

WABUN

Volume Seventeen Issue One

Sun



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REFLECTIONS



**Jason
Batise**
Executive
Director

Things have changed so much over the past couple of decades for Wabun Tribal Council and our member First Nations. We have come from a time where we were never consulted or involved in any development that happened on our traditional lands to a reality where our First Nations are negotiating Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) with resource developers.

***We are proof that
solidarity, sharing
and strength in
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when it comes to
dealing with
government***

There was a time when government and resource developers did not meet with us and our people had very little employment and benefits from mines, forestry and hydro projects happening on our lands. Today we are recognized as the leading tribal council in Ontario when it comes negotiating with government and resource developers. That has resulted in employment, training, education and business opportunities for our members. Our people are moving forward with good and well paying jobs and that is benefiting so many families in Wabun First Nations.

Now and then I think it is a good idea to pause and remember where we have come from, what a long and challenging journey it has been and to give thanks to our past and current Chiefs, councils and Elders for making our lives better. I recall very well some of those early days when we had no de-

cent roads to speak of to access our First Nations. There was little infrastructure in terms of communications, hydro service and utilities. We dealt with very poor housing with many people crammed into small unsatisfactory homes. Our people had to travel far to access health care and it was difficult to find employment.

When I visit our Wabun First Nations these days I am always amazed at how far we have come in a short time and I am reminded of how much energy, dedication, knowledge and skill it took our Wabun Chiefs, councils, Elders and management to get us to this point. Every agreement signed with resource developers came as a result of countless hours of research, strategic planning, meetings and negotiations to get all of those resulting jobs, training and business opportunities we see in place today.

We have water, sewage and hydro systems due to the hard work of so many people who pushed for months and years to produce all the services we have in our First Nations currently. We have better housing and those developments are continuing because we have had our leadership and staff involved in years of ensuring our goals in this area are met. Our Health Department offers

many services to all of our membership in every Wabun First Nation, staffed by professionals and offering state of the art care and programming. Due to all of these past efforts by people we all know and respect our time has come. Some of those who helped us on our journey have passed on but we still need to stop a minute and give thanks to them for their work to make our lives better.

In the spirit of honouring all those amazing, strong and talented people that have contributed to Wabun Tribal Council's development and to a better life for all of us in our Wabun First Nations, I say Meegwetch and I want all of you to know that your efforts as leaders, Elders, staff, volunteers and members are appreciated. We are proof that solidarity, sharing and strength in numbers counts when it comes to dealing with government and resource developers.

Some interests would like to see our tribal council weakened but the reality is that the overwhelming number of our First Nation members believe in the concept of strength in numbers. They also understand that our people have a tradition and culture rooted in sharing and care for one another. We have a history of survival.



THE WABUN YOUTH CULTURAL GATHERING RAN FROM FEBRUARY 20 TO 22 AT THE ELK LAKE ECO CENTRE IN ELK LAKE, ONTARIO. HERE WE SEE YOUTH PARTICIPANTS, CHAPERONES, FACILITATORS AND FIRST NATION LEADERS. SPECIAL GUEST AT THE EVENT WAS DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF DEREK FOX, OF NISHNAWBE-ASKI NATION. THE NEXT ISSUE OF WABUN SUN WILL FEATURE FULL COVERAGE OF THIS EVENT.

HEALTH MATTERS

Wabun Health has always been at the forefront of embracing new technologies and systems to improve efficiency, practicality and delivery of our health service programs to our community members. With the proactive and visionary direction of our Wabun Chiefs, we have celebrated many historic milestones in First Nation health services and we are well respected for our successes in Ontario and right across the country. That being said, I am excited to announce the development of a new state of the art medical record system.

We are putting in place the Mustimuhw Community Electronic Medical Record (cEMR) which is a client-centric electronic medical record or charting system for First Nations Health Centres. This is great news for our community members accessing Wabun Health services and for our staff at head office and in each First Nation. It makes so much sense for us to move to electronic records that are easy for our clients and health staff to access and update while maintaining privacy and security. The Mustimuhw system is an effective and culturally appropriate client information management system, designed specifically for First Nation Health by First Nations for First Nations and from a First Nations perspective. The Mustimuhw Community Electronic Medical Record is an electronic medical record or charting system for First Nations Health Centres. From community health encounters, immunization management, group encounters, to mental health charting, home and community care charting and Medical Transportation Management, the Mustimuhw system will support and help our front line workers to have more time to do what they do best - care for our community members.

We have been interested in doing this for a long time and now we feel the timing is right with most of our members in our First Nations having

access to the internet and owning various devices. In some cases where clients do not have this access our nursing staff can provide it in an off line but up to date means with a visit to the home and utilizing a device. Our clients will have a password and be able to access their file, communicate with staff and view up to date information or notices from Wabun Health.

The delivery of our Wabun Health services will be more up to date, more efficient and client friendly. It will also be much easier for our staff to generate reports, ensure updates are timely, provide communication in general and in regards to tests and individual health issues.

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It will also cut back on paper files and the work created in maintaining those files. One of the best things about this is that our clients can easily have access to their file and provide up to date input to staff regarding their health issues. It means that the relationship between client and staff becomes closer and more immediate. Clients have a right to see their files but most never request that but now it is very easy for them to simply go on line and access their information whenever they feel like it. In the early stages webinar training sessions and development is being provided to our

**Jean
Lemieux
Health
Director**



nursing professionals and we will be entering our data for our First Nations. As things progress we will move to involve data and connectivity to our National Native Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention, Mental Health Professionals and Medical Transportation. In addition clients will have access to any special groups sessions or events and can participate on line. The main server will be located at Wabun's office with state of the art security provided by Mustimuhw. There is no cost or fee for the Wabun First Nation client to access and utilize the system. This system will improve reporting to Health Canada and it is our hope funding is provided by them to assist Wabun Tribal Council to develop and continue into the future with this beneficial technology and service.

This type of electronic medical record system is still in its early stages but developing quickly. Our staff is very excited about it because it will make their jobs easier and provide a better connection between the client and health professional. Thanks to our Wabun Chiefs and our Executive Director, Jason Batise we are moving ahead with yet another milestone in our development. Other First Nations are taking advantage of this system and I envision a day when the entire health care system at all levels across the country will be connected in a way that allows for communication and up to date care and sharing of information and resources so that all of our clients are provided the very best service possible no matter where they live.

I want to note also that we now will have large flat screen television monitors set up in our waiting rooms in each First Nation that will feature health information, event announcements and health related news of interest to our clients. This is similar to what hospital and medical clinic waiting rooms offer.

Front Cover

Elder Vina Hendrix, of Matachewan First Nation, is the featured Elder for this issue of Wabun Sun. She has devoted much time and energy to sharing her knowledge of tradition and culture with Wabun youth.

photo by: Xavier Kataquapit

Brunswick House FN Employment Training

Brunswick House First Nation is set to take advantage of new opportunities in employment with the development of the Borden Gold Project by Goldcorp Inc in the Chapleau area.

The Borden Gold Project is an advanced project located on Borden Lake, which borders Brunswick House First Nation. The mining project is six kilometres from the community. According to the company website, mine development will take place in late 2018 and commercial production is set for 2019. Goldcorp is currently negotiating with Chapleau area First Nations to sign agreements concerning the development of the project.



**Julie
Cyr,
Mamo-
Nuskomitowin
Coordinator**

Julie Cyr, Mamo-Nuskomitowin Coordinator is working closely with First Nation communities in the Chapleau area to assist members in preparing for new employment opportunities in the coming years.

"We are excited to see the creation of a major mining project in the area and the opportunities it will create for First Nation people. Mining is new to the Chapleau area and there has never really been a need to train workers in this field. Our local First Nation members do not have these skills which is why we need to provide much needed training. We want to give our members the opportunity to take part in the new mining development at the Borden Gold Project," said Cyr.

She is working collaboratively with Chapleau area First Nations including the Wabun Tribal Council First Nations of Chapleau Ojibwe and Brunswick House and the Mushkegowuk Council First Nations of Chapleau Cree and Missanabie Cree.

"We work closely with our First Nation leaders, Chiefs and Councils and we take their direction with every step we make. To meet these needs, we are also working with several government organizations to access training and support programs that will allow our members to increase their skills, knowledge and education in preparation for upcoming employment opportunities," said Cyr.

She explained that Wabun, Mushkegowuk and the First Nations are accessing programs and services through existing employment and training agreements with the federal government and with the province through programs such as the Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF), under the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

To date, funding sources had been secured to provide training for four individuals in an Underground Common Core Program provided through Northern College in Timmins.

Recently, Mamo-Nuskomitowin and its member First Nations secured funding within the IEDF to provide training for 12 positions in the Underground Common Core Program, which will commence in the spring of 2018.

"We are very grateful for the funding support of the province to create this important training opportunity. As part of our request to give our trainees the best chance of success, the Underground Common Core Program will be delivered in the town of Chapleau so that no one will have to move to or travel to Timmins. Locally provided training had been one of our important requests and it was good to see that Northern College was able to accommodate our needs," said Cyr.

She added that the interests involved will continue to pursue additional employment and training programs in an effort to provide as much education to First Nation members as possible. In addition to actual underground mining jobs, the building and maintenance of a modern mine will require a trained workforce in many different areas involving machinery maintenance, welding, heavy equipment operation, maintenance workers, support staff, office administration, management and labourers.

"We are not just concentrating our efforts on one field of training but in supporting a variety of skills so that as many members as possible can find a job in mining or in the support services of the mining industry. Our hope is that our community members will have the needed skills to be able to take advantage of all these developing opportunities. We can help them in accessing the training they need and as well assist

them in applying for positions, writing resumes, cover letters and in preparing for interviews," explained Cyr.

The First Nations involved in creating these training programs are hopeful that this development will also give their members an opportunity to create healthier communities through the promise of more secure and long term employment.

"There are so many individuals, Native and non-Native organizations, private companies and government bodies involved in this process. We are grateful to them all for their assistance, support and contributions. This has truly been a collaborative effort in the Chapleau area and it would not be possible without their support," said Cyr.

She suggests that any First Nation members in the Chapleau area who wants to take part in these opportunities should contact their local First Nation employment and training office or their First Nation administration office for information.

"We are continually developing programs and services in the Chapleau area for First Nation training and skills development, so it is important for our members to stay in contact with the local office to find out the latest programs and services that are available," said Cyr.

Her primary role as Mamo-Nuskomitowin Coordinator is to manage a regional employment and training agreement under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, a federal government program. The agreement holders include the Wabun Tribal Council and Mushkegowuk Council. This arrangement provides the design and delivery of employment programs and services that are best suited to the unique needs of individuals in these regions. Cyr works directly with two regional coordinators who represents each tribal council. Bill Louttit represents Mushkegowuk Employment and Training Services (METS) and Janet McKay represents Wabun Training and Employment Services (WTES).

Cyr has been involved in the employment and training services with Wabun for several years. She previously held the position of WTES Coordinator.

Debbie Proulx-Buffalo Joins Wabun

Debbie Proulx-Buffalo has joined Wabun Health as the Mental Wellness Team Worker. She started February 2018. As a social worker with a lot of experience in counselling, she will be travelling to Wabun First Nations to counsel on a one to one basis as well as in groups.



Debbie Proulx-Buffalo,
Mental Wellness
Team Worker,
Wabun Health

Currently she is working closely with Faye Naveau, Wabun Health Regional Crisis Coordinator & Crisis Intervention Worker, as she is introduced into the communities and becomes familiar to people.

“Right now I am focused on getting to know people in the First Nations that I am serving. I need to build a relationships with people and gain their trust so that I am successful at assisting them with their needs. Once I begin to work with people then I can determine how to assist them and connect them to the traditional and cultural teachers or healers that can help them or medical professionals that can provide a service,” explained Proulx-Buffalo.

She pointed out that she hopes to be able to help people open up and talk about what is bothering them so that a healing can take place.

“People who are having problems in life need to talk to someone and share what is bothering them. Many Native people hold their problems inside and cope by using drugs or alcohol. It has been my experience that once a person opens up and lets everything out then they can begin to heal and find healthier ways to cope with whatever issue or trauma they have that is affecting them,” said Proulx-Buffalo.

She explained that she believes that so many First Nation people are dying young because of unhealthy lifestyles that they are using to cope with past trauma or problems and that are resulting in heart disease and diabetes as well as other health issues.

Her background in social work and care includes a year recently working in Wahgoshig First Nation as a Family Well Being Worker. Before that she was

employed with the Timmins Native Friendship Centre as the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Child Worker. She held that position for four years. She also worked earlier with the Ontario Native Women’s Association at the Timmins office as a Sexual Assault Worker. In this position she specialized in counselling through the Timmins Women In Crisis Centre where she worked with women as well as men.

Previously she was employed at the Mee-Quam Youth Residence facility associated with the Ininew Friendship Centre in Cochrane. She worked with male youth as a counsellor. That facility started out as male only but has recently moved to being co-ed.

Her own Native roots are steeped in the tragic residential school system. Her late mother Alice Roberts was born with the last name Wapaneskum (walks until dawn) in Moose River in the Moosonee area. At four years of age she was taken by a priest to live in Horden Hall, a residential school in Moose Factory. Then at 15 years of age Wapaneskum/Roberts was stricken by tuberculosis (TB) and transferred to the Moose Factory Hospital which at the time served TB patients. She then was transferred for treatment to hospitals in Hamilton and London.

***She has training in
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“My mother was taken from home at the age of 4 and did not return home until she was 17. When I was growing up there was such a stigma on being Native that we did not talk about it much. Mom worked at the local nursing home in Cochrane for years and one day an elderly Native Cree woman was admitted and she could speak very little English. Amazingly my mom was able to communicate with her and at that point she filled me in on more of her history and

my Native ancestry,” explained Proulx-Buffalo.

Her education includes graduation from a two year Social Service Worker Program at Northern College and certificates from George Brown and Confederation Colleges in Aboriginal Community Development.

***I love my work
and I am very
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She also has training in solution focused therapy, motivational interviewing, post traumatic stress disorder, lateral violence and historical trauma. In addition she has education in child adult relationship enhancement, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma as well as training with the ministry of Child and Youth Services in youth justice, FASD and nutrition. She also learned skills in mental health first aid for adults who interact with youth, prevention and management of aggressive behaviour and victim services training.

Proulx-Buffalo has participated as a volunteer as part of the Timmins FASD committee coalition, the local hospital committee and Victim Crisis and Referral Service (VCARS) for Misiway Community Health Centre.

She was born and raised in Cochrane and is married to Andy Buffalo. She has three children, two step children and five grandchildren. Her children are Ashley, Jacob and Naomi and the step children are Chris and Teah. Her grandchildren range from 19 to one year old and include: Cortan, Justin, Hailey, Xavier and Caleb.

Her recreation mostly has to do with being on the land in hunting and fishing. She also is involved in having her Labrador puppy trained to be come a therapy dog which she plans on using as part of her counselling with people.

“I am very satisfied with my life as I am working in a position I always dreamt of in assisting Native people in their communities. I love my work and I am very grateful to all of the wonderful people I work with,” commented Proulx-Buffalo.



SHAWN BATISE AND HIS SON QUINTON BATISE JUMPING INTO HORWOOD LAKE



FAYE NAVEAU LEADING THE GIRLS IN TRADITIONAL DRUM AND SONG



CHILDREN LIKE JALINE HOOYSMA ENJOYED BEING ABLE TO RIDE HORSEBACK

Wabun Youth Gathering

The Wabun Youth Gathering celebrated its 11th year with venues at Laurentian University in Sudbury for seniors and the wilderness lake side resort setting of Horwood Lake Lodge, west of Timmins for juniors. More than 36 senior youth participated in the educational focused event July 24 to 28 at Laurentian University while 56 Wabun junior youth attended the event at the wilderness gathering July 17 to 21. The event was sponsored by Wabun Tribal Council Health Services. The event was coordinated by Faye Naveau, Regional Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health Services.

"This year we wanted to introduce our senior Wabun Tribal Council youth to the options and opportunities available to them in higher education. We wanted them to experience what a university campus was like, to inform them about the assistance available for higher education and to provide them with interesting and action packed experiences," explained Naveau.

Randi Lynn Ray, a Wabun First Nation member from Flying Post FN, who is also part of Laurentian's Indigenous Student Affairs department provided a presentation to the senior youth on life on campus, the various forms of assistance available and care and guidance provided at the university. Julia Pegahmagabow, who also works for the uni-

versity featured a workshop on cultural and traditional teachings. A writing contest sponsored by Xavier Kataquapit awarded top prize to Kiara Constant, second place to Jacy Jolivet, third place to Hannah Saunders and runner up prizes to Neebin Prince, Brooke Collins, Mylina Tangie and Nigel Neshawabin.

The senior youth participated in a challenge course, canoe trip swimming and traditional craft making activities. They also had a tour of the university campus and visited Science North and Dynamic Earth.

"I really enjoyed being able to experience what it would be like to go to a university like Laurentian. There was a lot of good information provided and that should help me with any planning for my continued education. I also enjoyed all of the activities and making new friends from other Wabun First Nations," commented Meegan Nahwegezhic, Matachewan First Nation.

The junior event featured traditional and cultural teachings through arts and crafts, horseback riding, fishing, water activities and fun on an inflatable obstacle course and bubble soccer event.

Shawn Batise, Ontario Provincial Assistant Deputy Minister for the Negotiations and Reconciliation Division of the Ministry of Indigenous Relations



JUNIOR GROUP - WABUN YOUTH GATHERING - HORWOOD LAKE LODGE, TIMMINS, ONTARIO

Empowers FN Youth

and Reconciliation attended the event to meet with the organizers, chaperones and youth. As former Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council, he has been instrumental in supporting the Wabun Youth Gathering from the start and this year, joined in with some of the activities involving his son Quinton who was in attendance.

"I have watched the Wabun Youth Gathering grow over the years and I see through my own son and my family members just what a positive influence this annual event provides for our Wabun Youth. These young people are great and give us all hope for the future. In a way this type of event is very much an example of reconciliation at work for our people as we continue on a healing path and provide the skills and tools necessary for our youth to succeed," commented Batise.

Jean Lemieux, Wabun Health Director, spoke to the senior youth in encouraging them to consider post secondary education.

"I hope many of you decide to attend university or college to take advantage of all of the support and assistance that is available. We need you to move ahead with education to take over from us in health care, administration, teaching and positions in the trades. I want to thank our Chiefs for steadfastly continuing their support

for the Wabun Youth Gathering and I also say Meegwetch to Faye Naveau for all her hard work in making all of this happen and a special note of thanks to Shawn Batise our former Executive Director for travelling to the junior group event to encourage our youth," commented Lemieux.

Organizers were also thankful to all the adults and support workers who made this event possible.

"I want to thank all of our chaperones for their help this year and a big thanks to our Elder Vina Hendrix who has been coming to our youth gatherings for so many years. She is a big comfort to us all and brings a voice of wisdom and balance to our event," said Naveau.

The event was made possible through the vision and dream of Wabun Elder Thomas Saunders of Brunswick House First Nation who lobbied for a youth gathering to support the young people of Wabun Tribal Council. Sadly he passed before his dream came to be but his legacy lives on.

Wabun Tribal Council is a regional territorial organization which represents the six First Nation communities of Beaverhouse, Brunswick House, Chapleau Ojibwe, Flying Post, Matachewan and Mattagami in Northeastern Ontario and it is directed by its respective Chiefs.



**BRUNSWICK HOUSE FN YOUTH
READY FOR A SWIM**



**AMANDA VANBUSKIRK, BROOKE COLLINS,
CYNTHIA HENDRIX AND AALIYAH NAVEAU**



**EVENT COORDINATOR FAYE NAVEAU AND
RANDI RAY, FLYING POST FN**

**For more information visit:
www.wabunyouthgathering.com**



SENIOR GROUP - WABUN YOUTH GATHERING - LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY, SUDBURY, ONTARIO

New Health Manager In BHFN

Diana McCartney is the featured Health Staff member for this issue of Wabun Sun. McCartney joined the organization in the fall of 2017 as the Community Health Representative (CHR) and later was offered the Health Manager position for Brunswick House First Nation.

"I enjoy my work and the challenges it brings. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming with so much going on in Brunswick House FN. However, we have a good team of people who work well together. It is a constant learning process but our work is made easier because we support one another," said McCartney.



**Diana
McCartney,
Health Manager,
Brunswick
House FN**

submitted photo

McCartney is responsible for managing many of the health programs provided by the Brunswick House FN Health Department. She works with her health staff to manage several programs including Family Well Being, Aboriginal Healthy Babies / Healthy Children, Diabetes, Student Nutrition, Foot Care and Meals on Wheels. In addition, she also works closely with Registered Nurses, Doctors, Nurse Practitioners and the Community Health Representative. She is also involved in the management of the Long Term Care Elders Building in the community. She and her local health care staff provide these health services and programs from the local Health Centre building in the First Nation.

"I have a variety of duties under so many programs we have to keep running in the community. We have to maintain a regular supply of equipment and products to keep an orderly workspace and environment. All this is done to ensure that our health centre runs smoothly and meets the needs of the community," said McCartney.

She takes her direction from Lorraine Tangie, Band Administrator and from Chief and Council.

"I want to help the community move on to a healthier path which includes supportive programs that encourage land-based teachings and traditional and cultural practices. The

First Nation is moving towards that path and our job is to help everyone on that healing journey," said McCartney.

Although she is not a First Nation member, she has known and worked with close friends and family over the past 50 years in the Chapleau area First Nations. When she was a child, her mother Yvonne Kohls provided foster care for Native children in the Chapleau area.

"My mother saw that families were losing their children to foster care and she did not want to see them being taken too far away from their homes. She gave foster care to several children over the years and I have come to know many of those people as close friends," said McCartney.

Yvonne Kohls and her family adopted a Brunswick House FN member during the 60 Scoop. Later in life, McCartney had an opportunity to also give foster care to First Nation children and it has helped to build a very positive connection to the communities.

***She has been
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Originally from the north, she was mainly raised in Chapleau. Her family spent two years in Biscotasing, a railway stop in the wilderness between Chapleau and Sudbury. Her parents ran a country store there and she attended a one room schoolhouse and lived in a community that didn't have electricity until the 1970s.

"I am a Chapleau girl and I prefer living in the north in a small community of friends and family. I had a chance to live and work in the city but I always come home. We live on Borden Lake, and I love being able to see the land and the wilderness.

Our family enjoys fishing and being together on the lakes and rivers of the north," said McCartney.

She has been involved in the health care field in the Chapleau area for over 30 years. She has held the positions of Community Health Representative for Brunswick House, Family Wellbeing Coordinator for the Metis Nation of Ontario in Chapleau and Community Wellness Worker for Aboriginal Peoples Alliance Northern Ontario (APANO). She started her health care career when she completed a correspondence Registered Practical Nurse program with the Sudbury School of Nursing in 1984. She completed the program in her home community while raising her young family in Chapleau. McCartney went on to build a 20 year long nursing career at the Chapleau Hospital.

She enjoys working with the community and helps to organize cultural and social programs to encourage traditional teachings, song and drumming. When she worked for APANO, she helped to organize a girls club for children to take part in making traditional crafts and learning new teachings while building self-esteem.

In 2009, while in her early 50s, she went back to school and completed a two year long Social Service Program through Northern College and Contact North.

"I wish I had had the opportunity to work in the social services when I started my career. Nursing has many rewards but it can also be very physically demanding which is why I decided to change paths. I loved the work I did in nursing but I am enjoying what I am doing with my social work education even more," said McCartney.

When she completed her Social Service Program, she did a four month placement at a Women's Shelter at the Rankin Reserve near Sault Ste Marie, Ontario.

She married Barry McCartney in 2001. Her three children Jenny, Chad and Morgan and eight grandchildren are of Metis descent from a previous marriage.

Elder Vina Hendrix Featured

Elder Vina Hendrix of Matachewan First Nation is the celebrated Elder for this issue of Wabun Sun. She is an original long time resident of the community and has been active in its development over the years.

“Vina has been steadfast in her service to Matachewan First Nation and she has been sharing her knowledge of our traditions and culture for many years. She is part of a dedicated group of Elders that we are lucky to have and we thank her and all of our Elders for passing on their knowledge to all of us. In particular I want to thank her for her continued dedication to our youth as she has attended almost all of our annual Wabun Youth Gatherings in the role of Elder,” explained Jason Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council.

Over the years she has been involved in many programs including Ojibway language teachings, traditional crafts, traditional and cultural teachings, participation with Chief and Council as an Elder, health based programming and involvement in the health, welfare and development of Wabun youth.

“I have always believed that the future of our community and Wabun is with our youth. For that reason it has always seemed very natural for me to be involved in any programming that has to do with passing on my traditional and cultural knowledge to our young people. It has been very satisfying for me to watch our Wabun youth develop over the years through our annual gathering and I see the results of working with them as they grow into healthy productive people going out to get an education and obtaining employment,” explained Elder Hendrix.

She pointed out that learning and discovery is a two way trail. She has always found that while passing on her knowledge to youth, she in turn learns from them. She also explained that her knowledge and skills have de-



ELDER VINA HENDRIX (RIGHT) WITH HER DAUGHTERS CYNTHIA HENDRIX (LEFT) AND ELAINE DALEY (CENTRE) AT THE WABUN YOUTH GATHERING IN 2017.

veloped through exposure to Native facilitators and traditional and cultural teachers that have presented at the youth gathering over the years.

“I am always learning. Much of my knowledge of our traditions, culture and history of our people comes from my youth. In my early years I received the teachings from my grandparents and parents when we lived on the land. I spent a lot of time in our little cabin as my father made a living trapping in the area. We had to be very self sufficient in those days as we lived more the life of hunters and gatherers,” recalled Elder Hendrix.

Her parents Jim and Jean Hendrix provided an environment where they passed on their traditional knowledge so that she and her siblings would develop survival skills.

At a very early age she learned from her mother how to skin beavers and stretch the hide. It was normal for her to participate in hunting and gathering as there were no nearby grocery stores or services decades ago.

“When myself and my siblings started school we spent some time in the town of Matachewan but then had long periods back on the land in our cabin as my dad did his trapping. We brought along our books and paper and continued to study as best we could when on the land. Our language we spoke at home in those days was Ojibway,” explained Elder Hendrix.

Currently she is involved in passing along her knowledge of the Ojibway language and traditions and culture in Matachewan First Nation and assisting youth. She still enjoys heading out to her lakeside cabin on the land even though she is now in her late 70s.

“We are very fortunate to have Vina passing on her knowledge and skills to our Wabun youth. Over the years the young people have come to know her very well and often they can be seen sitting with her quietly. She comforts them and in her kind and wise way, she passes on the traditions, culture and teachings of our people to them,” commented Faye Naveau, Wabun Regional Crisis Coordinator & Crisis Intervention Worker.



ELDER VINA HENDRIX LEADING JUNIOR YOUTH AT THE ANNUAL WABUN YOUTH GATHERING IN 2015

BHFN Develops Housing

Brunswick House First Nation is moving ahead with continued housing development and expansion.

The community is set to complete the construction of three new duplexes in the First Nation this winter. This comes on the heels of eight new homes that were completed in 2017.

"We are excited to see the building of new homes for our families in the community. There are so many of our members who can not live on our reserve because there is always a lack of housing for them. So seeing these new homes going up is really satisfying because it means that our community is growing and more of our members have an opportunity to return to their home First Nation," said Jeremy Naveau, Housing Manager for Brunswick House FN.

***"We can only move forward to continue building our community for all our members,"
Chief Vanbuskirk***

The First Nation is working with Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and other government bodies to access further funding to plan for and build additional housing in the community.

Naveau explained that in addition to developing programs and projects that create new housing units, Brunswick House FN Administration also wants to establish better, safer and more efficient homes.

"We want to ensure that any new home we build has a high level of standards that will make it safe, secure and healthy for the families that will move in," said Naveau.

The community is looking forward to an increase in employed First Nation members with the ongoing development of the Borden Gold Project. The project is a major mining development that is located on the shores of Borden Lake and about six kilometres from the community. The First Nation has seen a steady increase in activity with training programs in preparing First Nation members for underground mining positions, as well as a variety of employment positions that will be created in the building, maintenance and management of the anticipated new mine.

Naveau explained that the First Nation is hoping to grow with the promise of new employment opportunities.

"New mining jobs or other employment related to the project will provide much needed work for our members in the future. We are expecting that these new employment opportunities will attract off reserve members to want to return to their home community. Since the mining project is so close to our First Nation, it will be an even stronger incentive for people to want to move back to their home community," said Naveau.

He added that the community is growing steadily and it is not just the influx of mining jobs that will create the demand for more housing but also an increasing population in general. Of the estimated 800 First Nation members of Brunswick House FN, 600 live off reserve and 200 live in the First Nation.

"I am enjoying the opportunity to assist my community in developing housing for our members. This is a very satisfying challenge and one that I am excited about," said Naveau.

Chief Lisa Vanbuskirk, who previously held the position of Housing Manager before her election to the Chief position in August 2017, is hopeful that the promise of new employment will help to alleviate the challenges of a growing community.

"We are thankful for the efforts of previous Chiefs and Councils for the current series of housing projects. We want to continue that trend and build on that success to create more housing for our members. There is a lot more work to be done but I feel positive about what we have achieved so far. We can only move forward to continue building our community for all our members," said Chief Vanbuskirk.

Councillor Robert Redbreast is responsible for the Housing Portfolio for First Nation Council. Previously he worked in Housing Maintenance Management for the community for ten years.

"For many years, we never had the resources to properly manage our housing development. Now we have more people involved and more homes are being built. It feels good to see so much happening. My hope is that we can continue to add to our housing, take advantage of any new building technologies or methods and create a healthy space for our families," said Councillor Redbreast.

He commented that he is also happy to see a younger generation of First Nation members taking an active part in community development.

"We really need our young people to get involved. Jeremy Naveau, a young member of our community who joined

our administration, is doing just that. He is learning more and more and adding to his skills and knowledge which is really good to see. There is a lot of work ahead of us in improving our First Nation but we have more hope knowing that our youth are getting involved in the process," said Councillor Redbreast.

In 2015, Brunswick House First Nation Chief and Council established a Lands and Resources Department to allow their administration to more efficiently manage housing issues in the community. The new department was also tasked with working with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to develop more housing programs and projects for the community.

The First Nation also started the process of creating a Land Code and Land Use Plan under the guidance of a Land Advisory Committee comprised of community representatives. A Land Use Plan has been put into place but the creation of a Land Code is still being developed and it is hoped that this will be completed with the ratification by community vote in October 2018. A First Nation Land Code would enable the First Nation to be able to independently handle their own land management. Currently, land management issues are governed by the Department of Indian Affairs and any land development or management requires approval by this federal government department.



submitted photo

JEREMY NAVEAU, NISHNAWBE-ASKI NATION (NAN) YOUTH DELEGATE HAD A CHANCE TO MEET PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU ON NOVEMBER 4, 2017 IN OTTAWA

Mattagami FN Elects New Chief



Chief Chad Boissoneau, Mattagami FN

Chief Chad Boissoneau was elected as Chief of Mattagami First Nation in April 2017. He held the position of Chief from 2001 to 2004 when he helped to direct his community towards resource development initiatives and job creation. Most recently, he has been involved in leading the Canadian National Railway derailment and spill cleanup for the community and as well developed and directed a Walleye Hatchery project for the First Nation. He has also been involved in many projects over the years related to forestry, job training and business development

and has an extensive background working for natural resource initiatives. He completed three years of education as a Forestry Technician.

Chief Boissoneau pointed out that he was grateful to previous Chief Walter Naveau for representing the community for the past ten years.

"I want to thank Walter for all the hard work and dedication he did for Mattagami First Nation. He has been and continuous to be a dedicated leader for our First Nation and we know we can count on him for his assistance," explained Chief Boissoneau.

He is currently working on developing employment, training and business opportunities with the hope that mining exploration involving IAMGOLD near the community results in a mine. In addition he is a driving force behind the continued development of much needed housing for Mattagami First Nation. Many new units have been constructed and more are coming on line.

Chief Boissoneau is a traditional person who enjoys hunting and fishing. He has a wealth of knowledge regard-

ing fishery management and has been involved in improving the fishery in local waterways.

"I am very proud of all of the volunteers in our First Nation that have produced first rate fishing derbies, our annual Beaverfest event, our annual popular Pow Wow and cultural and recreational programming for our members," explained Chief Boissoneau.

He is also happy to see younger residents of Mattagami First Nation returning to the community with post secondary education, training and skills that they share through positions they have secured.

"Our younger generation are being educated and coming back to share their new found skills with us. It is gratifying to see our youth who were raised here go out into the world for their education and then return to assist us in developing in the most positive way for the future," explained Chief Boissoneau.

He and his wife Eileen have two sons Brent and Dylan and two grandchildren Vincent and Dion.

Wabun Remembers Alfred Ojebah

Past Chief Alfred "Sonny Boy" Ojebah, Brunswick House First Nation passed away on October 30, 2017 at the age of 74 years. Ojebah was a recognized leader and community representative for his First Nation and for the Wabun territory for many years. In 1997 he was nominated and elected to the position of Wabun Board Chairperson and worked alongside the sitting Chiefs of Wabun Tribal Council. He also helped to foster a legacy of leadership in his son Chief Rene Ojebah, who also led their community as Chief.

Ojebah represented and advocated for his people and First Nations in general for over 30 years in First Nations politics, services and programs. He started his political career as Chief of his community in 1967, which he later achieved again in 1995. Over the years, he has held various positions in boards, projects and programs to represent First Nation people and issues. He held the title of Economic Development Officer (EDO) for his community and in the early 2000s, he was also a Project Coordinator for the construction of a new water treatment plant for Brunswick House FN.

He has also been employed as a Native Court Worker for his First Nation, a position which was sponsored by the Sudbury Indian Friendship Centre. At one time he also worked for the Sudbury Indian Friendship

Centre as a Community Development Worker.

Ojebah attended a Native Counselling program at Laurentian University in Sudbury. He also had an interest in aviation and once completed an Aviation Ground School program in Chapleau.

During an interview for Wabun Sun in the past, Ojebah expressed his hope to see younger community members take a more active role in all areas.

"Our youth are our future leaders. My hope is that as these young people learn how to live in this world they remember who we are and where we come from. Knowing our past and traditions will give them the knowledge to move our people into the future," said Ojebah.

He was born and raised on the Missinabie River on his family's traditional hunting and trapping grounds, north of Brunswick House FN near the town of Mattice. He is a First Nation Oji-Cree, who enjoyed taking part in the traditional pursuits of fishing and hunting and spending time on the land.

Beloved husband of Donna Taylor. Loving father of Debbie Ojebah (Victor), Rene Ojebah (Barbara), Darell Ojebah (September), Lisa Ojebah, Rosanne Ojebah (Andrew), Darren Taylor (late Cathy) Ruby Taylor (Jacques) and Doreen Wabegijig (Frank). Sonny will be remembered



submitted photo

by the mother of his children, Caroline Ojebah "Kooksie". He was the proud grandfather of many grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was also the dear brother of Evelyn Wolfe, Nellie Mitchell (George), late Doris Johnson, late Rene Ojebah, and the late Calvin Ojebah. Sonny will be missed by his many nieces and nephews.

"All of us in the Wabun family were saddened at the passing of Alfred. He was a wise, kind and forward thinking Chief who dedicated his time and efforts over the years to Wabun and Brunswick House First Nation," commented Jason Batise, Executive Director, Wabun Tribal Council.

New Chief For Brunswick House FN

Wabun Tribal Council welcomes the new Chief of Brunswick House First Nation, Lisa Vanbuskirk, who was elected in August 2017.

"I am pleased to welcome Chief Lisa Vanbuskirk to the Wabun Tribal Council. She has a lot of valuable experience and good energy to offer to Brunswick House First Nation. At this time I would also like to give our thanks to past and outgoing Chief Kevin Tangie for all of his hard work and dedication to his community and the Wabun family," commented Jason Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council.

Chief Vanbuskirk served on council more than a decade ago and has experience in the forestry business, training and dealing with government. She finds her new position very busy with a lot of development involving mining and forestry resources. She is developing a binder that includes information for members on all projects and initiatives happening in the community.

"I am very dedicated to making our local government operations transparent and I am doing my best to try to organize myself and everyone to deal with all that is before us these days. I want to make sure our membership is aware of everything we are doing for our First Nation," explained Chief Vanbuskirk.

She pointed out that a lot of energy has gone into making sure that the community is ready for a mine development concerning the Borden Gold Project next to the community. The project is located six kilometers from their First Nation and is set to develop into a major operation in the next few years. Training for employment has taken place and the First Nation is hoping to take advantage of the many benefits this development will produce. In other resource development sectors, Brunswick House FN is also involved in seven forest management plans with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Chief Vanbuskirk is also very pleased with the housing development that has taken place in Brunswick House FN and is pushing for more development in this area. There is a pressing need for developing housing and accommodation for people especially with the potential for a mine developing in the near future.

"I want to thank past Chief Kevin Tangie and his council for working to develop

housing for our community and for the groundwork they provided in dealing with the Borden Gold Project. I also want to commend my staff and in particular Robert Redbreast and Jeremy Naveau for the efforts they are making on our housing development," commented Chief Vanbuskirk.

While dedicated to making sure the people of Brunswick House FN have the opportunity to decent housing and employment and training opportunities she is also dedicated to preserving the environment and First Nations traditions and culture. Currently she is living off the grid and experiencing first hand, the need for housing development on the traditional and original community of Mountbatten.

"I would really like to see a healing lodge developed for our First Nation. We need to provide the opportunity for our people to have the knowledge, teachings and traditional lessons to develop healthy individuals who can live good and productive lives. It is in everyone's interest to make this investment for our people," explained Chief Vanbuskirk.

She follows in the footsteps of her father past Chief and one of the founders of Wabun Tribal Council, Chief Joseph Saunders.

"It is special for me to attend First Nation meetings and come back to our family home in Mountbatten. When I return home, I keep my name tags naming me as Chief next to my fathers when he was Chief of our community," said Chief Vanbuskirk.

Chief Vanbuskirk believes that bringing back cultural and traditional teachings is important and that is why she is supportive of a healing lodge development. She wants to see the teachings and sweat lodges and pow wows return to the community.

In the summer of 2017, Ontario Minister David Zimmer, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation visited Brunswick House FN during a tour of the north.

"I was very happy to host Minister Zimmer this past summer when he visited our First Nation. He was supportive of the idea of a healing lodge. That gives me hope," explained Chief Vanbuskirk.

She lived in Alberta for some time working where she also participated in traditional hunting and gathering. Her husband Clark and their children like to go camping and hunting as this is a big part of their traditional pursuits.



submitted photo

CHIEF LISA VANBUSKIRK (BACK ROW 2ND FROM LEFT) WITH HER FAMILY. FROM L-R BACK ROW, HUSBAND CLARK, CHIEF VANBUSKIRK, CODY AND NATHAN. IN FRONT L-R: RENAE, SANTANA, AMANDA, ERICA AND GRANDSON TRENT.



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