

Grassy Narrows turns up the heat

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Grassy Narrows First Nation is turning up the heat on Weyerhaeuser, citing logging impacts on its band members' traditional activities.

Concerned citizens in Canada and around the world began hosting movie and action nights Wednesday with the goal of raising awareness about destructive logging allegedly taking place on the First Nation's traditional territory north of Kenora.

Officials said the movie nights, featuring David Clement's film *As Long as the Rivers Flow: The Grassy Narrows Blockade Story*, will include discussions with local leaders and Grassy Narrows representatives, whose hopes are to inspire more citizens to join an international boycott of Weyerhaeuser Timberstrand products that are made from clear-cutting forests near the First Nation.

For their part, Weyerhaeuser officials have maintained that the harvesting of the Whiskey Jack Forest is conducted according to strict forest management planning guidelines and standards.

The movie nights support Grassy Narrows' demands that Weyerhaeuser and Abitibi Consolidated "immediately cease and desist from all logging and industrial resource extraction on our territory without community consent" or face a "fierce international campaign."

Grassy Narrows is upset over the use of pesticides and the clear-cutting of huge tracts of land near the community claiming most of the economic bene-

fits and products taken from the traditional lands flow to U.S. homebuilders and paper product manufacturers.

In addition to the movie nights, a Solidarity Summer is planned in Grassy Narrows with ongoing activist training, gatherings and protests culminating in an action week in the woods expected to draw hundreds of people in mid-July.

The Grassy Narrows community began a blockade of a nearby logging road three years ago in an attempt to stop Weyerhaeuser and Abitibi's unwelcome logging.

"The clear-cutting of the land and the destruction of the forest is an attack on our people," said Roberta Keesick, a Grassy Narrows' blockader grandmother and trapper in a news release.

Brant Olson, Old Growth Campaign Director with the Rainforest Action Network (RAN), suggested that "the overwhelming support for Grassy Narrows is further evidence that Weyerhaeuser is out of step with 21st-century business values regarding the environment and human rights."

"People from Nigeria to Manitoba are watching these movies, seeing the effect of destructive forestry on an already embattled people, and cannot help but take action against the companies and the government officials that are letting these atrocities occur."

Weyerhaeuser spokeswoman Bonny Skene said Thursday that it has been more than two years since RAN began attacking the company's forest manage-

ment practices.

"Unfortunately, marketplace campaigns by environmental groups against well-known companies like Weyerhaeuser have grown to be a commonplace technique today," she said.

Weyerhaeuser welcomes a meaningful dialogue with environmental groups, she said.

"We are committed to continuing to meet with the Rainforest Action Network to improve our performance and resolve our differences."

While more talks are planned to reach common ground, she said "there remains a lot of work to do."

Skene said Weyerhaeuser takes its commitment to the environment very seriously, and are "committed to building mutually beneficial relationships with aboriginal communities" by:

- Providing extensive opportunities for First Nation involvement during construction of the Kenora Timberstrand plant and establishing pre-employment training programs.

- Providing opportunities for First Nations' involvement in forestry activities on our licence areas.

- Working with individual communities to identify and pursue opportunities of mutual benefit.

Grassy Narrows hosts gathering to highlight concerns over logging

NORTHWEST BUREAU

More than 100 supporters from across Canada and the United States are in Grassy Narrows this week for an Earth Justice Gathering to raise awareness about indigenous rights and protection for the boreal forest.

The event features a tour of a clear-cut area, sweat lodge ceremonies, traditional feasts, training in non-violent protests and speeches by Grassy Narrows residents and other First Nations leaders who will reiterate calls for an end to clear-cut logging on the band's traditional land-use area.

The gathering is the latest development in an international response to a call to action by Grassy Narrows leaders in February. The First Nation wants people to join an international boycott of Weyerhaeuser Timberstrand products that it says are made from clear-cutting forests near the community.

Grassy Narrows is upset over the use of pesticides and clear-cutting of huge tracts of land near the community claiming most of the economic benefits and products taken from the traditional lands flow to U.S. homebuilders and paper product manufacturers.

The community began a blockade of a nearby logging road three years ago in an attempt to stop Weyerhaeuser and Abitibi-Consolidated logging.

Weyerhaeuser maintains that the harvesting of the Whiskey Jack Forest is conducted according to strict forest management planning guidelines and standards. The company doesn't have logging operations in the Whiskey Jack, but Abitibi sends wood from that area to Weyerhaeuser/Trus-Joist's Timberstrand plant in Kenora.

The Ministry of Natural Resources says it has consulted "extensively" with band members and area residents on development of forest management plans.

Tuesday, July 11, 2006

Clean yard bylaw in for update

BY JONATHAN WILSON
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

People with messy yards in the city of Thunder Bay could be subject to a new yard maintenance bylaw.

City council is being presented with the updated bylaw at city hall tonight. It includes \$100 fines for landowners who don't cut their grass and weeds, keep inoperable vehicles stored outdoors, or allow their property to be filled with debris, including dog feces.

The bylaw also allows the city's development department to authorize cleanups costing up to \$10,000, and to add the bill to the landowner's property taxes.

The previous bylaw was said to be outdated and required city council approval for any cleanup orders. City staff said that process often delayed the city's response to complaints by two to four weeks.

In 2005, the City of Thunder Bay received 618 yard maintenance-related complaints. Of those, 593 people voluntarily complied with a city order to clean up their property. The other 25 cases were reported to city council for yard cleanup action.

In other business tonight, city council will hear again from Coratina Construction which is requesting a zoning change which would allow the firm to continue using its property at the end of N. Marks Street, and replace several buildings on it.

The company's only access to the property is through a back lane off Wiegand Avenue. A group of residents filed a petition complaining that construction vehicles and Coratina employees use nearby parkland and a children's playground for parking.

City staff are recommending against the request from Coratina.

City staff are recommending a \$3.8-million contract for road repaving around the city be awarded to Bruno's Contracting.

The streets to receive new asphalt include:

- Memorial Avenue, from John Street to Lisgar Street.
- Water Street, from First Avenue to S. Cumberland Street.
- Edward Street, from Walsh Street to Arthur Street.
- Simpson Street, from May Street to Victoria Avenue.
- Fort William Road, from Northern Avenue to Harbour Expressway.
- Pine Street, from Van Norman Street to Elizabeth Street.
- Clavel Street, from Algoma Street and continuing on Albany Street.
- Forest Street, from Balmoral Avenue to Vickers Street.

City council is also being asked to approve a \$1.2-million contract to rehabilitate the Vickers Street bridge.

Man. First Nations plan to block rail lines to raise land claim awareness

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WINNIPEG — Some Manitoba First Nations plan to block rail lines connecting the province to the United States to raise awareness about land claims issues.

Canadian National Railway (TSX:CNR) and Canadian Pacific Railway (TSX:CP) tracks will be affected by the blockades, which will start at 4 p.m. on June 29, said Chief Terry Nelson of the Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation.

Protesters and vehicles will block affected rail lines for 24 hours, he said.

Roseau River, which is 90 kilometres south of Winnipeg, plans to block two lines.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs supports the blockade, and Nelson said First Nations in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. are also talking about getting involved.

"First Nations are tired," said Nelson. "The 6,000 land claims that are in limbo across the country need to be addressed, and it's unfortunate that we have to create a crisis in order for the government to respond to anything."

Nelson added that First Nations across the country feel that they deserve a bigger share of Canada's resource revenue.

"The people who immigrated to our lands didn't bring the diamonds with them in their little wooden boats. They didn't bring the zinc, the iron, the oil, the timber or any of the other resources that every Canadian can depend upon," he said.

"The Canadian federal government gets more money from their royalties on resources than they do on income tax, so to say that the First Nations live off the good grace of the Canadian taxpayer is absolutely false. We want a share of our own land and resources — we want a share of our own wealth."

The only way the blockade could turn violent is if the RCMP try to stop it with force, said Nelson.

"We don't want to hurt anybody, we don't want to hurt the economy, we just want to send a message."

In Ontario, aboriginal protesters have occupied land that was being developed as a subdivision since February.

Electoral process eyed

BY SARAH ELIZABETH BROWN
THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

Two Thunder Bay women will represent two of the region's ridings when an assembly of Ontario citizens debates whether the voting system needs to change.

Nuala Wieckowski, a 24-year-old legal secretary on maternity leave, and Pamela Patterson, a 31-year-old hotel employee, were selected Sunday as two of the 104 Ontarians on the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

Each woman was among the dozen people invited to Sunday's meeting, where prospective candidates learned about the process and nine community members' names were picked out of a box.

"I thought it would be interesting to be a part of the democratic system that represents our society," said Patterson, who lives in the Thunder Bay Superior North riding.

Patterson said she's keenly interested in politics, took political



Susan Pigett

ki, a Thunder Bay Atikokan riding resident, said she looks forward to learning more about electoral systems.

"If people follow along what we're going through, maybe more people will understand (electoral systems)," she said.

Though a regular voter, Wieckowski said she avoids election news and speeches.

Susan Pigett, one of the assembly staff, said assembly members don't need to know anything about elections at the outset.

Assembly citizens will spend six weekends in the fall learning about electoral systems at Toronto's York University under

science classes in college and at election time is "the one telling people: 'You better get out there and vote.'"

Wieckowski

Jonathan Rose, a Queen's University political scientist.

From November to February, assembly staff will organize public consultation meetings and take written submissions from Ontario residents.

Between February and April, the 104 citizens will spend another six weekends at York University, discussing whether the system needs change.

If they recommend a different voting system, it will go to a referendum.

"It's a really profoundly democratic process," said Pigett.

Electoral reform, fixed election dates and changing financing rules were part of the provincial Liberals' plans after their most recent election.

One push behind the citizens' assembly is low voter turnout, said Pigett. About 57 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot in 2003.

"(The assembly) is also a way of improving political literacy in the province," she said.

July 10, 2006

Aboriginal study underway

Researchers on the job in Kenora, Thunder Bay

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Housing, jobs and health care are among the main topics of research underway in Kenora this summer.

As part of a study of six communities across Ontario, the study is meant as a follow-up on a 1981 report, which provided insights and statistics surrounding urban aboriginal people.

"It had a number of new statistics in it and a huge impact on the urban aboriginal population," said research director Don McCaskill.

The study, which falls under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, is sponsored by a series of partners including the federal

and provincial governments, as well as aboriginal groups.

The other communities to be studied are Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Barrie-Midland, Toronto and Ottawa.

Staff will be conducting interviews in each city in an effort to flesh out the experiences of residents.

The results will be supplemented by demographic trends available from community surveys and Statistics Canada.

Researchers will also be looking at the emergence of an aboriginal middle class, which is demonstrated in the Kenora area through the growth in Treaty 3 Police, the creation of Anishinaabe Abinoojii and the expansion of Kenora Area Health Access Centre.

Community advisory members are Donald Copenace from the NeChee Friendship Centre, Tanya Laforme and Vanessa Perrault of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association, and Anita Cameron from the Ontario Native Women's Association.

Kenora researchers hired for the job are Tara Letwiniuk-Douglas and Pawn Wapioke.

Kenora is facing several challenges in the near future, including the plight of homeless and unemployed, said McCaskill.

The city is also facing a significant shift in population, as the young First Nation population continues to grow, he said.

Mayor quits

Marathon's Bell leaving Aug. 15

BY CARL CLUTCHERY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

Marathon Mayor Dave Bell should excuse himself from any major municipal decisions now that he's decided to leave his position as the head of council, says a veteran councillor.

"I wish him well, but as a councillor, I think he should consider removing himself from any pertinent decision-making," finance committee chairman Rick Dumas said at Monday's meeting.

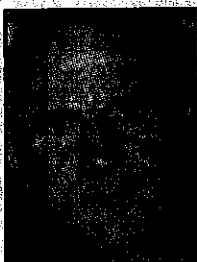
Bell, who appeared momentarily flummoxed by the remark, didn't respond.

Dumas said it would be "in the best interests of the community" for Bell to excuse himself because he's not only resigning as mayor, he's leaving town.

Bell dropped a bombshell during a break in Monday's agenda by announcing his resignation effective Aug. 15.

He said he's leaving three months before the end of council's term to accompany his wife, who is to become a Protestant minister in Alberta.

"This council is capable of continuing without me," said Bell, adding he was "troubled" by the decision to leave, but was looking forward to a new life in



Marathon Mayor Dave Bell

Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Mayoral candidate Rob Woito said Bell should stick it out until council's term ends in November.

"He's like a lame-duck president," said Woito. "He's there, but he's not there. For three months (after Bell's resignation) the town will be without a mayor."

Bell suggested it won't be necessary to replace him with only 90 days left in the term.

Monday's announcement follows grumbling among some councillors that Bell hasn't put in enough time as mayor.

That came to a head in the spring when Bell was not on hand to greet Premier Dalton McGuinty during a stopover in Marathon.

Former mayor Pat Richardson, who lost to Bell in the 2003 election, said Bell is duty-bound to attend meetings and vote on issues until his resignation takes effect.

Bell's announcement follows an unusually eventful mayoralty, at least on a personal level.

Shortly after Bell was sworn in, his former employer, the Ontario Provincial Police, charged him with insubordination for running for mayor against its wishes. OPP brass said Bell was in a conflict of interest because at the time of his election he was one of their police officers.

The Town of Marathon contracts out policing to the OPP.

A judge ruled against Bell. Early in 2004, Bell chose to take early retirement and avoided the prospect of being dismissed from the force.

Coal-fired generation will end, says premier

• Continued from page A1

Ontario is also guilty of pumping pollution into the air that drifts down over its southern neighbour, much of it from coal-fired power plants destined to be shut down—eventually—by the provincial government.

Despite an initial promise to mothball the plants by 2007, then later by 2009, the province has admitted it will have to keep the coal plants open indefinitely, at least until new power generation can be brought on-stream.

"In an ideal world, we would move much faster," McGuinty said.

"But in my world, the best, most recent advice I have is that to shut down coal-fired generation as planned in 2009 would leave our province short of electricity."

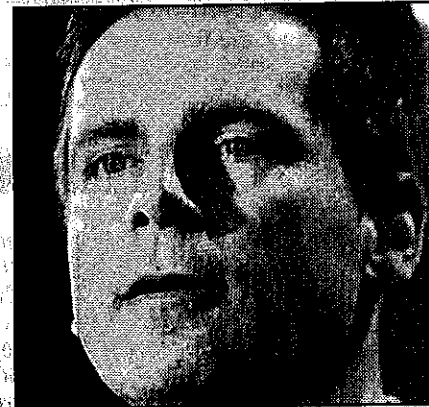
Environmentalist David Suzuki said after McGuinty's speech that he felt confident the premier would continue to work toward phasing out the coal plants, but was concerned about where new power is likely to come from.

"The alternatives seem to be heavily leaning toward nuclear," said Suzuki.

"I just told him now I think that we really need to give a reduction in the demand side and the alternatives in renewables a good shot at it."

Imported pollution also brings serious health implications.

It's been estimated that transbound-



Premier Dalton McGuinty

ary air pollution is responsible for more than 2,700 premature deaths, almost 14,000 emergency room visits and more than \$5.2 billion in health and environmental damages each year in Ontario.

In the U.S., Kerry said, an estimated 152 million people live in areas with unhealthy levels of ozone or particulate matter—the two principal air pollutants.

"We will eliminate coal-fired generation," McGuinty said. "It's just that it's going to take us longer."

Also Monday, Ontario and Quebec announced a transboundary environmental agreement that will see the two provinces work together to find solutions to air quality and other common environmental issues.

Land claims on the rise

THE CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA — More Caledonia-type conflicts are brewing as the number of native land claims nears 800 and the average wait time for settlements tops nine years.

The most complicated cases take longer. It's not unusual for the federal Justice Department to take five years to draft a legal opinion on a claim's basic merits.

Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice said he plans a major "retooling" of a badly flawed system that critics blame for rising tensions and stunted development.

"The backlog is not acceptable and we're working on it," Prentice said in an interview. "Claims vary in complexity. But by any measure, the current system is not working effectively."

A three-day conference starting today in Gatineau, Que., will look into ways to push for improvements.

Prentice said he's considering increased mediation, more skilled negotiators and other ways to simplify a notoriously cumbersome process. More funding may also be needed for a system that cost Ottawa \$536 million in 2004-05 to negotiate, settle and implement land claims.

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June 28, 2006 THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

'Hot spot' land clashes get the most attention

• Continued from page A1

Prentice led more than 80 public inquiries into such cases as co-chairman of the federal Indian Claims Commission. He was a bare-tooth critic of the sluggish pace of settlements while in opposition.

Today, communities embroiled in often testy disputes across Canada are looking to him for answers.

Prentice said he appreciates that "there's frustration out there."

It most recently erupted in Caledonia, near Hamilton, Ont., in a series of nasty confrontations over a subdivision on land reclaimed by Six Nations members.

In Manitoba, a half-dozen bands threatened this week to block rail lines around the province as part of a 24-hour protest over delayed land claims.

Prentice blames the former Liberal government for letting the number of unsettled, specific claims soar from about 200 to more than 750 over the last 13 years.

The situation got worse when the Liberals passed faulty legislation but never proclaimed it into law, Prentice said.

"By the time it was finished, the legislation was acceptable to nobody. So it sits on the books."

Meanwhile, the existing system ground to a halt in anticipation of a new

law that never arrived, Prentice said.

Most specific claims stem from First Nations who say Ottawa has misused traditional lands or breached historic treaties.

Cases have been settled for anywhere from \$12,000 to \$150 million, said Audrey Stewart, director general of specific claims for Indian Affairs.

Comprehensive claims, such as the landmark Nisga'a agreement in northern B.C., involve sweeping compensation deals for use of native territory.

About 20 specific claims are settled each year — compared to 55 new cases filed annually, Stewart said.

The department began streamlining

the process more than a year ago, she added.

"There's been a general recognition that it takes too long."

Cases are complicated, Stewart said. "We do lack capacity to deal with all of them as quickly as we'd like to."

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, who teaches aboriginal studies at University of Toronto, has helped write and research several land claims and said more high-profile clashes on par with Caledonia, Oka and Ipperwash are inevitable without major change.

"That's exactly what's going to happen because one of the messages that gets transmitted is: Unless you become a

hot spot, nobody's going to sit down with you and do any negotiating.

"Maybe it's not a spoken thing, but it sure seems to be that the squeaky wheel gets the grease."

Wesley-Esquimaux said a revolving table of experts is needed to tackle cases as quickly as possible.

Negotiating land claims shouldn't be a full-time, indefinitely lucrative pastime, she said.

"The consultants get paid huge amounts of money, and the lawyers get paid huge amounts of money. Frankly, I think this could be done a little more expeditiously by having people come to look objectively at the situation."

The High Arctic beckons

ON THIS sweltering hot day — two days before you'll read this — my thoughts have turned to cooler times and my trips to the High Arctic.

Perhaps some of my memories will help mitigate any heat this Saturday. I recall the February morning when I left the Eagle Plains Hotel at kilometre 543 on the Yukon's Dempster Highway. It was 34 below zero, with a knifing wind beginning to pick up.

North of the Arctic Circle the driver stopped me with an emphatic "No!" when I made a move to open the door on one of our stops so I could take a better photo during a whiteout. He told me that some men had had their door torn right off its hinges when they tried opening it with the wind gusting viciously. (In an after moment he did give me permission to open the window.)

I was mesmerised on that winter trip to the high Arctic but I admit I was glad to be in a heated vehicle even though we were both dressed for the conditions.

The previous evening, when we'd left the Klondike Highway to start up the Dempster, which runs from just east of Dawson City to Inuvik in the NWT, it had been 40 below. A clear night with a full moon. Some 70 kilometres later we were climbing the high, winding trail which gave us magnificent views of the North Fork Pass and Tombstone Mountain.

We stopped at a fabulous spot and Gordon reminded his wife, Terry, to cover the face of their sleeping baby, and then we opened the frost-ed side windows on one side of the car. The glorious moonlight danced on the snowy peaks of the Tombstones, and swept over the tundra with its stunted vegetation along river or creek banks. The vista viewing lasted only five or six minutes because of the intense cold and the year-old baby, but although it happened 20 years ago, the memories still make me feel grateful to have experi-



COUNCIL
ON POSITIVE
AGING

DOLORES KIVI

enced it.

I have been fortunate to have also visited the Yukon and Yellowknife in NWT twice each, in summer or September. The lakes in the NWT were intensely blue — but so were some of the waters around Prudhoe Lake north of here, when I was there. In the Yukon I stood enthralled at Emerald Lake which really is as green as the jewel whose name it carries. A cooling mountain beauty.

Alexandra Falls, and the smaller Louise Falls, are just off the Mackenzie Highway south of Hay River, NWT. Both worth a refreshing visit. In the Yukon, of course, there is Kluane National Park, 22,015 km, which includes one of the world's largest nonpolar icefield systems, magnificent glaciers and Canada's highest mountain, Mount Logan.

Our own Northwestern Ontario is fascinating and I believe that if we love our own remote areas, vistas and villages we will also be entranced by Canada's Arctic. It's worth a trip, even if it's just to the library to borrow books and films. Enjoy the coolness.

The Council on Positive Aging column appears every Saturday.

Little support for gas price watchdog

BY CHEN CHEKKI
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

July 12, 2006

Liberal MPP Michael Gravelle is not done pushing for a commissioner to force gas companies to explain rates at the pump.

Gravelle (Thunder Bay Superior North) presented a bill last fall calling for creation of a gas price watchdog, which has so far not received support from the Ministry of Energy.

"I do believe if the (gas companies) were forced to explain their prices, we would see lower prices," Gravelle said Tuesday.

Thunder Bay prices for regular unleaded gas ranged from \$1.12 a litre to \$1.16 Tuesday morning, a far cry from the 90-cent range they were at in June.

The watchdog bill has just made it past first reading, and Gravelle is now pondering whether to re-introduce it with the addition of a 48-hour notice clause that would give consumers an alert of impending gas hikes.

"No sir, it is not over yet," he said.

Gravelle said he wants to stay aggressive about the matter so consumers can be informed about why they pay as much as they do for gas. Gravelle said he believes drivers would be satisfied if the price they pay is "justified."

But after years of lobbying for the cause, Gravelle said he is not pretending that he has been "particularly successful."

Steve Erwin, spokesman for Energy Minister Dwight Duncan, said the province is not considering any moves to force gas companies to open their books.

The province considers price gouging and competition practices to be federal matters, Erwin said.

A gas price watchdog is not practical, according to Dane Baily, a vice-president with the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute, which represents petroleum refiners, distributors and marketers.

He said it would be a "huge" exercise requiring the commissioner to go into "thousands" of markets across Ontario every day and look into various factors affecting the price of gas.

This week's call by NDP MPP Gilles Bisson to control gas prices won't fly, as they wouldn't change costs that make up most of the retail price paid by the consumer, said Michael Ervin, president of MJ Ervin and Associates, a Calgary-based research firm that acts as a consultant to oil companies.

Regulations aimed at the retail level can't change the price for crude oil, the continental wholesale price of gasoline and provincial and federal taxes, Baily said.

He added that giving consumers a heads-up on gas price hikes could lead to panic buying, long line-ups and the perception of gas supply uncertainty.

Councillors take time on rezone request

NORTHWEST BUREAU

Citing area residents' concerns, Dryden council will take more time to study a log-processing proposal before making a decision on rezoning land for the project.

Meek Forestry Consulting, a local forest consulting firm, has asked council to approve a site specific zoning for a log handling, chipping and processing plant. The plant would be placed on a four-hectare parcel between Airport and Barclay Hall roads.

Spokesman John Meek said the project's goal is to extract value-added raw wood products for further refinement, maximize trucking potential in the region and help ensure the right product goes to the right mill.

"Benefits to the surrounding area in-

clude employment opportunities, increase marketing potential for area loggers, lower transportation cost to local and regional mills, (as well as) a catalyst for small value-added wood manufacturing by creating access to raw product," he said.

At a public meeting Monday, several residents told council to reject the rezoning request because it would increase noise levels and truck traffic in the area.

City planning administrator Maryann Legros said Wednesday that she is preparing a report for council on the project.

"We've taken all the comments (from the public meeting) and now we'll see if we can work something out," she said, adding that the report will include a site plan agreement with the consulting firm

which will try and address residents' concerns.

Mayor Anne Krassilowsky could not be reached for comment.

In his address to council, Meek said no permanent buildings would be constructed on site, and that noise levels during chipping operations would be mitigated by buffers of trees, plant muffers and focusing chipper noise to the north away from neighbouring residences.

Trucks would enter the property off Highway 17 on a gravel road and travel at low speeds to prevent dust pollution, he said.

Tax relief for Atikokan

NORTHWEST BUREAU

Atikokan ratepayers have caught a break.

With provincial education taxes and property assessments dropping, most households in the community will see their overall taxes decrease compared to last year.

Mayor Dennis Brown said Friday that the 2006 municipal budget hikes taxes 1.9 per cent on the average residential property.

However, he said that because property values have dropped due to reassessment, "by and large most households will see taxes drop by \$56 this year."

Atikokan's \$10-million budget sets aside \$500,000 in a special economic development reserve and pumps funding into a draining project for the Don Park subdivision, water and sewer in-

frastructure and the town hall.

Brown said council plans more discussions on whether to renovate or build a new town hall.

"The issue of the town hall hasn't been resolved," he said, adding that a public meeting is planned in the near future to debate the issue.

The municipality moved into the current town hall in the early 1990s. The 53-year-old former public school needs repairs to its roof and heating system.

While a majority of council favours a new building, Brown has said, "Unless we can get a big grant for it, I don't consider (moving the town offices) a big priority."

As for economic development, Brown said council plans to hire an economic development officer sometime this year to move several initiatives forward.

LHINs move government away from accountability

THE McGuinty government is taking a giant leap away from accountability for health care with the introduction of Local Health Integration Networks.

I attended the community engagement meeting May 18 in Thunder Bay and throughout I was left with the impression that I was being sold a bill of goods. The presentation was all government double speak and it was not even thinly veiled — each PowerPoint slide had the Government of Ontario logo on the bottom. I stayed for the entire presentation but it was all I could do not to bolt out the door.

I believe that this will be one more failed experiment by government that you and I will pay for, not only with our money but our health. Doctors are not included in this project. How can we manage without them?

The LHIN can say that it has given the public the opportunity for input. But most

residents of Northwestern Ontario will not even be concerned that their government is trying to wash their hands of this area of health care until it touches them personally. I counted only 25 people at the meeting Thursday night and I understand that another had even less.

The LHIN board claims they are accountable. They were not elected but appointed by the government. They might be accountable to the government but they are not accountable to the people.

I can already hear my MPP's response to a health question: We don't have any responsibility for that, the LHIN controls it.

John Watson

President, OPSEU 701
THUNDER BAY

Time to reconsider remote reserve living

IN lieu of throwing more monies into infrastructure and whatnot for fly-in remote northern reserves, it is time the government and native people do something about relocating to "drive-to" reserves and towns. This in turn would be beneficial for everyone, with access to living a better active and social life.

Most native suicides happen on "nothing to do" remote reserves where self-esteem and self-worth are minimized.

With 60 per cent-plus native people living off reserves this leads me to believe they want and prefer to live off reserves and that fewer natives practise their cultural ways.

The enormous continuing rising cost of mostly fly-in delivered goods and numerous yearly evacuations along with the native population explosion are stressing the declining taxpaying working people to the limit.

Robert W. Plouffe
SHEBANDOWAN

Damning indictment of Liberal arrogance

IN many ways the report by Auditor General Sheila Fraser last week was a more damning indictment of previous Liberal government than was her report on sponsorship two years ago. The sponsorship report showed bureaucrats had "broken every rule in the book" to funnel \$100 million to friendly ad agencies for little or no work. Those findings prompted the Gomery commission, which found that not only was Ms. Fraser correct — sponsorship was a massive waste of money — but also that some of the shenanigans associated with the waste were criminal and that some of the money ended up in the hands of the Liberal party itself to use in election campaigns.

OTHER VIEWS

Liberals defended the sponsorship program as necessary to combat separatism in Quebec. Former prime minister Jean Chretien declared that "perhaps there was a few million dollars that might have been stolen in the process" but so what, the country was at stake.

Many Canadians no doubt bought the line that desperate times require desperate measures. Certainly the January election result indicated that a great many Canadians thought that Liberal sponsorship sins were forgivable. But would they have thought so if they knew then what they know now?

Last week, Ms. Fraser put an end to all the hokey. She reported that even as the Liberals dodged and weaved on sponsorship in public, behind closed doors they remained unpentant cynics. In both 2003 and 2004, the government cooked the books to hide the fact that the costs of the long-gun registry continued to spiral out of control. The 2004 decision was taken to avoid the fallout that disclosure would have created in the early election. Paul Martin called to prevent the new Conservative party from holding a policy convention.

Ms. Fraser also found that even as Mr. Martin was tossing out the First Nations governance act to make chiefs and councils more accountable, even as he was negotiating to give them a \$5 billion bundle on the eve of the election campaign last winter, he was failing to address "health and well-being" issues that she had pointedly told the government it must address.

She found that even as the government was calling for an increase of 5,000 to the ranks of the Armed Forces that it had depleted, it was doing precious little to boost recruitment efforts as she had already shown they should.

And last but not least, she found that then public works minister Ralph Goodale conspired with others to overturn an office lease tendering process and waste \$4.6 million. Why? Because Martin Cauchon, who was minister for the Economic Development Agency for Quebec, didn't want to move.

It might be that all governments become cynical, that they serve their own interests and not those of Canadians and that they forget whose money they are spending. The Conservatives no doubt will use these findings to attack the Liberals, but they would be wiser to learn from Liberal mistakes.

From an editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press

Outpost camp going solar

Energy for a Pickle Lake area outpost camp will soon be coming from the sun.

North Caribou Camps Ltd. will use \$11,077 in provincial funding to buy a solar power system for its fly-in fishing and hunting outpost north of Pickle Lake.

The system will provide power to three cabins, a cookhouse and other buildings, while reducing the need for a propane supply.

Atikokan groups get Trillium funding

Three Atikokan non-profit groups will benefit from almost \$50,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The groups are:

- Atikokan Intergenerational Centre for Arts and Alternatives — \$25,000 for an environmentally-friendly, geo-thermal heating system. The centre is a hub for people wishing to explore creative activities such as photography, pottery, theatre, music and painting, and is run by a small staff and 240 volunteers.

- Pictograph Gallery — \$10,000 to renovate the facility and erect a new sign, and to buy a computer and camera equipment.

- Atikokan Library — \$14,500 for new furniture and resource materials. "Better educational resources and program materials for children will help students learn more and achieve more," said librarian Jonathan Lewis.

Lakefront condos? No way

IFIND it hard to believe that anyone can seriously support the giving of our waterfront to private interests ("Opinion split on condos," June 15). It took us well over a hundred years to reclaim it for *all* the people and now some would have us hand it over to some snake-oil salesmen who will erect monstrous condominiums, unload them for a healthy profit and then skip town giggling at the hicks who could be taken so easily.

Thunder Bay has made silly decisions before, among the most recent spending over \$250 million for the ugliest hospital in the world with fewer beds than we had to begin with and a crumbling facade. But are we really stupid enough to give our waterfront away? We need to grow up.

Don Cattani
THUNDER BAY

Valley to vote with Conservatives

KENORA (CP) — Kenora MP Roger Valley said Wednesday he supports the Conservative government's plans for the Canadian Firearms Centre.

"I will vote with the Conservatives to get rid of the long-gun registry," the Liberal said during a stop in Kenora.

Valley said he couldn't abide the registry's cost overruns.

Marathon looking for a new CAO

NORTH SHORE BUREAU

The Town of Marathon's search for a new chief administrator will begin immediately and not after a new council is elected in November.

"I think it would be irresponsible for us to just leave it," Coun. Iris Sullivan said Tuesday. "We've got too many projects to attend to and we need to fill the position as soon as possible."

Finance committee chairman Rick Dumas agreed, adding outgoing CAO Sharon Hacio will likely assist in the search for her replacement.

Hacio, who has been the town manager for the past three years, will be at the helm of administration until Dec. 31.

Her contract was extended for a year in January. Hacio, a former TBayTel manager, is on vacation until July 24.

Despite being the second-largest North Shore town, Marathon has had a history of having trouble finding candidates to fill the CAO position. It paid \$110,000 in 2005.

Dumas said he expects the town will have to pay a similar amount to attract a replacement.

Sullivan said she didn't think it would be difficult to find a candidate already working in Northwestern Ontario.

"There are plenty of qualified people out there," she said.

Sask. natives end highway blockade after deal

CUPAR, Sask. (CP) — Members of the Muscowpetung reserve ended their blockade of a provincial highway Tuesday.

Chief Todd Cappel said he agreed to dismantle the barricades after meeting with officials of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to discuss a memorandum of understanding with the aim of returning management of the band to local hands.

"Co-management is better," said Cappel. "It provides us with more input into the day-to-day operations of the band."

Federal spokesman Trevor Sutter said the band remains in third-party status but the department will support the band in fulfilling steps leading to co-management status, which Sutter described as a reduced level of intervention.

The blockade had been set up on Sunday and forced Cupar-area farmers and commuters, who normally use the road through the reserve as a shortcut to the Trans-Canada Highway, to find alternate routes. That added about 40 kilometres to the average trip, said Bob Barton, general manager of Agricore United.

July 12, 2006

Proposals would give municipalities more power

TORONTO (CP) — The Ontario government has introduced proposals to give municipalities more power over their local affairs.

Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen says the proposed amendments to the Municipal Act would allow local councils to pass bylaws regarding economic development.

They would also allow municipalities to pass bylaws to control public safety initiatives and the demolition of rental housing.

The moves follow the passing of legislation for the City of Toronto.

Those amendments gave Toronto the ability to tax such things as alcohol sales in bars and restaurants.

The latest changes for the rest of the province don't appear to offer similar taxing powers.

July 9, 2006

T.O. cool to northern hottie

WELL, it looks like the North was shut out yet again in the annual rankings of the hottest MPPs at Queen's Park ("Sexy in the big city" — Queen's Park, June 20). I have looked at Dalton McGuinty and Greg Sorbara and in my view, neither holds a candle to our MPP Bill Mauro.

I realize that our being way up here in the farthest corners of the province, other people tend to forget that anything else exists unless it is in the GTA. However at some point, perhaps we could start getting a little recognition for our handsome MPP. Until then, we will simply have to be satisfied with the good job he is doing on our behalf and wait until the so-called fashion experts realize what many of us already know.



Mauro

Barbara Toms

Petition calls for firing of OPP head over Caledonia

TORONTO (CP) — A petition demanding that the head of the Ontario Provincial Police be immediately fired for her handling of the ongoing land claim dispute in Caledonia has begun circulating on the Internet, the Toronto Star reported Saturday.

The petition calls on the dismissal of OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface for allegedly failing to protect the people of Caledonia as well as the town's power station, bridges, roads and homes during

the five-month protest.

Boniface has been criticized by politicians, residents, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and even some officers for her direction — or perceived lack thereof — since the protest began last February.

More than 650 people from Caledonia and beyond have given their support to the petition.

Boniface has yet to speak publicly on the issue.

Rural residents now get mail at group boxes

July 10, 2006

BY WARD HOLLAND
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

People who have residential mailboxes on Highway 11-17 in Conmee Township will have to pick up their letters and packages from group mailboxes beginning today.

Angie Carling, a clerk at the Canada Post office in Kakabeka Falls, said letter carriers will begin delivering to six group mailboxes today.

"It's probably better for (the carriers) because the highway puts them at risk," Carling said Friday. "I'm sure it's easier on them, safety-wise."

Carling said the residential mailboxes, which are typically located at the ends of driveways, are being taken down.

It is the responsibility of rural residents to take down the boxes, she said.

The group boxes will be placed at Hume Road, Ilkka Drive, Wiljala Drive, Spruce Grove Lane, Lundstrom Road and Holland Road, all off Highway 11-17.

The Municipality of Neebing is planning to retain its driveway boxes.

Some rural residents have end-of-driveway mailboxes in Neebing and those will stay intact as part of an agreement with Canada Post, clerk-treasurer Rodney Quarrell said.

Others in Neebing have to pick up their mail from green community mailboxes.

"They are old and rusty and they are falling apart," said Quarrell. "And they are not safe in some places."

Quarrell's mailbox is at the corner of Blake Hall Road and Highway 61. When he picks up his mail, he has to pull over and traffic whizzes by. "You're very close to the highway," he said.

Quarrell said Canada Post is committed to replacing the group mailboxes with new modern ones. Neebing residents will also eventually get their own postal code and different mailing addresses.

The municipality currently has several rural route postal codes with either a Thunder Bay or Kakabeka Falls mailing address.

Many residents of the Municipality of Shuniah, which is northeast of Thunder Bay, get their mail from green group mailboxes, but some have driveway boxes.

Eric Collingwood, Shuniah's chief administrative officer, said there are no plans to replace driveway mailboxes with group boxes.

"We have not been approached this year about turning over to super-boxes," Collingwood said.

July 9, 2006

Minister, chief sign agreement

NORTHWEST BUREAU

Anishinabek Nation leaders and the Ministry of Natural Resources have created a new dispute mechanism to resolve issues related to natural resource management.

A letter of intent outlining the process was signed Friday by Grand Council Chief John Beaucage, on behalf of 42 Anishinabek Nation communities, and Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay.

"We are pleased this Ontario government understands the importance of working with First Nations on natural resource issues, which represent the link between our historic treaties and our future economic prosperity," Beaucage stated, in a press release.

"Since we first discussed this process, Minister Ramsay has endorsed co-operative and respectful dialogue when dealing with issues involving First Nation jurisdiction and aboriginal and treaty rights."

"I am pleased to join Grand Chief Beaucage in signing this agreement, which will help address Anishinabek Nation concerns about natural resource issues," said Ramsay.

July 8, 2006

Motel fills in for health-care hostel

NORTHWEST BUREAU

Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre patients and their families will be housed at a local motel in Sioux Lookout until issues regarding a new hostel are worked out or an aging hostel is reopened. Nishnawbe Aski Nation officials said Friday.

Citing its aging condition, First Nation leaders closed the hospital's 39-bed hostel Thursday afternoon.

The closure follows a meeting Wednesday in which First Nation leaders were unable to get a funding commitment from Ottawa for a new \$9-million hostel.

They maintain the government may renege on its 1997 commitment to fund a 100-bed hostel in Sioux Lookout.

However, federal officials maintain

SIoux LOOKOUT

the funding commitment is firm.

NAN spokeswoman Jenna Young said Friday that hostel staff will continue working and serving the patients from a new location at the Sunset Inn.

NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fidler has said that "the health and safety of the people who access the services of the hostel is being compromised daily by old heat and water systems, mould and asbestos."

Al Garman, Ontario regional director of First Nation

and Inuit Health Canada, said the department remains committed to the hostel, and the department has begun work on helping them find alternate funding for the facility until the specific funding is freed up by the federal government.

As an essential support to hospital services, the hostel houses patients from more than 30 First Nation communities across the Northwest.



Mayor Lucy Kloosterhuis

Mayor goes for 10th year

July 10, 2006

BY JONATHAN WILSON
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Lucy Kloosterhuis is hoping to make it an even 10 years as mayor of Oliver-Paipoonge.

The two-term mayor submitted her nomination papers last month for the Nov. 13 elections.

Kloosterhuis said she's "still very much interested" in what happens in Oliver-Paipoonge, and she's hoping to continue her involvement in the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and its fight with the province to take back the downloaded costs for health units and ambulance service.

"I'm still enthusiastic about the job," Kloosterhuis said Friday.

As of Thursday afternoon, no other mayoralty candidates had put their names forward.

Kloosterhuis ascended to the rural municipality's top job in November 2000 when she upset longtime Oliver-Paipoonge mayor and reeve John Grave-son in a close vote, 904-816. She was acclaimed as mayor in 2003.

The province has extended the terms of municipal councils from three years to four, meaning the next council will stay in power until 2010.

Kloosterhuis said the change will save taxpayers some money in election costs.

The three-year terms, she said, sometimes aren't long enough to settle major projects and issues. And she thinks four-year terms will be especially beneficial to newly elected councillors.

"When I first went on council 15 years ago, I found it takes you about two years before you're even ready to open your mouth without sounding dumb," Kloosterhuis said with a laugh.

Sunday, July 9, 2006

Hospital start keeps changing

FIRST Nations and Sioux Lookout area residents have waited patiently for the start of construction of the Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre and hostel since an agreement to replace the aging Zone and Sioux Lookout General Hospitals was announced almost 10 years ago.

Now, First Nation leaders can't access the \$9 million in funding promised to begin construction of a new 100-bed hostel this summer.

Frustrated, they closed the current 39-bed hostel to try and get action on their concerns.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said Thursday that "the health and safety of the people who access the services of the hostel is being compromised daily by old heat and water systems, mould and asbestos."

"We're still committed to working with Health Canada and would reconsider reopening the hostel if we can secure a ministerial guarantee (for a new hostel), however at this point in time, and for the safety of our people we have no choice but to close the doors," he said.

An essential support to hospital services, the hostel houses patients from more than 30 First Nation communities across the Northwest.

While federal Health department officials say the funding commitment is still there, the money can't be released until the House of Commons resumes sitting in the fall.

If the money has been allotted — and it has — then it should be released to start building the long-promised hospital.

Who's to blame?

The federal government for not putting the money aside when the announcement was made, bureaucratic red tape, or poor planning by local officials.

The \$9 million in funding should have been put into a trust account when the funding was first announced so that it could be accessed when planning for the hostel had been finished.

Funding issues aside, it is also taking far too long for new hospital construction to begin.

When the announcement of the 63-bed health centre — designed to blend modern medicine with traditional aboriginal healing methods — was made in April 1997 officials said it should take about four years to take shape.

That didn't happen.

Then, last September the federal government announced more funding for the new hospital (inflationary costs had driven the price from a paltry \$30 million to more than \$84 million). Officials said then that construction would begin spring 2006.

Like someone throwing darts at board full of dates, the timeframe keeps changing.

In May, an official said that construction would now begin in the summer of 2007.

Will those plans change again?

Who knows? One thing is for sure, the Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre should be one of the most extensively planned hospitals ever built in Canada. If a shovel is ever put in the ground.

First Nations prepare to fight for rights during native convention

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VANCOUVER — A song used by natives who went to England 100 years ago to seek land rights opened the annual gathering Tuesday of the Assembly of First Nations.

Squamish Chief Ian Campbell told the crowd they will continue to sing those war songs as long as necessary.

The first song played at the convention was also used when a Squamish delegation went to England in 1906 "to fight for the very same issues we're fighting today: equality, our land, our children," Campbell told the group of chiefs representing more than 630 First Nations across Canada.

"One hundred years later we continue to sing that song to the Crown. Where is the integrity? We'll continue to question that."

Preparing for battle or making peace seemed to be themes in the opening speeches of the convention Tuesday.

Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, called on all native leaders to join in the fight to convince the Canadian government to agree on the United Nations Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Canada and Russia were the only two of 30 voting states who opposed the declaration that recognizes the rights of native people around the world.

Fontaine told the crowd it's an important document "because it speaks about our undeniable right of self-determination and it speaks about those issues that Canada says it believes in, the principles of human rights, democratic society and good government."

He urged native leaders to dig in their heels and press the federal government to adopt the document.

"So it's a complete mystery why Canada has decided to oppose this draft declaration," Fontaine said. "It's a very, very important document. It's obvious we have big fight before us."

The assembly will choose a new national chief Wednesday. Fontaine is being challenged by B.C. native leader Bill Wilson.

In contrast, B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell was welcomed to the convention.

Ernie Campbell, the chief of the Musqueam native band in Vancouver, even called the premier "cousin" as he introduced him to the crowd.

Campbell talked about reconciliation with First Nations and creating a new relationship.

"We must turn our back on the denial of the past. For 139 years we have not recognized the true contribution of First Nations and aboriginal people across our country."

The premier said he has a decade-long goal of closing the gap between natives and non-natives on the issue of health, housing and communities and education.

"It is not acceptable to me, nor to you... that there is a 400 per cent greater incidence of Type 2 diabetes. It is not acceptable that life expectancy is seven and a half years shorter," he said.

He admitted that changes have been necessary for a long time.

"We take small steps. And I can imagine the frustration that is felt by many who have worked so long to get us to our destination," Campbell said.

No mention was made of the Kelowna Accord, the \$5-billion agreement the Liberal government signed last year with premiers before it was voted out of office.

It was meant to fight poverty, improve living conditions and increase education and health standards for First Nations.

In an interview later, Campbell wouldn't say if he too was frustrated with the federal government's refusal to adopt the accord.

"The greatest concern I have is that we remain committed to closing the gap in education, health care, in economic development in communities and building a new relationship," he said.

July 12, 2006

Xstrata boosts offer for Falconbridge

TORONTO (CP) — Xstrata PLC (LSE:XTA) of Switzerland has raised its bid for Canadian miner Falconbridge Ltd. to \$59 a share in cash Tuesday, standing behind its position that an all-cash offer will defeat a cash-and-stock proposal from Phelps Dodge Corp. and Inco Ltd.

Xstrata is now offering \$18.1 billion for

the 80 per cent of Falconbridge (TSX:FAL) it doesn't already own, valuing the Canadian mining giant at \$22.5 billion.

Mick Davis, CEO of the Anglo-Swiss mining company, maintained that Xstrata's offer of cash makes it the better option for Falconbridge shareholders.

Rowe to answer to child sex charges

July 12, 2006

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A Kenora judge has decided that convicted sex offender Ralph Rowe, 66, will answer to 56 sex-related charges involving children, but has not ruled out granting stays for many of the counts.

Kenora Superior Court Justice Erwin Stach released his written decision on a constitutional challenge made by Kenora lawyer Robert Sinding in mid-May.

Stach rejected Sinding's argument for a stay of the criminal proceedings that cited court delays and abuse of process. The arguments included allegations of delays before and after the current charges were laid, which Sinding said breached Rowe's right to a trial within a reasonable time.

Stach concluded there was no evidence of "bad faith or ulterior motive on the part of the Crown. In short, there is simply no support on these grounds for Mr. Rowe's claim for a stay of the current proceedings."

However, Stach said the "core" of Sinding's argument is based on Rowe's 1994 plea agreement in which the Crown promised concurrent sentences

for any similar allegations against Rowe in the future.

Stach ruled the Crown is bound to honour the plea agreement made for charges that are "the same or substantially similar in level of seriousness to the charges already heard in 1994." These were referred to as charges in the "nature of fondling."

But Stach also ruled that the Crown could prosecute Rowe on any charges that were more serious in nature.

Rowe's 56 charges include numerous counts of sexual and indecent assault, as well as two counts of buggery.

The charges relate to acts alleged to have taken place between 1971 and 1986 with boys between the ages of 6 and 16 in several remote Northern Ontario First Nations communities where Rowe served as an Anglican minister and a boy scout master.

Rowe was convicted in 1994 on 27 counts of indecent assault and one count of common assault. He pleaded guilty to sexually abusing 16 boys and was sentenced to six years in jail. He served three years.

The matter has been adjourned to Aug. 28, to set a date for continuation.

Sunday, July 16, 2006

No word on repair help

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Kenora District Services Board is still waiting to see if the province will ante up a share of the estimated \$2.2-million cost for repairs to Parkview Apartments in Kenora.

"There are some major reasons why the province should pay (for the costly renovations)," KDSB administrator Sten Lif said Wednesday.

"The board believes that the province

has a responsibility to correct errors when this was built."

The province transferred the six-storey, 72-unit apartment building to the district services board in 2001.

Lif said the government never conducted building assessments on any of the properties it downloaded to KDSB at that time.

Monday, July 17, 2006

Blockade created traffic chaos in Kenora

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Thursday's blockade of the Trans-Canada Highway by visitors to the region to protest forestry practices in the Grassy Narrows area caused traffic backups and several complaints to police when highway traffic was rerouted through the heart of Kenora.

Onlookers were amazed at the number of vehicles which flowed through the downtown traffic which had not been seen since the Trans-Canada highway was

completed more than a decade ago.

Kenora Police Service acting Sgt. Dean Hodges said officers responded to five collisions and received numerous "traffic-related" complaints due to the added volume of traffic on Thursday.

Although most were minor, a more serious incident involved a tractor-trailer and passenger vehicle. Hodges said the eastbound truck attempted to make a right turn onto Eighth Avenue S. and "sandwiched" the other vehicle, also

curb. The accident resulted in minor injuries.

Mayor Dave Canfield said there was no warning about the protest.

He said he reassured locals that Grassy Narrows residents had not caused the blockade.

He said the city has been working toward a strong relationship with the First Nation and doesn't want it thrown away because of outsiders.

"They broke the law and they should

Saturday, July 15, 2006

Batchewana councillors resign en masse

SAULT STE. MARIE (CP) — Batchewana First Nation's new chief says he is shocked by the resignation of four councillors but will continue to pursue his "aggressive" agenda.

Councillors Kevin Tegosh, Bertha Beaulieu, Margaret Lesage and Dan Sayers Sr., who make up half of Batchewana's eight council members, announced they are resigning in protest over Dean Sayers' leadership.

The four say they strongly oppose several moves already made by the new chief. They say there is no point in staying on, however, now that Sayers and four allied councillors have gained the balance of power in Batchewana.

Options for paying your taxes bit by bit

IF YOU receive income during the year where tax has not been withheld or not enough has been withheld you may be surprised by a big tax bill when you file your return in April.

No one likes that sinking feeling when they have to scrounge up money fast to pay taxes.

So for people who receive bond interest, tips, rental income and self-employment income, the Income Tax Act requires them to pay income tax by installments.

Installments are periodic payments of income tax that some taxpayers pay to CRA four times a year on March 15, June 15, Sept. 15 and Dec. 15.

If you pay by installments the amount paid is shown as a credit on your tax return, so it is deducted from the taxes owing.

You have to make installment payments for the current tax year if your net tax owing — the amount you owe on your tax return — is more than \$2,000 for both the current tax year and either of the previous two years.

If you are required to pay tax by installments, there are three options to determine how much is required to be paid.

The easiest method is the no calculation option. CRA determines how much you must pay each quarter based on its knowledge of the tax owing in the pre-



YOUR
MONEY

**MURRAY
BECOTTE**

vious two years, and informs you how much you must pay.

In February and August, the CRA sends out installment reminders to people who may have to pay tax. This option is best for you if your income, deductions and credits stay about the same from year to year.

Under the other two methods you have to calculate the installment amount yourself.

With the prior year option, you calculate each quarterly installment as one-quarter of your tax liability for last year.

This option is best if you expect your current year's income to be about the same as the previous year.

The third choice is the current year option where you estimate your tax liability for the current year and pay one-quarter of that amount each quarter.

This option is best if you expect the current year to be materially different from the previous

year.

If you pay the amount shown on the installment reminder you will not have to pay installment interest, even if the payments are less than the total amount of tax you owe at the end of the year.

If you chose to make installments according to the prior year or current-year option and paid too little for the required installment you may be charged installment interest.

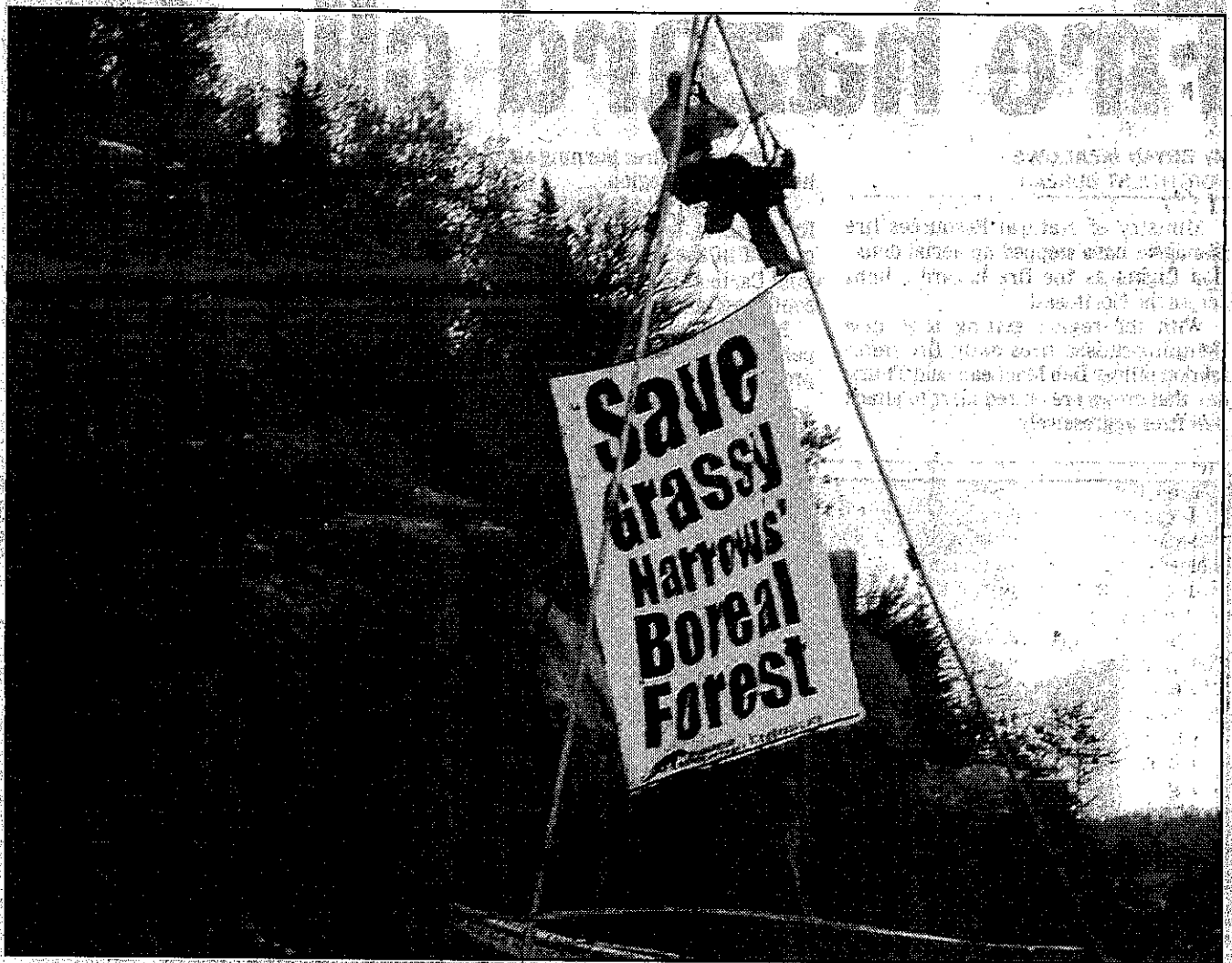
You may also incur a penalty if the installment payments are late or less than the required amount, and if the installment interest charges for the taxation year are more than \$1,000.

The penalty is either one-half the amount of the owed installment interest that exceeds \$1000, or one-quarter of the installment interest you would owe if you had not made installment payments for 2006, whichever is greater.

You probably want to choose the option that provides the lowest quarterly payments.

Just be accurate and make the payments on time.

Murray Becotte is a chartered accountant and CFP working as an investment adviser with BMO Nesbitt Burns in Thunder Bay. Opinions expressed in this column are his. Your Money appears every Monday on this page.



BRIANNA CAYO-COTTER

A woman from the Rainforest Action Network suspends herself from a 30-foot tripod over Highway 17A at the site of a blockade just north of Kenora on Thursday. A long-standing dispute over clear-cut logging practices near Grassy Narrows came to a head Thursday as 100 protesters erected the blockade.

Protest closes highway

Grassy Narrows takes new step in logging protest

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

About 100 Grassy Narrows First Nation supporters shut down Highway 17A north of Kenora on Thursday to raise awareness of the community's goal to stop clear-cut logging by Weyerhaeuser and Abitibi-Consolidated on their traditional land.

Supporters erected a 10-metre tripod on the Kenora bypass near the Airport Road intersection and perched on the top, while others locked themselves to cement-filled oil drums and even the axle of a logging truck. Protesters, carrying banners proclaiming: Save Grassy Narrows' Boreal Forest; Wake up Weyerhaeuser; Defend Native Rights; Defend Ancient Forests; and No logging without consent, stopped both lanes of traffic.

Among the vehicles were logging trucks on their way to the Weyerhaeuser Trus-Joist Timberstrand mill just outside Kenora.

Provincial police Const. Karen Rustige said officers were rerouting traffic through Kenora along Highway 17.

Police request the public's patience to facilitate a peaceful solution to the protest, she said.

"This is a completely non-violent protest... absolutely," said Brianna Cayo-Cotter, a spokeswoman with Rainforest Action Network which helped Grassy Narrows organize the protest.

Cotter said police had moved in earlier to try to disperse the protesters, but backed off.

There's no time limit on the blockade, she said. "It depends on when police figure out how to unchain the protesters. My guess is that they will move in at dusk."

The action by Grassy Narrows residents, environmental groups and supporters from other First Nations marks the latest development in the Grassy Narrows bid to end clear cutting. Community members want others to join an international boycott of Weyerhaeuser Timberstrand products that they say are made from clear-cutting near the community.

A Grassy Narrows band councillor refused comment Thursday.

Residents began a blockade of a nearby logging road three years ago in an attempt to stop forest companies from using pesticides and clear-cutting huge tracts of land near the community. The community claims most of the economic benefits and products taken from the lands flow to U.S. homebuilders and paper product manufacturers.

Many of the blockade supporters are attending an Earth Justice Gathering this week on the First Nation north of Kenora to raise awareness about indigenous rights and protection for the boreal forest.

RAN's Old Growth campaign spokesman David Sone suggested that Weyerhaeuser is destroying an ancient way of life and an ecosystem vital to the planet's health while the McGuinty government fails to act.

Grassy Narrows' Roberta Keesick, a grandmother and trapper, called

clearcuts "an attack on our people."

"The land is the basis of who we are," she said at the site of Thursday's blockade. "Our culture is a land-based culture, and the destruction of the land is the destruction of our culture," she said.

"Weyerhaeuser and the McGuinty government don't want us on the land, they want us out of the way so they can take the resources."

Weyerhaeuser has maintained that harvesting of the Whiskey Jack Forest is done according to strict forest management planning guidelines and standards. The company doesn't have logging operations in the Whiskey Jack, but Abitibi sends wood from that area to the Timberstrand plant.

Weyerhaeuser spokeswoman Bonny Skene said the blockade is not affecting mill operations as there are alternative routes for trucks to take to the plant.

The Rainforest Action Network began attacking the company's forest management practices two years ago, Skene said, adding such campaigns by environmental groups against well-known companies like Weyerhaeuser "are not uncommon."

Weyerhaeuser continues to welcome discussion with the group "to improve our performance and resolve our differences," she said.

The Ministry of Natural Resources says it has consulted "extensively" over the years with Grassy Narrows and area residents on development of forest management plans. Site-specific concerns identified by the band were considered in the 1999-2019 plan, the ministry says.

Towns chip in to save their lives

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

"Talk about putting your money where your mouth is."

A half-dozen small towns east of Thunder Bay say hiring a Northern Ontario economist is the first step in ensuring they stay on the map as their local economies shrink.

"As a group, we felt something had to be done," Hornepayne Mayor Gene Belanger said Monday. "The writing is on the wall, and it's not pretty."

The towns — Hornepayne, White River, Manitouwadge, Wawa, Chapleau and Dubreuilville — have collectively hired Laurentian Uni-

versity professor David Robinson to research and write a report on their economic futures.

Spending \$120,000 of local tax dollars on the project, rather than applying for a provincial grant, "was a tough sell" to taxpayers but will give the towns more control over the report, said Belanger.

"We are doing what another level of government should have done a long time ago," said Belanger.

Robinson's report, due out a year from now, will focus on what the towns could look like 10 to 20 years down the road in an economy bereft of a robust forestry sector.

"While all communities in Northern Ontario have been affected by

economic downturns, it is the smaller, rural communities . . . that are on the verge of collapse," said a joint news release from the towns' six mayors.

In the future, the towns could rely on new industries like furniture plants, while putting more emphasis on small-scale industries in local high school curriculums, said Belanger.

The report will likely transcend the short term, since the impact of that is already apparent.

"Employment, particularly in the forest industry, is in steep decline, having been dealt a devastating blow by high energy rates and high U.S. import tariffs," the mayors' release added.

A4 NEWS

Saturday, July 15, 2006

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Organizers claim success with Grassy Narrows action

NORTHWEST BUREAU

A blockade of the Kenora bypass by Grassy Narrows First Nation supporters has been successful in raising awareness of the community's goal to stop clear-cut logging by Weyerhaeuser and Abitibi-Consolidated on their traditional land, organizers claimed Friday.

Grassy Narrows spokesman Joe Fobister said that he felt the protest on Highway 17A made its point.

"We were successful" in getting the media here to raise awareness of our concerns, he said.

Highway 17A was reopened to traffic about 10 p.m. Thursday after about 100

protesters dismantled a 10-metre tripod and unchained themselves from cement-filled oil drums and the axle of a logging truck. The blockade which began about 12 hours earlier stopped both lanes of traffic. Motorists were rerouted over Highway 17 through Kenora.

Fobister said provincial police told him they wouldn't

arrest anyone if they dismantled the blockade Thursday evening.

Provincial police Const. Ronni Groseknick said additional OPP officers from neighboring detachments were called in to assist in traffic control.

An investigation into the peaceful demonstration continues, she said.

The action by Grassy Narrows residents, environmental groups and supporters from other First Nations marks the latest development in the Grassy Narrows bid to end clear cutting.

Community members want others to join an international boycott of Weyerhaeuser Timberstrand products that they say are made from clear cutting near the community.

Veteran councillor considers mayor's job

BY WARD HOLLAND
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Two Thunder Bay councillors are considering running for mayor in November's municipal election.

Lawrence Timko and Rebecca Johnson, both councillors-at-large, said Tuesday they are contemplating the top job.

"The fact that when you're there for a number of times... you think, 'Well, do I want to be mayor? It would be nice to be sitting up there,'" said Timko, who has been a councillor since 1976.

"You don't want to be doing that just because of that, but you just feel that it's the ultimate position on council."

"You only have the same amount of voting power, but you can influence a lot more from that chair... It would be kind of a different challenge for me and I'm still looking at it."

Timko, 68, said he would decide whether to run for mayor or councillor at-large by the end of August. He said he would be "awfully surprised" if Johnson doesn't run.

Johnson, 65, said she was "thinking about" running for mayor.

"I will not be making my final decision yet."



Rebecca Johnson

that's fine."

During the summer, the public isn't interested in what politicians are doing, Johnson said. She wants to continue working on the waterfront development committee.

Several others are planning to seek office in the Nov. 19 election.

Mayor Lynn Peterson and councillors Dick Waddington, Allan Rydholm, Joe Virdiramo, Linda Rydholm and Mark Benz have submitted re-election papers.

As of Tuesday, the city's website showed that at least one person has declined to run in six of Thunder Bay's seven wards. No one has filed to run in McIntyre ward.



Lynn Peterson

don't put in their papers in right away."

"They could even be thinking may or some people believe they would like to see what the field looks like before they enter a race."

Virdiramo said he's running again in Westford because he wants to work on city development and attracting more residents.

"The first three years was a good experience for me," he said. "I feel I understand the workings of a city council. I feel I can still contribute to that and be part of it again."

This group of councillors get along, Virdiramo said, even if they don't have the same opinions or vote the same way.

It also showed that no one has entered the councillor-at-large race.

Bentz, the Northwood councillor, submitted his nomination papers to the city clerk on Tuesday. He said there are several reasons why councillors



Lawrence Timko

ward and she knows it well. "I enjoy helping people with their issues," she said.

Bill Scollie, a councillor-at-large, said he will decide whether to run within the next month.

Andy Savella, president of Canadian Auto Workers Local 229, is planning to run in McKellar ward. McKellar incumbent Robert Tuchenhagen hasn't declared his intentions.

"I think right now our city is at a defining moment," Savella said. "I really think the future direction of council in the next couple of years is going to be paramount."

Savella, 43, was among those who lobbied

if I bring something forward and the rest of my colleagues turn it down, we can still go and socialize after the meeting," he said. "We don't take it personal."

Rydholm said four generations of her family have lived in Neelburg

bled council to keep the homes for the aged under city control.

"I think the city has to accept its responsibility to ensure that we do something to deal with the 400 long-term care beds that are desperately needed," he said.

Current River incumbent Waddington is facing some competition.

John Henderson, who placed second in the 2003 election, is running again. Andrew Foulds, a teacher at Port Arthur Collegiate Institute, is also giving it a shot.

Henderson said he ran campaigns for Mickey Hennessy, Dusty Miller and Ken Boshoff, and considers himself a "community-based politician."

Henderson, 55, owns advertising firm Brain Box Strategic Communication. "There is a need for the city to basically get off its butt and start marketing the city, similar to how the university attracts students from southern Ontario and foreign students," he said.

Foulds, 33, chairman of the PACI science department, said he believes this year's election will be one of the most important in Thunder Bay's history. He said voters will be looking for new ideas.

Field of Thunder Bay council candidates growing

BY WARD HOLLAND
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Three more people have decided to run in Thunder Bay's municipal election in November.

Terrence Yahn, area commander of the Lakehead Search and Rescue Unit, and Trevor Gieruga, the McIntyre ward councillor, have submitted their election papers to the city clerk's office.

Also, Coun. Jan Angus said in an interview that he is going to run again.

Yahn, 57, is the first person to submit his name for the councillor-at-large race.

"I filed my nomination papers and registered ear-

ly to show my commitment and desire to run for office and will use the next few months to bring myself up to speed on city matters," Yahn said in a statement.

"If successful, I want to be an effective councillor on day one, in step with those councillors who will be re-elected and are already working on committees and projects."

Yahn was born and raised in Thunder Bay and worked as a banker in Manitoba from 1969 to the mid 1980s.

He returned to Northwestern Ontario and worked as clerk-administrator for the Township of Red Lake. He was also financial controller for

Bearskin Airlines in Shovelookout.

For the past 12 years, Yahn has worked for Hamiltonian Company of Canada Ltd., a compact disc distributor.

He is married with two adult sons.

Gieruga has been city councillor in the McIntyre ward since 2000.

Councillors-at-large Lawrence Timko, Rebecca Johnson, Bill Scollie, Joe Vanderwees and Angus haven't submitted re-election papers yet.

However, Angus said on Friday that he is planning to submit his documents this month and run for the same position. He also quashed any rumours that he will change his mind and run for mayor.

"I will not be running for mayor," he said. "End of statement."

Angus, a former federal and provincial politician, encouraged all incumbents to submit their re-election papers as soon as possible so anyone considering running knows "what the field looks like."

Mayor Lynn Peterson has made it known that she will run again. In May, Timko and Johnson said they were thinking about challenging her for the top job.

Robert Tuchenhagen, the McKellar ward councillor, said that he hasn't decided if he will run again. "Quite honestly, I'm not sure," he said.

Robert Tuchenhagen, the McKellar ward councillor, said that he hasn't decided if he will run again. "Quite honestly, I'm not sure," he said.

Platinum mine at core of \$10-billion suit

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — The development of a potentially rare and lucrative platinum mine near a reserve in Northwestern Ontario has prompted a First Nation to sue the provincial government, while it faces a \$10-billion lawsuit by a Canadian exploration company.

The cases centre on Platinox Inc.'s hopes to mine for platinum in an area inhabited by about 1,200 members of Kitchenuhmaykoosibushumungwag First Nation, about 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

The company says about 90 per cent of the world's platinum comes from mines in South Africa, and a Canadian mine would be an extraordinary opportunity for all involved, including the aboriginal community.

But the community has made it clear it is against mining on traditional territory and a landmark Supreme Court ruling dictates it should have been consulted before Platinox was cleared by the province to go forward, said deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of Nishnawbe Aski Na-

tion, which is providing assistance in the legal fight.

For any company to work in (aboriginal) territory, it's just common courtesy to call the chief and council and say, 'We're interested in doing this type of work in your community, can we come and sit down and talk about it,' Fiddler said.

He said the community was shocked to find the company setting up to work and drill in a lake 15 km from the reserve, an area considered to be part of Kitchenuhmaykoosib's traditional territory.

The company was asked to leave the area but Platinox said it had received a permit from the province to do exploratory work and refused. Platinox pulled out after further confrontations and sought legal assistance.

The company turned around and sued the community for \$10 billion. "We thought it was maybe a typo, we thought it was \$10 million but it was really \$10 billion," Fiddler said. "So that was a shock to the community."

• Continued on page A4

• Continued from page A1

The company has filed the injunction to continue its work because it was legally cleared to do so, on land which — according to some legal interpreta-

tion — may be Crown property, said Platinox lawyer Neil Smitheman.

He said the monetary value attached to the case may give a wrong impression of what Platinox is after, since it refers to the maximum value the compa-

ny believes the mine could be worth, and not a sum being sought from the First Nation.

He said Platinox just wants to continue its work and is caught in the middle of a fight between the First Nation and the government over an ongoing land claim.

Platinox is a small company that can't afford to sit back and wait for the years it might take for the dispute to be settled, Smitheman said.

"If we don't get on the property to do exploratory

work, it'll cause irreparable harm to the company financially," he said.

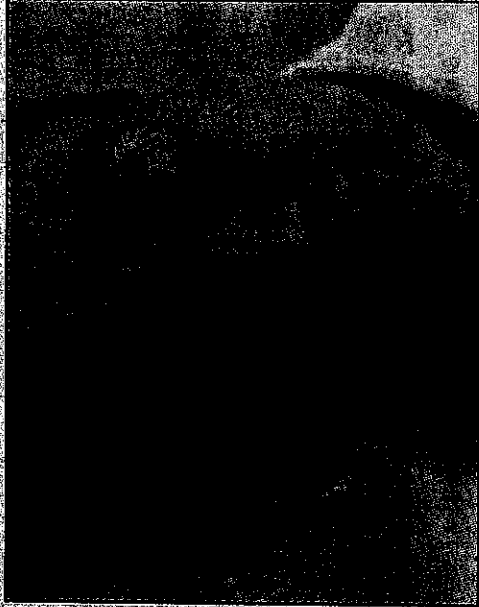
"A geologist went out and staked it and thinks there may be a significant platinum deposit there. So this could be something really quite exciting as far as the mining community is concerned, and dealt with properly, I think as far as the First Nation community is concerned as well."

Smitheman said the development could bring jobs and additional revenue to the community but understands not everyone likes the idea.

"I think that some members of the First Nation community would welcome (the development), others are concerned about losing their traditional way of life, however in fairness."

As the company and community wait for the cases to go to court, four members of the First Nation are walking to Ontario's legislature to raise awareness about their fight.

They began in Pickle Lake on May 6 and plan to walk 50 to 70 km a day hoping to span about 1,500 km and arrive in Toronto for National Aboriginal Day on June 21.



NAN's Alvin Fiddler refers to Supreme Court ruling about work on traditional territory



Hampton, father of NDP
leader Howard Hampton, died late
Monday after suffering a heart
attack at La Verendrye
Fort Frances hospital.

Hampton's father dies

IN PRESS

— George Hampton, father of NDP
leader Howard Hampton, died late
Monday after suffering a heart
attack at La Verendrye
Fort Frances hospital, NDP officials

lifelong resident of the
Fort Frances Ontario community,
worked as a truck driver and in
a saw mill.

He was survived by his wife Elaine

Was she pushed or did she jump?

Resignation of OPP commissioner a surprise to rank-and-file officers

IT'S A bit like the plot of one of those high-class British murder mysteries: Was she pushed or did she jump?

It's the question for Miss Marple after the surprise resignation of OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface last Friday.

Boniface has been under fire from rank-and-file officers over the handling of the Caledonia Standoff with native protesters. Many of them believe she simply didn't provide enough leadership to the force during the



QUEEN'S PARK
CHRISTINA BLIZZARD

me? Is the government going to be behind me?" he said at the time.

What burned him most was that cops had been assaulted — with apparent impunity. He wrote to Attorney General Michael Bryant complaining about one incident where four people, all natives, were arrested. But he says three of the four failed to show up for a scheduled court appearance and the one who did appear argued that the law didn't apply to him.

Walsh was taking the high road Tuesday wishing Boniface well. The fact is, though, that a court order is a court order. Cops can't pick and choose which ones they are going to enforce. They are there to apply the law, even if...

Unfortunately, her accomplishments were overshadowed

by Caledonia, but they speak for themselves," he said.

Opposition leader John Tory was asked about Boniface's departure during a visit to Caledonia on Monday. He made the point that this amounts to an odd, missing person report.

When somebody disappears suddenly on a Friday morning, usually you phone police," he said.

In this case, it was the police commissioner who disappeared early on a Friday morning. Tory added that while Boniface had put in a long and distinguished career with the OPP, "I don't think there is any question but that this whole series of incidents involving her must have had some connection to Caledonia."

WHAT frustrated some rank-and-file officers and many in the community is that from the beginning of the standoff, the OPP seemed to be taking a hands-off approach.

The court order authorizing cops to remove the protesters from the site of the housing development was never enforced. In fact last week Justice David Marshall called representatives

from the OPP, the ministry of the attorney general and the aboriginal demonstrators into court to find out why his order has been ignored.

Boniface could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Dalton McGuinty's government paid \$12.3 million to buy the disputed land from the developers and put it in trust while the issue of who owns it is hammered out.

But the protesters are still occupying the land, Tory said on Monday that the occupiers plan to sell cigarettes from a small hut on the property — a move that Darrell Doxtator, an adviser to Six Nations Chief David General, could not confirm.

It would make economic sense for the band to do that. After all, with the government hiking the price of legal cigarettes to the stratosphere, an underground economy in native cigarettes is flourishing. Your tax dollars at work.

Look on the bright side, though. Perhaps they could put a casino on the site.

Chris Blizzard writes for the Toronto Sun. christina.blizzard@tor.sunpub.com

Thursday, August 3, 2006

OPP officers ratify new 3-year deal

THE CANADIAN PRESS \$80000 x .03 = \$2400

TORONTO — The Ontario Provincial Police have ratified a new three-year contract with their employer, the provincial government.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Government Services says the deal brings the OPP's 6,900 officers in line with their peers in big-city police forces, such as those in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa.

Officers voted 93 per cent in favour of the agreement, which will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2006.

Key elements include a wage increase of 3.34 per cent in 2006, three per cent in 2007 and three per cent in 2008.

The officers also receive enhancements to health benefits.

Industrial hydro rates in Ont. highest in Canada: Hampton

BY JIM KELLY
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Large industrial customers in Ontario are paying about \$1.5 million more for electricity each month than their counterparts in Manitoba, NDP leader Howard Hampton said Thursday.

Speaking at a news conference at the Vahalla Inn, Hampton produced figures from Manitoba Hydro's Utility Rate Comparisons: Survey of Canadian Electricity Rates that showed hydro rates in Ontario for industrial customers are the highest in Canada.

Hampton said medium-size industrial facilities in Ontario are paying about \$110,000 more each month for hydro than similar plants in Manitoba.

And, medium-size commercial operations in Ontario pay almost \$2,400 more each month than similar facilities in Manitoba.

These figures apply to the period of May 2005 to April 2006.

Dalton McGuinty has hit Ontario industry with hydro price shock, Hampton said.

He raised prices so high that Ontario is now the most expensive place in Canada for industry to buy their electricity.

"That's bad for the economy, bad for workers and bad for communities," he said.

"Ontario has already witnessed a wave of factory and mill closures and job losses.

"Regrettably, we will see more pain unless Mr. McGuinty finally stands up, admits his energy policies are on the wrong track, and takes action now to provide energy price relief for Northern communities," Hampton said.

www.hydro.mb.ca

He said Ontario has lost some 100,000 manufacturing jobs since June 2004, including more than 4,000 in the forestry sector alone.

"Dalton McGuinty promised to stand up for Northern forest industry communities," Hampton said.

Instead, "we're seeing the same old approach — governments raising hydro rates through the roof, then standing on the sidelines doing nothing while mills close, workers lose their jobs and entire communities suffer," he said.

Hampton said every McGuinty MPP

wishes the energy problem would disappear.

He said if there is pressure on local Liberal MPPs Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North) and Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Atikokan), "I don't see them speaking out on the issue or doing anything about it."

Mauro said he agrees with the concept of regional energy pricing.

"In the past four days, I've had discussions with the minister of finance and one with the premier on regional energy pricing," he said.

"There's no announcement yet, but I'm feeling positive we're heading in the right direction based on my discussions with the minister of finance and the premier."

Gravelle said he has been very actively involved in pushing for the government to implement regional energy pricing that would bring the hydro costs substantially down.

"It was pressure from Mauro and myself that persuaded the premier to look seriously at regional energy pricing," he said.

"I'm expecting our government to take some action in the near future."

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Municipal politicians slam Ont. gov't

THE CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA — Ontario municipal leaders blasted provincial cabinet ministers Tuesday for not helping cities and towns cope with the effects of downloaded services.

At an open forum at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, municipal politicians questioned why the province's review of local service delivery will take 18 months.

Some leaders said municipalities need immediate funding to continue delivering costly programs like social housing and public health.

Finance Minister Greg Sorbara drew heckles when he ruled out ideas such as refunding the provincial sales tax for all goods a city or town buys — as the former federal Liberal government did with the GST.

"It's a lovely idea, but the question is how do we replace that revenue?" Sor-

bara said. "We're still struggling with the deficit we inherited."

Ron Holman, warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, said municipalities need funding help to avoid passing along a "devastating" property tax increase.

Sorbara insisted that his government's 18-month municipal services review does not mean that changes will have to wait until the report is finished.

"It does not mean we'll push pause on certain issues," he said. "I wouldn't be pessimistic in terms of the implementation (of changes)."

Some local leaders accused the province of hiding downloaded services. Ottawa councillor Diane Dearn said in some cases, cities have to pay as much as two-thirds the cost of a social housing unit.

"That is patently unfair," she said.

Sorbara said the report will tackle issues like that.

Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen said cities and towns will receive as much as \$12 billion in gas tax funding this year, which equals out to two cents per litre of gas.

He said the premier's pledge to review how municipalities deliver services marks a "new municipal landscape in Ontario."

Some mayors and councillors called on the province to reform the province's property tax assessment system.

The volatile system, which values a home based on what it would fetch if it were sold in the current market, has caused many to leave their homes, some said.

"You now have the opportunity to remove the volatility that drives people crazy," said Ottawa Coun. Alex Cullen.

Sorbara said the system will not change, so the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. must change how it conducts business.

Beardy re-elected grand chief

BY WARD HOLLAND
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Stan Beardy was re-elected as the grand chief of Nishinawbe-ski Nation on Thursday and three deputy chiefs were also elected.

Beardy will serve his third

term as grand chief of the NAN territory, which covers two-thirds of Ontario. He said his main issue is to bring hope to Nishinawbe people.

"Hope for having a job in the near future, hope to improve the quality of life for them and their future," he said in a telephone interview Thursday.

Voting for the grand chief and

deputy grand chiefs took place in the remote community of Sachigo Lake First Nation, near the Manitoba border, on Thursday.

Two other men competed against Beardy: Brian Davey and Mike Metatawabin. Davey got 11 votes and Metatawabin got nine on the first ballot, while Beardy got 25.

Beardy was first elected grand chief in 2000; he was re-elected in 2003.

Alvin Fiddler and RoseAnne Archibald were elected as deputy grand chiefs on the first ballot. Terry Waboose was elected as the third deputy on the fifth ballot.

Fiddler returns for a second term. "It's a great honour to be considered again for this position," he said.

Fiddler, who is originally from Muskrat Dam, was a health director for NAN from 1998 to 2003.

He said that diabetes, suicide, mental illness and cancer are concerns at NAN communities.

One of the key things that needs to be done is to give First Nations communities a say in re-

source development on their lands.

"We are trying to develop hope and a sense of purpose for our young people," Fiddler said.

Archibald, who is from Taykwa Tagamou Nation near Cochrane, was a deputy grand chief from 1991 to 1994.

"I believe that a woman's voice was necessary on the executive council again," she said.

Archibald said women's issues, education and developing young people are some of her concerns. "It's time for the next generation to take on leadership roles," she said.

But Archibald said her No. 1 issue is to have communities vote for the

grand chief and the deputies in the next election.

At this election, only the chiefs from the NAN communities voted for the executive council.

This is the first time Waboose, who is from Eabmetoong First Nation, has been elected.

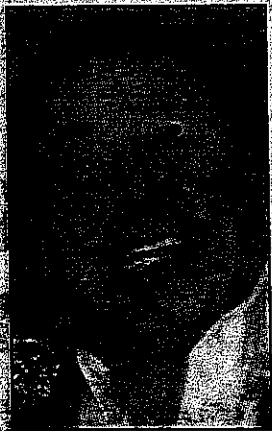
He has worked at NAN for the past seven years as a director. He oversaw self-governance negotiations with the Government of Canada for the past seven years.

Waboose said he wants to see "a drastic improvement" in housing, water and infrastructure at NAN communities.

"The housing need is as great in one area as it is in another," he said.

Beardy and the three grand chiefs will represent the 49 First Nations communities across Northwestern Ontario that are part of James Bay Treaty No. 9.

Other people ran for deputy grand chief — John D. Beardy, David L. Flood, Michael Fox, Ivan Iserhoff, Archie Meekis and Bill Nothing — but they did not succeed.



NAN Grand Chief
Stan Beardy

Canadian border officials out of control

WHEN tourists cross the Canada-U.S. border at Fort Frances, there is a wall that reads, "The Great Canadian Experience." Below this should be a sign that reads, "If you can get in."

Canadian Immigration is out of control and now we're relying on countless visitors almost every day under the guise of protecting the country.

This year, we have had several groups refused entry for ridiculous reasons. In one group an individual failed to pay a medical

bill. I never realized that our tourists were such hardened criminals.

The main problem at the border crossing is that too much latitude is left to the officer on duty. I agreed that a person with a serious felony should not be allowed entry. However, if an individual has had a bit of youthful indiscretion such as impaired driving or hasn't paid a medical bill, this person should be admitted.

It took over 80 years for the tourist industry to promote Northwestern Ontario, but it

will take Canada Immigration only five years to destroy it. Word is spreading fast that Canada is not a country to visit. Even though people have paid their dues to their respective governments, they are not accepted or welcomed in Canada.

It is already costing Northwestern Ontario millions of dollars in jobs, taxes and income. People are being turned away at the border taking all of the members of their group to northern Minnesota and spending their money there. According to

Minnesota operators, this has been a boon to their tourist business.

U.S. immigration officers have told us that if they treated Canadian visitors the same way, more than 700,000 Canadians would be affected within 24 hours. This problem would be solved immediately because Canadian immigration would be pressured by Parliament to use some common sense.

Mike Henry
Pipstone Fly-in Quipists
ENO

Friday, August 11, 2006

Mantario bad idea, say area politicians

BY JONATHAN WILSON
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A comprehensive study on the potential merger of Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba proves that such a move won't benefit this region, Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson said Thursday.

"I don't see anything there for my community," Peterson said.

The "Mantario" analysis, which received national attention Thursday, was conducted several years ago and was published in the journal Canadian Public Policy, and later updated by Lakehead University economics Prof. Livio Di Matteo.

It found that such a merger would give the areas of Kenora, Thunder Bay and Rainy River greater political clout in the smaller western province, but likely little in the way of economic advantage.

The study also mentioned that Manitoba would gain by having more people to pay off its debt.

"Paying higher taxes and paying off someone else's debt isn't particularly appealing," Peterson said.

"It would be interesting to see who would want to pursue that."

Fort Frances Mayor Dan Onichuk and Dryden Mayor Anne Krassilowski were not available for comment Thursday.

Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield — who formed a committee to study the potential move — said the study failed to include the impact of Ontario's electricity prices, which are twice as high as those of its neighbour.

"If we had Manitoba energy prices, most of the mills in Northwestern Ontario would still be running," Canfield said Thursday.

NDB leader Howard Hampton, MPP for Kenora riding, has said the rash of mill closures in the Northwest is proof the Ontario government has been "ignoring" this region, and that the study indicates there is some merit to the argument to switch provinces.

The area's two Liberal MPPs disagree.

Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Alkerton) said the study's findings show him there would be no net gain by joining Manitoba, because the national equalization system would likely offset any gains in transfer payments.

Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North) has concerns about the amount of money that would be available for health care and education in the Northwest under the Mantario scenario.

"I find it hard to imagine that Manitoba could match (the Ontario government's) level of funding," Gravelle said Thursday.

"I still think that there's a considerable downside to us becoming part of a province that is, frankly, a have-not province."

The study predicts the Northwest would increase its government representation by switching provinces, going from three seats among the 103 at Queen's Park to eight in the 57-seat Manitoba legislature.

Canfield said the change would turn the Northwest into a political "powerhouse" compared to what it is now.

"It's very important that we make Queen's Park understand that we have to have some more control some how of our destiny," Canfield said.

Gravelle said the argument of gaining a stronger voice "may be the case," but added it is outweighed by the downsides.

Mauro pointed out that the McGuinty government has tabled legislation ensuring that the current complement of 11 MPPs in all of Northern Ontario is never reduced.

The Liberal MPPs said if they can convince their government to provide the Northwest with regional energy pricing, the area will be in a much better position to remain in Ontario.

Although Gravelle doesn't agree with the idea of Mantario, he said the controversy does help his lobbying efforts in Toronto.

"It's another way of confirming that people are not entirely satisfied with the treatment they feel they're getting from Queen's Park," he said.

Tuesday, August 8, 2006

Rocks, golf balls fly at Caledonia blockade

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CALEDONIA, Ont. — A fragile truce between local residents and aboriginal protesters fractured early Monday with more violence.

"We had two sides lined up and they were escalating to the point where things were starting to be thrown at each other," said Dennis Harwood, spokesman for Ontario Provincial Police.

Harwood said about 40 residents gathered in opposition to the aboriginal protesters shortly after midnight.

That number quickly grew to 100 residents, and that's when the projectiles started to fly. Pebbles, rocks, and golf balls were thrown from both sides, hitting a resident, an occupier and an officer. No one was hurt, but vehicles and property were damaged.

Police said they were able to calm the situation and ensure peace through the remainder of the night.

Six Nations protesters have occupied a site since February, saying the land was illegally taken from them 200 years ago.

The land, which had been slated for a housing development, has since been purchased by the province.

Although barricades cutting off access to the town have come down, residents say they're living in fear because of the continuing native occupation.

Ontario launches legal battle to continue talks in standoff

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Ontario launched a legal battle Wednesday to resume talks aimed at resolving an aboriginal occupation that has bitterly divided a community and stoked fears of bloodshed.

Negotiations between Six Nations protesters, the province, and the federal government are "in the public interest" and are "the best way to resolve" the dispute in the southwestern Ontario community of Caledonia, said Attorney General Michael Bryant.

Those talks were derailed Tuesday when Ontario Superior Court Justice David Marshall ordered all parties to

halt negotiations until the aboriginals end their almost six-month occupation.

On Wednesday, Bryant said the court had "no jurisdiction to order the parties to cease negotiations" and launched an appeal. Six Nations residents who have occupied the Douglas Creek Estates construction site since February vowed to stay regardless of legal rulings and appeals.

The appeal is just "part of the Canadian" legal process, said aboriginal spokeswoman Janie Jamieson.

In addition to continuing the occupation, the group will decide on Aug. 23 whether to re-erect highway barricades that previously divided the town and

sparked violent confrontations with non-aboriginal residents.

In the meantime, Jamieson said it is up to Caledonia residents to maintain the peace. Aboriginals and non-aboriginals clashed Tuesday night at the occupation site, with some aboriginal protesters turning a fire hose on the other group. The two sides were kept apart by a line of provincial police officers.

"There is a constant push from some (residents) to see bloodshed and they're going to keep on creating situations until it happens," said Jamieson.

Despite the legal action, Bryant said the province will indeed halt negotiations until the Ontario Court of Appeal

either overturns Marshall's ruling or orders a stay pending appeal.

"The reasons for judgment do appear to be clear," Bryant said.

"We will comply with that order until such time as the order is either stayed or suspended or overturned."

Thursday, August 10, 2006

First Nation wants water station removed

BY SARAH ELIZABETH BROWN
THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

Angry that a government-funded water monitoring station was set up in its territory without permission, Sachigo Lake First Nation has issued a 48-hour eviction notice to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Chief Alvin Beardy says it's another example of the province ignoring court directives to consult with First Nations before acting.

A hunter noticed the cleared land about eight to 10 kilometres away from the community and the small prefabricated building on July 29, said Beardy.

"They feel invaded, infringed upon," the chief said of the hunters and trappers who regularly use the area along the Sachigo River, the community's "main road" to trap lines.

His office didn't know the monitoring station was going up when it did, and had his office known, the First Nation would have been consulted, said Bob David, district manager for the MNR in Sioux Lookout.

He hasn't received a formal eviction notice, but did receive a news release late Tuesday afternoon that was faxed to media outlets Wednesday, he said.

The water monitoring station north of Sachigo is one station in a federal-provincial project to monitor rivers for flood and drought advisories, David said.

The MNR funded some of the stations in partnership with Environment Canada, which has been installing the gauges on northern river systems over the last month or so, he said.

"In this case, I know we weren't at the district familiar with the schedule of the installations," said David. "No one notified the communities that these little structures were actually going to be placed."

"At a time with very heightened" sensitivities over continued disputes regarding mining exploration, the northern residents were unhappy they weren't notified, he noted.

"A program that's administered, planned at a provincial level, and then with the partnership with the feds, there was just a real lack of communications," he said. "Just a breakdown there."

Beardy said if the building isn't gone in two days, he can't guarantee the structure's or equipment's safety.

He argued that the MNR is trying to reverse the process of consulting with First Nations by building first and asking for negotiations later.

David said he's trying to set up a meeting with the community so MNR staff can determine if the station's current location is a poor choice. But Environment Canada has said that because of key staff being on holiday, it can't remove the station before Aug. 21, long past the 48-hour deadline, he said.

Federal foes in FedNor-funding feud

BY JIM KELLY
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Depending on who you talk to, FedNor funding is either \$51.9 million or \$45.5 million or somewhere in between.

A day after Minister for FedNor Tony Clement announced almost \$2.6 million for two research-related projects in Thunder Bay, he's been criticized for his government's plan to cut FedNor's annual budget from \$51.9 million to \$45.5 million.

"By cutting base-funding for FedNor the Harper government is delivering a tremendous blow to communities and organizations throughout Northern Ontario," said MP Anthony Rota (L-Nipissing-Timiskaming).

"This federal funding is essential to creating jobs and strengthening our regional economy."

Rota noted that Clement, in a recent announcement Tuesday, confirmed the government's commitment to FedNor by maintaining the existing budget at \$45.5 million for the next five years.

But the previous Liberal government established a

FedNor budget of \$51.9 million in February 2005.

In a news release on Feb. 25, 2005, former FedNor Minister Joe Comuzzi (L-Thunder Bay-Superior North) said that FedNor core funding in the 2005 budget had been set at \$51.9 million.

"My understanding is the FedNor funding is \$51.9 million," Comuzzi said Friday.

"If there's a discrepancy, then I'll go back and find out what it is."

In a news release Wednesday, Clement said his government is delivering on its commitment to FedNor and Northern Ontario.

"This (\$45.5 million) is an unprecedented level of stable funding for FedNor which will allow it work with northern communities to effectively plan long-term investments that create jobs, invest in people and build a stronger Northern Ontario," Clement said.

Clement spokesman Erik Waddell said the news release is accurate.

"We stand by the news release," he said from Ottawa.

"I'm not going to comment on the accuracy of a news release put out by the Liberal Party," he said referring to the Comuzzi statement in February 2005.

Waddell explained that Rota may be confused because last year one-time funding of \$6 million was directed by FedNor to research laboratories at both the Sudbury and Thunder Bay campuses of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

Rota said the \$6 million provided for research facilities and equipment at the school in 2005 was above and beyond the \$51.9 million annual FedNor budget guaranteed by the Liberal government.

MP Ken Boshcoff (L-Thunder Bay-Rainy River) said it was his understanding the FedNor budget was going up.

"I believe they raised the budget to \$51.9 million," he said.

FedNor also delivers the \$21.7 million Community Futures Program in rural Ontario.

It supports small and medium-sized businesses through its network of 61 Community Futures Development Corporations — 24 in Northern Ontario and 37 in rural southern Ontario.

Inukshuk welcomes Fort Frances visitors

VISITORS to Fort Frances are welcomed by an attractive new sign on the 100 block of Scott Street. The large letters, The Great Canadian Main Street, encircle a rocky formation. The Inukshuk in the centre of the sign invites everyone to find their way into a friendly village.

A second sign near the water treatment plant on Colonization Road East was erected in time to welcome visitors arriving for the Fort Frances Bass Championship last weekend.

A third sign, under construction will



FORT
FRANCES
**NORMA
PATTISON**

be placed at Canada Customs to welcome tourists from the south to follow the way into Canada to enjoy Fort Frances and the Rainy River District. The sig-

nage is the initiative of the Downtown Core Committee and supported fully by Scott Street businesses. FedNor is funding the signage, designed and created by artist **Burton Penner** of Vermilion Bay.

"This is a Canadian directional sign, known worldwide to point the way to the next village, or in the old days to the next fishing grounds," **Connie Cuthbertson** reported from her Northwood Gallery & Gifts Shop in Fort Frances. "It is an unique piece of art in perfect balance and each piece is crucial in the message of safe travel pointing the way to the future"

The insignia will be recognized as

Canadian and the travelling public love the Inukshuk according to the variety of messages in rock formation appearing along the highways.

This is the beginning of revitalization plans for the border and service community incorporating reconstruction of the museum and walkways pointing out historical buildings and viewing points on the way to and along the LaVerendrye Parkway on the riverfront.

Cuthbertson hopes businesses will be encouraged to spruce up buildings with Canadiana subjects, probably animals from the Canadian wilderness. A new Business Improvement Area mural may be in the works, and everyone is reminded of the projects involving blooming hanging baskets and the Community in Bloom contest encouraging homes and

Thursday, August 3, 2006

Tuesday, August 15, 2006

Water bill could sink town's hotel

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

A heated squabble over municipal water and sewer rates is about to flush the sole hotel in Pickle Lake down the drain.

Winston Hotel owner Boris Kravets said Monday that the town has threatened to shut off the hotel's water on Aug. 24 if he doesn't pay \$26,866 in water and sewer charges, a bill that Kravets maintains is exorbitant and not based on actual water usage by the 26-unit hotel, restaurant and bar complex.

Without treated water, the operation will have to close, throwing 15 people out of work, he said.

"I would be willing to pay half of the bill," Kravets said. But he said the town insists that the entire bill be paid.

The hotel pays \$4,475 every three months for municipal water and sewer, based on its 26 rooms.

The bill should be based on actual water usage, not on a per-unit basis, Kravets said, adding vacancy rates have ranged from 33 to 50 per cent since he purchased the hotel in February 2004.

In response to a letter to cancel from Kravets requesting a reduction in fees, town clerk treasurer Paul Panciw sent a water disconnection notice.

Mayor Roy Hoffman said in a telephone interview that council has "a bit of history" with the hotel owner.

The bottom line is that when he bought the hotel, he knew what the water rates were.

Hoffman said, "We don't want to see the hotel go down and we are going to try and work with (Kravets) to work this out."

"(However) even if we changed the rate tomorrow, I doubt that it would be retroactive."

Hoffman said council plans to look at water and sewer rates over the next several months.

"Costs are rising. Everyone is hurting," he said, adding the township is getting smaller and costs are being spread across an ever-shrinking assessment base.

Meanwhile, hotel employees are upset that they may be without a job as of next Thursday.

Cook Justin Gagnon said in a letter supporting Kravets that if the hotel is forced to close, "I am faced with no choice but to move." My wife cried herself to sleep last night, over the thought that we might have to move again and we don't have the money to do so.

Assistant manager Shawna Leflar said she believes the hotel "is the heart of the town."

"Where will people stay? Where will they eat or go for social gatherings?"

"This hotel is my life," Leflar said. "I've worked so hard to be where I am and I'm devastated at the thought that it could be all taken away over something so ridiculous."

Other employees pointed to the potential loss of income for other town businesses should the hotel close.

They ask where American tourists, winter road travellers, mine workers, Ministry of Natural Resources staff and wildlife trackers stay. Such sources bring a lot of revenue to this town, they said.

Kravets said the hotel's closure of the Pickle Lake Hotel a year and a half ago was due to township levies for water and sewer, and municipal taxes.

AAS7

August 5, 2006

Ontario won't pay to secure courts

TORONTO (CP) — Ontario's community safety minister acknowledges that it's not fair for municipalities to foot the bill for court security — but he says money won't be coming from the province either.

Monte Kwinter says his government has put money into other priority areas such as health care and

education.

Kwinter says a solution may be to have neighbouring local governments help pay for court security if they occupy the courthouse for 20 per cent of the time. The minister says such an arrangement is already in place in Sarnia-Lambton and seems to be working well.

Natives fired up over smoking bylaw decision

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

WINNIPEG — A judge's ruling that Manitoba's anti-smoking law must apply to native reserves has raised a legal question other provinces will face as they decide whether to allow band councils to set their own smoking rules.

Judge Albert Clearwater of Court of Queen's Bench ruled Monday that an exemption for reserves is discriminatory because it violates Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees that all people receive equal treatment under the law.

"It is every bit a breach of the charter to create offences for certain conduct by persons, and to concurrently exempt aboriginal persons from prosecution for the same conduct," Clearwater wrote.

He said the Manitoba government was wrong to think it does not have jurisdiction over smoking on reserves.

But aboriginal leaders disagree and are warning the province will be in for a fight if it tries to enforce its ban on reserves.

"The fact is, First Nations have jurisdiction and that's clear under the constitution," Terry Nelson, chief of the Roseau River reserve south of Winnipeg, said Tuesday.

Nelson, whose reserve opened a smoker-friendly gambling house last year, expects the case will be appealed.

Clearwater overturned the conviction of Robert Jenkinson, a bar owner in Treherne, Man., who was fined \$2,550 last year for allowing patrons to light up.

Jenkinson argued he was being discriminated against as a non-native, and many of his patrons were flocking to nearby reserves, where they could smoke to their hearts' content.

The judge ordered the province to start applying its smoking ban on reserves after a "reasonable but short period of time" to allow native business owners to familiarize themselves with the law.

For bar owners who have been fighting the legislation since its inception in 2004, the ruling was sweet victory.

"This confirms what we've been saying all along, that you can't enact laws

based on race that are going to damage somebody's business and discriminate against people," said Gary Desrosiers, leader of a coalition of bar owners.

The ruling was also welcomed by bar owners in Saskatchewan, who have been fighting that province's smoking ban on the same grounds.

"Right across Canada, we'll be taking a close look at this," said Tom Mullin, head of the Saskatchewan Hotel and Hospitality Association.

"If an individual has now proven that there is definitely an uneven playing field, then it's really a whole new ball game."

The Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments argue they do not have jurisdiction to set laws on aboriginal lands.

Other provinces which have drafted no-smoking laws have also taken a hands-off approach.

Nova Scotia originally said its anti-smoking law, which is to take effect in December, would apply to reserves in the same way that highway speed limits and other laws do. But the province quickly added it would negotiate with individual bands about how the law is to be implemented and enforced.

In Ontario, First Nations can pass bylaws to opt out of the provincial smoking ban.

Manitoba is now caught between a political rock and a hard place. It can appeal Clearwater's ruling and gear up for another legal battle with non-native bar owners, who have raised money for Jenkinson. Or it can obey the ruling, start enforcing its law on reserves, and prepare for a likely court battle with native leaders.

A government spokesman said the province is reviewing the ruling and considering its options.

Saturday, August 12, 2006

Wind farm is being built on its land: First Nation

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MELANCTHON TOWNSHIP, Ont. — The First Nation involved in the occupation at a housing development near Caledonia is now laying claim to a parcel of land slated for a multimillion-dollar green energy project.

The Six Nations Confederacy is stalling the development of a wind farm on land owned by Canadian Hydro, saying both the land and the wind that passes over it are the rightful property of aboriginal peoples.

The \$275 million wind farm, which currently consists of a 45-turbine operation near Shelburne, was scheduled to undergo major expansion next year.

Canadian Hydro planned to nearly

double the number of turbines in an attempt to provide the province with a major source of renewable power.

But Kahentinetha Horn, a Six Nations title holder, says the project site is on the Haldimand tract, which was granted to the Six Nations in 1784.

"We've been robbed of our land and now we want it back," Horn said from her home at the Kahnawake reserve near Montreal.

"It is our land and it is our wind. They need our permission to use it. We are very concerned about the use of the air, land and water," she said.

Horn and another title holder have filed a notice of seizure which essentially lays claim to the land and the existing turbines.

Aug 5/06

12 suspects awaiting trial in fraud case

Others charged in the welfare fraud investigation are:

• Rochelle M. Johnson, 55, department administrator of the social services department at FWPN, is charged with fraud over \$5,000, breach of trust by a public officer and falsification of books and documents.

• Shirley Mae Allan, 46, of Nioch, Ousemenecaning First Nation in Rainy River District, is charged with fraud over \$5,000, breach of trust by a public officer, falsification of books and documents, possession of property obtained by crime and uttering forged documents. Allan is a former administrator on FWFN.

- Patricia A. Charlie, 62, education liaison at FWFN, is charged with fraud over \$5,000, breach of trust by a public officer and uttering forged documents.
- Giselle M. Thibert, 36, is charged with two counts of fraud over \$5,000 and two counts of uttering forged documents.

- William J. Solomon, 43, secretary of the Anemki Mountain Corp., which oversees a business Trust connected to EFTFN, is charged with fraud over \$5,000 and breach of trust by a public officer.
- Phillip R. Solomon, 46, is charged with fraud over \$5,000.

- **Valerie C. Chapman, 65**, a member of

The case involves allegations that more than \$750,000 in social assistance benefits were fraudulently obtained from the band's program.

Arrests in the case were made between Monday and Thursday this week.

All those arrested this week were released after agreeing to certain conditions, said Det. Staff Sgt. Robert Matthews, Northern Ontario unit commander.

When contacted by The Chronicle-Journal on Friday, Chief Collins called the whole incident "a tragic situation."

"It will take its co-

"We're happy it's getting closer to the end and the thing is, but to bed once and for all because it's been a nightmare from day one." One of those

charged in the case. Walter Paul Bannon, 49, was originally

Continued on page A4

Fort William First Nation is viewed from Mount McKay over it since 2003, when some band members complained to the OPP about a possible welfare fraud scheme.

EWEN: council, is charged with fraud over \$5,000 and uttering forged documents. "I think being a Crown witness I'd get some kind of leniency," he said. Matthews, confirmed investigator

- C. Jason Chapman, 36, is charged with fraud over \$5,000.
- Cheryl Chapman, 26, is charged with fraud over \$5,000 and, allegedly, with fraud over \$5,000 and, allegedly, with fraud over \$5,000.

with fraud over \$5,000 and uttering forged documents.

• Maurice H. Solomon, 45, is charged with fraud over \$5,000.

All of the accused except for Allan are related to Chief Collins either through police. He claims his life will be in danger if

Matthews said the investigation was marriage or are blood relations. Matthews said the extensive investi-

Walter Paul Barron claims he is one of the band members who originally complained to police. He told The Chronicle-Journal Friday that he has agreed to be a prosecution witness.

Bannon claims he has assisted the OPP for 3 1/2 years on the case. In a brief synopsis of the investigation, he said the 12 who have been

charged are accused of using the identities of other people to create false client files in the Ontario Works program.

Police allege records were completed with fraudulent information and forged, and entered into the database system enabling benefit cheques to be issued.

Investigators allege the accused then collected these cheques and cashed them:

Matthews said the investigation is complete and no further charges will be laid.

A spokesperson with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada refused comment except to say the department "cooperated with police during the investigation."

Land-claim fights handed down through generations

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WINNIPEG — For as long as he can remember, Chief Pascal Bighetty has heard the stories of how his great-great-grandfather urged his people not to sign a treaty with the Crown.

It was a conclusion the trapper named Namikos (Trout) reached after he had been chosen to spend time in England studying the document.

"He said we'd be giving up our lands for nothing and his belief was that without a land base you're nothing," said Bighetty, head of the Matthias Colomb band of the Roseau River First Nation.

First Nation in northwestern Manitoba.

That warning has been a constant echo in his head, and has guided him through a political life that has seen him elected chief for 28 of his 55 years.

And it's what brought him to historic Lower Fort Garry last week, just north of Winnipeg, for a four-day gathering of aboriginals from across Western Canada.

Discussion centred on the original spirit and intent of Canada's numbered treaties, and how to enforce them in a modern era of lengthy land-claim negoti-

ations with government.

The timing and location of the event were carefully chosen — the national historic site is on what is considered Treaty 1 territory. Aug. 3 marked the 136th anniversary of the treaty's signing in 1871.

Aboriginals ceded most of what is now Manitoba in exchange for reserve land and about \$5 per person each year in cash for goods and services.

Now, the focus is on pressing the federal government to honour treaty rights.

Chiefs say the last few decades have left them with the impres-

sion that their concerns have fallen off the radar.

They wrapped up their meeting by appointing Chief Ovide Mercredi, former grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations and head of the Grand Rapids First Nation, to be the spokesman for chiefs representing treaties through 11.

The group wants "to create a movement, not a political organization" to help bring a speedier resolution to outstanding claims.

Bighetty wants to go one step further and gather chiefs to visit the Queen this fall to make a political statement by redelivering

• Continued on page A4

Almost a decade after the Manitoba Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement was signed, only about five per cent of the 1.1 million acres owed to First Nations in the province has actually been converted to reserve status, said Carl Braun, executive director of the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee.

"The process can take years," said Braun. "There can be a whole collection of problems."

The federal government often must first get the land back from the provinces before turning it over to the bands, a process that can be complicated when third parties are using the land.

Bighetty said he's willing to be patient and doesn't share the view taken by others that protest and civil disobedience will speed things up.

Tensions have erupted since the spring at Caledonia, near Hamilton, Ont., in a series of nasty confrontations over a subdivision of land reclaimed by Six Nations members.

In southern Manitoba, the Roseau River First Nation says it will use surprise rail blockades to get Ottawa's attention.

Chief Terry Nelson says the reserve is owed at least \$80 million from a 1903 claim.

"I believe in negotiations," said Bighetty. "You have to sit down at the table and if you don't get what you want, you go back. Protests and civil disobedience only work for a while, it's only a Band Aid solution, not long-term."

Chief Norman Bone said he believes peaceful talks are what ultimately got his Keeseequoewin First Nation in southwestern Manitoba a successful resolution in 2004 of 440 hectares of land in Riding Mountain National Park and about \$11 million. The case took 32 years to resolve — "and it was an easy one!"

But Bone attributes the delays to everything from a repeated

Tuesday, August 8, 2006

"The system that's set up is very flawed because it's given to bureaucracy and there's all kind of delays and every kind of situation occurs," said Bone.

"Sometimes we felt like it was never going to happen. Thinking back, if we'd wanted it done quickly we might have done some blockades, but we were so confident in our research, no matter which way you looked at it, it was reserve land."

But Bone, 53, warns the system must be revamped because younger generations will be quicker to turn to protests to get results.

The Department of Indian Affairs has said about 20 specific claims are settled each year, compared with 55 new cases filed annually.

There are 770 outstanding-specific claims on file at various stages of the process.

Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice has said he plans a major "retooling" of the land-claims process, calling the current backlog unacceptable.

He's considering more mediation, adding more skilled negotiators and further funding. Ottawa spent \$536 million in 2004-05 to negotiate, settle and implement claims.

Far too many of these cases are passing through several generations without final resolution, said Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, who teaches aboriginal studies at the University of Toronto.

"That's a sense a lot of native people have about the future and resolution of these things — how do we do this in a way that protects the integrity of the community in the moment but assures viability for the future?" said Wesley-Esquimaux, a member of the Chippewas of Georgian Island First Nation in southern Ontario, who has helped research and write several claims.

"A lot of people are reluctant to sign agreements because they're not sure how to avoid condemning the future."

Protests
and civil disobedience
only work for a while.

Chief Terry Nelson
Roseau River First Nation

Merger merits seen

AUGUST 10

'Mantario' study released

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WINNIPEG — It's a popular topic around coffee shops and water coolers in Northwestern Ontario, but now an economic study has also found some merits to the disgruntled region's breaking away and joining Manitoba.

The analysis, published in the latest issue of the journal *Canadian Public Policy*, examines three options for the region: a union with Manitoba, provincial status or regional government.

The authors conclude that a merger with Manitoba would give the areas of Kenora, Thunder Bay and Rainy River greater political clout in the smaller western province, but likely little in the way of economic advantage.

"You have to decide if you want to marry up with someone like you, or someone different from you," said Herb Emery, an economics professor at the University of Calgary and one of the authors of the study.

"Northwestern Ontario has this problem — they don't really fit with the rest of Ontario that easily, but they look a lot like Manitoba economically."

Emery said Northwestern Ontarians would likely feel more at home with Manitoba's higher taxes and higher spending policies relative to Ontario, as well as shared priorities such as aboriginal issues.

While the merger scenario — dubbed by many as "Mantario" — seems to offer "a big win" for Northern Ontario, Emery said the national equalization system would likely offset any gains.

The region's relative wealth — from its resource and manufacturing-based economy — would reduce Manitoba's take of the program, and force the government to spread the money over a larger population.

In the end, the transfers that Northern Ontario gets from that province's government would be almost the same as what they'd get by joining Manitoba, said Emery.

An upside for Manitoba, however, is that the government would have more people to help pay its debt.

• Continued on page A4

Northwest shares links with Manitoba now

• Continued from page A1

As for the option of creating a separate province, the study found the economic evidence was "ambiguous." Regional government would be the easiest plan to implement, but would do the least to end regional alienation.

Ontario NDP Leader Howard Hampton, who represents the riding of Kenora-Rainy River, said people's feelings of alienation have been building for the last three years.

Hampton said a major catalyst has been massive job losses that he blames in part on "provincial government policy that is very unfair to Northwestern Ontario."

About 5,000 well-paying forestry jobs have been lost in the region because pulp, paper and sawmills can't afford to compete with provinces that charge about half of what Ontario charges for electricity, Hampton said in an interview from his home in Fort Frances.

In Kenora alone, 400 jobs have disappeared, worth \$26 million to the local economy.

Kenora Mayor David Canfield could not be reached for comment. Earlier this year, he struck a three-person panel to study the possibility of the region breaking away from Ontario and joining Manitoba.

Hampton said he's not surprised by the political conclusions of the study, saying the region would likely end up with about eight seats in Manitoba's now 57-seat legislature.

There are already strong links between Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Many patients ask to be referred to specialists in Winnipeg instead of southern Ontario, and students choose to attend either the University of Manitoba or University of Winnipeg.

"The average person in Northwestern Ontario," said Hampton, "is increasingly asking themselves, 'Why be part of the Ontario political structure when the government of the day is not just ignoring the legitimate needs and aspirations, but actually punishing communities and destroying jobs when a more enlightened policy would ensure these jobs and communities are sustainable?'"

But even if folks do come knocking on Manitoba's door, will the province let them in?

With open arms, suggests a CBC Radio poll conducted earlier this year.

The survey of 1,000 Manitobans in March indicated 72 per cent of residents supported a merger sought by the Northwest.

Only 13 per cent were opposed, with the remaining 15 per cent undecided.

Thursday, August 17, 2006

Website for seniors draws little interest

BY CARL CLUTCHER
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

A provincial website for seniors has been getting a lukewarm response from municipalities.

"The goal is to have as many communities (on the site) as possible, but that isn't going to happen overnight," said Lily Pavlovic, a staffer with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

So far, the only Northwestern Ontario community that's agreed to put a link on SeniorsInfo.ca is the Municipality of Greenstone.

The numbers across the province are slim: only 21 municipalities are taking part on the site, which is to be unveiled Friday in an upgraded format.

"We thought that if we didn't do this, we would be doing a disservice to our seniors," said Jim Turner, manager of the Greenstone agency that contributed the town's information.

Seniorsinfo contains a variety of federal and provincial information regarding pensions, legal services and housing pertaining specifically to seniors.

When visitors to the site click on links provided by municipalities, they can find out information such as contacts for local clubs and activities for the elderly.

Just over half of the 75 members who belong to Geraldton's Pioneer seniors club, which is in Greenstone, have a computer at home.

The Pioneer clubhouse has a computer and is getting it connected to the Internet, said club president Irene Marszowski.

Seniorsinfo.ca was given a test run in 2003 with the City of Brockville acting as the main link.

Turner said feedback showed that those who used the site the most were middle-age adults trying to find information for their elderly parents.

The City of Thunder Bay considered taking part on the site but in the end felt that local seniors can access the information they need well enough.

"When we compared it to what we have, we thought we were providing it already," said Mark Simic, the city's older adult services supervisor.

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Fatal crash sparks road concerns

3 die on same stretch where 2 truckers died last week

THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL
AND THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three people are dead and two others are in hospital following a horrific crash Monday on the Trans-Canada Highway east of Dryden.

James Isaac, 83, and Theodor Isaac, 87, both of Winnipeg, and Blward Day, 54, of Callander, Ont., died when an eastbound vehicle collided with two westbound vehicles just before a ramp about 600 kilometres east of Dryden.

William Osadenuk, 21, of Ste. Pie, Que., suffered

minor injuries and Donna Shankowsky, Day, 56, of Callander, is listed in serious but stable condition in a Toronto hospital.

Provincial police said Tuesday the first westbound vehicles hit the ditch on the north side of Highway 17, while the other two vehicles collided head-on and remained in the westbound lane.

Highway 17 was closed for about six hours after the crash to allow for cleanup and for investigators to work at the scene.

Investigation continued Tuesday but police said no charges were being considered.

It was the second fatal crash in less than a week in the same area.

Day was a former vice of Nipissing Township and a long-time executive director of the Nipissing-Chapleau Association.

Former Nipissing tourism manager Dave Saad says Day was the face of Northern Ontario tourism.

Two men were killed last Tuesday on the same stretch of highway in a head-on collision involving two tractor-trailers.

Both were from Calgary.

Dryden Mayor Colin Bill-Brown said two fatal collisions on the same stretch of highway

shuts in less than a week are more than enough reason to renew calls to twin the 550-kilometre stretch of Highway 17 between Kenora and Thunder Bay.

It is a major truck link for long-haul truckers, Brown said.

The distance between Kenora and Thunder Bay is particularly risky at sunrise, sunset and any time the weather is poor and the roads are slick or icy, he said.

On Monday, crash drivers had to take a five-hour detour through Atikokan and Fort Frances on secondary highways.

Municipal leaders take hot topics to AMO sessions

THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

Four Thunder Bay city officials are among 1,500 representatives converging on Ottawa next week for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference.

And though they'll be attending the AMO conference workshops, the annual meeting is a key chance to get some of the city's big questions asked.

Along with all the municipal officials on hand at the AMO conference from Aug. 13 to 16, a plethora of provincial ministers will attend, Mayor Lynn Peter-

Son said Thursday.

"Obviously, you're not going to get an answer tomorrow, but you're going to get follow-up," she said. "Nothing will happen unless you go after it."

It's the face-to-face aspect of these type of discussions that generates a real response, said Peterson.

She'll be joined in Ottawa by Bob Pettit, the city's chief administrative officer, and councillors Lawrence Linko and Joe Virdianno.

She'll be asking Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan where the promised new courthouse is and where it's likely to be built. Peter-

son said, noting city council has endorsed a resolution for the facility to go in a downtown core.

And of course — forestry energy.

Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay has been "really successful in terms of what he could cover," she said, noting MINR efforts over the last two years to reduce delivered wood costs, to mills and to cut red tape.

Ramsay has been doing what he can to help the forestry industry deal with high power costs, but he's not the energy minister, she said.

Energy Minister Dwight Duncan won't be at the

meetings, but Peterson is trying to get an appointment to see him in Toronto.

A growth plan for the north, environmental cleanup costs and social housing are topics she'll be chatting about with ministers.

And the Thunder Bay contingent will speak with the provincial representatives about a made-in-On-tario policy plan that would benefit Bombardier's bid to get the Toronto subway car contract.

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 445 municipal governments.

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