

FIRE PREVENTION

Fire Prevention Week runs from October 9-15, 2011, however you should consider fire safety all year round. This year's theme is Protect Your Family from Fire. The Matawa Fire Marshals are encouraging our First Nation Fire Departments and First Nation community fire safety teams to focus their Fire Prevention Week messaging and activities on their local community fire risks.

Matawa Fire Marshal Message

Is Your Home Safe from Fire?

The answers may surprise you.

Fire hazards may be lurking in your home where you least expect them. Take a few minutes to inspect your home for fire hazards. As you go from room to room, circle your responses to the questions below.

Cooking Safety

Yes No Does an adult always stay in the kitchen when food is cooking on the stove?

Yes No Are stove tops and nearby counters clear and uncluttered?

Yes No Do you keep a proper fitting lid near the stove when you are cooking?

Yes No Are pot handles turned inward so they can't be bumped?

Yes No Are curtains, utensils, paper towels and other things that can burn well away from the stove?

Yes No Is there a "kid-free" zone of one metre around the stove when adults are cooking?

Heating Safety

Yes No If space heaters are used in your home, are they at least one metre away from things that can burn, including curtains, furniture, pets?

Yes No Does your fireplace have a sturdy screen to catch sparks?

Yes No Has your chimney been inspected and cleaned during the past year?

Yes No Has your furnace been serviced by a professional in the past year?

Yes No Are propane tanks, gasoline, or other fuels stored safely outside your home?

Candle Safety

Yes No Are candles placed in sturdy holders, out of reach of children and pets so they can't be knocked over?

Yes No Do you cover lit candles with glass chimneys, to prevent people or objects from brushing against the flame?

Yes No Do you always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to bed?

Smoking, Matches and Lighters

Yes No Are matches and lighters stored out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet?

Yes No If you smoke, do you have just one lighter or book of matches and keep it with you at all times?

Yes No Do you encourage smokers in your household to smoke outside?

Electrical Safety

Yes No Are electrical cords in good condition, without cracks or frayed areas?

Yes No Are extension cords used safely? (Are they not under carpets or across doorways?)

Yes No Are kitchen appliances such as the kettle, coffee-maker, toaster oven and microwave, plugged into separate outlets?

Home Fire Escape Planning

Yes No Are all of the exits in your home clear of furniture, toys and clutter?

Yes No Do you have a home fire escape plan that includes two ways out of every room (if possible)?

Yes No Have you picked a safe place outside where everyone will meet after exiting the home?

Yes No Have you practiced a home fire drill with everyone in your household?

Smoke Alarms

Yes No Does your home have working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas?

Yes No Are the batteries working in all your smoke alarms? (Test the battery by pushing the test button. If there is no button, press the centre of the cover.)

Yes No Do you have a designated person to test the smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once per year?

What's Your Score?

Add up the number of "yes" responses in your checklist. Give yourself one point for every "yes" response.

My Score: _____

If you answered "yes" to all of the 27 checklist questions above, congratulations! You are a fire safety expert!

If you answered "yes" to at least 20 questions, you're well on your way to a fire safe home.

If you answered "yes" to between 15 and 20 questions, you're on the right track but there is still some work to be done.

If you answered "yes" to fewer than 15 questions, there are some important changes that need to be made around your home to make sure everyone in your home is safe from fire.



FALL 2011



MATAWA

M E S S E N G E R

For The People, About The People

Matawa First Nations Chiefs Sign East-West Corridor Collaborative Agreement in Ring of Fire

Four Matawa First Nations have signed a landmark collaboration agreement to pursue the ownership, development and operation of a preferred East-West corridor in the Ring of Fire. The East-West Corridor Collaborative Agreement was signed between the communities of Webequie, Neskantaga, Eabametoong and Nibinamik.

Since March 2010, the First Nations have been working towards a community-driven strategy to develop a preferred corridor through their traditional territories. The goal is to establish a First Nation joint venture that will operate an infrastructure, transportation and service corridor for northern First Nations and for other activities in the Ring of Fire.

One of the major objectives outlined in the East-West Corridor Collaborative Agreement is to ensure that community members from the four First Nations realize the maximum possible benefits from the corridor development. ■



CAPTION: Left to Right: Chief Peter Moonias, Chief Roger Oskineegish, Chief Harry Papah, and Chief Cornelius Wabase sign agreement in Thunder Bay.

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A First Nation Youth Tells her Story of Addiction

By Amanda Bay

Grasping on tightly to a tissue with tears streaming down her face, Dorris Slipperjack sat deep in her seat at the Paramount Theatre in Thunder Bay, as she watched a documentary that featured a girl who appeared to be a drug addict going through treatment. The girl in the video is Slipperjack, and she tells the audience at the premier of "The Life You Want", that she has come a long way, "fighting a battle within herself" that she doesn't think will ever end.

The 22-year old from Eabametoong First Nation, was addicted to pills for years. She decided to participate in the film with hopes of raising awareness about the issue, and at the same time, try to get funding for a desperately needed treatment centre in Eabametoong. "No one wants to leave home to go for treatment," Slipperjack explained.

James Morris, Executive Director of Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, the group that commissioned the project, refers to the film as a "Shock-umentary". "First Nations people on reserves have no freedom, little help, and everything is controlled by someone from the outside. That is why so many people slide into addictions," Morris said.

Slipperjack told the audience how drugs became more of a necessity to her at one point than food for her own children. She was paying 400-dollars for one pill of Oxycontin.

The film was made to educate people from the perspective of a First Nation youth. Former Chief of Eabametoong First Nation, Lewis Nate says the film is just a sample of what the community is going through. "Dorris is representing a lot of young people that are hurting, that are really struggling. If you go out in our community after hours, there are seven and eight year old kids sniffing gas because they aren't being taken care of by their parents who are drug abusers."

Since making the film, and receiving treatment, Dorris has relapsed a couple of times, but continues to talk to groups and organizations about her journey. She is currently in a Suboxone program. Suboxone is a narcotic medication indicated for the treatment of opioid dependence. Slipperjack says the program is helping, and she is still off the pills. She says she feels great. "It's okay to ask for help. I feel reborn. I found myself, found self-worth."

People can access "The Life You Want" video by visiting www.sfnha.com or on Facebook by looking up: "The Life You Want". ■



YOUR LAND IS AT RISK

Did you know there are currently two mine development projects proposed for the Ring of Fire?

These projects are located near McFaulds Lake in Northern Ontario, in the backyard of Matawa First Nation communities. The projects have the potential to significantly impact Matawa First Nations and the environment.

The Cliffs Chromite Project and Noront Eagle's Nest Project have both submitted "Final Project Description" documents to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) (Federal Government) and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry (MNDMF) (Provincial Government).

Both projects include mining and infrastructure components such as roads and electrical transmission and telecommunication lines on the traditional territories of First Nations. The projects have the potential to profoundly affect the Matawa First Nation communities and the rest of Northern Ontario.

Major environmental impacts have been identified for both projects. They include:

- All-season roads crossing over approximately 100 water bodies each. The Cliffs all-season road also crosses over three major rivers, while their project will re-route three waterways and drain several ponds at the Mine Site. These activities will impact fish habitat.
- Large amounts of water to be used by the mining activities, and treated water will likely be discharged to the Muketei River. This can impact water quality and quantity.
- Pollution from diesel-powered machinery, transport trucks and the noise generated by equipment will affect the surrounding environment and wildlife.
- Man-made roads/corridors (including the slurry pipeline) can fragment the habitat of migratory animals (caribou, moose, etc.), disrupting their travel routes.

Project Descriptions have been accepted by CEAA and have triggered a 90-day "Pre- Environmental Assessment Planning" stage. This stage determines what kind of Environmental Assessment (EA) will take place for the projects. Matawa Chiefs are calling for a Joint Review Panel EA. Industry is asking for a Comprehensive EA.

Want to find out more information about these projects, the Environmental Assessment process and how you can get involved? Check out the Special Projects page on the Four Rivers website and watch for the Four Rivers team visiting your community soon!

www.fourrivers.ca

Mining Matters to Matawa Youth

A group of Matawa First Nations youth were digging for information this summer. Youth from Long Lake #58, Webequie, and Marten Falls First Nation participated in the Mining Matters Youth Camp. Learning to use a compass and GPS made the camp a hands-on learning experience for the group, as well as several field activities and classroom lessons.

Chief Cornelius Wabasse of the Webequie First Nation says, "This program teaches our youth about Earth science and mineral exploration, mining and the environment. The content is so relevant to the mineral exploration and mine sites close to our communities. It inspires and challenges our youth. Positive reactions [last year] lead me to believe that the program has a lasting impact on our youth, opening their eyes to their own potential as well as the job possibilities awaiting them."

With the explosion of mining activity in the area known as the Ring of Fire, close to the Matawa First Nations communities, many youth are questioning what a "mine" even is. These camps provide the opportunity for youth to find out and discover careers in the mining and mineral exploration industry, as well as Earth science.

"It is critical that local youth understand the importance of mining, education and staying-in-school, to ensure Aboriginal communities are equipped to fully participate and benefit from future career and business opportunities," says Leanne Hall, Vice President of Human Resources at Noront. "We are thrilled to be expanding the program to the Thunder Bay Region and having over 180 Aboriginal youth participate in the Mining Matters program."



NEW STAFF

CRISIS INTERVENTION

Hello everyone, my name is Hannah Myers and I recently accepted the position as the Regional Crisis Intervention Coordinator for Matawa Tribal Council.



My employment history includes; Recreation, Secretarial, CHR, Health Director and Crisis Team Coordinator, all for Constance Lake. I was also a Program Manager for Aurora Services Inc in Wisconsin U.S. for a period of 4 years, where I managed 2 houses with handicapped individuals.

My education includes Licensed Practical Nurse and Community Health Representative. I was also certified as a First Responder in Canada and the U.S. I recently completed the Admission & Discharge Criteria and Assessment (ADAT) training, and have a letter of completion. Shortly I will be taking the St. Johns Ambulance Instructor Course for First Aid and CPR.

My goal is to provide extensive training to Coordinator's in the area of PDA (Prescription Drug Abuse) as this is an epidemic in our communities. We have to get to the root cause of our addictions!

I truly believe that prevention and promotion with our Youth is the answer. "Youth are not the problem, they are our solution" is a motto I like to use. Providing aftercare programs for individuals who have completed treatment is also a big area, which has to be addressed.

I look forward to working with you and your community, and I will be seeing you soon. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at 1-800-463-2249 or hmyers@matawa.on.ca and I hope to do the same.

COMMUNICATIONS

Matawa is pleased to announce that it is developing an on-site communications department. Matawa has been out-sourcing its communications for a number of years. The Matawa Chiefs identified a growing need to have a full time, on-site communications department. Two communications specialists have joined the Matawa team.



Anita Fraser comes to Matawa with over twenty years of experience in the communications field. Her early years were spent as a broadcast journalist and senior producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio Service (CBC Radio One). After leaving CBC Anita did community development work in Thunder Bay, and also worked with Nishnawbe Aski Nation as a Communications Officer. For the past eight years she has been the CEO of Communications Northwest, a full service communications company which worked predominantly with First Nations to help advance their goals by assisting with communications, strategic planning, media relations, and facilitation. Anita attended the University of Guelph and Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology. She is originally from the Toronto area but has made Northwestern Ontario her home for 25 years.

LEARNING CENTRE

Hello Everyone! My name is Brad Battiston, the new Principal at the Matawa Learning Centre.



I am from Thunder Bay and a graduate of Lakehead University. Prior to working for the Matawa Learning Centre I spent 10 years at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School. My first 7 years

were in the classroom and my last three were as Principal. After DFC I worked with Lakehead Public Schools at the Adult Education Centre in a variety of capacities.

I came to the Matawa Learning Centre because I was very interested in getting back into First Nations education. I hope to expand on the tremendous effort put in last year by Denise Baxter (former principal) and current teacher Maureen Hatherley, to assist the students at the Learning Centre. I would like to build upon the established relationships within the city and region as well as develop new ones in the areas of post-secondary and Co-Operative education, and professional development. We are going to do our best to create new learning opportunities for the students outside the classroom while providing a flexible academic schedule to meet their specific learning needs.

My main message to the students is to not be afraid to have dreams and goals and to never give up on them. It will not be easy but it is possible to fulfill their dreams if they put the necessary time and effort into the process. The Matawa Education staff is here to assist in any way possible to help the students on their journey. We will work hard to provide guidance, academic and personal support but the ultimate decision is up to the students to take advantage of the opportunity. I hope and believe every student will be successful in some capacity. As principal I will do my best to support them.



Jason Paul Rasevych is a Ginoogaming First Nation member who has managed corporate communications and developed marketing campaigns in Northern Ontario for over half a decade. He graduated from Lakehead University earning a Bachelor of Administration degree in business management. Earlier he obtained an Advanced Ontario College Diploma in Business-Administration Marketing from Confederation College. He is also the first Aboriginal in Canada to earn professional membership to the Canadian Institute of Marketing and Canadian Public Relations Society Inc. Jason comes to Matawa with an extensive background as a marketing, communications and public relations specialist with the Alzheimer Society and has also completed work as a marketing consultant for Wawatay News.