



Elder Gord Waindubence shares clan teachings at the Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebeg miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag - Our Past, Present and Future Conference held Feb.13-15 in Sault Ste. Marie. — Photo by Laura Barrios

Clan teachings: we are one family

By Laura Barrios

SAULT STE. MARIE – The Governance Working Group and the Chiefs Committee on Governance members jointly met in Sault Ste. Marie on February 7 and 8. There were 22 members that attended, representing 12 of our member First Nations, including Chiefs and members of Council.

Updates on the progress of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement were provided to members, more specifically surrounding the Fiscal Chapter, which is the remaining piece to be completed. The new fiscal arrangements will be part of the new Fiscal Transfer Agreement that will provide the financial support for the governance related functions and for the exercise of the law-making powers and other authorities going forward in a new self-government agreement.

Members participated in a major discussion on how to find unique ways of reaching out to our citizens to try and be better communicators. Members suggested that we need to tell the story of self-determination and action. We need testimonials from our citizens. We need to personalize how we

communicate with our citizenship and First Nations. The way in which we communicate with all First Nations will vary based on the capacity and challenges each First Nation faces.

For example, if there is an issue of broadband accessibility, there is intermittent access to online means of communications, therefore, a more direct approach will be better suited with door-to-door visits, or mailed information. Other First Nations may have more off-reserve citizens which will require information to be provided to citizens via mail-outs, e-mail, social media, billboards, etc.

We need to ensure that information that is circulated is clear and concise, relevant, and tailored to all demographics in order to make an impact. If the content can make an impact, then citizens will become more engaged in the process and understand the importance of the Agreement.

Elder Gordon Waindubence provided teachings to members on the Anishinabek Preamble in the form of drawings:

- The Creator placed Anishinabe on the Mother Earth.

- The Four Elements: Fire, Water, Earth, Wind. They were given to the Anishinabek to take care of.

- The 7-pointed star: represents the sacred gifts—the Seven Grandfather Teachings—which are the foundations that were given to us by the Creator. These are our laws.

- Sovereignty: the Creator gave us sovereignty to man, woman and child to look after ourselves and Mother Earth.

- The Anishinabek also respect and honour the Past, Present, and the Future.

- The Big Circle: we are one family—this is our family; every one of us is in this circle. We all belong to a clan and we all have a responsibility. This is what our house looks like.

Elder Gordon expressed that if you want to understand more of our Anishinabe way, go live, look and travel to see for yourself and participate in ceremonies—the Creator gave us that.

Martin Bayer, Anishinabek Nation Chief Negotiator, provided a presentation on the preliminary findings of the updated Socio-Demographic Profile of the Anishinabek Nation by consultants Jeremy Hull

and Stewart Clatworthy. One of the findings concluded that Ojibway is used at home by a small minority of the Anishinabek population, even in the First Nations where it is the strongest. For example, the highest level of Ojibway is in Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory where it is the home language of 20% of the residents on-reserve. In the majority of the Anishinabek Nation First Nations, 0.0% of the residents identify Ojibway as the language usually spoken at home.

Members believe that while children are learning the language at home, the learning stops once they reach the age where they enter into the school system. Members believe that we need to do more collectively as a Nation to address this alarming issue. In the last 20 years, the language speaking has declined by 60%.

The Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement will provide the power to establish laws that will support the preservation and on-going development of the Anishinabe so that in the generations to follow, there will always be Anishinabe.

The next scheduled GWG meeting will be March 28 and 29, in Sault Ste. Marie.



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#HAVEAHEARTDAY

Southeast Regional Chief JimBob Marsden participated in the #Haveaheart social media campaign for First Nations children in care on Feb. 14.

Anishinabek Nation political update

Governance:

The Anishinabek Nation is currently negotiating to finalize the Governance Agreement, which will enable communities to govern themselves in ways that reflect who we are as Anishinaabe people and implement traditional governance-related laws outside of the Indian Act that will help improve conditions in our communities consistent with the following:

- The Anishinabek have always governed themselves with their own traditional laws. Over time, traditional governance laws were replaced by other government laws without consent;
- The Anishinabek Nation established the Governance Working Group comprised of representatives from member First Nations to help guide the negotiation of the Governance Agreement with Canada;
- Consultations within the four Anishinabek regions have been ongoing to ensure that the agreement reflects the needs of the communities moving forward;
- The Governance Agreement is not a treaty and will not take anything away from constitutionally protected aboriginal and treaty rights;
- The finalization of the agreement has been tentatively targeted for the summer of 2019.

Next Steps:

- The Anishinabek Nation continues to provide information to leadership and citizens as progress is made towards a ratification vote, Canada's continued commitment is critical to its success;
- Continued support from the federal government as it relates to advancing the Anishinabek Nation governance in areas beyond education and core governance. Relations and coordination with both INAC Headquarters and Ontario Region are necessary.

Anishinabek Nation Citizenship Law – E'Dbendaazijig:

Anishinabek First Nation citizens have stated over the years that, "We have the right to determine our own people", and that this right is free and separate from the legislative authority of the Government of Canada in defining our nation.

The Anishinabek Chiefs-in-Assembly have rejected the Government of Canada's unilateral definition and control over the definition of "status Indian" and asserts that our Aboriginal rights include jurisdiction of Anishinabek Nation citizenship, which rests solely with the Anishinabek Nation.

Next Steps:

- Seeking the support of INAC for the Anishinabek Nation citizenship initiative that will support enacting our own E'Dbendaazijig laws which has become more urgent by outdated membership codes and recent case law.

Child Well-Being Law:

We continue to meet with Ontario to develop a shared vision on child well-being and secure provincial funding support for the implementation of the Anishinabek child well-being law. This is the Framework Agreement. We are working towards signing the Framework Agreement in the spring of 2018. These are bilateral agreements between the Anishinabek Nation and Ontario. As we negotiate new arrangements with Ontario, we want to engage the federal government to support the implementation of the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law.

Next Steps:

- First Nation law-making processes will continue.
- The approach is to continue the bilateral negotiations with Ontario and to enter into



Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee speaks to participants at the Kamnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebeg miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag - Our Past, Present and Future Conference held Feb.13-15 in Sault Ste. Marie.

- Photo by Laura Barrios

bilateral discussions with Canada.

- There are two more double bilateral meetings among the Anishinabek Nation, Canada and Ontario to share information on the status of the respective discussions and approach to funding Anishinabek child well-being.

Anishinaabemowin Language Implementation:

Anishinaabemowin is the language that has been given to our people. It has been spoken by our people since time immemorial. As part of the Algonquin language family, it is the second largest spoken Indigenous language in Canada, and the third largest in North America. Only Cree and Navajo are spoken more widely. It was and continues to be used in our ceremonies, social and working life.

Next Steps:

- Seeking formal commitment on identifying officials from INAC to support language initiatives from the Anishinabek Nation in coordination with INAC Headquarters and Ontario Region officials.
- The Anishinabek Nation is advancing towards establishing partnerships with existing language institutions and organizations to support the preservation, protection and promotion of Anishinaabemowin.

Health Transformation:

The Anishinabek Nation is charting a path towards health transformation that will ensure our citizens have access to the best health programs and services available. This path will mirror the Anishinaabe way of life. These initiatives will embody our culturally holistic understanding of the physical, spiritual, mental aspects of the individual, family and community.

Health transformation will be created so that it will be accountable to the people we serve. Strengthening First Nations sacred paths to wellness will in effect rebuild our nationhood, our young people, our families and our communities. We wish to close the health gaps between First Nations and other jurisdictions and establish a new relationship based on mutual respect and recognition for all.

Next Steps:

- Project manager has been hired.
- The Anishinabek Nation is in the process of signing a Letter of Intent with Health Canada and an MOU with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to confirm Federal and Provincial Support.
- Community sessions will continue this spring throughout the Anishinabek Nation to get a clear picture as to what First Nations would like to see within health transformation. Information has been sent out to First

Nations.

Anishinabek Nation Housing Strategy:

The Anishinabek Nation strongly opposes the one size fits all National Housing Strategy. The Anishinabek Nation believes the National Housing Strategy will not address the unique needs of Anishinabek communities.

Next Steps:

- The Anishinabek Nation is currently coordinating the completion of the overall housing needs report. Upon completion of this report, the Chiefs Committee on Housing will develop a work plan for phase 2.
- The Phase 2 work plan will guide the development of a proposal that will be submitted to INAC in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Water Needs Assessment:

The Anishinabek Nation has worked with INAC and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) to prepare a Water Needs Assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to:

1. Develop a plan to address boil water advisories in 2 years;
2. Pursue the creation of a Government Act that is in line with Anishinabek water needs; and
3. Collaborate with government to set agreed-upon water implementation indicators to plan and monitor progress.

In discussion with INAC, following the completion of the Water Needs Assessment in June 2016, INAC indicated that further study was required. No additional funding has been provided to date by INAC to undertake this work.

MOECC has provided in-kind support to the Anishinabek Nation to collect additional information on Anishinabek Nation water treatment plants. The MOECC is assisting and providing water treatment plant assessments for each of the 40 Anishinabek communities.

Next Steps:

- Continue to work with MOECC on the water treatment plant assessments and the development of the Admin Manual.
- Follow up with INAC on the status of the proposal submission for capacity support as submitted through INAC Ontario Region. Proposal has been submitted.
- The Anishinabek Nation has confirmed through the Water Needs Assessment report that there are 248 projects representing approximately \$24.8m dollars in "shovel ready" First Nation support.

Youth ask for what was taken away from them

By Marci Becking

Photos by Laura Barrios

TORONTO – The 23 Participating First Nations that are part of the Anishinabek Education System met in Toronto on Feb 27-28 with provincial school boards, and Ontario and Canada representatives. This time, they brought along their youth.

Director of Education for the Kinnoomaadziwin Education Body, Kelly Crawford, summarized what the youth had to present to the some 200 education forum participants.

“One of the items requested was for the truth to be told,” said Crawford. “That is very powerful. Asking for a safe place, asking for transportation, asking for a connection to land, and asking for relationships to be developed and built, requesting support of Aboriginal Wellness Workers. Asking for opportunities for inspiration for our own people. Asking for the language. Asking to have the opportunities to experience relationships with our Elders. So for me, sitting there listening, they’re asking for everything that was taken away from them. They’re asking us to do better. It’s not a lot to ask. I want to say Chi-miigwech for sharing that. I feel that collectively, we need to make a commitment to these youth in a lot of these areas.”

Participants had an opportunity to listen teachings from key note speakers like George Couchie and Alan Corbiere.

Couchie, a retired OPP officer, says that when he trains police officers he says, “When you look at youth in a community, you are looking at three or four generations. You have to look past the individual and look at the greater picture to understand.”

Couchie also gives talks to educators and other groups.

“I talk about the importance of women in our community. They are the givers of life. It is our job as men to protect those women.

We don’t hit them, we don’t abuse them. We need to teach the men why women are so important. Women are making the changes in our community.”

Couchie also shared some real statistics about human trafficking and homelessness.

“When we talk about the trafficking across Canada – 52% of women are First Nation who are trafficked. 25% of the homeless people in Toronto are First Nation.

He is part of an initiative that will bring 4500 students to Memorial Gardens in North Bay on June 21.

“We are bringing all of the North Bay school boards together. Partnering with Nipissing University and Canadore College. Drummers, singers, outside venues, how to build a wigwam and other educational booths outside. It will be a Pow-wow and a day of learning, bringing community together and showcase who they are. The North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre is also involved. This will be good for community healing.”

Alan Corbiere says that there are five things that are important to your Anishinabek identity: name, song, clan, community/land and nation.

Corbiere comes from M’Chigeeng - Aki: Michigiwadinong is a place that is surrounded by bluffs that are in step formation – slate of rock.

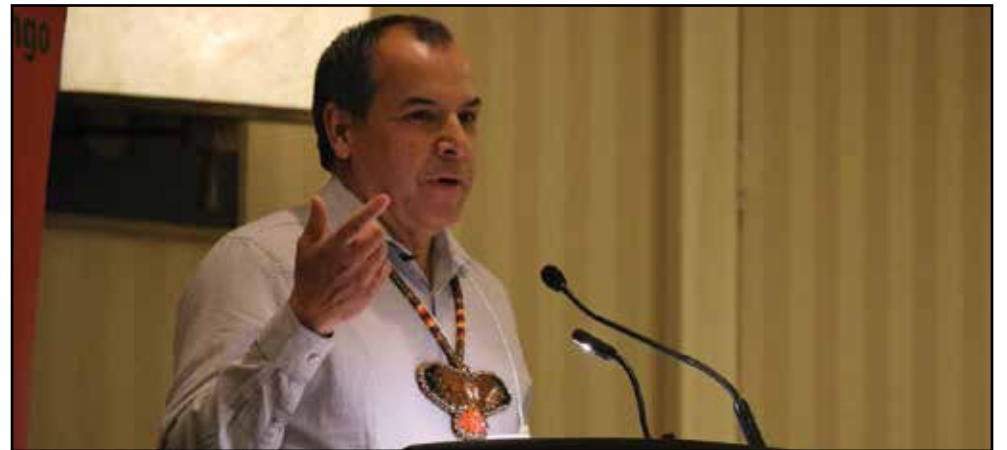
He emphasized how language is connected to the land.

“Caribou and Buffalo clans used to be in southern Ontario,” he says. “Because the land was cleared for activities such as farming and the construction of cities, the caribou and buffalo were pushed out.”

“When you really understand who you are, you start to put it all together,” he says. “Your name, story, song – each song has a teaching – clan and clan song. “Imagine how rich we would be with knowledge? We would be resuscitated – revived.”



Alan Corbiere gives keynote on identity. There are five things that are important to your identity: name, song, clan, community/land and nation is Anishinabek identity.



‘When we talk about the trafficking across Canada – 52% of women are First Nation who are trafficked. 25% of the homeless people in Toronto are First Nation,’ says keynote speaker George Couchie.



Youth from Regional Education Council #1 wants to see the classroom taken out on the land.



Director of Education for the Kinnoomaadziwin Education Body, Kelly Crawford, listens to youth presentations at the third annual education forum.



‘Safe places in school – smudge, Elder, we need to do more of what our needs are’ say youth from Regional Education Council #2.



Youth from Regional Education Council #4 say that a safe space, land base, Elders, Culture, teachings, along with support and identity, is what is important for their education.



For the puzzle piece activity, youth from Regional Education Council #3 explained how they depicted the older hand is holding the medicines. The younger hand is showing how to be youthful.



Ogimaa Duke Peltier, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory.



Nipissing First Nation Chief Executive Officer Dwayne Nashkwa and Chief Scott McLeod.

Constitutions, best practices discussed at Our Past, Present and Future conference

By Marci Becking

SAULT STE. MARIE – Wiikwemkoong's Ogimaa Duke Peltier and Nipissing First Nation Chief Scott McLeod made presentations on their constitutions, laws and best practices to the participants at the Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebeg miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag – Our Past, Present and Future conference.

Ogimaa Peltier said that Wiikwemkoong builds governance through dialogue with the citizens.

"We place an emphasis on this. Influence of how we need to steer the ship for our council and nation. We put before our community the process of how we are going to do laws and policy – what the basic ground rules are going to be when people come to our council."

Wiikwemkoong has had their constitution in place since June 2014.

Nipissing First Nation Chief Executive Officer Dwayne Nashkwa and Chief Scott McLeod. – Photo by Laura Barrios

"We have to make it a priority to protect our lands and ways, embed our cultural understandings and language into our everyday being," said Peltier. "We always make big statements. We say we are doing this for our kids, often times our words are empty. We did the Wikwemikong Children's Bill of Rights. It outlines how we are going to live up to statements about actions for our children. When we proclaimed it, we had speeches from our children on what work they wish to see done. Our council heard that, our staff heard it."

"Any other external laws are subordinate to ours. We began to establish laws that are applicable to our own people. Time for people to review, because it will have a lasting impact. We are aiming for a balanced lifestyle and be productive members of the community. We have about 50 applications for residency. People are coming home. We want to create a safe and welcome environment for our children. We have our Matrimonial Real Property Law. We haven't gone to Canada to create these laws. We know what we need to have structure in our communities."

"We have those inherent rights, we have the responsibility to create what we need to create, the answers lie with our council and community members. We are exploring our Land Management Act (land code) that will define how we consult. When we are developing laws, we have an approach where we go to urban centres so that they can have a say in what we are building. Our team is in their 2nd round in consultations with land code. People feel that they are appreciated and their voice is welcome – time to connect."

"We are looking at our own Election Law. If you are looking at establishing laws and policies – resource it properly. Speak with other communities who are embarking on their own journey who can provide you with guidance. Know your histories and share those understandings within your community. Resource your departments properly if you are embarking on any law-making and to create the structures – have a constitution to lay down your foundation."

tion to lay down your foundation."

Nipissing First Nation Chief Scott McLeod and Chief Executive Officer Dwayne Nashkwa did a presentation on their Gchi-Naaknigewin and community laws.

"Know your history," says Chief McLeod. "We wouldn't be where we are with governance if we didn't know our history. Inherent rights and treaty rights – no such thing as treaty rights. Our inherent rights were well intact. We got into the treaty process to protect those things. Our lands, fish and culture were all impacted by the Indian Act. We lost the possession of our inherent rights. In 2018, we are now reasserting those inherent rights in rebuilding our governance structure. We have a staff of 170 and an annual budget of \$22 million. We are becoming stronger and building the future. We are recognized as being lands, fisheries, Gchi-Naaknigewin and financial."

Nashkwa said that in terms of process, Nipissing First Nation's success is about consulting actively with citizens.

"Resource it and know where you came from – what you want your future to hold. The first piece was Land Code. Joan McLeod is now an authority in Canada on Land Code today. Former Chief Phil Goulais and Joan McLeod really focused on our Land Code which changed Nipissing. We pushed INAC out. We did business deals – we have a partnership with Miller Paving. We lease the land to Miller – sold the building to them and they moved their operations to Nipissing. This brought 15-20 good jobs for Nipissing First Nation people. We are also

now accountable."

Chief McLeod said that in 2004 Nipissing First Nation developed their Fisheries Law.

"We did a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries to protect our rights. We established a relationship with the Ministry recognizing our jurisdiction and inherent right. We had our Gchi-Naaknigewin. Nipissing First Nation citizens who were not abiding to our laws were asked to attend a justice circle. If they didn't agree with sentencing, then they aren't participating with community law – they have to deal with the province. Province says if you aren't following your First Nation Law, and you have no commercial license, then you are fined. No one persons rights can supersede those of a community. What we are doing is protecting our inherent rights to govern, to act as a community, to harvest fish and know the fish are there. If you do not give the fish the right to exist then the rights are meaningless. Our duty is to make sure every citizen from our community has those rights intact."

Nashkwa said that the Gchi-Naaknigewin defined who the Nipissing people are as a people and set community standards.

"When we adopted this, it was a watershed moment," said Nashkwa. "Whenever we were presenting something going forward – instead of people asking 'what program is this funded by?' or 'what does INAC says about this?' – we now have – 'is this in line with our Gchi-Naaknigewin'. It serves as Supreme Law."

Gold for fishery vision

By Kelly Anne Smith

Nipissing First Nation has been awarded gold for efforts to heal Lake Nipissing's walleye. There are now more spawning male and female walleye and the abundance of adult walleye has noticeably increased.

The First Nation received the IPAC Gold Award for their leadership along with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for the joint stewardship of Lake Nipissing in Toronto. Entries were received nation wide.

The Institutions of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) and Deloitte recognized the outstanding leadership and innovation of reaching the Memorandum of Understanding between Nipissing First Nation and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

which recognized rights and interests of both governments.

A report showcasing inspirational leadership leads with the Anishinabek having fished Lake Nipissing's waters since time immemorial.

The conclusion calls for similar collaborations across Canada to successfully mimic that of the NFN/MNRF.

There has been a dilemma enforcing provincial laws to help Lake Nipissing grow healthy while balancing the Treaty rights of Anishnaabe commercial fisherpersons.

Innovation and leadership are behind the award says Chief McLeod. "It's about the creative work that we did trying to determine how we were going to get around some of the obstacles that were handcuffing us to fully



enforce and recognize First Nation law. At the same time, recognizing provincial laws toward the fishery and how we were going to work together to resolve those issues and those gaps. We could both collaboratively work together to manage the fishery without jeopardizing any rights while working within the parameters of provincial legislation."

The Chief says the award is to recognize

the relationship. "We've used positive relationships to solve really conflicting problems. It's not really based on the report card of what we've done with the fishery. That is an added benefit.

It's more about working through complications we're challenged with and coming up with creative new ideas to circumvent those issues."



Anishinabek Nation Citizenship Commissioner Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell, Stewart Clatworthy, and Jeremy Hull. - Photo by Laura Barrios

We cannot become extinct:

Implementation of our

E-Dbendaagzijig has to happen now

By Marci Becking

SAULT STE MARIE – Anishinabek Nation Citizenship Commissioner Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell says that she is pleased that we are at this point in our history when the Anishinabek Nation passed resolutions that we want to retain our people no matter where they are.

E-Dbendaagzijig – those who belong – is the Anishinabek Nation Citizenship Law.

“We have inherent rights, we are a sovereign nation,” says Corbiere-Lavell. “Our people recognize each other. E-Dbendaagzijig says that if you can trace your ancestry to either parent – to someone that is Anishinaabe – then you are eligible to be a member of the Anishinabek Nation. Or, you can also trace it back in the Indian Act way to be a Status Indian. One-parent rule. No complications that the Indian Act has now. That is what is tearing our communities apart. I was able to get my status back to my community and my children were able to. The actions that are happening with the Indian Act is so piecemeal. We need dollars to do the implementation. We know who our people are. If we believe what we are being taught – have our teachings – be Anishinaabe in our teachings, then we are Anishinaabe.”

Deputy Grand Council Chief Glen Hare says that from the Jeremy Hull and Stewart Clatworthy’s report, we need to implement E-Dbendaagzijig in our communities to make us stronger.

“There will be more of us. Today as we stand hear today we are getting beaten by the white man,” says Hare. “Today another child is being taken away in the hospitals when they are born. When I talk to government I tell them we have a law that says we have people that belongs to us. We can’t stop our children from dating non-native people. Miigwetch to Jeannette for her fight for us. When we fought for the Robinson-Huron annuities in the early days – they told us you’re not Anishinaabe – not treaty Indian. That’s

almost like Indian Affairs telling us that. I don’t know the difference between Anishinaabe and Treaty Indians.”

“We should be proud when our kids find a partner and have kids to make our Nation strong.”

Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee says that the “Indian problem” goes back to the time of Sir John A. Macdonald.

“All the policies and legislation is to try to get rid of the Indian Problem,”says Madahbee. “In Missisauqua of Scugog – as of 2013 no more registered Indians. Italy, Japan, China, the UK, Germany, France – everyone else has the one parent rule to recognize their people. Everywhere around the world.”

“We cannot to afford to lose one more Anishinaabe. Implementation needs to start. I urge all First Nations to implement that law in their communities. We cannot become extinct.”

Report data:

84% of people who live in our First Nations are status – 3% are Aboriginal identity and 13% are non-First Nation.

Between 2002 and July 2016, the Registered Indian population of Anishinabek First Nations increased by 14,820 (or about 32%) to 61,360 individuals. 21,558 on reserve, 39,802 off reserve.

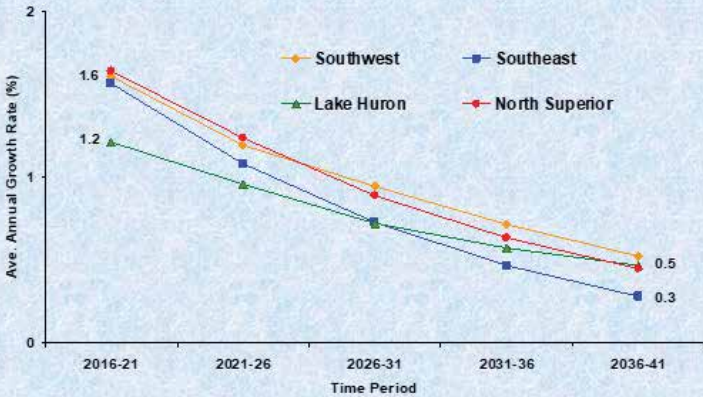
Language – 19.1% Lake Huron – 3.6% Lake Superior, 3% Southwest and 5.7% Southeast mother tongue Anishinaabemowin

Top home language use in individual communities: Wikwemikong 20.4%, Sagamok Anishinawbek 9.2%, Beausoleil 5.7%, M’Chigeeng 5.6%, Sheshegwaning 3.7%, Pic River 3.4%, Andeck Omni Kaning2.7%, Whitefish River 2.2%, Curve Lake 1.9% , Wasauksing 1.6%, Nipissing .9%, Garden River .9%, Aamjiwnaang .8% and Rama .6%.

Percentage of language speakers in 1996 – 19% down to 7% in 2016.

Projected Registered Indian Growth Rates On Reserve By Region

The general decline in the rate of Registered Indian population growth on reserve (observed for the 2002-2016 period) is projected to continue throughout the 2016-2041 period.



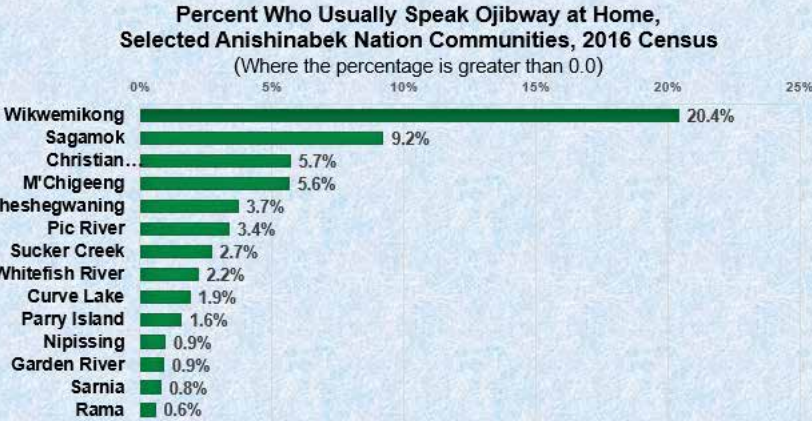
Annual growth rates on reserve are forecast to decline in all regions. By the end of the projection period annual growth in all regions is projected fall to the range of .3 to .5%.

Declining growth is forecast to occur most quickly among First Nations comprising the Southeast region.

Ojibway Home Language Use in Individual Communities

Ojibway is used at home by a small a minority of the population, even in those communities where it is strongest. The highest level of use of Ojibway is in Wikwemikong, where it is the home language of 20% of the residents, and in Sagamok, where it is the home language of 9% of residents.

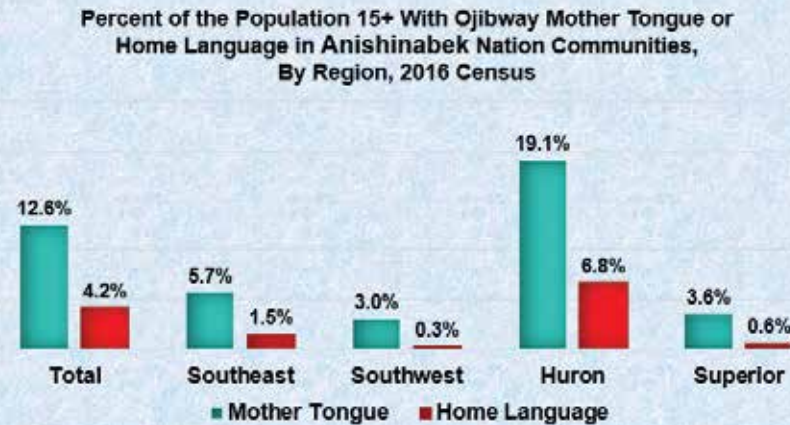
In the majority of Anishinabek Nation communities no one identifies Ojibway as the language usually spoken in the home.



Ojibway Language: Mother Tongue & Home Language

More than 12% of the population living in Anishinabek Nation Communities identify Ojibway as the language they first learned, but only 4% use Ojibway as their primary language in the home.

Ojibway is most used in the Huron region where 19% identify it as their mother tongue and 7% say it is the most frequent language used at home.

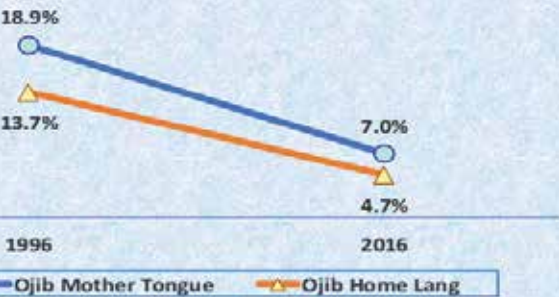


Change in Ojibway Language Use 1996-2016

Over the last 20 years the percentage of Ojibway speakers in Anishinabek Nation communities has declined by about 60%. In the 23 communities for which data were available in both 1996 and 2016 the percentage of residents who usually speak Ojibway at home fell from about 14% to 5%.

By 2016 only 7% of the residents of these communities identified Ojibway as the first language they learned.

Percentage of Ojibway Speakers in 23 Anishinabek Communities, 1996 & 2016





The Anishinabek Nation Health Transformation Regional Session held in Garden River First Nation on Feb. 20 - 21. Health care professionals engaged in discussion around challenges and benefits to creating a health care system that truly reflects the needs of communities.

Anishinabek Health Transformation: the journey continues

By Lynne Brown

GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION—At the Anishinabek Health Conference in January, and Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee shared insight with attendees into movement forward on Anishinaabe health transformation. It is without doubt a monumental journey to be on.

“We work in an area that is a vast geographical territory and when we get the chance to see the different levels of advancement and capacity around the territories in health care delivery, I have to say that we have some astounding and fantastic people working on the frontline. We have made incredible advancements around the territories.”

“There’s never been more of a time in our history to work together and be united,” stated Grand Council Chief Madahbee. “What we need to do is look at best practices. When we began the process, I asked five chiefs to lead the charge on this—all folks that have been involved in health portfolios in various capacities. Those five chiefs, along with our staff, have begun the engagement process. We are not predetermining anything.”

“We need to get some foundational work done before the next round of provincial and federal elections,” added Madahbee. “Foundational elements that would prevent any change in government at the provincial or federal level from impeding progress. We presently have willing partners at the table.”

“We need to look at what makes the most sense. Let’s look at this from a First Nations perspective. We have people who are working on the frontlines of health. We

have people at different stages including at high levels working on health delivery... We have Anishinaabe doctors and professionals working right now in all levels of health services. Nothing is written in stone – we don’t have the perfect model now – so why not try and create something that we can tweak and mold that works for us... Our people are creative and intelligent, they find solutions and when we empower our people to do something we can create a health system that works better for us. By creating and building upon regional networks, we can continue to build capacity as we go along.”

Cathy Bellefeuille, Legal Policy Analyst at the Anishinabek Nation, is facilitating regional sessions to begin the dive deep into health transformation.

Regional sessions began in February with Sudbury, Munsee Delaware Nation, Chippewas of Rama and Garden River First Nation. The initial round of engagement is for health professionals, with broader community outreach sessions taking place over the next several months.

“We’re trying to capture information on what First Nation people see as their idea of what First Nation Health means. We aren’t just taking a health care system that is maintained in the mainstream and then bringing it into our communities – It’s creating our own healthcare models,” said Bellefeuille at a recent session in Garden River.

“It could be a community model supported by a regional model supported by an Anishinabek Nation model. First Nation designed, delivered and administered. In all aspects of health, we want to be able to control

health care,” continued Bellefeuille. “We’ve started our regional discussions with health directors, care providers – to begin looking at what is being done across the Anishinabek Nation.”

Bellefeuille said that capturing as much of the Anishinabek Nation as possible and generating discussion across the Nation is very important. Outreach will be key to pulling information together.

“It’s going to be our system, so it’s important that we reach as many individuals as possible,” stated Bellefeuille. “Some communities have very little programming and services. They don’t have the resources and so they may not see this as realistic. By creating a web of services that are all encompassing and far-reaching, we may be able to mobilize communities that feel that they don’t have anything.”

Bellefeuille said that by bridging the gap between those communities that are underserved in health care programming and delivery with regional networks that do have a more fulsome capacity for health care, the potential exists for a more equitable system across the entire nation.

“We are looking at other models that are working, including the BC First Nations Health Authority, North Shore Tribal Council Health Services, and Sioux Lookout Health Authority. There are models that are already working and we hope to be able to create a system that can be built upon strengths.”

Bellefeuille further shared that, by identifying capacity and lack of capacity, gaps in service, the Anishinabek Nation can create a health care delivery model that works across

the entirety of the Nation.

“It’s difficult to put a timeline on how long this will take. With these community sessions, we can generate the discussion around what people need. It’s going to be a lot of outreach, and for the next year, leading up to April 2019, there will be ongoing consultations, information gathering, and reports generated that continue to pull the pieces together,” noted Bellefeuille. “We want to capture as much of the Anishinabek Nation population as possible. We want to make sure that everyone has a voice on this issue.”

Bellefeuille said that technology can play a role in gleaning information; however, grassroots community engagement will be key.

Bellefeuille added that ultimately it will be the communities that decide what it is that they need in health care programming and delivery.

“Empowering communities, thereby ensuring that health care delivery truly reflects what First Nation people need. Our own health care authority and health care laws.”

A historical signing ceremony of an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will take place sometime this Spring between the Anishinabek Nation and the provincial and federal governments.

Upcoming dates for Regional engagement sessions include:

March 19-20, 2018, in Thunder Bay at the Victoria Inn;

March 27, 2018, Sudbury at Shkagamiik-Kwe Health.

Meet the new Jordan’s Principle Navigators

CHRISTIAN HEBERT
(Dokis First Nation)

I have returned to the area as a teacher from Florida and has gratefully accepted the position of Jordan’s Principle Navigator with the Anishinabek Nation. I derive great satisfaction from knowing I will be able to assist First Nations children and families find the health care and support they need to live a quality life. Look for me at a community or regional presentation near you.

I am also a full-time BBA student at Nipissing University and enjoy being near my family and son Alexander again.

TYLER WADDILOVE
(Munsee Delaware Nation)

I am pleased to be working with the Anishinabek Nation as one of the Jordan’s Principle Navigators.

I’m passionate about helping First Nation youth. I also volunteer in my surrounding First Nation communities.

My mentor is my father Jody Waddilove who worked in my home reserve Munsee Delaware Nation for 30 years in social services.



Christian Hebert and Tyler Waddilove are the new Jordan’s Principle Navigators. Jordan’s Principle is a child first and needs-based principle born from the tragedy of Jordan River Anderson. Its goal is to make sure First Nations children from ages newborn to 19 can access all public services without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions related to their status as First Nations citizens. - Photos by Marci Becking

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The Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity (AN7GC) is fortunate to have partnerships with several hotels across Ontario, which provide benefits to the AN7GC, and in turn, benefits to our First Nation communities and citizens.

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2018 AN7GC Hotel Discount Program



Sudbury

Our long standing partner hotel in Sudbury is the Holiday Inn Sudbury. To book with the Holiday Inn Sudbury call (705) 522-3000.

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as well as booking instructions can be found on our website at: <http://www.an7gc.ca/hotel-discounts.asp>

If you have any questions or would like more information please call or email AN7GC Manager Jason Restoule at (705) 497-9127 or an7gc@anishinabek.ca.

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