisory committee with representatives from across the country. Headed by former prime minister Paul Martin, the group includes singer Susan Aglukark; Phil Fontaine, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Chuck Strahl, former minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Brenda LaRose, a consultant and partner in Leaders & Co.; Brent Mainprize, professor at the University of Victoria, and Miles Richardson, interim director for the National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development at UVIC.

This research presents an opportunity to document the current landscape and the number of Aboriginal businesses in Canada, reads a press statement, and for CCAB Research to develop and maintain its own statistical database of Aboriginal businesses in order to build a strong and vibrant Aboriginal marketplace across the country. The report will be released in the fall of 2015. For further information please visit: www.ccab.com/research

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Raven's Eye: Special Section providing news from BC & Yukon

FEBRUARY 18 WAS AN EMOTIONAL DAY FOR THE

survivors of St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Alert Bay as a special ceremony was held to mark the beginning of the demolition of the building. National First Nations leaders and Anglican Church representatives joined the former students and community members at the demolition site.

St. Michael's Indian Residential School was closed in 1974, but its place in history should never be forgotten," said B.C.'s Minister of Aboriginal Relations John Rustad. St. Michael's is a symbol and stark reminder of a dark chapter in our history. From the 1870s to 1996, more than 150,000 Aboriginal children in Canada were removed from their homes and placed in government-funded, church-run schools like St. Michael's.

"We recognize the deep scars inflicted on children who attended these schools. And we acknowledge and honour the courage of survivors, their families and all those who suffered. As we look to the future, we share a great hope and optimism for healing and reconciliation."

BRITISH COLUMBIA WILL BUY

Grace Islet, the site of at least 16

First Nations burial cairns, from the private owner at a cost of \$5.45 million. Barry Slawsky, who started to build a retirement home on the property, will receive \$850,000 for the land and the rest for costs incurred over two decades by the landowner "and his lost opportunity for future enjoyment of the property," a government statement reads. Construction on top of the burial cairns caused controversy when it began last year. "Incurred costs include items such as utility installation and archaeological, architectural and professional fees; as well as building contract and material costs for construction of a high-end house." The islet is located off Saltspring Island.

BEAU DICK, WHO PERFORMED

a copper-breaking shaming ceremony on Parliament Hill last summer, told iPolitics he has had no response from Canadian authorities and does not know what happened to the piece of broken copper he folded inside a piece of canvas artwork and left on the steps of Centre Block.

The broken copper represents government's failure to live up to the promises made to Indigenous peoples. On the canvas was Prime Minister Stephen Harper's statement made for the 2008

residential school apology.

The Department of Public Works says the copper is within its "custody", but provided no more information. They have no record of what happened to the canvas.

Copper-breaking is an ancient custom to shame someone for their actions. It was the second time the shaming ceremony was conducted in modern times.

BILL C-51, THE ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, HAS GONE TO THE

House of Commons, but one B.C. Indigenous leader is warning that the bill "will radically and dangerously expand the powers of Canada's national security agencies and greatly infringe upon the rights of all citizens without making us any safer or secure."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, said the "sweeping scope" of the Bill "violates the ability of all Indigenous Peoples to exercise, assert and defend their constitutionally-protected and judicially-recognized Indigenous Title and Rights to their respective territories." He called it "absolutely appalling" that protecting Indigenous territories could result in facing "insidious, provocative and heavy-handed

powers" that come with C-51.

"As an act of civil disobedience, I was arrested at Burnaby Mountain because I believe mega-projects, like Kinder Morgan and Enbridge pipelines, do not respect the Indigenous laws and inherent authority of Indigenous Peoples to protect their territories, land and waters from the very real potential and increased risk of oil spills and increased coast tanker traffic along our coast. I believe under the draconian measures of Bill C-51, I would be identified as a terrorist. Regardless, I will continue to do what is necessary to defend the collective birthright of our grandchildren."

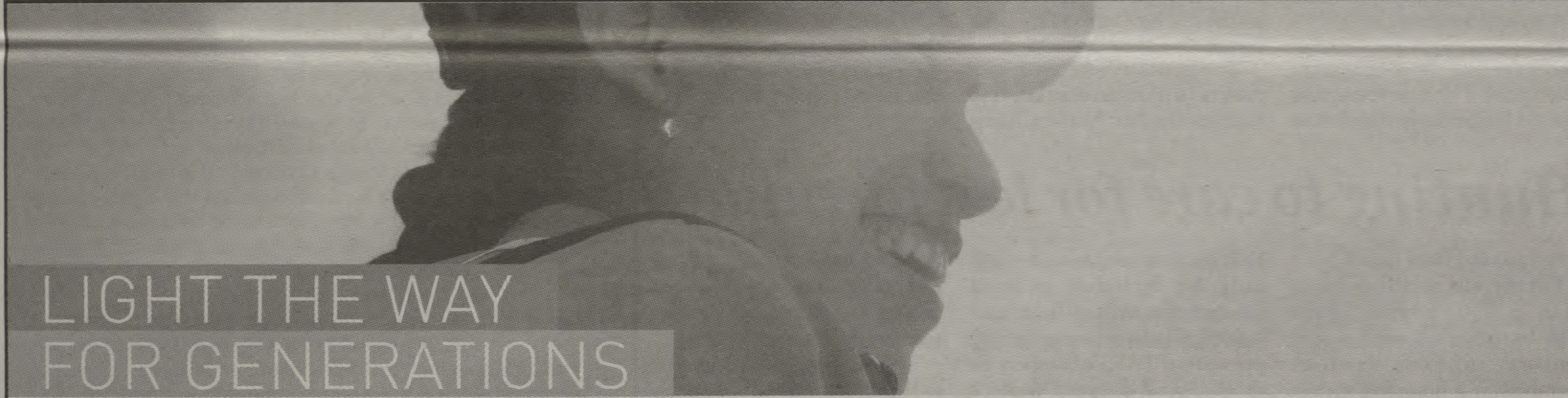
THE SONGHEES AND ESQUIMALT

First Nations helped bless a 250-metre-long panel of murals to mark the anticipated completion of the \$138-million cleanup of 17 acres of contaminated land and seabed at Rock Bay. It's been an 11-year-long job and, upon completion, four acres of the site will be sold to the Nations. While they don't have specific plans for the downtown lands, the goal, they say, is economic development, the Times Colonist reports. The property along Government and Pembroke streets had been called one of

Canada's most toxic sites, reads the article. Rock Bay once held the site of a coal gasification facility and was filled with waste, including coal tar, which damaged the soil, groundwater and harbour, an "unwelcome inheritance from a time long ago when there was little regard for the environment," said Greg Reimer, B.C. Hydro spokesman. The company owns part of the lands and will monitor over the next five years.

A TENTATIVE LAND-EXCHANGE

agreement has been reached between the government of British Columbia and Westbank First Nation. The Nation had given reserve land to the province in 2009 to construct the Westside Rd. Interchange, and the province agreed to provide replacement lands. The package of lands and cash now under consideration includes four parcels of Crown or private land and \$1.5 million in cash to be used for mutually agreed-upon, future land purchases. The lands include agricultural properties within the City of Kelowna, private property on the eastern shores of Lower Arrow Lake, and Crown land located east of Kelowna adjacent to lands held by Westbank First Nation at Medicine Hill.



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60511-265

Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Harper Creek Mine Project

Public Comment Period and Information Session

Harper Creek Mining Corp. proposes the construction and operation of an open-pit mine located 90 kilometres northeast of Kamloops, British Columbia (B.C.). The Harper Creek Mine Project is expected to produce 70,000 tons of copper-gold-silver ore per day (25 million tons per year) over a mine life of 28 years.

The Harper Creek Mine Project is subject to review under both the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and B.C.'s *Environmental Assessment Act* and is undergoing a coordinated environmental assessment.

Public Comment Period

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) and B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) are inviting the public to comment on the Application / Environmental Impact Statement (Application / EIS) submitted by the proponent, Harper Creek Mining Corp. The Application / EIS describes the project and its potential to cause environmental, heritage, health, social, and economic effects.

A copy of the complete Application / EIS is available online at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca and at www.eao.gov.bc.ca, along with a shorter summary of the document and additional information about the environmental assessment process.

The public comment period is from **February 19, 2015 to March 21, 2015**. The Agency and the EAO accept public comments during this time submitted by any of the following means:

By Online Form: www.eao.gov.bc.ca

By Email: HarperCreekMine@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

By Fax: 250-387-2208

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PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V1

The Agency accepts comments in English or in French. Any comments only need to be submitted once to either the Agency or the EAO to be considered for both the provincial and federal environmental assessments.

Copies of the summary and the complete Application / EIS are also available for viewing at these locations:

Thompson-Nicola Regional
District Library System
(Kamloops)
465 Victoria Street
Kamloops, British Columbia

Canadian Environmental
Assessment Agency
Vancouver, British Columbia
Viewing by appointment only
Telephone: 604-666-2431

Thompson-Nicola Regional
District Library System
(Clearwater)
422 Murtle Crescent
Clearwater, British Columbia

Information Session

The following information session will be held during the comment period:

Clearwater, February 24, 2015, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Dutch Lake Community Centre, 209 Dutch Lake Road, Clearwater, British Columbia

Information on the Harper Creek Mine Project and the Application / EIS will be available for viewing at the information session, and interested individuals will be able to speak with provincial and federal representatives and Harper Creek Mining Corp.'s technical team.

Next Steps

The Agency and the EAO will consider the public comments received, along with the information in the Application / EIS, in preparing their environmental assessment reports. The environmental assessment for the project will also include one final federal public comment period on the Agency's environmental assessment report, which will be advertised at a later date.

All submissions received by the Agency and the EAO during the comment period in relation to the Harper Creek Mine Project are considered public. Comments will be posted to the EAO website and will become part of the Agency project file.

Canada



Too soon for recommendations on housing

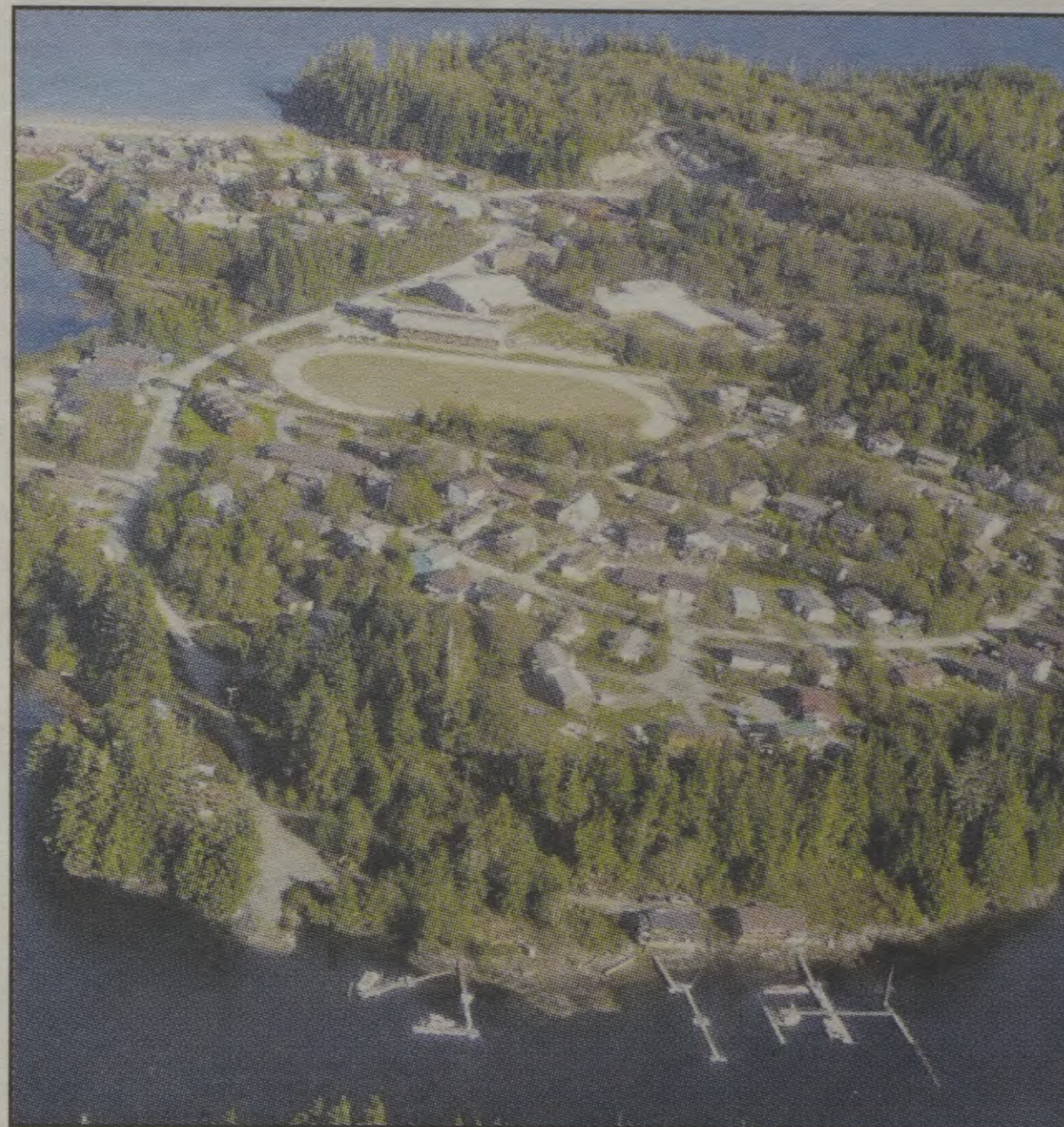


PHOTO: STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The committee visited a number of reserves across Canada, including the remote community of Ahousaht.

By Shari Narine
Raven's Eye Contributor

OTTAWA

Nothing has changed.

That's what Chief Theresa Spence told the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, which is studying housing and infrastructure on First Nations. Nothing has changed from 2010 when she first declared a state of emergency on Attawapiskat First Nation, located on the west coast of James Bay.

The committee released its interim report in February.

Attawapiskat leadership had called a state of emergency in December 2011, and previously in 2010 and again last year because of the membership living in unsafe housing, in tents and shacks as the winter approaches.

"It's really a challenge that we face almost every year. Our community continues to face a critical housing shortage until this day," Spence said when she appeared before the committee last September.

The interim report reiterates the issues Spence brought attention to with her six-week hunger strike in December 2012. The report acknowledges there is a "significant housing shortage in First Nation communities, and the existing stock of housing in many communities is in deplorable

condition." And while it identifies the challenges faced by communities, and highlights innovative practices that have helped some First Nations meet their housing needs, the committee offers no recommendations.

"It had been our intention to propose recommendations in this interim report, however the committee is continuing to hear important testimony on housing as it continues its infrastructure study. To make recommendations at this time would be premature," noted the foreword of the interim report entitled, *Housing on First Nations Reserves: Challenges and Successes*.

In preparing the interim report, the committee heard from 40 individuals and organizations through 21 meetings held in Ottawa, a day of public hearings in Thunder Bay, and travelling to 16 First Nations communities in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. The committee also heard from federal departments and agencies.

Concerns outlined by Spence – overcrowding, substandard housing, mould and sewage contaminations, lack of clarity on who is responsible for providing and paying for housing – were echoed by presenters as well as what the committee saw in their community visits.

(See *Too Soon* on page 17.)

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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan



Neechie Gear founder recognized with award

Kendall Netmaker was presented with the National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur award in Toronto by Erin Meehan, president of ESS North America and board member and co-chair of Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. The award recognizes an up-and-coming Aboriginal entrepreneur under the age of 35. Netmaker, from Sweetgrass First Nation, is founder and owner of Neechie Gear Inc., a lifestyle apparel brand built to empower youth through sports. The company donates a portion of its profits to help fund underprivileged youth, allowing them the opportunity to take part in extracurricular sports. (Photo: Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business)

Death in Prince Albert underscores need for inquiry

Monica Burns, 28, from Sturgeon Lake First Nation, was found dead Jan. 17 on a remote snowmobile trail northwest of Prince Albert. On Jan. 28, RCMP arrested Todd Daniel McKeaveney, 38, of Prince Albert, charged with second-degree murder in Burns' death. RCMP said there was no evidence to indicate McKeaveney knew Burns previously.

Prince Albert RCMP were joined by RCMP Major Crime Unit North in the investigation. Burns was a sex trade worker known to police. Since Burns' body was discovered, her family has been raising awareness of the issue and joining calls for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

RCMP praised Burns' family and the general public for their support in the investigation. Shirley Henderson, chair of the Prince Albert Grand Council's women's commission, said

Burns' death has served as "another wake-up call" to Prince Albert residents that the city is still not safe for Aboriginal women, and people need to continue pressuring the federal government and work to create programs for those who end up on the street.

SUMA supports inquiry in murdered, missing Aboriginal women

Members of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association voted in favour of a resolution to hold an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The motion was put forward by North Battleford city council. "A lot of our police chiefs have said they already know what the problem is, and it's time to move forward with some action and possibly a task force," said SUMA President Debra Button, who was not surprised the resolution passed. The vote was not unanimous with some delegates saying it would be an expensive and fruitless endeavour.

Trappers compensated for power line disruption

Lac La Ronge First Nation has distributed \$75,000 to members whose trap lines were affected by the construction of SaskPower's 300-kilometre transmission line running from Island Falls to Key Lake. The compensation follows two years of negotiations. The money was paid from SaskPower's newly established Trapper's Compensation program. The band was notified of the project in 2012 and held a series of community meetings to identify the affected trappers. Some trappers were forced to move from their family cabins when the line was built. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson said the compensation is less than



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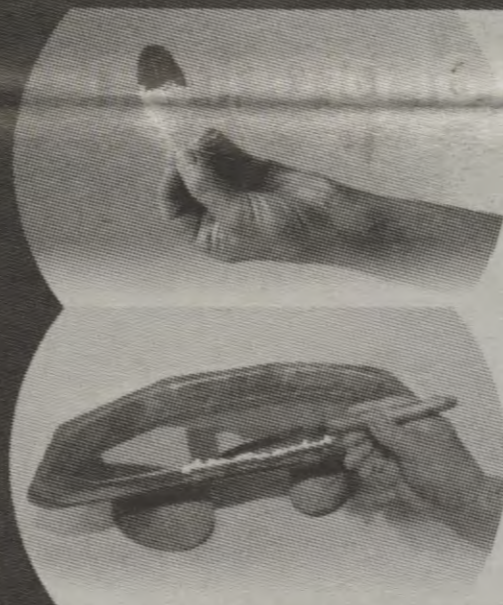
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La date limite pour présenter une demande a été prolongée au **9 mars 2015**. De l'aide pour remplir le formulaire d'attestation de crédits personnels est offerte.

Pour plus d'information, consultez le site Web www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca ou communiquez par téléphone avec les organisations suivantes :

- Ligne d'information principale : **1-866-343-1858**
- Assemblée des Premières Nations : **1-866-869-6789**
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Iqaluit : **1-888-646-0006**
- Société régionale inuvialuite, Inuvik : **1-867-777-7092**
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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

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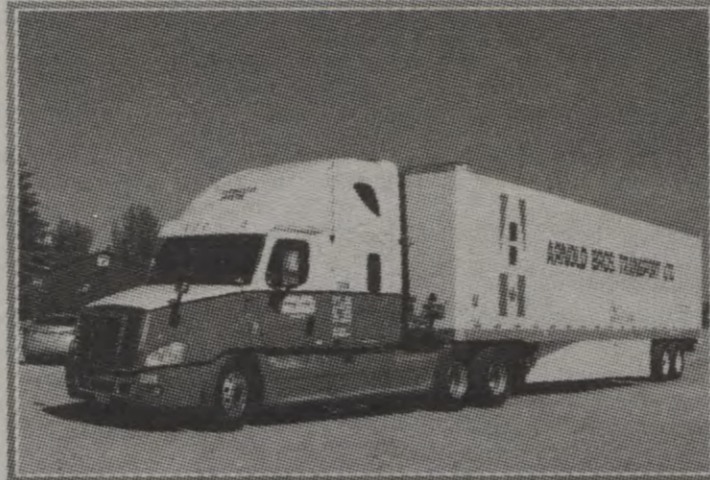
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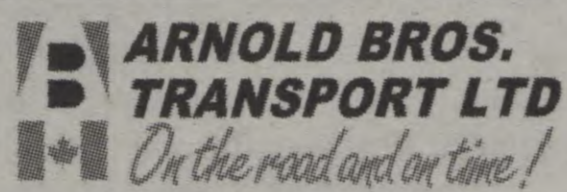
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originally requested, but trappers have indicated they are satisfied.

determined through a selective jury process. Award winners will be announced on April 25.

Saskatchewan Book Awards announced

Aboriginal authors have received multiple nominations in this year's Saskatchewan Book Awards. Dawn Dumont (*Rose's Run*), Ernie Louttit (*Indian Ernie: Perspectives on Policing and Leadership*) and Robert Alexander Innes (*Elder Brother and the Law of the People: Contemporary Kinship and Cowesses First Nation*) are vying for the Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award.

As well, Dumont and Louttit are included in the University of Regina Book of the Year and City of Saskatoon and Public Library Saskatoon Book Award. Dumont is also nominated for City of Regina Fiction Award.

Louttit is nominated for the First Book Award. Innes is also nominated for Luther College and University of Regina Arts Award for Scholarly Writing. Nominated in the First Nations University of Canada Aboriginal Peoples' Publishing Award are Gabriel Dumont Institute for Leah Marie Dumont's *My First Metis Lobstick*; MacKenzie Art Gallery for Michelle LaVallee's *7: Professional Native Indian Artists Inc.*; and Purich Publishing for Louttit's *Indian Ernie*.

The list of nominees was chosen from 196 entries, with 90 titles, in 11 writing and three publishing categories. The 14 award categories offered this year are diverse, representative of Saskatchewan's literary production, and responsive to emerging areas of interest.

Award winners are

Recognition for dedication, global leadership

Dr. Shauneen Pete, David Wessel and Wilma Bell-Wessel were recognized for their dedication and leadership in global and Indigenous education at the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation Global Citizen Awards in February.

"At first I was surprised to have been nominated for the award and as I found out more about it, and about the organization, I was very honoured," said Pete, an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, who also serves as the executive lead on Indigenization.

"The selection committee asked some very interesting questions, which made me think about what it means to be a global citizen and for me it goes back to the teachings of the Elders and our responsibility to respect and care for each other, not just in our immediate family, but in the larger community and globally."

The Wessels have trained teachers in Africa and Jamaica and have committed their lives to supporting many agencies involved in social justice, refugee support, and human rights work. Established in 1990 the awards recognize Saskatchewan people who have made exceptional contributions to international development, cooperation, peace and justice.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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Personal Credits of up to \$3000 for
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Individuals who received a Common Experience Payment under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement are eligible for up to \$3000 in Personal Credits for education programs and services.

These include courses at universities, colleges, trade or training schools or for programs and workshops provided by community-based groups or cultural centres for activities related to Aboriginal language and culture. Personal Credits can be used by a Common Experience Payment recipient, shared with up to two family members or pooled for group education services.

The deadline to apply has been extended to **March 9, 2015**. Help with completing the Personal Credits Acknowledgment Form is available.

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or by phone:

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- Assembly of First Nations: 1-866-869-6789
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Iqaluit: 1-888-646-0006
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[health]
**Miyo Wicehtowin walk set
 for mid-April**



Isabel Okanese next to the monument dedicated to Terry Fox.

By Dianne Meili
Windspeaker Contributor

VICTORIA

Isabel Okanese has been thinking about walking across Canada for more than a decade.

The distance is intimidating, but she wants to make the trek to bring awareness to lateral violence within Aboriginal communities, something she's experienced many times.

"I've been put down by people, even Elders, who denied me teachings because I wasn't Indian enough or I didn't grow up on a reserve. Freezing out, gossip, jealousy, back-stabbing, blame – it's all lateral violence," she said. "It happens among Aboriginal people because we've been oppressed, and those feelings of anger, shame and rage get turned on our own.

"When we can't fight the oppressor, we fight each other."

The Victoria woman, who is Anishnabe Cree from Iron River in central Alberta, calls her healing walk Miyo Wicehtowin, Living in Harmony. She'll begin from Victoria on April 18, following Highway 1 across the provinces – sleeping in a motorhome doubling as flag car – and anticipates arriving in Halifax by Oct. 30 later this year.

"It's not a protest walk. I'm not angry about anything. This is a healing walk to remind our people of the unity we once experienced before colonization. I've felt rejected by my own people and I'm hoping the walk will get people sharing about lateral violence. We need to talk about how hurtful and destructive this behaviour is. Skin colour, blood quantum, where you're from – they're all irrelevant.

"My first sweatlodge ceremony was led by the late Alfred Bonaise. He said if you're one per cent Indian, you're an Indian."

Along the way, Okanese, 43, and her walking partner, a 78-year-old Navajo Elder, are prepared to speak about ending lateral violence in Aboriginal communities. Okanese welcomes individuals to walk with her in total or in part, or to stage walks in their own communities to encourage unity.

"The sacred number is four. Walk four minutes, four hours, four days or four months, or come and be with us on the road."

How do you prepare for an almost 4,000 km trek?

"I've been getting ready since last May. I inherited my late mother's bunions, but foot

exercises and wearing special "five finger" shoes have healed my right foot. I expect the left one will be healed by the time I begin the walk."

Okanese has gone from a size 18 to a size 14, easily completed a three-hour march in February, and continues to lose weight. The first leg through B.C. is mountainous, so she's climbing steps and inclines regularly.

"I'm a healthy First Nations woman who doesn't drink, smoke or do drugs. I go to ceremony when I can and my spirit is strong."

Support for Okanese is mounting. Information about Miyo Wicehtowin is on her website: miyowicehtowin.webs.com, and she's releasing a video on Youtube and Facebook explaining her undertaking.

The walk follows suit in her efforts to uplift first peoples of Turtle Island. In Victoria, she leads a monthly talking circle called Wanska, the Art of Decolonization, and initiated a World Smudge Day coming up on March 21.

In Edmonton, where she lived for three decades, she created Achimowin, a music and talk show still airing on CJSR Radio, at the University of Alberta, for and about Aboriginal people.

Health Watch

Compiled by Shari Narine

Provinces with high Aboriginal population rank poorly in health

The Conference Board of Canada report has given both Manitoba and Saskatchewan overall grades of 'D', ranking them 23rd and 24th respectively out of 29 high-income regions around the world.

Every province and 15 countries in Europe, Asia and North America were graded on 11 indicators of health—life expectancy, premature death, infant mortality, self-reported health status, deaths due to cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory illnesses, diabetes and the nervous system, as well as suicides and self-reported mental health.

The report notes Manitoba and Saskatchewan have the highest proportion of Aboriginal people. Manitoba Health Minister Sharon Blady said she believes a lot of the concerns for health in Manitoba stem from poor health outcomes for Aboriginal Manitobans and she blamed Ottawa.

"I know we've got a certain population that is operating at a disadvantage because the federal government is not living up to its obligations."

Jo-Ann Episkenew is the director of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre in Saskatchewan. "If we have a whole bunch of people in the province doing well and one group who makes up about 15 per cent of the population doing poorly, you've got to look at the structures that are maintaining that."

Racism, access to health care linked

The report, *First Peoples, Second Class Treatment*, links racism experienced by Canada's Indigenous people to the lack of equal access to health care.

"The historical and contemporary link between racism and poor Indigenous health outcomes is clear but we need better data to understand the specific impacts of racism at both the individual and systems levels and identify the best strategies to address it," said Metis physician Dr. Janet Smylie. He is co-author of the report, which was produced for the Wellesley Institute.

More reliable measures of the disproportionate burden of illness, poverty, and discrimination that challenge Indigenous people compared to the rest of Canadians will allow advocates to better engage Canadians in discussion on how to improve health and its determinants for Indigenous peoples.

The researchers wrote that racism in the Canadian health care system can be fatal, citing the death of Brian Sinclair, following a 34-hour wait in a Winnipeg emergency department in 2008. They also cite evidence describing the pervasiveness of racism within the health-care system and how Indigenous peoples strategize around anticipated racism before visiting the hospital or choose to avoid care altogether.

A primary focus of the report was the need to better measure the impact of racism on Indigenous peoples' access to health care, but researchers also call for the evaluation of Indigenous health interventions that have already been implemented.

AFN launches mental health wellness framework

The Assembly of First Nations has released a national framework addressing mental health wellness among First Nations. The framework is the result of extensive collaboration that began in 2012 among the AFN, Health Canada, and community mental health leaders, including the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and the Native Mental Health Association.

The process included a comprehensive mapping of existing mental health and addictions programming that identified gaps and ways to address and avoid them. Culture is the heart of the framework, emphasizing First Nations strengths and capacities.

It identifies a continuum of services needed to promote mental wellness and provides advice on policy and program changes that will enhance First Nations mental wellness outcomes.

Service integration among federal, provincial and territorial programs is central to its success. The framework provides guidance to enable communities to adapt, optimize and realign their mental wellness programs and services based on their own priorities.

"We know that community solutions are the key to our success and we know that First Nations cultures must be central and foundational to addressing substance use issues and promoting wellness for individuals, families, and communities," said AFN Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy, who holds the health portfolio.

"First Nations people are taking our health into our own hands, but achieving the envisioned continuum of mental wellness will require sustained leadership, commitment and collaboration by all parties."

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Sports Briefs

Compiled by Sam Laskaris

Aboriginal curlers sought for nationals

Organizers of the 2015 National Aboriginal Curling Championships are hoping to attract 48 teams to this year's event. The national bonspiel will be staged April 2 to April 6 at the Granite Curling Club in Saskatoon.

The Canadian event will feature a men's division, with a maximum of 32 teams, and a ladies' category, with as many as 16 entrants.

Though the bonspiel is being held in Saskatoon, it is the northwest Saskatchewan village of Ile-a-la-Crosse, located almost 500 kilometres away, that is organizing the nationals.

Town officials are organizing the event in conjunction with the Sakitawak Development Corporation, the Ile-a-la-Crosse Friendship Centre and the Ile-a-la-Crosse Communications Society Inc.

Besides the opening ceremonies, the first day of the national bonspiel will also include a youth clinic. Those looking to participate in this year's Canadian bonspiel must register before March 25. The registration fee is \$500 for men's teams and \$400 for those in the ladies' division.

The participants, however, will have plenty of opportunities to win back more than their registration fees. Organizers are planning to award more than \$22,000 in cash prizes to the top eight finishers in each category. The men's champions will be awarded \$4,000 while the female winners will take home \$2,000.

Even those that finish fifth through eighth in both categories will win back double the amount of their entry fees; \$1,000 for men's teams in these positions and \$800 for their female counterparts.

More information is available at the website www.nationalaboriginalcurlingchampionship.com or by calling (306) 833-7719 or (306) 833-7857.

Six Nations to host international tourney

A bit of lacrosse history will be made in a Six Nations community mere days before it is made south of the border as well. At least five teams will compete at the Under-19 International Lacrosse Festival, which will be held this September in conjunction with the world men's indoor lacrosse championships.

The under-19 tournament, scheduled for Sept. 11 to Sept. 13 will be held at the Iroquois Lacrosse Arena, located near the Six Nations town of Ohsweken. It will be the first international tournament to be contested on Haudenosaunee land.

Organizers are hoping to have between six and eight teams take part in this event. So far, entrants that have agreed to take part are the host Iroquois Nationals, Canada, United States, Israel and the Czech Republic.

As for the world men's tournament, it will also be historic, as parts of it will be held on Haudenosaunee land for the first time. All preliminary-round and quarter-final contests will be staged at the Onondaga Lacrosse Arena near Syracuse, from Sept. 18 to Sept. 23.

The tournament will then shift to Buffalo's First Niagara Center from Sept. 25 to Sept. 26, where the semi-final, medal games and matches which determine final placing for teams from fifth through eighth will take place.

Cree player stars in two leagues

A 19-year-old Cree defenceman managed to star in a pair of different Junior A hockey leagues this season. Khadyn Butterfly, who is from the Moose Cree First Nation in northern Ontario, began the 2014-15 campaign with the Sudbury Nickel Barons. Butterfly had also spent the previous two seasons with the Nickel Barons, members of the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League.

Butterfly was chosen to represent the NOJHL this past November at the Central Canada Cup All-Star Challenge in Toronto. The eight-team tournament featured players representing Junior A leagues from across Ontario and Quebec.

Butterfly played four games in that tourney and finished in a three-way tie for team scoring for the NOJHL side, by earning three points (all assists).

The following month Butterfly's rights were traded to a squad in another league, the Hamilton Red Wings, who participate in the Ontario Junior Hockey League.

The Red Wings became the third junior franchise that Butterfly has suited up for. That's because last season he also appeared in three games with the Ontario Hockey League's Sudbury Wolves.

Following his trade this season, besides joining the Red Wings for the remainder of their season (the Hamilton squad did not qualify for its playoffs), Butterfly was also selected to compete in a rather prestigious contest.

He was one of 40 players from across the country that took part in the Canadian Junior Hockey League's Prospects Game, staged Jan. 20 in Oakville, Ont.

Butterfly suited up for Team East in that contest, which was edged 3-2 by their Team West opponents.

All of the players in the game were chosen in consultation with officials from Central Scouting, which provides detailed analysis of all draft-eligible players to National Hockey League clubs.

Blind hockey gaining awareness across country

[sports]

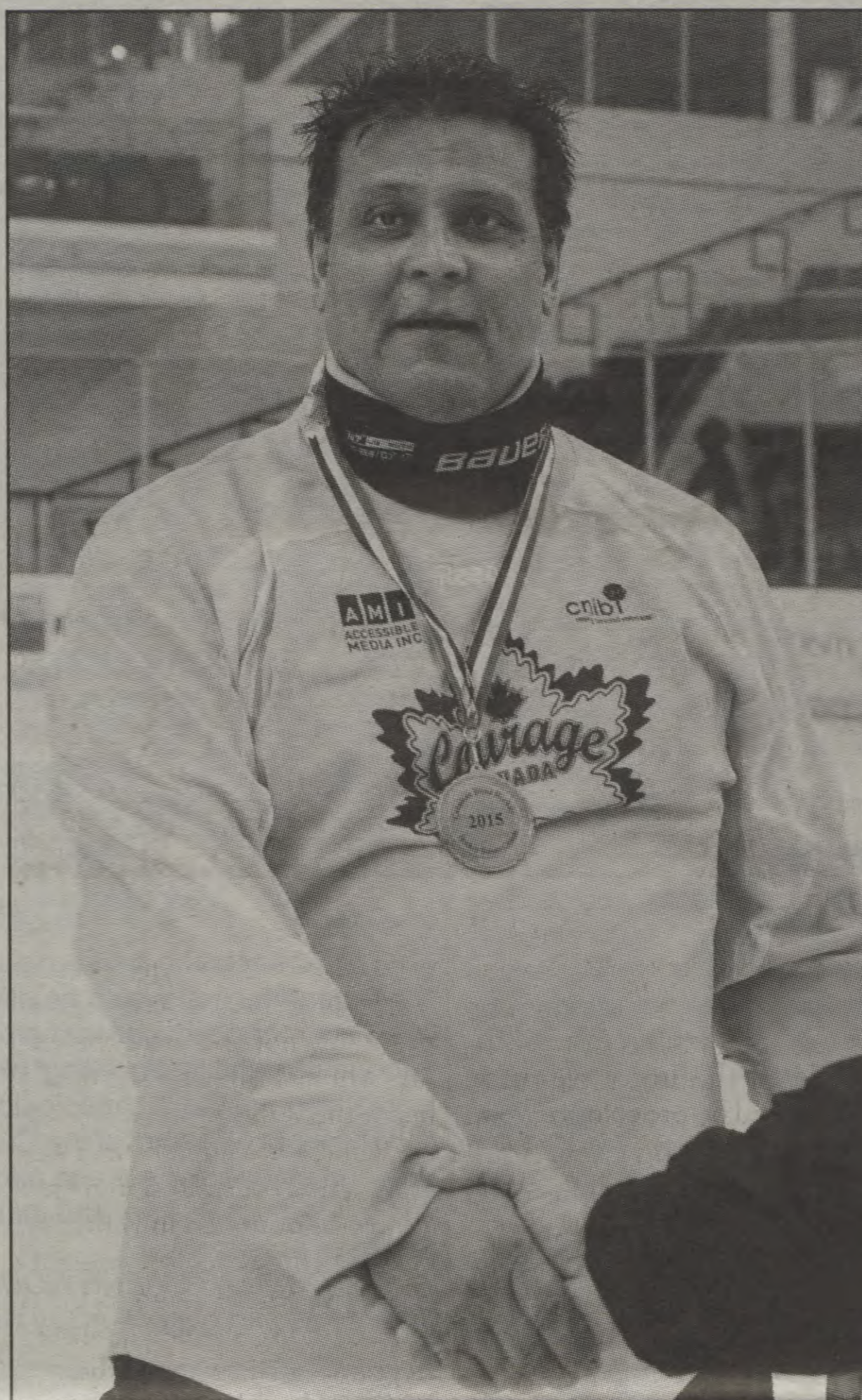


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Roland Arndt

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Though he's now in his 50s, Roland Arndt can still score his share of hockey goals. Even if he can't see the puck for large portions of the game.

Arndt, a 52-year-old Ojibwe who lives in Toronto, has Stargardt disease, a macular degeneration that causes progressive vision loss. He began to lose his sight in his late teens and now only has about 10 per cent vision in each eye.

But he continues to play an adapted version of hockey. He was one of 76 players that competed in the Courage Canada national blind hockey tournament, which concluded on Feb. 15 in Toronto. Courage Canada is a charity which provides visually-impaired youth the opportunity to learn to skate and play blind hockey.

As for the national tournament, which featured six teams, it was staged at the Mattamy Athletic Centre, formerly Maple Leaf Gardens.

"I can see the puck if it is within range," Arndt said. "But if it goes down the ice, I don't have a clue where it is."

For obvious reasons, there are

a few alterations made for those that compete in blind hockey.

For starters, the puck is considerably larger than a normal puck. Various versions of a puck utilized in blind hockey games have been used in recent years.

This includes the tires from barbecue stands. At this year's tournament a light metal puck, about three times the size of a normal rubber puck, was utilized.

As with other types of blind hockey pucks, the one used at games this year included ball bearings inside so it can rattle when it is moving so players with limited or no vision can hear where the puck is if they cannot see it.

Also, to assist goalies who have difficulties keeping track of the fast-moving puck, players are not allowed to shoot the puck high into the air in order to try and score. In fact, the top portions of the net are partitioned off with a cover. Players can only score by shooting into the lower parts of the net.

Besides a half-dozen players from the United States, this year's national tournament attracted players from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

"The tournament is getting huge now," Arndt said, adding in some previous years there were only entrants from B.C., Ontario and Quebec.

The participating clubs were named after provinces or regions of Canada. And the competitors, who range in age from 14 to 80, were not necessarily placed onto teams from where they are from.

For example, Arndt was on Team Atlantic.

Organizers attempted to balance the teams by how much sight players had. They attempted to give each club an equal amount of totally blind, mid to low, and relatively high vision players.

Arndt scored five goals for his club in its first three games. Team Atlantic won all of these contests.

But Arndt and his teammates were defeated 4-1 by Team Quebec in the gold-medal match.

"I was pretty banged up in that final game," Arndt said.

The day before the gold-medal game Arndt was tripped by an opposing player in a game. He did a complete flip in the air before crashing to the ice.

Arndt said that incident affected his performance in the final.

"It was rough for me," he said. "I was pretty stiff. And I had a rough time out there."

Arndt was still hurting several days later but had not gone to see a doctor.

"I definitely know I've got some bruised ribs," said Arndt, who works as a recreation therapist at a seniors home. "But I haven't had time to get it checked yet."

Arndt has been playing blind hockey with the Toronto Ice Owls for almost a decade now. The team plays once a week from October through March.

Because of work commitments, however, Arndt is only able to join the team every two weeks.

"I'm definitely slowing down," he said. "The kids are getting a lot younger and faster. I can still hold my own out there. But I don't have the speed I used to have. And I don't have the stamina I used to have."

Canada is currently the only country that has a national blind hockey tournament.

Arndt, and those who govern the sport here, would love to see the game expand to other nations.

"I can see it becoming more popular," he said. "The word just has to get out there. And more of our games just have to be streamed online. They figure in eight, 10 years it might get to be a Paralympic sport."

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[education]

Honoring long-time traditional educator

On Feb. 13, representatives of the University of Sudbury traveled to Moose Factory to confer an honorary doctorate to Edmund Metatawabin, an individual who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in his community.

Metatawabin's name means "10 sunrises". He is a respected Elder in the Mushkegowuk territory, and across the country.

While studying for his Master's degree in Environmental Studies at York University, Metatawabin was asked to return home to assume the responsibilities of chief for his community of Fort Albany First Nation. He served in that capacity for eight years.

Metatawabin is a Cree writer, who has published several books, including "Harvesting: Cree Hunting and Gathering Techniques"; "Hanaway": a tale of resistance and survival; and "Up Ghost River: A Chief's Journey through the Turbulent Waters of Native History". This book was nominated for the Governor General's Award for English-language non-fiction in 2014.

An activist for Aboriginal rights, he works tirelessly to right the wrongs of abuse suffered by Aboriginal children in residential schools. He is also an educator in traditional knowledge. Every summer, he takes Aboriginal youth on a 300 km raft journey so that they may connect to the land of their ancestors.

Today, he lives in a self-made log house off the reserve boundary which he refers to as "my grandfather's land". He owns a local sawmill and works as a consultant, speaker and researcher.

Indspire shows value of funding studies

Ninety-three per cent of Indigenous students who receive funding for their education earn a post-secondary credential, and 82 per cent of those graduates find work, reads a new report released by Indspire, a major funder of Indigenous education.

"Our research has found that financial support is critical to Indigenous student success. In fact, it is the most significant barrier for Indigenous students in completing their post-secondary education," said Roberta Jamieson, president and CEO of Indspire.

The report is titled "Creating Positive Outcomes: Graduation and Employment Rates of Indspire's Financial Award Recipients." Another finding in the report is that 84 per cent of employed graduates report that they are serving Indigenous people in their current role.

Indspire surveyed First Nation, Inuit, and Métis students who received funding from Indspire from 2000-2001 to 2012-2013.

"This report reinforces the effectiveness of financial aid in closing Canada's education gap for Aboriginal students," said Paul Davidson, president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. "Along with culturally-relevant curriculum, programs, and outreach, financial support is key to improving both access and success for Indigenous students in post-secondary education."

"Indspire's success in easing the financial burden that many Indigenous students experience when pursuing post-secondary education gives all Canadians a reason to celebrate," said Rita Bouvier, MEd, author, researcher, and award-winning educator. "We are all the richer for these students' accomplishments and their commitment to give back to their communities."

New book covers 5,000 years of occupation

The Cree Nation Government has published a major work on the history of Eeyou Istchee and of the Cree people. Called *CE QUE LA RIVIÈRE NOUS PROCURAIT: Archéologie et histoire du réservoir de l'Eastmain-1* (What the River Provided: Archaeology and History of the Eastmain 1 Reservoir), the book contains 18 chapters (three in English and the remainder in French) by archaeologists, geographers and historians relating to the occupation of Eeyou Istchee over the last 5,000 years.

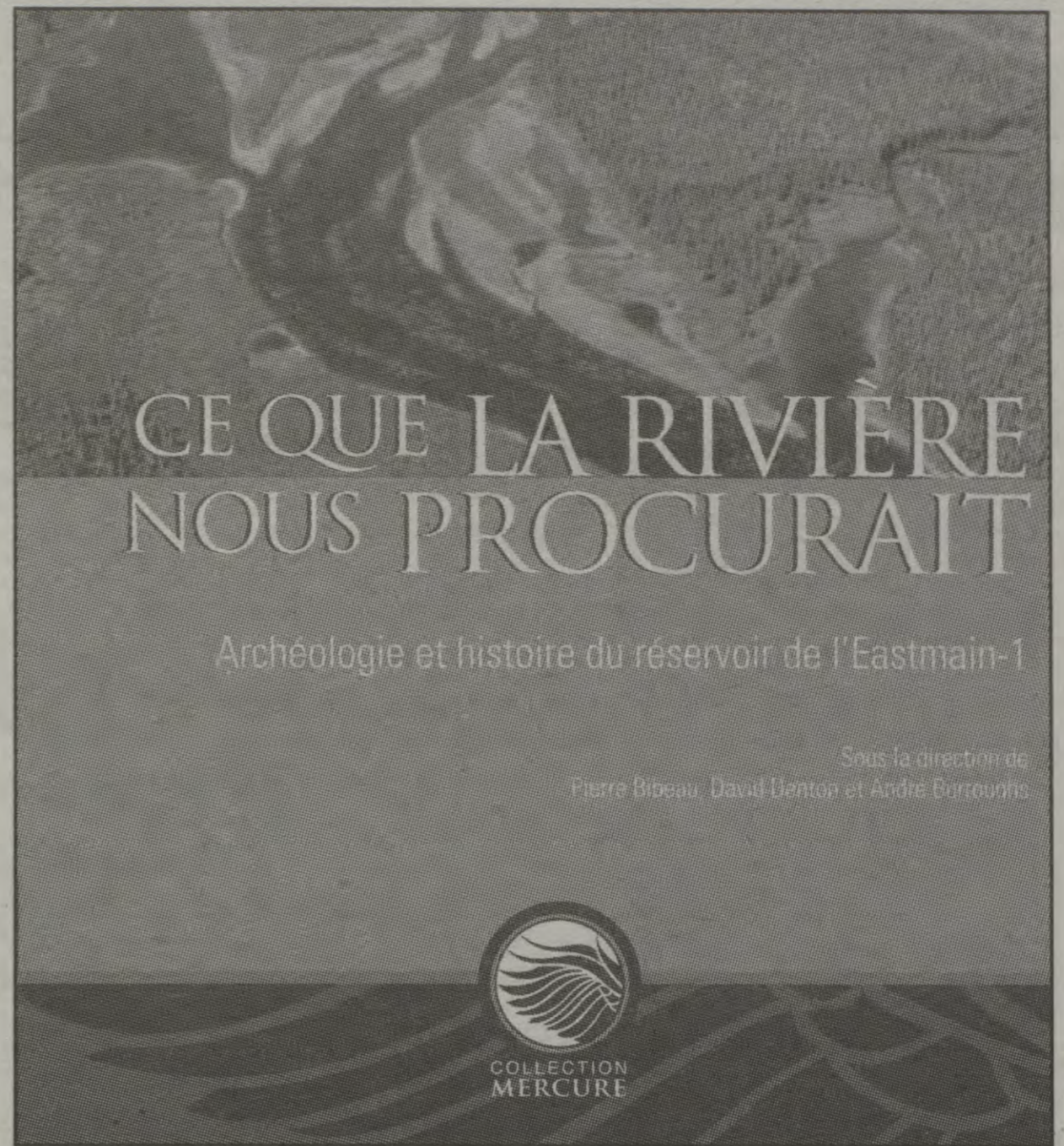
In 2006, the Eastmain-1 hydroelectric project created a reservoir of 603 sq. kms in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory. From 2002 to 2005, archaeological research was undertaken by the Société d'Énergie de la Baie James and the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Program in the areas that would be flooded.

The Cree Nation worked with elders, historians and archaeologists to create an archive of the Cree heritage that would be affected by the Eastmain-1 project.

A number of educational products aimed at a Cree audience (films, a book, a commemorative monument and a travelling exhibition) have already been produced. Now, a major scientific compilation of the archaeological, geographic and historical research is launched.

The input and spirit of the Cree Elders is present throughout the volume, reads a press release. Beyond archaeologists and members of Cree Nation, the book should appeal to those interested in First Nations' history and those grappling with issues of large-scale resource development and heritage preservation.

CE QUE LA RIVIÈRE NOUS PROCURAIT is jointly published by the Canadian Museum of History as part of its Mercury Series and the University of Ottawa Press.



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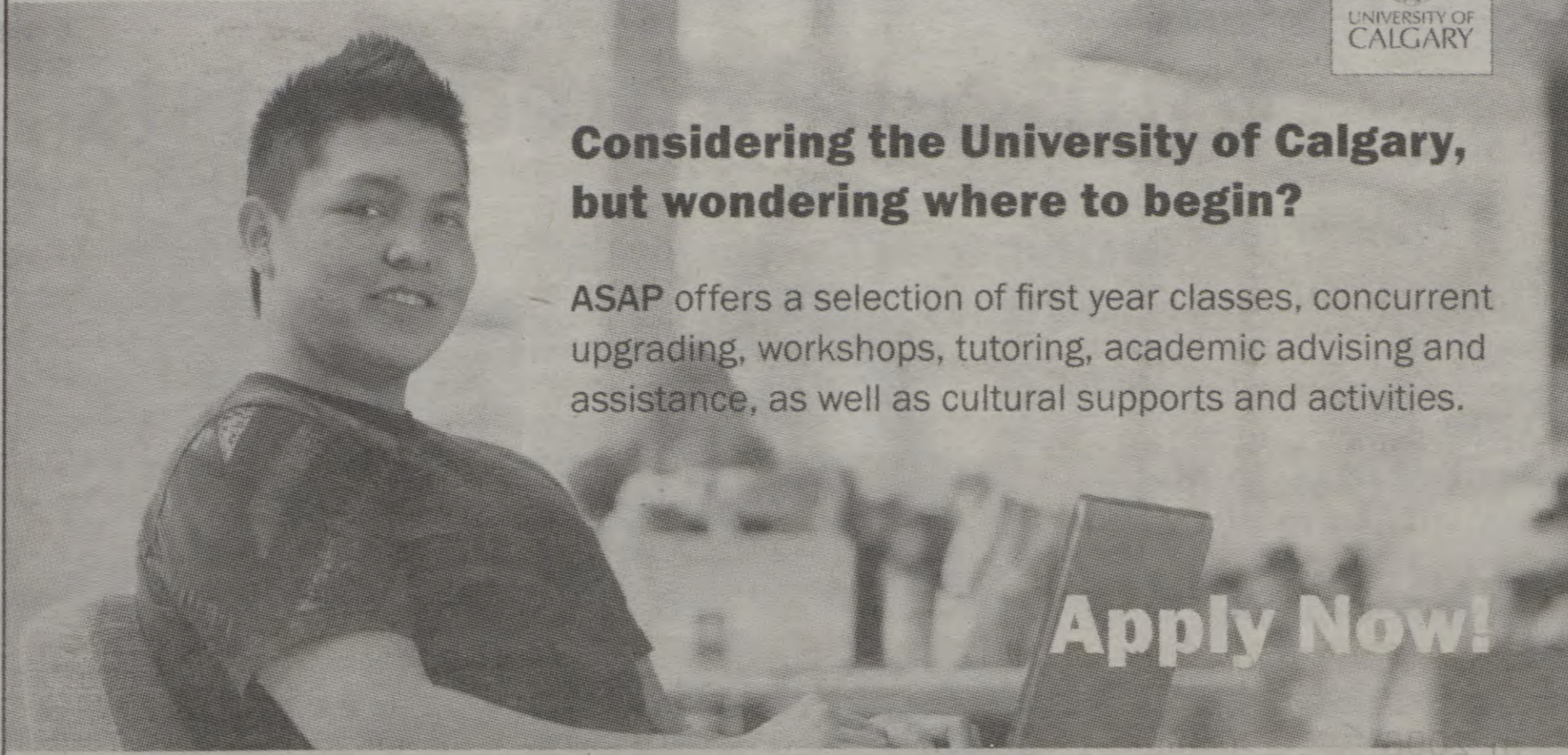
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Too soon for recommendations on housing

(Continued from page 11.)

"The poor quality of housing and the overcrowding in many communities is a distressing situation," reads the report.

Spence said overcrowding has far-reaching consequences. "Overcrowding has a significant impact on every area of our residents' lives. They suffer from infectious disease, family conflict, even violence and disruption of education and employment. Children are suffering from infections — skin, respiratory, stomach. When they go to school, they cannot focus on school because they live in overcrowded housing. That's a major impact on our children... They witness family conflict and violence that is the natural result of families struggling to recover from the legacy of the residence schools while living in overcrowded, unsafe homes. Some have been removed from their homes, from their families and community because of unsafe housing."

The committee concedes that although there is an acknowledgement of a "significant housing shortage on reserves," the severity of that shortage remains unclear. The Assembly of First Nations pegs the shortage at upward of 85,000 units, but Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada says the figure is less than half of that, closer to 35,000 to 40,000.

Due to projected population growth, the AFN says the housing crisis will hit 130,000 units by 2031.

Other discrepancy in figures include a Statistics Canada survey that said in 2006 44 per cent of people living on reserve claimed their homes needed major repairs. However, AANDC's 2012-2013 departmental performance report says 82 per cent of First Nations housing was deemed adequate. The committee noted a difference in the sites they visited, with northern locations, accessible by air, water, or winter road, facing more challenges to their housing and infrastructure needs than southern locations.

The committee stressed that it "consistently... heard that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to housing on reserve" as the way housing was managed differed from one reserve to another and reserve economics also played a role.

The interim housing report is the first phase of a two-part study being undertaken by the committee examining infrastructure on reserves. The committee is currently in the second phase of its study focusing on community infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water and sewer systems.

A final report with overall recommendations will be tabled at the conclusion of phase two.



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PLEASE REFER TO COMPETITION #2015-008 WHEN APPLYING FOR THIS POSITION.

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[footprints] Blood, Green, Sereda, Morin-Desjarlais

Highway accident claims

four celebrated artists

By Dianne Meili

Flags were lowered and tributes flowed when four artists were killed Feb. 10 in one horrific car crash in Saskatchewan; sentiment justified all the more by examining why they were travelling together that snowy morning.

Narcisse Blood, 60, Michael Green, 58, Michele Sereda, 48, and Lacy Morin-Desjarlais, 29, were enroute from Regina to Payepot School on Piapot First Nation to initiate a community project based on the success of Making Treaty 7 – a multifaceted theatrical performance.

The production features Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal performers and re-interprets the story of treaty-making in southern Alberta. The play asks audiences to consider the inequity of the historical agreement, and to forge a new one together with integrity and respect.

“The project they were going to work on at Payepot School was the equivalent of Making Treaty 7, here in Saskatchewan,” explained Janine Windolph, a close friend of Morin-Desjarlais and Sereda. The process of Making Treaty 4 would empower and heal the Aboriginal community as they explored their history, and non-Aboriginal audiences would be invited to join the dialogue.

“Everyone in that vehicle was a humanitarian in that they saw their art as a way for humanity to heal and move forward. They were powerful bridge builders,” Windolph said.

Each artist/creator/mentor used their voice, body and spirit to bring openness and understanding to diverse audiences. Blood was a Kainai First Nation storyteller and culture keeper, Morin-Desjarlais a Saulteaux Metis dancer and powwow instructor, while Sereda and Green were forward-thinking theatre directors with deep ties to Aboriginal communities.

Staff and students at the University of Regina, from which Sereda, founder of experimental theatre company Curtain Razors, graduated, and where Morin-Desjarlais taught powwow dance, expressed intense loss.

“Both Lacy and Michele were fantastic role models for the students,” said Dean of Fine Arts Rae Staseson in a

statement. “Michele was dedicated to giving a voice to those who had stories to tell by teaching and inspiring emerging performers. Her energy and vision touched everyone she worked with in our faculty and we are very proud of her accomplishments.”

Morin-Desjarlais had only moved from B.C. to Saskatchewan two years ago and was involved in dance and filmmaking, with numerous projects and collaborations on the go. With many community ties, she had performed in the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company’s Rez Christmas show, and had also begun to write articles for RezX online magazine.

Blood, Tatsikiistamik/Middle Bull, was the former director of Kainai Studies at Red Crow Community College, and an Elder who shared Blackfoot Ways of Knowing in his teachings and films. He collaborated with Green on Making Treaty 7. Green was a long-time cultural force in Calgary who co-founded One Yellow Rabbit Theatre Company and developed High Performance Rodeo into an international performing arts festival.

“This is the most rewarding and electrified piece of art I have ever created in over 30 years,” Green said of Making Treaty 7. In a statement posted on the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society’s website following his death, Green is quoted as saying, “To have, through this process, through the Sundance, been blessed with a spiritual awakening is a gift I could never have expected.”

Green was profoundly affected by the Sundance Blood invited him to, along with other Treaty 7 performers, during the summer of 2013.

Among other arts community members who mourned the loss was Sandra Laronde, director of Indigenous Arts at the Banff Centre.

“Both Narcisse and Michael were so deeply entrenched in the Making of Treaty 7 here, and Lacy was an emerging dancer in our Dance Residency in 2013. They were so upbeat, positive, excited about Making Treaty 7 and how critical this was to Albertan and Canadian audiences. It’s an incredible loss

to southern Alberta, like a library having been burned down,” she wrote in an e-mail to Windspeaker.

Remembering Morin-Desjarlais, Sarina Primozic wrote on Facebook, “You were an inspiration to youth and adults everywhere. You were beautiful inside and out and I’m sorry we lost you so soon.”

With substantial vision for a young woman, Morin-Desjarlais created a controversial dance film with Sereda, *Dancing the Space Inbetween*, just before her death.

“She was challenging the way we think by dancing a male warrior dance,” said Windolph. “That’s considered taboo, but she wasn’t doing it in disrespect. She was doing it to honour what she says is the time of the woman, that women are warriors, and she wanted to empower them.”

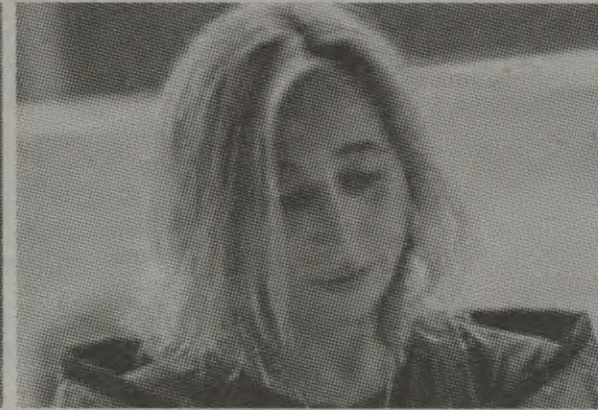
Weeks before his death, Blood offered Windspeaker comments about the passing of fellow Red Crow Community College founder Marie Smallface-Marule. At that time, like Morin-Desjarlais, he uplifted women, saying all Blackfoot ceremonies were given first to the women. He wondered why abuse centres were needed in Blackfoot communities, insisting the disease came because of colonization.

“We must work to defeat it,” he said. “We have to work toward our own healing.”

He spoke of his residential school experiences, saying they were important to know and talk about the pain of the past, but he avoided anger, sourcing his words from the Blackfoot philosophy of love and healing, instead.

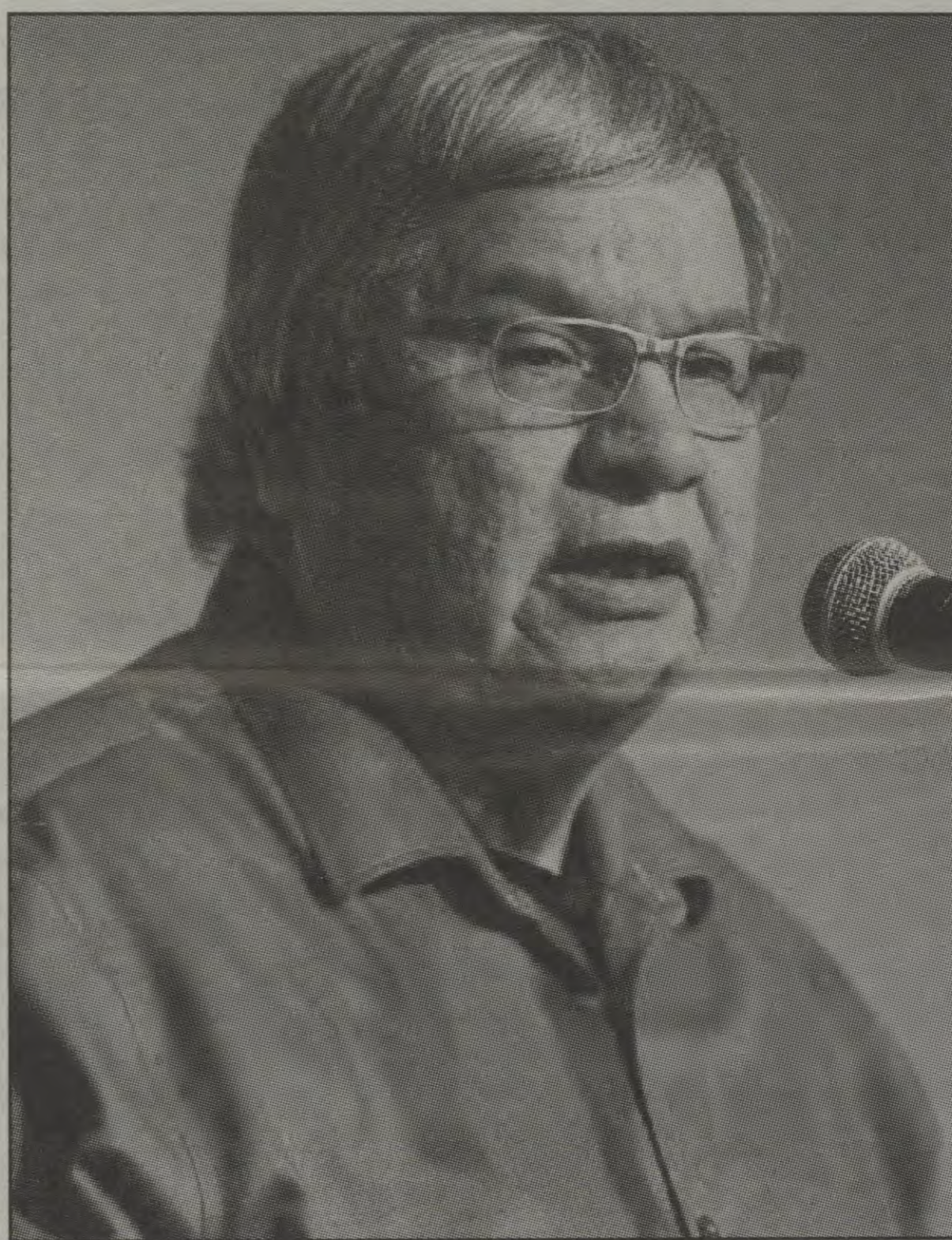
“All of these people saw promise in us and pushed us to reach our potential, so we feel the loss, but also need to carry on and honour ourselves and our own abilities as they would have wanted,” said Windolph.

Highway 6, north of Regina, was closed off for several hours the morning of the collision, which involved two other vehicles. A fifth person died, Morley Hartenberger, 59, the lone occupant of a truck. Two other adults in the third vehicle, a woman and a man, were taken to the hospital with injuries. RCMP say blowing snow may have been a factor in the accident.



Lacy Morin-Desjarlais
Narcisse Blood

Michael Green
Michele Sereda



Narcisse Blood



Lacy Morin-Desjarlais

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Notice of Public Hearing and Application to Participate National Energy Board Public Hearing for Enbridge Pipelines Inc. Application for the Line 3 Replacement Program (Project)

The National Energy Board (NEB or Board) has received an application under sections 52 and 58 of the *National Energy Board Act*, and section 45.1 of the *National Energy Board Onshore Pipeline Regulations*, from Enbridge Pipelines Inc. (Enbridge) for approval to construct approximately 1073 km of new pipeline to replace the majority of the existing Line 3 pipeline, and to decommission the majority of the existing Line 3 pipeline, from Enbridge's Hardisty Terminal, located near Hardisty, Alberta to Gretna Station, located near Gretna, Manitoba.

The proposed Project includes the replacement of the existing 863.6 mm crude oil pipeline with a 914.4 mm crude oil pipeline, the addition of remotely operated sectionalization valves, the addition of 18 pump stations and associated infrastructure and equipment, the addition of tankage at the Hardisty Terminal, and the decommissioning of the majority of the existing Line 3 pipeline once the replacement pipeline is in operation.

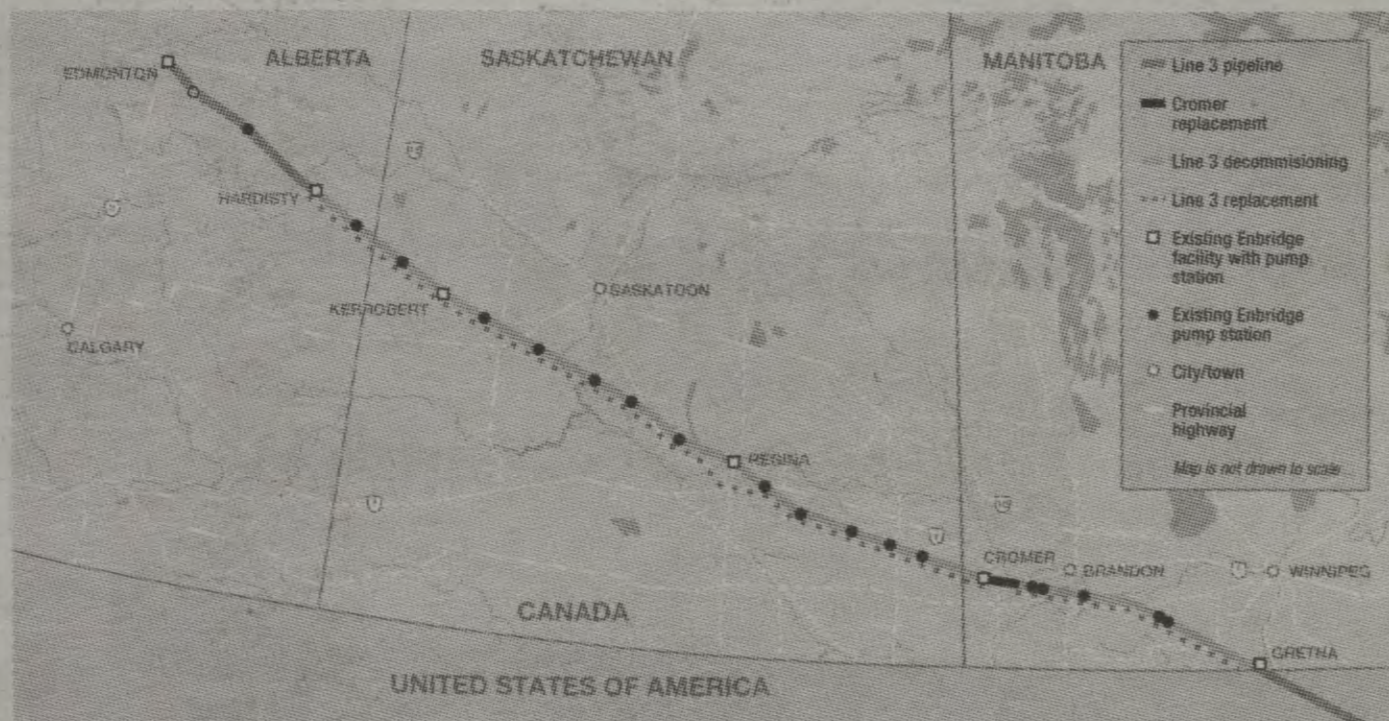
The NEB will hold a public hearing regarding Enbridge's application, which will include a written component and may include an oral component. The issues the Board will consider are:

1. The need for the Project.
2. The economic feasibility of the Project.
3. The potential commercial impacts of the Project.
4. The potential environmental and socio-economic effects of the Project, including those to be considered under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*.
5. The appropriateness of the general route and land requirements for the Project.
6. The suitability of the design of the Project.
7. Potential impacts of the Project on Aboriginal interests.
8. Potential impacts of the Project on landowners and land use.
9. Contingency planning for product release, accidents or malfunctions, during construction and operation of the Project.
10. The suitability of the decommissioning plan for the existing Line 3 pipeline.
11. Safety and security during construction and operation of the Project, including emergency response planning and third-party damage prevention.
12. The terms and conditions to be included in any recommendation or approval the Board may issue for the Project.

PARTICIPATION IN THE NEB'S PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to section 55.2 of the NEB Act, the Board will determine who may participate in this hearing. Applicants must clearly, and in sufficient detail, describe their interest in relation to the issues for the hearing, as described above. Those who are directly affected by the granting or refusing of the application will be allowed to participate in the hearing and those with relevant information or expertise may be allowed to participate.

If the Board allows an applicant to participate in the hearing, it will be as either a **Commenter** or an **Intervenor**. Applicants are required, at the time they apply, to indicate which type of participation in this hearing they are seeking from the Board. For further information on participating in a hearing, refer to the Board's website www.neb-one.gc.ca. From the drop-down menu on the black bar, select *Participation & Lands*, then under *The Hearing Process*, choose *Hearing Process Handbook*.



Commenters participate only by submitting a Letter of Comment with the Board. Submitting a Letter of Comment allows a participant to contribute views and thereby assist the Board in making its decisions and recommendation on the application. When submitted, a Letter of Comment becomes part of the official record of the hearing. Commenters do not ask questions about other participants' evidence or present a final argument prior to the closing of the hearing.

Participating as an Intervenor can require a substantial commitment of time, and may involve some costs to prepare evidence. The Board's Process Advisor is available for further information.

Participating as an Intervenor allows a participant to:

- apply for participant funding assistance;
- submit written evidence;
- ask questions of Enbridge and other Intervenor about their evidence;
- submit and respond to motions; and
- present final argument.

Intervenor must:

- provide copies of their written evidence and related documents to Enbridge and other Intervenor;
- in writing, answer any written questions asked about their evidence; and
- should there be an oral component to the hearing, participate by answering any questions about their evidence.

APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE FORM

If you wish to participate in the hearing for this Project, you must complete an "Application to Participate" form. The form will be posted on the NEB's website on **3 March 2015**. You can access the form at: www.neb-one.gc.ca, under *Quick Links* on the right hand side, select *Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Program*, then *Applying to Participate*. The application to participate process will close on **31 March 2015 at 4:00 pm (MST)**.

After the application to participate process closes and the Board has made its ruling on who may participate and how, the Board will take steps to issue a Hearing Order. The Hearing Order will outline the procedures for the public hearing and include a timetable of material events, including any oral component of the hearing the Board deems appropriate to schedule.

PARTICIPANT FUNDING

Should there be an oral component to the hearing, the NEB will make funds available under its Participant Funding Program to assist directly affected persons, or those determined to have relevant information or expertise, in participating in the public hearing for the proposed Project. Only Intervenor in the hearing are eligible to receive participant funding. Please refer to the heading "Documents and Information" below for further information.

PROCESS ADVISOR AND INFORMATION SESSIONS

If you are thinking about applying to participate in the Board's hearing for this Project and have questions about how to apply, or have questions about the NEB's hearing process, please contact Matt Groza, Process Advisor for this Project by email at matt.groza@neb-one.gc.ca, by phone at 902-858-2138 or through the Board's toll-free line at 1-800-899-1265. If you are interested in participating in an information session, on-line or by telephone, please contact Mr. Groza to sign up for one of the sessions below:

| 5 March 2015 | 12 March 2015 | 19 March 2015 | 26 March 2015 | 30 March 2015 |
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DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

For information about this Project, visit www.neb-one.gc.ca. Under *Quick Links* on the right hand side, select *Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Program*. Select *NEB 101 Information* for information on the NEB Hearing Process; select *Applying to Participate* for information on applying to participate; select *Participant Funding* for information on funding for participating in the hearing, and the application form. An electronic copy of the Project application is available for viewing under the *Regulatory Documents* section of this page [Folder 2546069].

Copies of the Project application are available for public viewing at various locations along the Project route. A list of these locations will be available on Enbridge's website by 20 February 2015.

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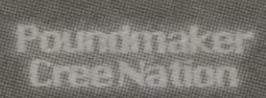
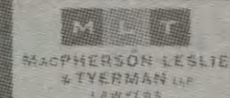
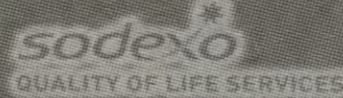
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PUBLIC NOTICE

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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT ACT
NOTICE OF APPLICATION**

In accordance with the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, Titan Tire Reclamation Corporation has applied to Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development for an approval to construct and operate a Thermal Vacuum Recovery Plant (TVRP). This TVRP will thermally degrade tires into steel, carbon black and bio-oils for recycling or reuse. This project has a design capacity of processing about 90,000 kilograms of rubber per day. The proposed project will be located within Section 15 Township 92 Range 10 West of 4th Meridian, north of Fort McMurray.

Pursuant to section 73 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, any person who is directly affected by this operation may submit a written statement of concern regarding this application. Failure to file a statement of concern may affect the right to file a Notice of Appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board. Such a statement of concern must be submitted to:

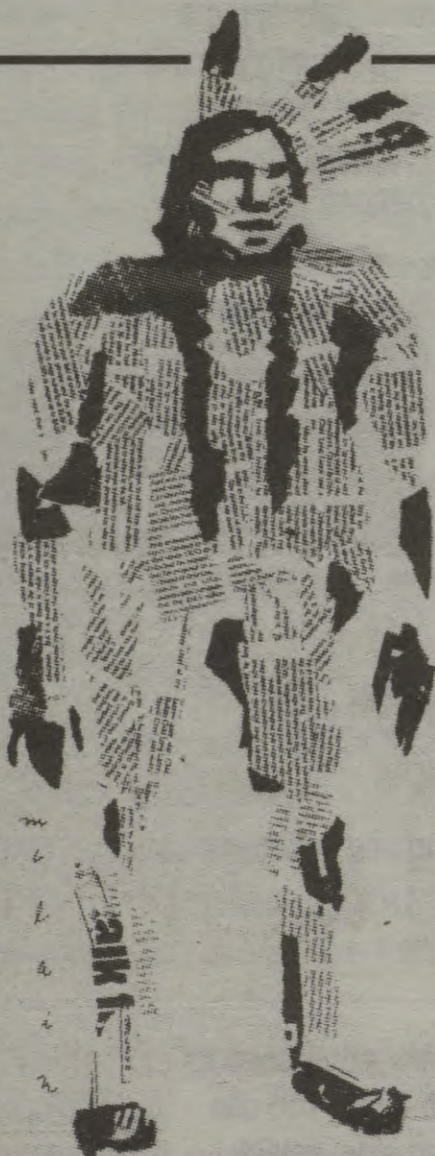
Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Regulatory Approvals Center
Main Floor, 9820 -106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6
Fax: (780) 422-0154
Email: aenv.northernepea@gov.ab.ca

within 30 days of the date of this notice. Please quote Application No. 001-364232 when submitting a statement of concern in regards to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act application.

NOTE: Any statement filed regarding this application are public records which are accessible by the public.

Copies of the application and additional information can be obtained from:

Titan Tire Reclamation Corp.
Attention: Dean Sawatzky
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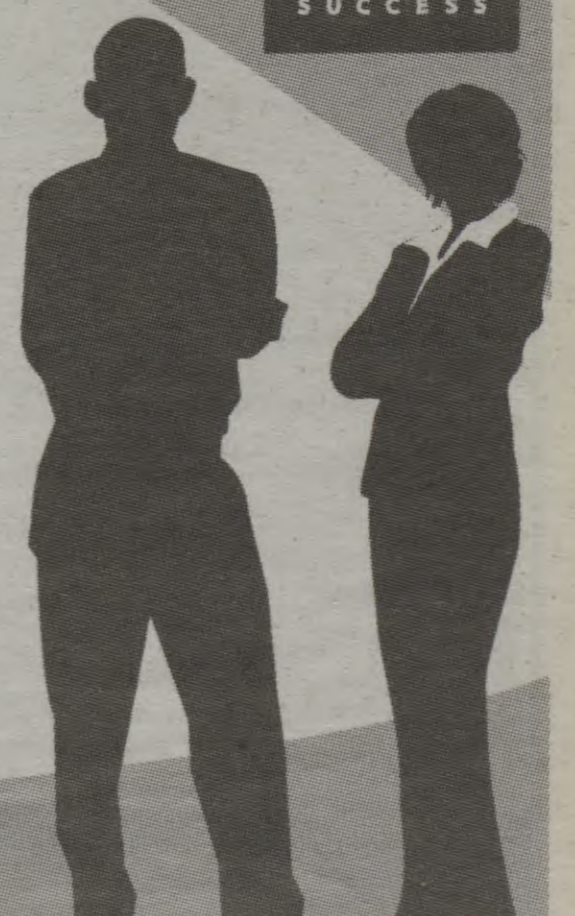
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