



Former Algoma-Manitoulin MPP Mike Brown, centre, receives a plaque of appreciation from his former staff, Sherry Perron and Tom Farquhar, during an appreciation dinner held in Spanish.

photo by Michael Erskine

Former MPP Mike Brown feted for service to Algoma-Manitoulin

by Michael Erskine

SPANISH—Not everyone in the room may have been a supporter of the Ontario Liberal Party, but all rose in a prolonged standing ovation to recognize the 24-year contribution of former Algoma-Manitoulin MPP Mike Brown during a dinner held in his honour at the municipal marina in Spanish.

The choice of venue was particularly apt considering the role Mr. Brown played in securing the funding to build the facility, noted Spanish Mayor Gary Bishop during his welcoming remarks. Mr. Bishop pointed out that Mr. Brown was instrumental in bringing over \$100 million to Spanish over the course of his 24-year tenure. “For a town of 700 people, that is an incredible contribution,” said Mr. Bishop. “On behalf of the people of Spanish, thank you Mike Brown.”

Sudbury MPP, Minister of Northern Development and Mines and Chair of Cabinet Rick Bartolucci was the keynote speaker at the dinner and he related anecdotes of the lobbying efforts Mr. Bartolucci had made to him on behalf of Algoma Manitoulin. “I don’t know how many times I heard him say, ‘You can walk away, but you can’t change the facts. The people in my constituency need this,’” said Mr. Bartolucci. “I can tell you it numbered in the hundreds.”

Mr. Bartolucci referenced the immense size of the electoral district Mr. Brown represented. Mr. Bartolucci ended his accolades by relating the story of three bricklayers building a house. The first two, when asked what they were doing, said building a wall or building a basement, the third said I am building a home. “Mike Brown helped build communities,” said Mr. Bartolucci.

Although Mr. Brown was first elected to office as an opposition MPP, he still managed to accomplish a great deal for his community by taking a non-partisan approach to working together, noted Mr. Bartolucci.

Minister of Natural Resources Michael Gravelle, MPP for Thunder Bay Superior North, who was unable to attend due to eye surgery, delivered his greetings via video, congratulating Mr. Brown and recounting his enjoyment of working with the determined advocate.

Among one of the most poignant speakers at the dinner was Elliot Lake councillor and community advocate Sandy Fenamore, as she described Mr. Brown’s contribution to women’s shelters and other community projects. “The first words out of his mouth were always, ‘How can I help you?’” she said.

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Unorganized municipalities post fewer citizens, census indicates

by Michael Erskine

WESTERN MANITOULIN—Manitoulin Unorganized West Part, known affectionately to Manitoulin residents as Dawson Robinson, showed a precipitous drop in population in the last five years, at least according to data from the 2011 national census as reported by Statistics Canada.

Although Gordon/Barrie Island grew significantly during the same time period, Statistics Canada reports that the population of Manitoulin Unorganized West Part in 2011 was 160, down from 222 in the 2006 census.

The figures for Dawson Robinson were not reported in last week’s front page lead story or included in the chart accompanying that story due to the labeling issue with Statistics Canada. The new chart published this week corrects that omission and corrects the overall population of Manitoulin communities to reflect the inclusion of Dawson Robinson.

Population data for Zhiibaahaasing First Nation was also missing from the chart and story. No data was available from Statis-

tics Canada for Zhiibaahaasing, and the 2006 census reported no permanent population, but according to Yvonne Sagon at the band office the community currently has 45 residents living full time in the community.

Additional information on the Northeast Town indicates that the

Port of Little Current saw an increase of 162 residents for 2.7 percent increase in population over the five years since 2006, even as the population of the Northeast Town overall was relatively level with a net decline of five residents.

Population Change by Manitoulin District Community			
COMMUNITY	2006	2011	Percent Chg
Assiginack	914	960	0.7
Aundeck Omni Kaning FN	346	365	5.5
Billings	539	506	-6.1
Birch Island FN	403	487	17.1
Burpee and Mills	329	308	-6.4
Central Manitoulin	1944	1958	5.7
Dawson Robinson	222	160	-27.9
Gordon/Barrie Island	459	526	14.6
Gore Bay	942	850	-8
Killarney	459	505	10
M'Chigeeng FN	642	897	17.1
Northeast Town	2711	2706	-0.2
Sheguandah FN	160	154	-3.8
Shesheganwaning FN	107	118	10.3
Tehkummah	382	406	6.3
Wikwemikong	2387	2592	8.6
Total	12946	13498	+0.04

MCSEA references OFA wind statement calling for delay of McLean’s wind farm

by Robin Burridge

LITTLE CURRENT—The Northland Power Inc. McLean’s Mountain wind farm project’s Renewable Energy Assessment (REA) 60-day public review response process may have ended on January 27, but that hasn’t stopped the opposition from trying to freeze the project.

The Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternative (MCSEA) presented a letter to the Northeast Town council earlier this month, using the Ontario Federation of Agriculture’s (OFA’s) position statement on industrial wind turbines to call for a motion to delay the McLean’s Mountain wind farm project.

The statement released by the OFA last month called for the province of Ontario to “suspend the award of feed in tariffs (FIT) contracts for industrial wind turbine development projects,” and listed its concerns.

In MCSEA’s request to council, the group states that the OFA rep-

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Northland Power fails to contact Canadian Pacific Railway prior to REA cutoff

by Robin Burridge

LITTLE CURRENT— Canadian Pacific Railway Company (CP), registered owner of Goat Island, the proposed site for a substation and electrical transmission line for the Northland Power McLean’s Mountain wind farm, has claimed it did not receive notice of the McLean’s application for Leave to Construct Transmission Facilities until February 1, 2012, past the January 27 deadline for CP to file a letter of intervention or other comments or concerns.

“As the owner of land that will be directly affected by the project, and based on CP’s initial review of the materials, CP has concluded that it has a substantial interest in McLean’s application and it intends to participate actively and responsibly in the proceeding,” states a letter to the Ontario Energy Board from CP’s solicitors. “Accordingly, CP will be

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AOK gets permission from MOE to submit late comments concerning Northland Power wind project

by Robin Burridge

LITTLE CURRENT—Audeck Omni Kaning (AOK) First Nation was granted permission from the Ministry of Environment (MOE) Environmental Approvals Branch to submit comments regarding the Northland Power McLean’s Mountain wind farm project, despite the Renewable Energy Assessment (REA) 60-day public review response process for the project having ended on January 27.

On January 22, AOK issued a press release explaining that the community had asked for an extension to the REA public review and public input process deadline due to the chief and council feeling that there had not been “a proper consultation process with the community as to the location of the McLean’s wind farm project, nor a proper update on the state of the negotiations and the agreement between Northland Power and the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising Tribal Council (UCCMM).”

The project was a major concern of the newly elected chief, Patsy Corbiere, and the AOK council who also felt that they had not been

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Expositor up for heritage award in Better Newspaper Competition

BURLINGTON—The Expositor learned on Valentine’s Day, February 14, that once again, Northern Ontario’s oldest newspaper is a finalist in the annual Ontario Community Newspaper Association (OCNA) Better Newspaper Competition.

The Expositor is up for a premier award in the category of heritage writing for the May 18, 2011 page 1 article titled ‘Wikwemikong sisters tell stories of abuse, loneliness while at St. Joseph’s girls’ residential school, Spanish’ by editor Alicia McCutcheon. The story chronicles the story of Ida Embry and her sister, Blue Cloud Woman, during their time at residential school during the 1930s and 1940s. Ms. McCutcheon wrote the story after meeting the sisters at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission session held at the Northeast Town recreation centre on May 12 and 13. Residential school survivors came from across Northern Ontario to share their stories and meet other survivors, while learning about the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

The Expositor is up against the New Hamburg Independent and Nunavut News/North in this category. First place will be announced during the OCNA Better Newspaper Competition awards gala on April 27 at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.