

## Critics take aim at new wage policy

• Continued from page A1

With that the Liberals are saying: "We're going to give you more money but we're going to take it away and put it in our coffers, thank you very much," Eves said.

Bentley argued that the raise for most minimum-wage workers won't boost the amount of tax they pay.

"The small amount of increase in tax will be more than offset by the large amount of increase in their net wages," he said.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton said the initial increase is only a measly four per cent.

"The minimum wage should be increased to \$8 an hour now, with annual increments to follow," he said. "That would be a fair minimum wage."

The Ontario government has to consider boosting the minimum wage further to \$10 an hour, which would yield annual salary of about \$20,000, said Andrew Jackson, a senior economist with the Canadian Labour Congress.

"An \$8-an-hour job is still not going to cut it for a single mother with two kids who wants to go into the workforce," Jackson said.

"This is essentially the Liberals fulfilling a modest promise and we'd like to have seen it be a bit more generous."

# Ontario's minimum wage on its way up

Arvids- Dec 2/03

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — More than half-a-million Ontario workers can expect a raise after a nine-year pay freeze as the Liberal government outlined its plan yesterday to boost the province's minimum wage.

In keeping with a promise made in the election campaign that brought the Liberals to power in October, Ontario's minimum wage will rise to \$8 by 2007, Labour Minister Chris Bentley said.

"Everything makes a difference to people living on the minimum wage. This is an increase that's going to make a real difference in their lives," Bentley told the legislature.

"It is an important first step. We kept our commitment."

In the first instalment, the province's lowest-paid workers will get a 30-cent-an-hour raise on Feb. 1, bringing the province's minimum wage to \$7.15 an hour, Bentley said. It will rise every February until it reaches \$8 an hour in 2007.

The minimum-wage hike is the first in nearly a decade. The current rate of \$6.85 an hour has been frozen since Jan. 1, 1995.

Statistics from 2000 indicate that about 680,000 Ontario workers were being paid between \$5.95 and \$8, Bentley said.

Opposition members argued that with the Liberals rolling back taxes and hiking electricity prices, the government really isn't putting much money into the pockets of Ontario's lowest-paid workers.

"While they will increase the minimum wage and give some money with one hand, (Finance

## PAY RATES

### ONTARIO MINIMUM WAGES

**GENERAL** — Current: \$6.85; Feb. 1, 2004: \$7.15; Feb. 1, 2005: \$7.45; Feb. 1, 2006: \$7.75; Feb. 1, 2007: \$8.

**STUDENTS** (under 18 years old, less than 28 hours/week) — Current: \$6.40; Feb. 1, 2004: \$6.70; Feb. 1, 2005: \$6.95; Feb. 1, 2006: \$7.25; Feb. 1, 2007: \$7.50.

**LIQUOR SERVERS** — Current: \$5.95; Feb. 1, 2004: \$6.20; Feb. 1, 2005: \$6.50; Feb. 1, 2006: \$6.75; Feb. 1, 2007: \$6.95.

### ELSEWHERE

**Nunavut:** \$8.50.

**British Columbia:** \$8.

**Quebec:** \$7.30.

**Manitoba:** \$6.75.

**Saskatchewan:** \$6.65.

**Prince Edward Island:** \$6.25.

**Nova Scotia:** \$6.25.

**New Brunswick:** \$6.

**Newfoundland:** \$6.

**Alberta:** \$5.90.

— THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minister) Mr. (Greg) Sorbara will be in the pocket with the other," Conservative member John Baird told the legislature.

One of the tax breaks being cancelled by the Liberals is the Ontario tax reduction program, which exempts people earning below a certain level from paying provincial taxes, said Conservative Leader Ernie Eves.

• Continued on page A5



# Northern Ontario Heritage fund to focus on job creation: minister

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SUDBURY — The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund isn't a "slush fund" and shouldn't be treated that way, says the province's northern development minister.

Rick Bartolucci, also the member of provincial parliament for Sudbury, said he has asked his staff to review and recommend ways to spend the fund's \$60-million budget — although there is only about \$5 million in the coffers right now.

"I want to go back and look at the original mandate, which included private sector opportunities," Bartolucci.

"To exclude the private sector from the application process is not a fair process."

The former Tory government, Bartolucci said, "tinkered" with the fund in recent years, altered it to exclude the private sector, and was lax on the fund's job creation and economic development aims.

In the months before the October provincial election, Bartolucci said, the Tories severely depleted the fund by rapidly approving 60 projects.

Bartolucci said he wants the fund to be restricted to financing job-creation projects.

"I've looked at past applications to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, and I'm not pleased with the number of jobs that the approvals have created over the course of the long term. I want that changed."

Proposals that do not demon-

strate the potential for job creation or economic development will not get money.

While there is only \$5 million in the fund, Bartolucci said it will be topped up in the new year, and despite a massive provincial deficit, the Liberals will maintain their five-year commitment to pour the additional \$55 million into the fund.

That five-year plan ends in the 2004-05 fiscal year, and there is a mandate to renew it for five more years after that.

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*"I want to go back and look  
at the original mandate,  
which included private  
sector opportunities."*

**Rick Bartolucci**

*Minister of Northern Development*

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Chronicle - Dec 23/03





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**Whitefeather Forest Initiative**

# Whitefeather Forest and Adjacent Areas Community-Based Land Use Strategy

## UPDATE FALL 2003



## 1<sup>st</sup> Open House

Our first open house on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 was a great success with over 300 persons in attendance. Thank you for sharing your views and interests in the process. It was an excellent beginning!



## Building Partnerships

This past summer Pikangikum continued to develop partnerships in education, resource management and business development that will be internationally recognized.

For more information on partnerships, check out our web site at [www.whitefeatherforest.com/partnerships/introduction.html](http://www.whitefeatherforest.com/partnerships/introduction.html)



## World Forestry Congress

A delegation from the Whitefeather Forest Initiative participated at the XII World Forestry Congress recently held in Quebec City from September 21-28, 2003. There was much interest in the Whitefeather Forest Initiative booth. We made new contacts and had productive discussions on partnerships with representatives of indigenous groups and organizations, the forest industry and the environmental community.

## Public Consultation – Second Open House

A second open house, providing the opportunity to review and comment on the development of Land Use Options, will now take place in late spring-early summer, rather than February, as was originally scheduled. Extra time is needed for community dialogue and preparations. Formal letters of invitation will be sent out 21 days prior to the open house.

To obtain more information on the initiative check out our web site at [www.whitefeather.com](http://www.whitefeather.com) or feel free to contact:



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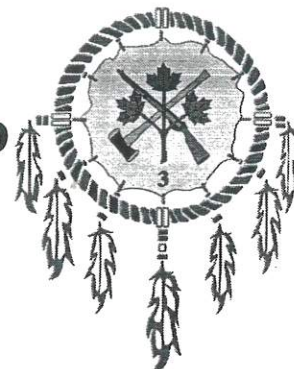


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# Newsletter

## 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group



Canada's Army in Northern Ontario

Canadian Forces Base Borden - Borden, ON - L0M 1C0

Date: 6/12/04 2 Phone (toll free) 1-877-902-4534 Fax 705-423-3634

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Editor: Sergeant Peter Moon

February 2004

- ☐ Council
- ☐ E.D.C.
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Cemetery
- ☐ Public Works

### MISHKEEGOGAMANG RANGER PATROL SERVES TWO COMMUNITIES

Northern Ontario's newest Canadian Ranger patrol has several features that make it different from any other in the Far North.

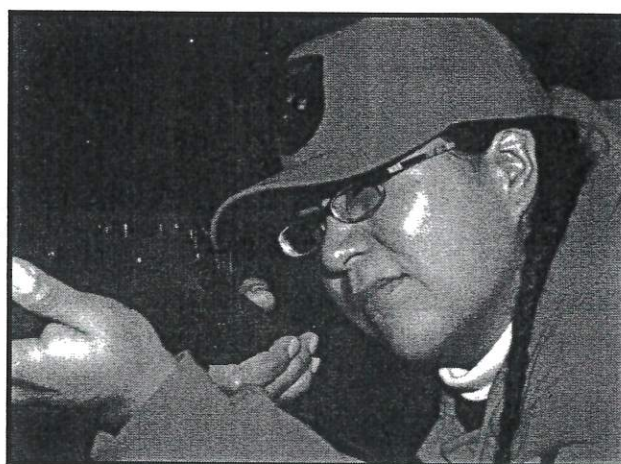
The Mishkeegogamang Canadian Ranger patrol is the only one that serves two communities - Mishkeegogamang First Nation at New Osnaburgh and the largely non-Aboriginal town of Pickle Lake. Both communities are on Highway 599, the province's most northerly highway, and are separated by a 45-minute drive.

The only other Canadian Ranger patrol on a paved highway is Constance Lake, near Hearst. The other 13 Canadian Ranger patrols in Northern Ontario are in remote and isolated First Nations with no year-round road access.

The Mishkeegogamang patrol had its first training visit from 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group instructors in November, when 26 new Canadian Rangers completed their basic training. Approximately two-thirds of the new Canadian Rangers live on the reserve and a third live in Pickle Lake.

"Mishkeegogamang is the first all-Ojibway community we have gone into," said Major David Scandrett, the Canadian Rangers' commanding officer in Northern Ontario. "The opportunity to bridge between an Aboriginal community at Mishkeegogamang and the non-Aboriginal community in Pickle Lake is unique for us. The opening of the patrol is the culmination of a year of preparation work. Both communities saw the opportunity and grabbed it."

"We like to think of Pickle Lake and Mishkeegogamang as one community," said Sergeant Clinton Fontaine, the patrol's first leader.



New Canadian Ranger Raven Neekan aims her rifle.

An Ojibway from Manitoba, Sergeant Fontaine is a constable with the Ontario Provincial Police in Pickle Lake, who spent two years as a constable with Nishnawbe-Aski Police at Mishkeegogamang before joining the OPP. He has also served as a constable with the RCMP and completed short stints with the U.S. Navy and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, an army reserve unit in Winnipeg.

"It was a good training visit," said Sergeant Wayne Atkins, an army instructor from Canadian Forces Base Borden. "We've created a team between the two communities. They welcomed us with open arms and we got a lot of support from chief and council and the community at Mishkeegogamang. We did our training on the reserve but we used the OPP shooting range in Pickle Lake for safety reasons."

Robert Bottle and Jeffery Loon became the patrol's first master corporals.

Canadian Rangers are reserve soldiers who provide a military presence in Canada's remote and isolated regions, including Northern Ontario. They provide assistance in emergencies such as searches, plane crashes, forest fires and floods. They also operate the Junior Canadian Rangers, a youth programme for boys and girls aged 12 to 18.



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# Nault plans to run again

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kenora-Rainy River MP Bob Nault has not changed his stance — he will seek re-election in the spring.

"Next week, I expect to be announcing my campaign team for re-election," he said Friday, dispelling rumours that he will be accepting a patronage post or retiring.

Nault, 48, noted the average cabinet member age is 55, implying he has plenty of time for a comeback.

He was dumped from his Indian Affairs and Northern Development when Paul Martin took over the prime minister's office from the retired Jean Chretien.

Nault listed the expansion of the power grid, roads to the north and a sound deal on softwood as his priorities.

He also addressed a further need for improvements to health care, access to post-secondary education and quality of life for First Nations as concerns.

With Ontario and Manitoba set to move on the Conawapa mega-project, the federal government will need to assist with the creation of a power grid to help distribute much-needed energy to southern Ontario, Nault said.

He repeated his support for the ill-fated First Nations Governance Act, saying creation of a professional public service, free from band politics, is necessary.

Chronicle - Jan 15/03

Friday, January 16, 2004

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

# Ratepayers face tax hike

## *Council wants budget cuts*

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

Right out of the starting blocks, Dryden ratepayers face a potential five- to 7.5-per-cent hike in municipal taxes in 2004.

Councillors got their first glimpse this week at a wish list of capital expenditures from city departments, and they want some changes.

City treasurer Paul Heayn said yesterday some councillors have told him they want any budget hike kept to five per cent or lower this year.

That means some cuts have to be made to the wish list which stands at almost \$10 million, requiring \$3.8 million from local taxes.

Heayn said council would "like to pare (the local taxation commitment) down to about \$2.5 million which is what the city's tax base is paying for capital right now."

Some capital projects planned for 2004 include a \$950,000 public safety building renovations, sewage treatment plant improvements and a new Wabigoon Drive lift station.

Another capital expenditure which will account for a 2.5-per-cent tax hike is the city's \$1-1.5 million commitment to build a new auditorium.

Heayn explained that the previous council wanted the 10-year debenture

cost of the auditorium separated on the tax bill.

The 2.5-per-cent increase (depending on what interest rate the city can get) will disappear from tax bills after the commitment paid off, Heayn said.

If council can keep the tax increase for operating and capital costs at five per cent this year, the total municipal tax hike will be about 7.5 per cent, he said.

Last year, increases in capital spending and higher levies for nursing home care meant a six-per-cent municipal tax hike.

The \$24-million budget included more than \$8.5 million in capital expenditures.

On the operating side of the 2004 budget, council will have to consider a three-per-cent wage hike for unionized workers in April and other potential increases in social and health services costs.

"We don't know yet what the Kenora District Services Board levy will be for such things as land ambulance, Ontario Works and day care. . . . Then, there's health unit and home for the aged costs," Heayn said.

He said 42 per cent of the operating budget covers municipal budget costs while "the rest is outside influences."

Those outside influences, Heayn said, could give council "some major, major" matters to deal with.

# Library expands choices

## *Comic books in the mix in response to interest*

BY KRIS KETONEN  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Walk into the Thunder Bay Public Library's Waverley branch these days and you may be in for a surprise: there, staring back at you from a library shelf, is Batman.

And Spider-Man. And Superman. And the X-Men.

Comic books — hundreds of them — have come to the library, and they've been a huge success since their fall debut.

"We did this as a pilot project in response to the interest," said Angela Meady,

the library's head of child and youth services. "And it really took off well."

"The circulation is out of this world, and we've got a lot of nice comments from the young people who've been reading them."

Now Meady said, the library will likely bring the graphic novels — a book that pulls several issues of a comic book series together to tell a full-length story — to other branches even as libraries in other cities, such as Duluth, build their own collections.

"It's becoming more common in libraries," Meady said, adding Thunder

Bay's selection is still bigger than most. "More and more are becoming aware of it."

At Thunder Bay's library, the big movers are those telling the ever-popular superhero tales — characters like Batman and Spider-Man are popular — although more eclectic fare, such as the Pulitzer Prize-winning Holocaust drama *Maus* or the wildly imaginative horror-fantasy series *Sandman*, is also available, Meady said.

Manga — a general term for a Japanese style of comic book that deals with all manner of story subjects, from comedy to

romance to adventure — is also popular, said Meady, herself a graphic novel reader.

The library's collection, for example, contains Manga versions of the Star Wars saga.

Also to be found are Simpsons books, and graphic novel versions of classic literature such as *Moby Dick*. It's not just teenagers withdrawing them, either, Meady said: a lot of adults, including library staff, are dipping into the collection.

The items were bought from Rob Quinn, owner of Hill City Comics and Cards.

• Continued on page A3

# Good reading for all ages

## Comics going through a 1980s revival

• Continued from page A1

Quinn said it's a matter of comics defeating their stigma of being kids' books, with today's mature stories infiltrating the mainstream. In fact, Hill City deals in all manner of pop culture, from games to toys to models, which can get pricey, yet graphic novel and comic sales account for about half his business.

"You're definitely getting books written for an older audience," Quinn said. "I'd say at least half of all the books being done today are done for either young adults — teens and people in their 20s — or adults in general.

"Once they start getting played in mainstream newspapers and reviews, all of a sudden people come out of the woodwork . . . looking for books that I'm kind of surprised they even know exist," Quinn said.

Entertainment Weekly, for example, has a weekly graphic novel/comic book review, and big-time bookstores like Borders in the U.S. have huge graphic novel sections, he added.

When those shoppers come into a comic store and look around a bit, they always find other books that pique their interest. That's why Quinn keeps such a large collection of graphic novels and Manga in his Thunder Bay store. Right now, he's got about 3,000 items, and the collection is growing.

Those mature books come with a price in that not all are suitable for the kids anymore. For example, Marvel has a Max label that prints mature books only: the debut issue of the new Punisher Max book, which came out last week, features a very gory scene of Frank Castle mowing down dozens of mob figures with a heavy machine gun.

There are others. Take The Authority, for example, a superhero book that tries to turn the establishment of the genre on its head by featuring a group of heroes that don't mind killing, torturing and swearing for the greater good.

On there's Gotham Central, a fantastic series about the detectives of the Gotham City Police Department's major crimes unit and their uneasy relationship with Batman, who takes a back seat here. While not nearly as extreme as The Punisher or The Authority, it still deals with adult themes every month.

And those are just a sample of superhero books, never mind titles like Sandman.

"You get a lot of kids who watch the movies, or the Justice League (animated series)," said Stephanie Nash, an employee of Thunder Bay's Comix Plus Music Exchange.

"The parents or grandparents usually come in, they're trying to find something for their six, seven-year-old to read," Nash said. "I have to keep track of the main people — X-Men, Batman — just to see what issues are suitable for a younger person. We've had a few complaints.

"A lot of parents still have the idea that comics are a children's book, so it takes a little bit of getting used to," she said, using the example of Marvel's popular X-Men titles, which often deal with things like relationships and sex.

There are still titles for kids; Disney, for example, publishes a line of books featuring its characters, and the titles

man Adventures, Teen Titans Go! or Justice League Adventures — which features DC staples like Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman — are child-friendly.

Quinn added that the very popular Marvel Ultimate line — which tweaks some of Marvel's most-beloved characters like the X-Men, Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four to keep them fresh — are Grated.

The self-rating system Marvel is using with Max and its less-extreme-but-still-mature label Marvel Knights is something DC Comics started years ago with the inception of the Vertigo label, which also went on mature titles, said Gary Gummesson, owner of Comix Plus.

That Vertigo line still sells well, he

added, being home to titles such as Swamp Thing and Sgt. Rock.

But in the end, it's not a matter of gore and violence for the sake of gore and violence. There are good stories and context there, too, evidenced by the fact that sales today come down to who's writing.

"Just because you slap on Max doesn't mean it's going to sell," Gummesson said. "A writer is huge now."

Brian Michael Bendis's run on Daredevil, for example, sold well, Gummesson said. Now that the book's changed hands, it's dropped off.

Quinn added comic companies make a lot more money on spinoffs like toys and movies than they do on monthly comic books. But if those books are well-written and tell good stories, people get a pos-

itive picture of the character in minds and buy into the other stuff.

Maturity isn't the only trend in comics these days. Gummesson Right now, the industry is going through somewhat of an '80s revival: pop books now are GI Joe, Transformer Man and the Masters of the Universe and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle to mention the Star Wars comic. Star Wars is Star Wars. It's always lar.

"Everybody says things come back 20-year spans," Gummesson said, "it's tough to think of a big mid property that hasn't had a book especially since the first few months. 2004 will see Quebec company 8 Studios start new series based on and Ghostbusters.



hillcitycomic  
comixplusmusic



Friday, January 23, 2004

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

# Ramsay sees bright future for forestry industry

BY CATHI AROLA  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

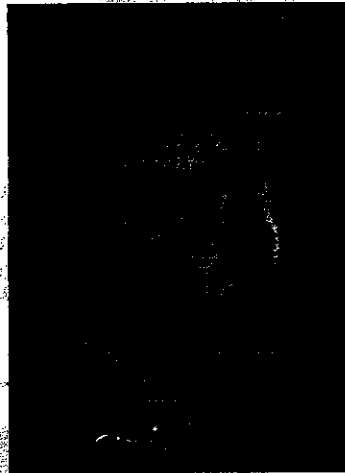
Even before a softwood lumber agreement is final between Canada and the United States, provincial Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay is optimistic that Northwestern Ontario's forest products industry has a promising future.

Ramsay spoke to the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce at its annual meeting yesterday.

The region's opportunities lie in under-used forest species, new technology to build mills and a skilled workforce, Ramsay said.

"We need to continue to work as a country to try and convince our American customers that we're on the right track - we don't want to give up our industry under the dictations of the Americans," he said.

Earlier this week, trade officials from both countries met in Davos, Switzerland, on the matter. No agreement has been



Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay was in Thunder Bay yesterday.

reached to solve a dispute in Canada's bid to end tariffs imposed on Canadian softwood by the U.S.

A proposed quota system that would limit forest product exports to U.S. markets could po-

tentially cripple "new entrant" mills, including the Bowater sawmill at Fort William First Nation because it has no history of exporting wood south.

"That's a shame because I really support what Bowater is doing there, they have a great partnership with the First Nations. I want to support that sort of development and encourage more of it.

"We've got to get this softwood lumber dispute resolved so we can get on with economic development in Northern Ontario, especially with First Nation partners," Ramsay said.

With the spring bear hunt not reinstated, a nuisance bear management strategy will be in place by April 1, in time for the bears' awakening, Ramsay said.

Until then, the MNR will be in consultation with municipal police forces in an effort to upload bear responsibility back to the ministry.

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

## Martin orders nomination rules rewritten

OTTAWA (CP) — Paul Martin has told the Liberal party to rewrite its rules for nomination contests, following complaints that would-be candidates were being asked probing questions about their mental health history.

"The prime minister expressed to us all the opinion and the view that those provisions should not be in the rules and (that he) felt very uncomfortable about it," Steve MacKinnon, deputy director of the party, said yesterday.

Martin was specifically concerned with part of a questionnaire that asked whether prospective candidates had ever been treated for mental illness, including schizophrenia, paranoia, bipolar disease or manic-depressive symptoms.



# Municipalities feel crunch of massive health budget hike

By Warner Bloomfield

Northwestern Ontario municipalities are facing sharp increases in their public health expenses.

At its most recent general meeting, the Northwestern Health Unit approved a new budget which will require a 36 per cent increase in municipal levies. These will jump from \$36.75 to \$50 per capita.

The NHU argues the larger budget is necessary to fund several mandatory programs which it has failed to offer so far due to a lack of funding.

Those programs include such matters as health education, dietitian services and vaccination clinics. These are supposed to be offered on an equal basis to all residents in the district.

Medical officer of health, Dr. Pete Sarsfield says the local health unit has fallen well behind its peers throughout the province in the past six years.

Over that time, Northwestern Health Unit boards have approved budget increases of two or three per cent, compared to 20 per cent hikes in other jurisdictions.

"This brings us back to the level we were at in 1998 and a little bit more," he says.

The higher municipal levies will add \$650,000 to the health unit budget. Traditionally, the province has matched any municipal funding.

While not disputing the importance of the public health programs, Dryden city councillor Brian Collins points out the hike in municipal levies is the equivalent of a two per cent tax increase here. The total contribution from this city jumps from \$278,000 to \$379,000.

He adds he disagrees with having these services forced onto municipalities by the province of Ontario.

"We are the only

province in Canada which requires municipalities to pay for public health. Everywhere else it is funded at the provincial level," he says.

He adds increases in NHU funding have outpaced provincial grants aimed to help pay for various services which used to be fully funded by Queen's Park.

"Public Health should be a provincial issue. It should not be on the backs of municipalities," he says.

Furthermore, the province's Community Reinvestment Fund, which provides money to assist municipalities adjust to added expenses downloaded from the province, are not keeping pace with these increases in levies.

Collins explains that in 2000, Dryden paid \$164,000 to the NHU. The CRF covered \$91,000 of that. In 2003 the CRF covered 178,000 of Dryden's \$278,000 contribution. This year that fund will only cover \$167,000.

Sarsfield insists that the NHU's ongoing legal battle over second hand smoke is not a factor in this budget. He acknowledges legal expenses associated with area restaurants fighting his public health order cost a lot of money in 2003. In fact those expenses equaled approximately \$200,000. Much of that was covered by additional provincial funds of \$120,000 and outside donations, he adds.

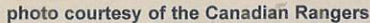
"We have budgeted \$20,000 for all legal expenses in 2004. I have no intention of exceeding that amount," he says.

He adds that if the second hand smoke case requires further funds they must come from an outside source.

That case remains before a public health tribunal. A final decision on the appeal is now expected no sooner than the end of January. ★

Dryden Observer - Jan 28/04





## by Ranger Peter Moon

The Mishkeegogamang Canadian Ranger patrol is the only one that serves two communities – Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the largely non-Aboriginal town of Pickle Lake. Both communities are on Highway 599, the province's most northerly highway, and are separated by a 45-minute drive.

The Mishkeegogamang patrol had its first training visit from 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group instructors in November, when 26 new Canadian

"Mishkeegogamang is the first all-Ojibway community we have gone into," said Major David Scandrett, the Canadian Rangers' commanding officer in Northern Ontario. "The opportunity to bridge between an Aboriginal community at Mishkeegogamang and the non-Aboriginal community in Pickle Lake is unique for us. The opening of the patrol is the culmination of a year of preparation work. Both communities saw the opportunity and grabbed it."

An Ojibway from Manitoba, Fontaine is a constable with the Ontario Provincial Police in Pickle Lake, who

"It was a good training visit," Sergeant Wayne Atkins, an army instructor from Canadian Forces Base Borden, said of the session in Mishkeegogamang. "We've created a team between the two communities. They welcomed us with open arms and we got a lot of support from chief and council and the community at Mishkeegogamang. We did our training on the reserve but we used the OPP shooting range in Pickle Lake for safety reasons."

Robert Bottle and Jeffery Loon became the patrol's first master corporals.