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Akwasne Mohawk School Students Present Flag to School Board



The SD & G Public School Board was presented with the official Akwasne Mohawk flag by students at AMS. Pictured from L-r: Penny Peters, T.J. Point, Jason Lazore, Lindsay Roundpoint and Mamie David-vice-chairman of the board.

At a recent meeting of the Ontario Public School Board Association Special Committee on Native Education, Mamie David of Kawehnoke was elected as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee consists of six native trustees who represent OPSBA regions that contain school boards with a native representative. There are more than 50 native trustees on Provincial School Boards. Mamie is the Eastern Ontario Region representative. Formed in June of 1990, the Committee is currently dealing with: A proposal to develop school board handbook on Tuition Agreements, asking the Board of Directors of OPSBA to consider a special Membership Category which would enable First Nations School Boards to participate in OPSBA activities if they so choose, and we are in the process of setting up a panel discussion on native issues for the upcoming annual meeting of OPSBA in Toronto this coming June.

Police Seek Help in Tracking Down Fake ID Cards

The cards would be "virtually useless" in areas where merchants are very familiar with them, Sgt. Blake said, but might fool storekeepers elsewhere because not all band membership cards are identical.

Hundreds of people with counterfeit Indian band membership cards -- which could be used to make purchases without paying the federal or provincial sales taxes -- are being asked to contact the Ontario Provincial Police.

The OPP said that it stumbled on a counterfeiting operation while arresting a man on Manitoulin Island who was wanted on an unrelated matter in the Edmonton

area. Police found 18 counterfeit band membership cards, a stolen identification camera, paper similar to the kind governments use to issue licenses, and several firearms.

Pierre Fournier, 57, of no fixed address, is to appear in court again on a continuance of a bail hearing. He was charged with possession of firearms while prohibited and possession of stolen property worth more than \$1,000. He is also charged under RCMP warrants with theft, obstructing police and causing a disturbance.

"We expect there are several hundred (fake) cards already in circulation," said Sergeant Dennis Blake of the OPP's Little Current

detachment.

"That's why we are appealing to the public to turn them in and give a statement as to what exactly was said to them" when they obtained the cards, "so that we may lay additional charges."

The Cards, which police say sold for \$50 each, identify the holder as an Indian band member who is exempt from provincial and federal taxes on merchandise to be taken onto an Indian reserve.

Sgt. Blake said police also found 60 applications filled out by people in Quebec and Metro Toronto, on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford and on Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay, and on several reserves in Manitoba and Alberta.

Grand Chief Responds to Claims of Military Build-up in Akwasne

Grand Chief Mike Mitchell of the Mohawk Council of Akwasne made a statement to respond to claims by Canadian Government officials that Akwasne is stockpiling military equipment.

"This story has gotten out of hand," stated Grand Chief Mitchell. "It's going all over the country that the Mohawks are gearing up for war, and that's nonsense. It's reached the point where even Tom Siddon is making statements about it in the House. It's been blown way out of proportion."

The military equipment in question consists of old boats, tanker trucks, construction equipment, storage boxes, stoves,

and surplus food and clothing. It is made available to equipment-poor tribal governments by the United States Government. The equipment being distributed to Akwasne is of a non-military nature.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is a non-issue," added Chief Mitchell. "The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is certainly acting in the community's interest by securing this equipment."

Chief Mitchell also responded to statements made by Jocelyn Turcotte, president of the Quebec Association of Provincial Police Officers, that tensions in the three Mohawk reserves of Akwasne,

Kahnawake, and Kanesatake (Oka) are on the rise and that more Surete du Quebec officers are needed to maintain the peace.

"This statement is a deliberate attempt by the police officer's union to gain a strong bargaining position in their contract negotiations. There's nothing to support their claims. In fact, we can foresee a time when our own Mohawk police service and justice system will be fully-functional, and we will be in the position to ask the outside police forces to leave," explained Chief Mitchell.

See Military
Cont'd on page 2

Groundbreaking Ceremony in Kanatakon for Health Facility



Throwing the dirt during the Ground Breaking Ceremonies last Monday at the Health facility in Kanatakon. From L-r: Jay Benedict, Director of Akwasne Technical Services, Gail McDonald, Director of Social Development and Health, Jack Donagani, Director of the General Management Program, Grand Chief Mike Mitchell, Pierre Colombe, Quebec Government Representative and Wallace Oakes, M.C.A. Chief.

by Derrick Paul/Staff
On Monday May 4, the community of Akwasne took part in another historical event.

The new health facility in Kanatakon is expected to be open for business in January of 1993.

The future site was host to a ground breaking ceremony.

Although the construction is still in the excavation stages, the initial ground work began in 1987.

The building will be in the Village of St. Regis at the former site of the Six-Plex housing complex.

A major step in the development of the Health Facility went back to November of 1990. This was the initiation of the Memorandum of Agreement signed at Iakhihsotha between Akwasne, Quebec and Ontario Governments. This occasion also marked the Opening of Iakhihsotha Home for the Elderly.

Guest speakers at the Ground breaking ceremonies represented Provincial and Mohawk Governments.

Tom Porter, the Reverend Laurie Smith and Father Egan opened the ceremony with prayers.

Russell Roundpoint, MCA Intergovernmental Liaison was the Master of Ceremonies and he received credit from the various speakers.

The first was Chief Wallace Oakes, holder of the Social Development and Health Program Portfolio. His speech was short and he made light of the fact that he will not have to argue with this staff over office space.

Roundpoint came on and gave a brief outline of the Memorandum of Agreement and its involvement with the Health Facility. This program states that the Mohawk Council of Akwasne will construct a number of projects in a five year span.

Alma Ransom is a representative of the Elderly and is not involved with any Government body.

She explained to the crowd how important a facility such as this is and how situations have improved over the years.

"In former days our people would go to the doctor only when sick, they would come sometimes by boat from Fort Covington or Cornwall and they would arrive probably by midnight."

She also said that the doctors would do nothing except tell the patient they are going to die.

"Everything will be under one roof", sums up the Health Facility in relation to the needs of the community.

The Building will have a Mental Health division, Alcohol and Drug treatment, Day Care and domestic violence.

Although Ransom could not officially comment, the Health building, it was said may house a Holistic medicine area.

"This will bring a lot of people in. They feel they will be welcome and have no hesitation because they know Indian medicine will be used."

She also noted that Indian Medicine could be used with modern medicine.

The Health building project has been an uphill battle since day one in 1987 and the people responsible for making this a reality were praised by Ransom.

They were given ovations by those present.

Alma especially gave credit to Grand Chief Mike Mitchell for his involvement.

"writing proposals is very discouraging, but we are looking at a Grand Chief who is the best lobbyist of any Indian Chief in Canada," says Ransom of Mitchell. "In fact when he comes to Ottawa it's either get him out of here as soon as we can or give him what he wants."

"He never quits". Another hurdle in the procurement of the building was getting the Provincial Governments to recognize Akwasne as a whole.

Gail McDonald, who has been overseeing the project since day one, says that team work on the part of Mohawk Council workers was key.

"The Federal Government had a lot of grey areas in jurisdiction."

The hardest part was "getting the Government to look at us as one community", and McDonald said this was stressed at all levels.

"We are one people, and this is the only way".

On hand at the future health facility site were noted Government officials and even those who were not present offered their congratulations.

Grand Chief Mike Mitchell read a

letter of congratulations at the ceremonies from Tom Siddon, Minister of Indian Affairs. "Please accept my heartfelt congratulations to you and the members of the Akwasne Community for the launching of another major project."

Jack Donegan is the Director of the General Program Management Branch and he relayed a personal message to MCA.

"When I am here, its like I am home. I think I have met most of the people here in one capacity or another and I have done nothing more personally rewarding in my life."

He also said he was honored to be invited to "pick up one of those shovels."

A mutual friendship was formed between the Canadian and Mohawk Government as stated by Russell Roundpoint.

"In working with all these projects, not only have I have the pleasure of working with my Mohawk colleagues but I've managed to meet a few new people along the way."

Grand Chief Mitchell said the Facility and other buildings like it are something to be owed to the Elders.

"When I first became Chief (1984) the Elders asked if I could do this for them."

He also explained the position that the elders play in our lives.

"When you are raised by your Elders, you grow up in that environment and you learn a lot of things." One of them is to be conscious of their needs and their wisdom and when they move on, you appreciate the wise things they have done for us."

At the ceremony, a model was shown to the public and the elaborate design on this miniature will be multiplied when the building is completed on the January 1993 completion date.

The building will be finished in a combination of brick and masonry blocks with anodized aluminum window frames and tinted glass.

But the building also marks the first of its kind on this reservation, as noted by Mike Mitchell.

"When this building located right here is finished, it'll be the first time that we are going to have an elevator in Akwasne and I'm proud of that."