

The MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR



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Kristin Debassige, coordinator of the M'Chigeeng First Nation Spiritual and Moral Support Vigil, waits while community elders gather their medicine bundles during a break in the action at the M'Chigeeng First Nation Community Centre. The vigil was held in solidarity with the people of Atiwapiskat and to show support for Aboriginal leaders meeting with the Prime Minister in Ottawa. Although most of the events were forced inside by Monday's torrential downpour, a sacred fire was lit and tended through the night by firekeepers and a bus at midnight picked up supporters headed to add the force of their presence to their negotiators in Ottawa.

photo by Michael Erskine

Harper grants 'a couple of hours' to national First Nations leadership

by Alicia McCutcheon

OTTAWA—Union of Ontario Indians Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee said he is not deterred by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's "shenanigans"—cutting down his Tuesday meeting at the historical Crown-First Nations gathering to "a couple of hours"—and nor should the rest of the chiefs be.

The chiefs learned Monday at a gathering of the Assembly of First Nations that the Prime Minister would be limiting his time at the Tuesday gathering,

choosing instead to bulk up the meeting with cabinet ministers in his absence, Chief Madahbee told The Expositor in a telephone interview Monday night.

"For some of us politicians who have been in this game a long time, none of this stuff surprises me," he said. "It is what it is—the government is trying to keep the chiefs off-balance using tactics so we don't get to the main issue."

Chief Madahbee said while some of the chiefs were

...continued on page 12

Northeast Town mayor suggests, Assiginack reeve strongly opposes winter closure of 10 Mile Pt. airport

by Robin Burrige

LITTLE CURRENT—Mayor Joe Chapman called for the seasonal closing of the Manitoulin East Municipal Airport at last Tuesday's Northeast Town council meeting.

The mayor's comments concerning the airport were no surprise to Councillor Marcel Gauthier, who sits on the Manitoulin East Municipal Airport Commission with Mayor Chapman, where the mayor previously discussed the possibility of closing the facility for the winter at the commission's last meeting on January 9.

"It's simply losing money in the winter," stated the mayor to council. "All the expenses are in the winter, but no revenue."

Mayor Chapman explained that council is looking for ways to save money for taxpayers in all areas of

the municipal budget, and should be considering making the airport a seasonal facility.

"I'm not an airport basher, but perhaps the time has come to downsize," said the mayor who is also a pilot. "We need to save money. We are raising taxes on seniors

and low income families and we need to look at any costs we have control over."

The mayor stated that CAO Dave Williamson will be working with Manitoulin East Municipal Airport manager George Dobbs,

...continued on page 17

Wikwemikong islands claim progressing No invitation to fall DFO meeting irks officials

by Alicia McCutcheon

WIKWEMIKONG—During a recent meeting with staff of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve land claims department, The Expositor learned that Manitoulin's largest First Nations community was not informed of a recent visit to members of the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising (UCCMM)

by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). (Wikwemikong has not been a member of the UCCMM for many years.)

Land claims officials at Wikwemikong say this oversight is relevant and important because of the band's specific land claim to off-shore islands around

...continued on page 12

AOK requests an extension of comment deadline for wind turbines

Chief wants community consultation

AUNDECK OMNI KANING—The McLean's wind farm project proposed by the Northland Power Inc. (NPI) was a major issue on the agenda of the newly elected chief and council of Aundeck Omni Kaning (AOK) First Nation's annual planning session.

As a result, Chief Patsy Corbiere told The Expositor on Monday that her community will be sending a request for a delay in the Ministry of Environment's (MOE) 60-day public review and comment period of the Renewable Energy Approval (REA) report on the proposed wind farm project. The due date for comment is this week, Friday, January 27.

Chief Corbiere explained that she and her council felt there was not a proper consultation process with the community as to the location of the McLean's wind farm project nor was there 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.

The present council also felt



Chief Patsy Corbiere

they are not fully prepared to endorse or reject the wind farm project and, as such, are requesting a suspension to the REA report or, at the very minimum, an extension to the 60-day public review and comment period.

The council unanimously agreed to send a letter asking the MOE to allow the AOK First Nation the opportunity to offer a proper consultation period with its band members and to have a final comment on the wind farm

...continued on page 12

Ontario Federation of Agriculture calls for halt of expansion of wind turbine plans

GUELPH—Escalating concerns about industrial wind turbines has prompted the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) to urge the province of Ontario to suspend further development until farm families and rural residents

are assured that their interests are adequately protected.

The OFA unveiled its strong stance in a new position statement on industrial wind turbines that will be presented to government later this month.

Since 2007, when the development of industrial wind turbines began in Ontario, the OFA has worked with government on regulations, cautioned farmer members on the pitfalls of wind leases and expressed concerns about pricing. Many of these issues have not been addressed, the OFA states in a release, causing tremendous tension among rural residents and community neighbours.

"We are hearing very clearly from our members that the wind

...continued on page 12

...comment deadline for wind turbines

...continued from page 1
project.

"The council feels the duty to consult and offer the community an opportunity to fully understand the impact of wind farms is a fundamental requirement," Chief Corbiere said.

A meeting will be held for all registered band members of AOK to seek their direct input on this development. A date for this meeting has not yet been set.

When contacted Monday, Kristina Rudzki, senior project evaluator with the Ministry of Environment's renewable energy team, said the MOE had not yet received a letter from Chief Corbiere. "Once it's received, the ministry will carefully review the chief's request and respond accord-

ingly," Ms. Rudzki said.

"Generally speaking, public consultation is a significant part of the renewable energy application process," the project evaluator continued. "Proponents must host public meetings and solicit feedback directly from interested parties during the application stage. All feedback must be documented as part of the application and proponents must advise the ministry on how they plan to address comments raised. Once the ministry receives a complete application, the ministry posts it for public review and comment."

"We take all public comments submitted under careful advisement when reviewing applications and all comments are considered as part of our review," Ms. Rudzki concluded.

...halt of expansion of wind turbine plans

...continued from page 1

turbine situation is coming to a head, seriously dividing rural communities and even jeopardizing farm succession planning," said OFA President Mark Wales. "The onus is on our provincial government to ensure the interests of rural Ontarians are protected. OFA is speaking up to clearly outline the issues that must be addressed right now."

OFA field representative for Algoma-Manitoulin, Neil Tarlton, explained that the OFA fully supports moving away from fossil fuel use to green energy while recognizing that farmers are "big landowners in the province of Ontario," but that perhaps the pace with which this is happening is too fast. "Let's reduce the speed we're doing this so we get it right," he said.

"The concerns we have in rural communities are quite profound," Mr. Tarlton said.

The OFA's new position statement on industrial wind turbine development addresses a number of concerns of rural Ontarians including: price paid for wind power, inefficiency of wind power—it can't be stored for use during peak demand periods, setback issues and induced currents, health and nuisance issues, removal of municipal input from industrial wind turbine projects, OFA has always supported Ontario's need for a reliable, affordable source, of renewable energy for our future.

"We must all work together to ensure green energy projects respect concerns for noise, community

involvement and price, balanced with the effective provision of energy," says Mr. Wales.

"The OFA supports the intentions of the Green Energy Act," the OFA statement reads. "We agree that Ontario needs to secure affordable and renewable energy for its future while reducing green house gas emissions. We encourage efforts to replace imported power, facilitate conservation and stimulate economic development through our energy requirements."

"However," the statement continues, "the situations regarding industrial wind turbines has become untenable. The proliferation of wind turbines across rural Ontario has seriously polarized our rural communities. Residents not engaged in turbine developments have

been pitted against neighbours over concerns with health impacts and quality of life issues. Industrial wind turbine development currently preoccupies the rural agenda."

"A balance between the province's power requirements and local autonomy regarding land use must be struck," the release states.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, representing 37,000 farm families across the province. As a dynamic farmer-led organization based in Guelph, the OFA works to represent and champion the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more. OFA is the leading advocate for Ontario's farmers and is Ontario's voice of the farmer, according to the organization's website.

...Harper grants 'a couple of hours'

...continued from page 1

upset at having been seemingly sloughed off by the prime minister, he warned them to take the "shenanigans" in stride and focus on the issue at hand. In fact, rather than a late Monday afternoon sit down with Prime Minister Harper, Chief Madahbee chose to sit on a panel for CTV's Power Play on its NewsNet channel. "I felt I would get more accomplished going national than sitting with the prime minister."

Chief Madahbee told The Expositor Monday that despite some dispute among the 130 chiefs represented as to allocation

among provinces, the Anishinabek Nation would still be granted its 10 seats. Island representatives include Chief Madahbee, Grand Deputy Chief Glen Hare and Sheguiandah elder Gordon Waindubence. He said Monday was spent "hashing around key messages" but that treaty relationships would probably be key.

During his time on CTV, Chief Madahbee told Canada he expects "more than just a photo op" out of Tuesday's meeting.

"We need to be partners in the economic sustainability of this country, just like the treaties meant us to be," he said.

...Wikwemikong islands claim progressing

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its shores and that Wikwemikong representatives should have been included in any meetings involving the relinquishing of Crown property.

The DFO made the trip to Manitoulin in October to discuss the divestiture of lighthouses deemed "surplus" by the federal government and to outline the proposal made by the Manitoulin Lighthouse Committee (MLC) to take over the lighthouses with the UCCMM and hear any concerns the First Nations may have had.

Bill Caesar, co-chair of the MLC, told The Expositor he thought the DFO had met with all of Manitoulin's First Nations and said he was surprised to learn Wikwemikong had not been notified of the fall visit.

He further noted that the Lonely Island lighthouse, one of the area lighthouses deemed surplus, was originally part of the MLC proposal, but that due to Lonely Island being part of Wikwemikong's specific land claim, the group has since backed off.

"We realize that (Lonely Island) is a legitimate land claim by the people of Wikwemikong," Mr. Caesar said, noting "we have extended a welcome for Wikwemikong to join the association."

Duke Peltier, claims negotiator with Wikwemikong, pointed to the 1997 case that saw the First Nation seek legal action against the provincial and federal governments for failing to recognize the band's legal interests in relation to unsold islands from Sault Ste. Marie to Parry Sound.

"We are seeking legal recognition of what we know is rightfully ours," said former Chief Margaret Pitawanakwat in a 1997 press release. "We are not infringing on the rights of existing owners. The legal action will involve an accounting with the

federal government and a legal recognition of Wikwemikong's interest in what are presently described as Ontario Crown islands in this area."

Mr. Peltier said that especially considering this case (which is still before the courts), he and the rest of the claims department were surprised to learn they were left out of talks, noting that the government has an obligation to inform all parties involved in land claims if there is an undertaking that might touch on the First Nation's ongoing land claim process.

"The unresolved island issue raises serious questions of conflict of interest on the part of the federal and provincial government," the 1997 release from Chief Pitawanakwat continues. "By the Bond Head Treaty of 1836, the Crown recognized the exclusive interest of the Ottawas and Chippewas (Ojibwas) by agreeing to withdraw its claim to these islands and to recognize the aboriginal title of the Ottawas and Chippewas. In return, the Ottawas and Chippewas agreed to allow other Indians to also use and occupy such islands."

The chief also noted that in 1862, the Crown attempted to "secure a surrender of Manitoulin Island," but no other islands were included in the negotiations. And, on October 6, 1862, the chiefs of the bands located west of Heywood Sound (Manitowaning Bay) and the Manitoulin Gulf (South Bay) signed the treaty, now known as the Manitoulin Treaty, while the chiefs of the bands located east of this area, Wikwemikong, did not sign or assent to the treaty.

The community notes that the Crown began surveying and selling islands in the claim area after 1862, an act that was

...continued on page 17

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**LACROSSE ORGANIZING MEETING
FOR THE NORTH SHORE MANITOULIN**

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Wednesday, February 1st, 2012
7:00pm
ESPANOLA –
Regional Recreation Complex
OR
Thursday, February 2nd, 2012
7:00pm
LITTLE CURRENT –
Howland Arena

Presentations by:
The Ontario Lacrosse Association
Equipment display

Facilitated by the Town of Espanola, NEMI
and Whitefish River First Nation