

ARENA PROJECT UPDATE

Progress Report on the (Yet to be Named) Arena

The Akwesasne Arena was one of the beneficiaries from the Memorandum of Agreement between Ottawa, Quebec and Ontario of which 5.1 million was set aside for this purpose. Over the last 30 years various groups in Akwesasne had been trying through community fundraising efforts to secure an Arena for the benefit of the citizens of Akwesasne.

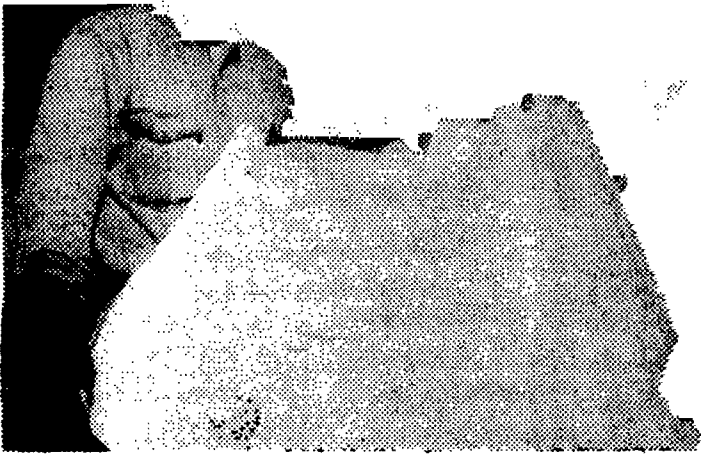
Because of the various jurisdiction that affect our community a unified approach was never possible. In 1986 then Grand Chief Mike Mitchell initiated a series of meetings that involved the three Mohawk governments with Akwesasne. Also invited were Federal and State officials from Washington and Albany along with Ottawa, Toronto (Ont.) and Quebec City (Que.). Over

the next two years ongoing meetings were held to determine what Akwesasne had lost or denied due to the multi-jurisdictional dilemma that existed in Akwesasne. During this period discussions focused in on Education, Adult Training, Health, Justice, Policing and Recreation. An agreement in principle was reached at that time for outside governments to

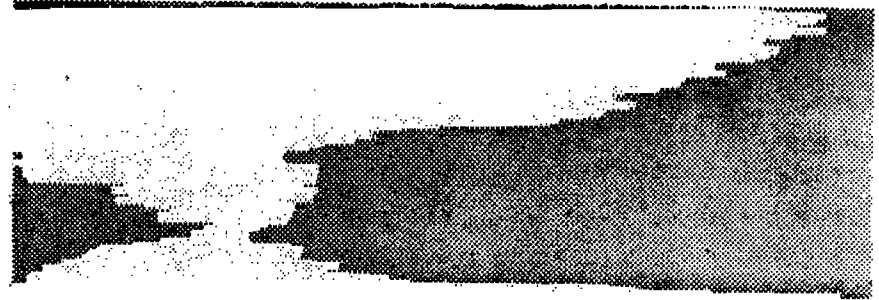
contribute towards a unified Akwesasne based project.

In 1989 internal conflict lead to community strife and brought about chaos and violence. The American participants never came back to the table. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne continued with the negotiations with Ottawa, Ontario and Quebec and in 1990 signed an agreement which resulted in a

25 million dollar infrastructure program which included buildings for health, justice, adult training, education, health and social development and also youth protection home, women's shelter, home for the elders, a health facility, a chronic care hospital in Cornwall Island, new recreation buildings for Snye, St. Regis, Cornwall Island and a new Arena for the community.



A ground breaking ceremony was held on June 22, 1994 at the north west part of Cornwall Island just east of the Seaway International Bridge and across from Cornwall. The Akwesasne Arena was expected to have total capacity of 2000 people (seated and standing), a 200 by 85' ice surface, six dressing rooms, concession area a walking/jogging track and a second floor area within enclosed windows and heat to provide a viewing area for the elderly, disabled and immediate family members for minor sports (hockey, figure skating, lacrosse, etc). The 39,000 sq. ft. arena was scheduled to be completed by the end of August 1995.



The original plan for the arena was to design it in the form and shape of a turtle. The body would serve the practical purpose of a rink and seating area. The overhead roof would provide an unobstructed view while the head and neck would serve as the entrance and viewing area for the sports hall of fame. The most important statement of the community was to make a cultural expression on behalf of the Mohawk people to the rest of the world. This historical and cultural view that mother earth rests on the back of a giant turtle, and that all the life-forces on mother earth to be treated with reverence and respect.

