

GOOD PUBLIC WORKS MANAGEMENT IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Sharing The Story
Experiences of Six Communities



Miawpukek First Nation

Moose Cree First Nation

Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Peigan First Nation

Six Nations of the Grand River

Westbank First Nation



Indian and Northern
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For more information, please contact Real Property Services for
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (RPS for INAC) Headquarters by telephone at
(819) 997-9787 or by fax at (819) 953-9395.

This document has been prepared by:

Neegan Burnside Ltd.

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Message from the Honourable Robert D. Nault

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to extend congratulations to the communities highlighted in this publication. Each of the First Nations in *Sharing the Story - Experiences of Six First Nations Communities* has a unique story to tell about how public works are successfully managed and delivered in their communities. These First Nations have developed effective public works systems that reflect their culture. By striving to create local solutions to local challenges, First Nations are active players in improving the quality of life of their communities.

I would like to thank Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) for its support. The professional and technical services it provides helps to sustain the infrastructure in First Nations and Northern communities. As trusted partners, PWGSC and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) work to strengthen First Nations communities and assist in building new partnerships with First Nations people and Northerners.

First Nations have much to learn from other First Nations and it is with this spirit that these six First Nations have shared their experiences. The communities profiled here have set a strong example that will no doubt encourage others to adopt these best practices and models.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert D. Nault".

The Honourable Robert D. Nault PC, MP.
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Executive Summary

This document presents the delivery of the public works function in six Canadian First Nations communities. Each of the First Nations has a unique story to tell about how public works are delivered in their community, according to their individual goals, needs, and circumstances. While their situations and histories may differ, there are many common fundamental principles of good public works management shared by the communities. The First Nations include:

Miawpukek First Nation, Conne River, NF

Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, QC

Six Nations of the Grand River, ON

Moose Cree First Nation, ON

Peigan First Nation, AB

Westbank First Nation, BC

These communities are diverse in terms of size, location, remoteness, governmental arrangements, and approaches to public works. Much can be learned from considering how these First Nations have created a vision for the development of their communities, and have carefully planned the role of public works in supporting and serving that vision. This process involves much more than the provision of infrastructure and physical works. Some of the keys to success as exemplified by the profiled First Nations include:

vision – generated by the community;

leadership – inspirational, strong, stable;

policies – practical, clear, effective;

management and administration – capable, responsible, dedicated;

self-sufficiency – resources, capacity, cost recovery;

human resources – training, development;

asset protection and management – systematic approaches, committed implementation;

accountability – to the community, transparent; and

fiscal accountability – cost accounting.

The profiles clearly demonstrate that an effective public works system can significantly contribute to broader community goals, such as self-reliance and socio-economic development. In sharing First Nations public works success stories, it is important to also recognize the challenges and difficulties that have been, and continue to be, overcome. Some of these challenges include funding constraints, more stringent environmental standards, and increasing expectations on the public works function. The First Nations communities profiled in this document have shared their approaches for overcoming challenges such as these, and also offered insights into the future of public works delivery. Regardless of whether a community is in the beginning stages of establishing a public works system or continuing to improve a fully operational system, much can be gained from “First Nations helping First Nations”. This document represents one of several tools available to assist in this process.

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Sharing the story

Community Profiles as a Resource and Learning Tool

1.0 Introduction

In 2001/2002, Real Property Services (RPS) for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) – a division of Public Works and Government Services Canada – undertook a project to profile public works management and delivery in six First Nations communities across Canada. The six profiles prepared are summarized in this report and are included in Annex A. They are provided as a resource and learning tool. Following completion of the profiles, key members from each community attended a workshop to discuss issues regarding public works management and delivery in their community.

RPS for INAC would like to thank the following First Nations for their participation in this project, and for their willingness to share their experiences and knowledge for the benefit of other First Nations:

Miawpukek First Nation, Conne River, NF

Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation, QC

Moose Cree First Nation, ON

Six Nations of the Grand River, ON

Peigan First Nation, AB

Westbank First Nation, BC

1.1 Purpose of Portfolio

First Nations Public Works Experiences

The public works function is vital to the health, safety, and well-being of First Nations communities. It directly impacts many other community aspects, such as standard of living, land use planning, economic and sustainable development, resource development, and environmental protection. This document presents the experiences of some First Nations who are successfully managing and delivering public works. Many First Nations across Canada have important decisions to make regarding the way that public works are addressed in their communities, and may find these case studies to be a useful reference.

1.2 What Are Public Works?

Services Included in Public Works

Public works consist of the public facilities and infrastructure, services, and support systems required by a community. The following is a list of technical areas that typically fall within the public works function:

- water and wastewater management;
- roads, bridges, and public transportation systems;

- solid waste management;
- buildings, parks, and cemeteries;
- land use planning and land management; and
- fire protection.

Effective administration of public works ensures that all components are working together in a way that is practical and cost effective. The following activities are involved in the delivery of these services:

- capital works projects, involving the construction of new facilities or major upgrades to existing facilities. These require a working knowledge of needs and cost forecasting, planning, project management, design, contract administration, and construction practices;
- operation and maintenance of existing facilities;
- development and enforcement of standards, regulations, and policies; and
- management and administration of human and financial resources, records and documents, liability issues, insurance and risk management, etc.

1.3 Principles of Good Public Works Management

Many of the general principles of sound management within the realm of public works include:

Vision and Direction

- *vision and direction* to ensure that what is planned and implemented is in keeping with broad community goals and context;

Effectiveness

- *effectiveness* to ensure that the public works aspects of the community vision are delivered reliably and responsibly, in a manner that will protect human health and safety, as well as the environment;

Accountability

- *accountability* to ensure that the community and those responsible for delivering public works have a common and accepted understanding of expectations around what is to be accomplished; and

Sustainability

- *sustainability* to ensure that the public works delivery system can continue to operate on an on-going and permanent basis without placing undue stress on community resources or the environment.

1.4 Aspects of Public Works Addressed in the Profiles

The profiles include descriptions of current public works operations and the key milestones, decisions, and transitions that set the First Nations on their chosen course. The profiles also give a glimpse into the future and offer thoughts about key public works issues in the years to come. The profiles cover the following general topics:

- leadership and vision;
- social responsibility;
- sustainability and environmental protection;
- community and capital planning;
- accountability;
- cost accounting and recovery;
- services, facilities, and equipment;
- risk management;
- organizational structure;
- delivery options and approaches;
- policies, procedures, and regulation;
- human resources;
- skills, certification, and training;
- workplace health and safety;
- asset protection;
- record keeping; and
- fire protection and emergency response.

Selection of Communities
Represent a Diverse Cross-section

2.0 Overview of Communities Profiled

As part of this study, six communities were selected to be profiled. These communities represent a cross-section of First Nations in Canada, with diverse characteristics in terms of size, location, remoteness, governmental arrangements, and approaches to public works. Figure 1 shows the location of each community.

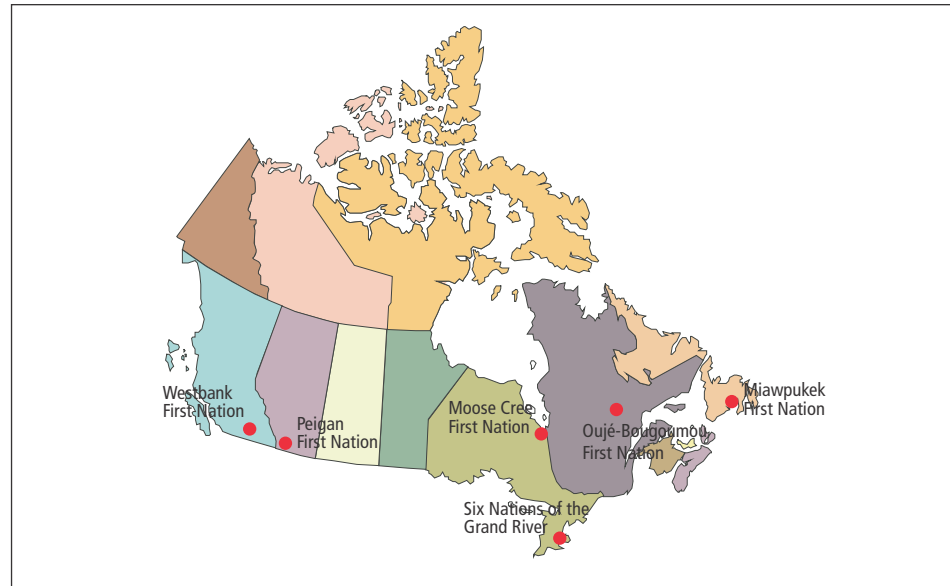


Figure 1

Site Visits and Interviews

The profiles were prepared based on interviews with key members of the community, including public works staff at all levels, councillors, and staff from related departments such as finance, housing, capital works, fire department, along with senior administration staff. The interviews were supplemented with a site visit to all communities with the exception of Oujé-Bougoumou.

The following section offers a short summary of each community and some of the highlights of their public works delivery. The scope of services offered by each community varies. Often the community vision, goals, or other community-specific factors determine whether services are offered by the public works department, by other departments or organizations of Council, by individual community members, or with outside assistance.

Each profile highlights the aspects of public works management that are prominent in the community. Some of these are directly related to public works. Others play a fundamental part of community management, but may have a less direct relationship to the public works department.

2.1 The Communities In Brief

Miawpukek First Nation

Population: 800

Remote Road Access

Self-reliance, Education, and Teamwork

The Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River is a relatively remote community of 800 people, located on the southeast shore of Newfoundland. Traditional Saqamaw Misel Joe credits its success to his community's historical ability to work as a team. "Everyone has a stake and pride in the community and its projects," he says. In return, Council is accountable to the community by relying on well-established policies and procedures to ensure stable and effective government. Training and education are the keys to a highly motivated and capable staff. Economic development and sustainability are an important part of the community's strategic vision, and the Miawpukek Public Works Department is very much an integral part of this broader vision.

Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Population: 700

Road Access

Community Vision and Planning

The community of Oujé-Bougoumou is located in the James Bay Territory of Quebec. The people of Oujé-Bougoumou are Eenu, their language is Cree, and their homeland is Eenu Astchee. After being relocated from site to site over a period of decades, a permanent community was finally established during the early 1990s. Although there were advantages to creating a community from scratch, they were faced with the overwhelming challenge of planning all aspects of their community at one time. One critical element of the master plan was that of public works. Oujé-Bougoumou proved to be more than capable of meeting the public works challenge, and through perseverance and determination, were able to develop solutions that blended conventional technologies with innovation and tradition. The resulting infrastructure system is compatible with the surrounding land and with the culture of the people it serves.

Moose Cree First Nation

Population: 1,600

Remote Access

Multi-jurisdictional Services

Moose Cree First Nation is located on Moose Factory Island near the James Bay coast in Northern Ontario. With the nearby mainland community of Moosonee accessible only by air or rail, the island community is decidedly remote. The First Nation has taken a lead role in providing municipal services to the three jurisdictions on the island, including the reserve, the area hospital located in the federal compound, and the Local Services Board under provincial jurisdiction. With the MoCreebec Council also located within the area, coordination and management structures that allow representation from all parties are required. The Moose Factory Island Fire and Rescue department, run by a combined Council, provides an excellent model for a shared service. It has received national awards for fire protection and search and rescue operations, and has taken the lead role in developing support for regional organizations. The First Nation is working toward implementing a similar model for the delivery of all emergency and municipal services.

Policies and Procedures

Six Nations of the Grand River

Population: 11,000

Near to Urban Centre

Six Nations of the Grand River, near Brantford, Ontario is Canada's largest First Nation in terms of population and has a comprehensive public works system. The key to successfully operating a system of this scale is to have a well-organized management plan, and to be committed to that plan. At Six Nations, a sound system of policies and procedures has been developed and is implemented with vigour. Input and involvement is provided by the management and staff of the Public Works Department, and also by community members, leaders, and representatives of other departments. This is an example of a relatively large First Nations community that has, over the years, guided the development of its Public Works Department to one that is effective and accountable.

Computerized Maintenance Management System

Peigan First Nation

Population: 2,200

Rural

Peigan First Nation is a mid-size community situated in the foothills of Alberta's Rocky Mountains. Public works are delivered by a close-knit team of well-trained personnel. A computerized maintenance management system is the backbone of operations, maintenance and record-keeping, generating work orders that provide guidance for daily activities. Success is credited to inspirational leadership and to an investment in people with high expectations for performance.

Entrepreneurial Initiative and Self-reliance

Westbank First Nation

Population: Band Members - 375; Non-members - 8,000

Urban

Westbank First Nation (WFN) is situated in the heart of the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, between Kelowna and Westbank, in one of Canada's fastest-growing development areas. The First Nation's entrepreneurial spirit in its approach to growth has led to the substantial development of both residential and commercial leases. This brings its own challenges and opportunities, as the Public Works Department finds the need to be accountable not only to community members but also to non-native residents, and for commercial contracts. With a relatively small on-reserve population of 375 band members, the community has established strong connections with the adjacent municipality and has brought in highly qualified senior staff to expand knowledge and raise standards in order for WFN to compete with neighbouring municipalities for development opportunities.

2.2 Key Success Factors

The profiled First Nations share many common characteristics. Some of the key ingredients to success that emerged from the profiles are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Key Success Factors

Miawpukek	Moose Cree	Oujé-Bougoumou	Peigan	Six Nations	Westbank
Strong, stable leadership	Dedicated leadership	Visionary leadership	Inspirational leadership	Strong leadership	Comprehensive set of by-laws
Education and training	Strong, stable administration	Sound financial management	Integrated MMS* based on work orders	Sound policies and procedures	Cost accounting
Teamwork and community involvement	Community involvement and support	Blending of tradition with innovation	Cost accounting	Checks and balances	Entrepreneurial initiative
Self-reliance and ingenuity	Multi-jurisdictional body	Effective use of outside resources	Investment in people	Cooperation	Use of outside resources
Local employment programs	Advanced capability for fire and rescue and emergency operations	Determination	High benchmark of performance	Mentoring	Partnership with neighbouring municipality

* maintenance management system

3.0 Elements of Success

First Nations Helping First Nations

Workshop Allows Exchange and Integration of Ideas

Following completion of the profiles, representatives from the six communities gathered for a two-day workshop to share their experiences and to explore opportunities for “First Nations to help First Nations” in public works delivery.

The workshop was hosted by Real Property Services for INAC and took place in Ottawa on March 5 - 6, 2002. A list of workshop participants is included in Annex B. While several of the attendees expressed concern about adequacy of funding for public works delivery, they also acknowledged the importance and usefulness of meeting in a setting that would allow for exchange and integration of ideas. One attendee, Roger Jonathan, expressed his feelings on the matter:



Workshop Participants

“I was reluctant to attend the workshop but am now glad that we did. We have always shared anything we have with our sister First Nations, and are willing to participate as long as First Nations are benefitting.”

Roger Jonathan, Six Nations of the Grand River



Ila Bussidor, Sayisi Dene

Well-developed
Vision

Also attending the workshop were representatives from two First Nations in Northern Manitoba: Jerome Denechezhe of Northlands First Nation, Lac Brochet, and Ila Bussidor, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake. Ila explained that the Sayisi Dene First Nation has had a troubled past that has involved community relocation and severe social difficulties. The community is hopeful and optimistic that an upcoming land claim settlement will enable their people to create and implement a vision for their community. Ila can't help but wonder, however, "whether we'll be ready." Participating in the workshop allowed her to experience different approaches for public works and community management that might serve as inspiration and guidance for her community.

Discussion at the workshop focussed on six central themes of public works management. Information gathered from the profiles and from the discussion at the workshop is summarized by theme in the following sections.

3.1 Community Vision, Goals, and Planning

Community vision and planning can have a significant role in influencing public works management and delivery. The majority of the First Nations profiled have taken the time to encourage discussion and develop a community vision and a strategic and/or community plan consistent with this vision. The strategic plan might highlight specific goals and action plans for each functional area of community management – including public works – and address issues and opportunities within the community. The development of a five-year capital plan by the community's public works department usually follows from these initiatives.

Oujé-Bougoumou, for example, had a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan, incorporating a long-term vision, when planning their new community:

"We realized that by planning comprehensively we would also have the ability to include future operations and maintenance considerations into our decision-making. We were in a position to make decisions which clearly would reduce municipal maintenance costs while also conforming to community preference, respecting environmental requirements, and addressing cultural and aesthetic considerations as well."

Abel Bosum, Past Chief, Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation



Paul Wertman,
Advisor to Oujé-Bougoumou

Paul Wertman, advisor to Oujé-Bougoumou, emphasizes some of the important elements of developing a community vision.

"It's very important to engage the community. Oujé-Bougoumou held regular meetings about every aspect of life, including everything from health and safety issues to housing and development. It's one thing to build a village, but it's another to build a community whose people ask, 'How do we want to live together and to relate to one another?' Oujé-Bougoumou didn't go to the federal government and ask, 'What can we build?' They laid a community plan on the table and said, 'Let's cost this out.'"

Paul Wertman, Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Community planning was key to Oujé-Bougoumou realizing its vision. Wertman stresses the importance of keeping the community engaged throughout the process:

“Never underestimate the power of celebration. The people of Oujé-Bougoumou celebrated many victories along the way. In the end, what emerged was a well-developed vision that provided strong support for negotiation. Now that the community has been in existence for several years, it’s time to review and renew the vision. That’s important, too.”

Paul Wertman, Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Stan Louttit added that in Moose Cree,

“We had a consultant come into our community to actually live with us. It was useful in developing our community strategy. It’s very important to know where we want to be and to identify the barriers to our destiny. Sometimes the barrier is the government, sometimes cost, but sometimes we’re surprised that the barrier is ourselves.”

Stan Louttit, Moose Cree First Nation

In Miawpukek, the community vision and goals of teamwork, training, and self-reliance influence all aspects of community management, including the organization, structure, and operation of the Public Works Department. It is clear that each community relies heavily on a community vision and strategic plan, whether these be formal or informal.

3.2 Leadership, Management, Organization, Accountability, Policies, and Regulations

Leadership

All six communities demonstrate strong leadership in public works at both the political and management levels. Some of the elements of leadership that were expressed as being important include stability, recognition of roles, and personal leadership qualities. Roger Jonathan of Six Nations and Paul Wertman share the view that there are many things that can be done to guide and prepare a leader for a leadership role, but the fundamental leadership qualities come inherently from within a person.

Roger Jonathan emphasizes the importance for elected leaders to avoid the temptation to be drawn into administrative matters, which should be addressed by staff. This ‘flip-flop’ of leadership and administrative roles is a common tendency that several First Nations have observed. Floyd Provost of Peigan noted that this is particularly common during the first few months of the term of a newly elected council:

“At Peigan, Public Works provides Council with an orientation, which includes a description of roles and expectations. Leaders often come from different backgrounds and they’re used to being hands on.”

Floyd Provost, Peigan First Nation

Management

Typically, the director of public works is accountable jointly to the senior administrative officer and to the public works committee. The public works committee is typically made up of councillors and in some cases also includes community members. The committee gives direction on programming and policy decisions, and approves annual budgets. The senior administrative officer provides direction on personnel, administrative issues, and monitoring of budgets.

Although there are similarities in the way public works departments are structured in each community, there are differences in the range and scope of services placed under the responsibility of the public works umbrella. While water, sewer, roads, and administration building maintenance are common for most communities, some of these services differ in how they are offered.

Organization and Services Offered

Moose Cree contracts road maintenance to its development corporation. WFN has formed a utilities corporation to provide water and sewer services, some of which are contracted out to the neighbouring regional municipality. Moose Cree is considering including all public works functions, as well as other community service functions, under a common public utilities commission.

Miawpukek has separate departments for public works and for capital works, while the remaining communities include the capital works portfolio under the public works department. Fire protection is under the responsibility of the public works department in Six Nations and Peigan. Other services offered by some public works departments but not others include school building maintenance, housing, landscaping and grounds maintenance, arena and ice surface maintenance, cemetery maintenance, and school transportation.

Accountability

Accountability to the community for the delivery of public works forms a cornerstone of good management. In most of the communities, accountability is achieved through frequent community meetings, maintaining an open-door policy to community members, and through community representation on the public works committee, and in some cases, on hiring committees.

Financial Accountability

All six communities prepare annual public works budgets, with the assistance of the director of finance. Most have either monthly or quarterly budget reviews to monitor on-going performance and variances.

Cost Accounting

The majority of the communities maintain a cost-accounting system, with all expenditures tracked to their source and linked to cost centres to assist in cost control, and in some cases, cost recovery. Timesheets are used in several of the communities to assist in tracking where staff and equipment time are expended. Peigan, for example, tracks time through a work order system. Half of the communities have accounting staff within the public works department, while the other three use the general administration accounting of the finance department.

“The work order system provides accountability, as every employee must account for their hours spent and each hour is charged to a cost account. Staff are self-motivated enough to leave their signature on each job.”

Floyd Provost, Peigan First Nation

Cost-recovery

Most of the communities have implemented some sort of cost-recovery or fee-for-service system. This serves to augment funding available from other sources, to expand service levels beyond the funded level, and to increase awareness of the costs for delivery of services.

Moose Cree, for instance, charges user fees for water, sewer, and solid waste services. WFN has a fairly comprehensive fee service structure as a result of the broad range of services it offers, the servicing arrangement with the neighbouring regional municipality, and the large non-member population. Miawpukek has limited user fees, but recognizes the need to move toward a user-fee structure in the future.

Record-keeping

Record-keeping is taken seriously in all of these communities, and includes contract documents, operating manuals, maintenance records, as-built drawings, and financial records. In Peigan, documents are filed by year and by asset. Recently, during the re-sale of a used generator, they were able to supply the new owner with manuals and work histories dating back to 1987. Six Nations has a dedicated building and staff for overall document management. Much of the information has been converted to microfiche for storage.

Policies and Procedures

Policies establish a critical link among the public works department, community members, and their leaders. The profiled communities all have a well-developed framework for policy development and implementation. This goes hand in hand with good overall community management.

Some of the policies are applied administration-wide, including hiring and employment, procurement and tendering, health and safety, conflict of interest, emergency measures, and environmental protection. Some of the communities have developed policies that are specific to the public works department, which cover areas such as snow clearing, garbage collection, landfill and recycling, and water/sewer service hookups.

Policies help to ensure that objectives are discussed and agreed upon, and that day-to-day decisions of staff are transparent and independent of both the individuals that implement them and the politics of the day. The Six Nations policy framework includes a yearly review and update to reflect learning experiences and potential improvements. In some of the smaller communities, the approach to internal public works policies is more informal.



Dayle Bomberry, Roger Jonathan, Six Nations

“I try to stay out of the politics. Policies are written in black and white and create the nucleus that holds it all together and lets everyone know what is expected. In our community, our leadership is very supportive of policy enforcement and we all know that the public has access to the policies. It makes it easier to stick to my guns when I know that the policies are there for the good of everyone, not for individuals. Where do the policies come from? They come from the grassroots, the people who are dealing with them every day. Together we work out the wording and then take them back to the leadership.”

Dayle Bomberry, Six Nations of the Grand River.

Most of the communities rely on federal and provincial standards and regulatory guidelines in the implementation of public works. In addition, the communities have developed by-laws to regulate some aspects of public works. WFN, in particular, has developed a comprehensive system of by-laws. Due in part to its proximity to other urban communities, WFN looks to neighbouring municipalities for examples of development and servicing guidelines, in addition to federal and provincial guidelines.

“A critical key to success is excellent leadership and a consistent vision. It is also important to back up that vision with the practices, procedures, and rules so that the community can withstand changes in leadership and personalities.”

Paul Wertman, Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Use of Outside Resources

Due to the technical complexity of public works, many of the communities have chosen to engage outside expertise, either as staff, outside contractors, or consultants. This expertise has been used in policy development, implementation of capital projects, and staff development and training. This involvement has often included a staff mentoring or training aspect to develop First Nations staff.

3.3 Staffing, Training, and Development

Each community places a high value on staff training and development. Training is a long-term investment for both a community and its members. Tammy Drew, General Manager, explains what that means to Miawpukek community members:



Rembert Jeddore, Tammy Drew, Miawpukek

“I was taught that whether our community can provide us with a job opportunity or not, our best option is for education. Perhaps that’s why so many people that have grown up in our community have gone on to further education. I remember when I was in Grade 10, we were shown a chart that indicated what jobs were expected to be required in our community in the next 10 to 15 years. Those were the jobs we went after.”

Tammy Drew, Miawpukek First Nation

At Miawpukek, community members are given preference for positions, provided they are qualified to carry out the work. In cases where the First Nation ‘goes outside’ to have work done, a community member is often assigned to job shadow, in order to acquire skills and build experience. The First Nation maintains a house in St. John’s for the use of its members while at university. The majority of employees have journeyman papers, and management staff have university degrees. Miawkupek also embodies a team approach across all departments – most of the positions are shared by two or three individuals – to ensure that everyone has the ability to earn a living and has a stake and pride in the community and its projects.

“Training our young people is key.”

Saqamaw Misel Joe, Miawkupek First Nation

There is concern in some communities that once employees are trained, they are more likely to leave to find employment in nearby centres because the First Nation cannot always offer competitive remuneration. In contrast, Floyd Provost of Peigan First Nation looks at this as an opportunity to help individuals on their career path. With insufficient volume of work to maintain trained tradespeople on staff, Peigan often encourages local businesses to hire and provide training to community members by agreeing to use their services for all First Nations business. Several individuals who have obtained their start in this manner now operate their own businesses on reserve.

3.4 Asset, Capital, and O&M Management

Capital programming, operations and maintenance, and asset management are core functions of any public works department. Each of the communities emphasizes maintenance and asset management systems. Cost savings associated with maintenance have not received sufficient attention in the past. The trend is now to preserve existing capital infrastructure rather than letting it deteriorate and incur premature replacement costs.

Peigan has been using a comprehensive, computerized maintenance management system (MMS) for close to 15 years. The MMS generates work orders based on preventative and routine maintenance, and keeps track of work done and the maintenance costs of each piece of equipment. At the end of each day, time spent on each task is recorded on the work order sheets. This information is then transferred back to the MMS in order to update the database. The system is fully integrated with the accounting function.

At Six Nations, staff place significant emphasis on the need for asset protection:

“In many cases, we know what the logical thing to do is, in order to maximize the life of our equipment. We know that in the long run it’s better to give it the necessary attention before problems compound. The problem is, there is no funding to do what we know should be done. Sometimes we have no choice but to do it anyway.”

Roger Smith, School Maintenance Supervisor, Six Nations

Maintenance Management Systems



Floyd Provost, Peigan

Economic Development

3.5 Contribution of Public Works to Community Goals

As part of the community vision, public works can contribute to overall community goals of self-reliance and economic and social development.

Self-reliance not only makes a community strong from within, but it positions it to be a strong partner to other communities and businesses. Tammy Drew explains:

“Conne River is isolated. In the 1970s we were the poorest of the poor. None of the surrounding municipalities had any interest in us because we had nothing to offer. But we got together with the goal of becoming self-reliant. Now we’re there. We don’t have everything, but we’re doing okay and the economic climate has changed. Those surrounding us want to be our partners.”

Tammy Drew, Miawpukek First Nation

Many of the First Nations interviewed are undertaking significant economic development initiatives. In WFN, the delivery of public works is influenced strongly by the extensive residential and commercial development taking place in the community. Employment gained for grounds maintenance through contracts for commercial lessees contributes to the community’s economic development goals. WFN is a community that has built self-reliance in spite of limited resources and a small population base. Raf DeGuevara explains:



Raf DeGuevara, WFN

“Do we feel that we have the capability to take on public works under self-government? Definitely, yes. In the case of our community, we went to the outside to raise the ability of our people. We’ll find out everything we need to know from our consultant, then one day that need will be eliminated as we become self-sufficient.”

Raf DeGuevara, WFN

Oujé-Bougoumou’s public works department also provides building maintenance services on contract. Similarly, Moose Cree delivers public works to provincial and federal jurisdictions in addition to its own community.

Social Development

In Miawpukek, social goals are supported by the public works approach to job-sharing, ensuring that all community members can benefit from employment and contribution to the community. The use of job-sharing (the director of public works is the only full-time position in the department) helps to reduce reliance on social assistance.



Stan Louttit, Moose Cree

3.6 Relationship Between Public Works Management and Community Management

Many of the success factors that underlie good public works management also underlie effective community management. Although the First Nations profiled were selected specifically for their successful management of public works, each also demonstrates sound community management as a whole. An effective management regime is characterized by responsible decision-making, community involvement and support, good record-keeping, and the reliance on well thought-out policies and procedures. Some of the aspects of management that overlap include:

- accountability to Council and community members;
- financial management;
- communications; and
- cultural expression.

“How you do anything is how you do everything.”

Paul Wertman, Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

4.0 Looking Ahead

4.1 Workshop Reflections

At the conclusion of the workshop, an interesting contrast became apparent. The six profiled communities recognize that they have come a long way in developing successful public works delivery systems. Still, many feel that they have a long way yet to go in achieving a level that will provide an improved standard of living. In contrast, however, Tadoule Lake is at an earlier stage of public works development. After listening to the stories of the profiled First Nations, Ila Bussidor expressed the predicament of the Sayisi Dene people:

“Listening to you, your First Nations are far ahead. In our community, we have a long way to go to get to where you are. It’s mind-blowing for me to hear just how organized you all are. We are going to need your help. It’s for the benefit of the young people of our community.”

Ila Bussidor, Sayisi Dene First Nation

All First Nations at the table readily responded with offers of assistance as Sayisi Dene First Nation moves forward with its challenge of developing a community with strong public works and infrastructure as its core.

The purpose of these public works success stories and other related tools prepared by RPS for INAC is to assist First Nations at all stages of public works management and community development. For those that have achieved significant success already, there are still challenges ahead.

First Nations Communities Can Benefit from the Wealth of Available Experience

On-going Challenges

“People say that in accomplishing what we have, we’ve set the bar high. But we still struggle. Now that we’ve set the bar, the question becomes, ‘How do we go further and jump it?’ There’s lots to be learned from other First Nations.”

Floyd Provost, Peigan First Nation

4.2 The Future of Public Works Delivery

In general, the profiled First Nations have a very positive outlook about the future of public works delivery in their communities. Management and staff are gaining skills and capabilities that will enhance their ability to contribute to the public works function. Administrative and management structures are being developed and are evolving in a manner that will better serve their communities in years to come. Cost-accounting and recovery approaches are being implemented so that public works department will be able to continue to provide the necessary services even as demands and expectations continue to grow.

The profiled First Nations have identified the following areas where they see the need for additional work:

- the integration of public works with strategic, community, and land use planning;
- funding and cost-recovery mechanisms;
- on-going staff training and development;
- standards and regulations; and
- environmental protection codes.

4.3 Future Directions for Support of Public Works Management

In general, the participants indicated they found it helpful to hear what other First Nations communities are doing. They said that sometimes there is a tendency to be focused on one’s own community and local situation, and it can be motivating to hear the positive things that are going on in other communities. The exchange of information was useful and most of the participants indicated that they would be taking ideas back to their communities. Many expressed an interest in maintaining contact with those at the workshop to sustain what the workshop had begun, while broadening the scope to include other First Nations.

The following are some of the suggestions made at the workshop for carrying forward the work started by this project:

- An annual First Nations public works conference or series of workshops on specific topics. The need for professional capacity development through conferences or certification was also identified. A lot of public works related administration training and resource material is available and can be accessed through existing organizations, without the need to re-invent the wheel. (See Annex C)

Exchange of Information Useful

Participants Will Take Ideas Back to Their Communities

Annual Public Works Conference or Workshop

Peer Support and Assistance

- The need for “First Nation to First Nation” contact was emphasized. There may be a role for RPS for INAC to facilitate this interaction. Site visits to communities were suggested as being particularly helpful.

Mentorship Program

- A peer support arrangement, where individuals from different communities or other organizations are brought in to a community requesting assistance. The requesting community then makes valuable contacts and can make use of these resources on an on-going basis to deal with specific issues as required.

- A mentorship program, whereby communities requesting assistance are matched with communities volunteering assistance to provide on-going support and guidance.

Website

- There was wide support for the development of a website for information sharing, including a chat room to exchange ideas and suggestions around delivering public works.

Sharing The Story

Annex A

Community Profiles

MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION



Sharing the story

The Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River is a relatively remote community of 800 people, located on the southeast shore of Newfoundland. Traditional Saqamaw Misel Joe credits the success of his community to the historical ability of its members to work together as a team: “Everyone has a stake and pride in the community and its projects”. In return, Council is accountable to the community and relies on well-established policies and procedures to ensure stable and effective government. Training and education are the keys to a highly motivated and capable staff. Economic development and sustainability are an important part of the community’s strategic vision and the Public Works Department is very much an integral part of that.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population – 800
Reserve Area – 3,600 ha
Townsite – Conne River
Region – Atlantic
Geographic Zone 2 – between 50 and 350 km of nearest service centre
Environmental Index
Code B – between 45° and 50° latitude

Website: www.miawpukek.nf.ca

Miawpukek First Nation is located on the isolated southeast shore of Newfoundland, in the Mi’kmaq Territory of Conne River. It is the only recognized reserve in Newfoundland, lying 560 kilometres from the capital city of St. John’s and 180 kilometres from the nearest service centre, Grand Falls. The Miawpukek First Nation was recognized as an official Indian Band in 1984, and has since grown to an on-reserve population of approximately 800 people. The community is connected to Route 360 by a paved road that runs approximately 150 kilometres north to the TransCanada Highway.

tors of each individual department report directly to the Band Manager, who in turn reports to the Saqamaw and Council.

Miawpukek puts high value on self-reliance, problem-solving, home-grown solutions, and an efficient, stable, and accountable government.



Helicopter View of Conne River



The Mi’kmaq people of Conne River were historically a nomadic hunting and trapping tribe. Today, the First Nation is managed by the Saqamaw and six members of Council, who are elected every two years. The direc-



Band Office

Public Works Department

Rembert Jeddore has been the Director of Public Works since 1987. As Director, Rembert is responsible for administering and maintaining all aspects of public works throughout the community, including water and sewer, roads, buildings and grounds, snow removal, fire protection, and landfill. Rembert reports directly to the Band Manager and supervises approximately 38 staff ranging from mechanics to labourers, although much of the work is seasonal.

Fire protection is provided by a volunteer fire crew of a dozen community members, who are responsible for fire prevention, inspections, and chimney cleaning. The community has a reciprocal emergency response agreement with the neighbouring communities of Morrisville, Head of Bay d'Espoir, and St. Albans. An emergency preparedness plan is currently under development.

Capital Works and Housing

Brian Kelly, Director of Capital Projects, is responsible for the following:

- Supervising all capital projects carried out by the Miawpukek First Nation. This involves monitoring all expenditures, evaluating tenders, scheduling labour and material requirements, and directing tradespeople before and during construction.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply – South West Brook is dammed to provide a surface water source to the community. The water is treated with chlorine disinfection. The Public Works Department is currently considering alternatives for a new water treatment plant.



Roads – Residential roads, as well as the highway to the reserve boundary, are maintained by Public Works. The main access highway is maintained by the province.

Buildings – All band-owned buildings are maintained by Public Works.

Grounds – The reserve grounds, including the cemetery, are maintained by Public Works, often through the use of student placement programs.

Wastewater – Sewage collection lines discharge to a two-cell, facultative lagoon.



Landfilling – Garbage pickup is provided on a daily basis. There are currently no fees for this service.

Fire Protection – The community uses volunteer firefighters. Public Works maintains a full-size fire truck and two smaller fire rescue vehicles.

Snow Removal – Public Works maintains a salt truck and other equipment for snow clearing residential roads. Individual driveways are plowed for a fee. In some situations, this fee is waived.

- Identifying and pursuing outside funding sources, such as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).
- Planning for future development, including specific construction projects and infrastructure goals.



Typical Band House

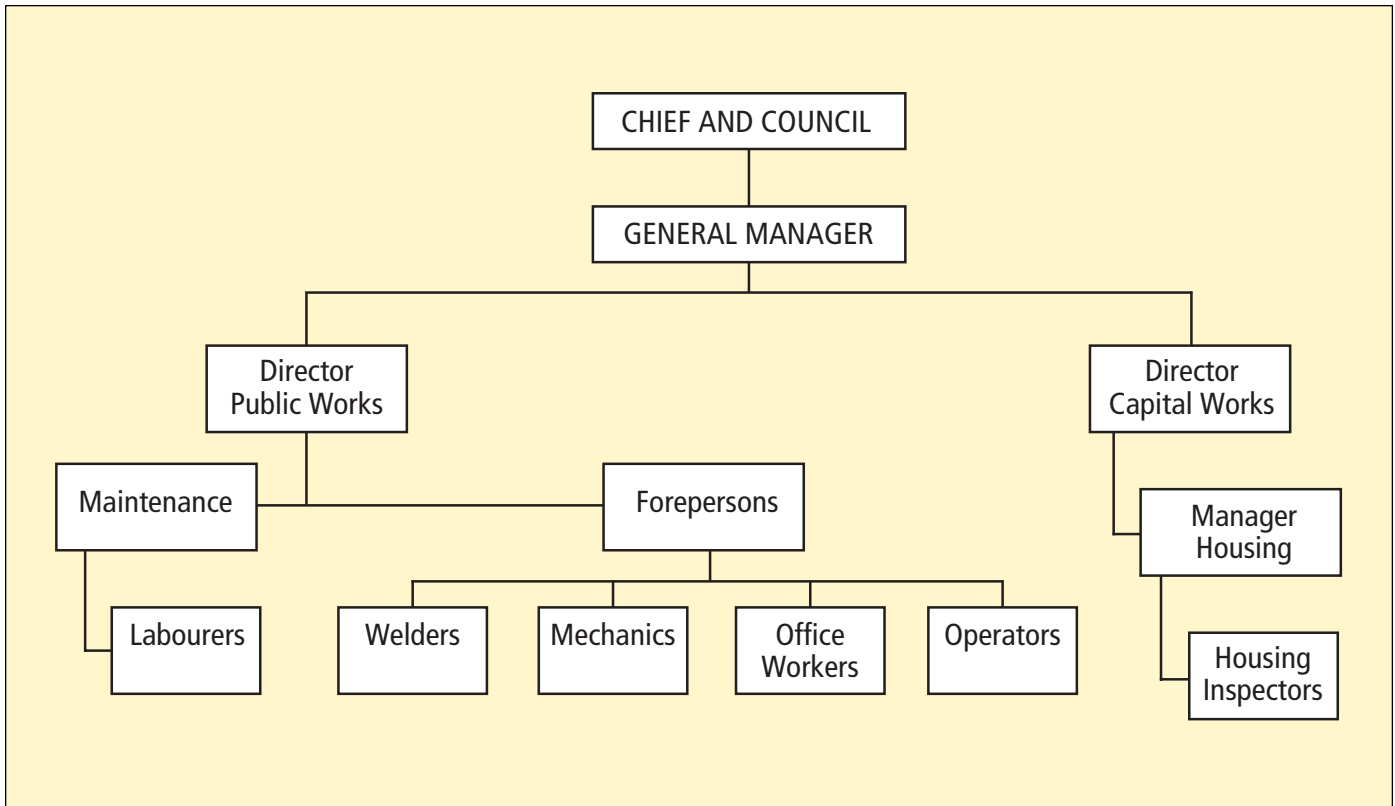
One of the major roles of the Capital Works Department is to ensure adequate housing for all band members. The band has implemented a number of initiatives to address the housing needs of the community, including the New Home Construction policy, the Home Builder Grant, and Section 95 Funding.

Under the New Home Construction policy, houses are given to band members according to need (which is defined by factors such as overcrowding, health considerations, and current living conditions).

The Home Builder Grant illustrates the community approach to improvement. Homeowners are provided a small grant of \$6,000 for building materials supplied through band-owned Conne River Building Supplies. They are expected to finance the balance, usually through a bank. The owner contributes some “sweat equity” during construction, and also agrees to landscape and maintain the home.

Under Section 95 Funding, the band purchases a mortgage to build housing units, which are then rented to members of the community for 25 years, at which time the individual assumes ownership.

PUBLIC WORKS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Team Approach

“We look at everyone in the community as part of the team. We try to draw from Band members as part of that team.”

Saqamaw Misel Joe

Saqamaw Misel Joe credits the success of Miawpukek First Nation to the community’s historical ability to work together as a team. While refusing to become a welfare state, the First Nation decided to use welfare funds to put people to work, primarily in the area of public works.

The team includes everyone in the community. All who can work are employed. Most of the positions are shared by two or three individuals, to ensure everyone has the ability to earn a living and have a stake and pride in the community and its projects.

All departments within the Miawpukek Administration make use of a team approach and share resources. In particular, the Public Works and Capital Projects Departments work closely together.

Rembert says, “We work together and argue together, but in the end we are all professionals and part of a team, fighting toward the same goals.”

Rembert remembers the early 1970s when there was no access road into the community, just a footpath. He has seen the community grow substantially, and takes great pride in the fact that he, along with friends and co-workers, has helped in its infrastructure growth.

Senior management supports the community’s team approach with regular planning and policy meetings. The Public Works crews meet prior to every construction season to plan and set objectives; they

meet again at the end of the season to review and evaluate results, as well as and set objectives for the next year.

“You have to take ownership of what is yours.”

Saqamaw Misel Joe

Training and Development

Critical to the success of Public Works has been the ability to train and hire qualified community members for positions in the department. The hiring process involves an interview with a standard set of practical and technical questions. Both Rembert and Brian indicate that “our policy is to hire qualified, on-reserve band members for any available positions. If there are no qualified band members, we attempt to find members who are living off the reserve. Only when these two options are

exhausted do we consider hiring personnel who are not part of the Miawpukek First Nation.”

Regular performance reviews are completed with all staff. If things are not working out, the band applies a three-step rule: first a warning, then suspension, and if issues cannot be resolved, termination.

The department acknowledges that training is the key to success. Both hands-on training and education have contributed significantly to the success of the Miawpukek Public Works Department. A primary example is the emphasis on post-secondary education. As part of this program, the First Nation keeps a house in St. John’s for the use of Miawpukek university students. This program has enabled the First Nation to educate members off-reserve, with the hope that they will return to work in positions typically filled by non-band members.

As a result of this emphasis on training, most Public Works employees have journeyman papers. Many management staff have university degrees. Significant emphasis is also placed on health and safety and construction site safety. Staff are young, motivated and educated, thanks to a healthy regime of encouragement and participation.

“Training our young people is key.”

Saqamaw Misel Joe

Accountability to the Community

The Miawpukek Administration promotes an “open-door policy”, and welcomes community members to frequent the office and access information from the staff, including directors and Council members.

The Council invites the community’s input at quarterly accountability sessions as well as at its annual planning meeting to set goals and priorities.

With respect to financial accountability, the Miawpukek First Nation has an Alternative Funding Arrangement with INAC, which enables it to define its own priorities and allocate funds according to community objectives. The Director of Public Works is responsible for making Council aware of needed expenditures for upcoming years. This is done through a process of rigorous planning and cost forecasting for the five-year capital plan. To ensure accountability for allocated funds:

- an annual budgetary process involving the General Manager and the Director is completed to justify all budgets to Council;
- the Director and Council meet several times per year to discuss budgets, employment opportunities, and job-creation strategies; and
- the Director is required to submit monthly reports to the Band Council outlining a summary of activities undertaken, and monthly financial statements to identify expenditures and financial commitments.

The accounting for each department is completed centrally by the Finance Department. The First Nation maintains a balanced budget approach to financing.

MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION MISSION STATEMENT

“Our Mission Is To Preserve, Promote And Advance The Culture, Health, Economic, Educational and Social Well-Being Of Our People – Including Our Language, History And Spirituality.”

Policies and procedures are heavily relied upon, and are acknowledged by everyone in the community. A first and second reading are required when Council passes new policies, to ensure there is opportunity for reflection. The Chief cannot override policy except in rare emergencies. In this way, people are treated fairly and cannot seek special favours. Saqamaw Joe acknowledges the pace of innovation that the community will accept and the need to introduce new policies and procedures accordingly. The policy manual includes such things as procurement, conflict of interest, and hiring.

The First Nation also has a number of by-laws. In the absence of a specific policy or by-law, federal and provincial regulations are referenced as appropriate.

The Pursuit of a Sustainable Economy

The Public Works Department actively supports the community goal of increased economic development. Rembert says, “Once the infrastructure is built, there needs to be other sustainable initiatives and job opportunities to avoid dependence on social programs.” To meet the needs of the community, Rembert’s department has taken every opportunity to purchase rather than rent equipment needed on the

PUBLIC WORKS’ EQUIPMENT

Excavator
D6 tractor
Front-end loader
Backhoe
Two road tractors
Two dump trucks
Two pick-up trucks

reserve. To date, his department has a variety of heavy equipment, such as excavators, dump trucks, loaders, tractors and flat-bed trailers. Rembert states, “We buy all equipment if it is feasible to do so – it usually pays itself off through use on other projects.” The purchasing of the equipment allows the department to train on-reserve members and complete most projects within the community. Most trade skills are available from among the members of the community. “There is no pride or economic spin-off by getting outside contractors to do the work,” says Rembert.

The department also demonstrates resourcefulness and ingenuity. For example, the department built road salt equipment from an old tracker, and recycled asphalt using rebuilt equipment from an old sawmill.

The Miawpukek First Nation Council continually pursues economic development activities in an attempt to obtain a higher quality of life for its people. Some of these initiatives include:



Miawpukek Aquaculture, Deer Cove

Aquaculture – The aquaculture program was established in 1985 and is owned and operated by community members.

The aquaculture facilities typically produce several hundred tons of steelhead trout per year; however, this number has declined recently, mainly due to unstable markets. The potential sale of the project to an external company is being considered. Should the aquaculture system be sold, there will be a clear mandate in place to ensure that community members remain employed on the project.



Micmac Air Charter Services

Tourism and outfitting – Miawpukek operates two outfitting lodges – one drive-in and one fly-in. The lodges employ over 10 band members and provide users with hunting and fishing tours with Aboriginal guides. The lodges are booked up to the year 2004. The First Nation also owns its own single-engine float plane, which takes passengers to the site. The pilot, Dave MacDonald, is a member of the community.



Cablevision – The cablevision program offers cable television to Conne River and other nearby communities.

Offshore fishing – Miawpukek has recently purchased several 34-foot, 11-inch fishing vessels, and one 44-foot, 11-inch vessel. These boats are used to fish crab, lobster, shrimp, herring, cod, and any other available fish. In accordance with the band’s



training policies, they have hired experienced captains from other communities who are required to train individuals on the reserve to one day captain the vessels themselves.

Some other economic development strategies initiated by the Miawpukek First Nation include Christmas tree culture, silviculture, an automotive and heavy equipment service centre, craft stores, and a building supplies store.

Culture and Traditional Heritage

The Miawpukek First Nation has placed increasing emphasis on its culture and traditional heritage. The Saqamaw has played a significant role in providing spiritual direction for the Band Council, the Administration and the general membership. Saqamaw Joe says, “The community has been totally rebuilt in the past 30 years, and significant infrastructure is now in place. As the infrastructure continues to grow, we must respect the environment and our values – that is why a major goal of public works is the return of trees and grass.” An environmental code of conduct is part of the department’s strategic plan.



Aquaculture and Scenery at Deer Cove

The emphasis on traditional values is filtered down through all the departments in the Miawpukek First Nation. The Public Works Department is considering a cultural museum, shaped like a wigwam, in their long-term planning. In addition, plans are to change road signs in the community to incorporate both the English and Mi’kmaq languages. “We try to incorporate culture in everything we do,” says Rembert.

Looking Toward the Future

The community is presently working on the development of a strategic plan; each director is developing short- and long-term goals and objectives for their departments. The plan will be discussed with the community throughout its development, and will eventually be ratified by Council.

The Miawpukek First Nation is involved with on-going self-government negotiations, including negotiations to acquire additional land and to develop co-management agreements for local resources. Associated with this is the preparation of a new community plan.

The Saqamaw has a vision for a shift in style of governance, one that is true to tradition but adapted to a modern setting. He speaks of increasing the number of councillors and establishing a separate senate, composed of representative community members, which would also serve as a training ground for future councillors.

Saqamaw Joe sees the Public Works Department heading for change. He mentions the need to move to user fees. Although some resistance is likely, Saqamaw Joe says that if they are introduced slowly, the plan will work. There is already a fee for snow plowing services. The band also taxes cigarette sales, which are used to fund the health system.

As the community grows, the Public Works Department envisions contracting out more of the construction work to local Miawpukek firms, and reducing of the work done by Public Works crews.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Education and training
- Strong, stable leadership
- Teamwork and community involvement
- Local employment programs
- Self-reliance and ingenuity

The Miawpukek Public Works Department continually emphasizes priorities that pertain to community development. While the department has made significant strides since 1984, there are still many challenges that need to be overcome to achieve a sustainable economy for the Miawpukek people.

“We are only on the verge of where we want to be – we’ve got a long way to go, lots of programs to change, more employment to find, and more training to do.”

Brian Kelly – Director of Capital Projects

MIAWPUKEK FIRST NATION CONTACT PERSON

Rembert Jeddore
Director of Public Works
Miawpukek First Nation
Box 10
Conne River, NF A0H 1J0

Tel: (709) 882-2146
Fax: (709) 882-2458
Email: rembertjeddore@hotmail.com

MOOSE CREE FIRST NATION



Sharing the story

Moose Cree First Nation is located on Moose Factory Island near the James Bay coast in northeastern Ontario. The nearby mainland community of Moosonee is accessible only by air or rail, which makes the island community decidedly remote. The First Nation has taken a lead role in providing municipal services to the three jurisdictions on the island, including the First Nation, the federal compound run by Health Canada, and the Local Services Board which is under provincial jurisdiction. The Moose Factory Island Fire and Rescue Department, run by a combined Community Fire Council, provides an excellent shared responsibility model for essential community public safety services. This public safety program, and its counterpart, Moose Factory Search and Rescue, have received national awards for various achievements. Moose Factory Island Search and Rescue continues to play a lead role in providing support to other regional organizations. The First Nation is working towards implementing a similar model for delivering all emergency and municipal services.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population – 1,600
Reserve Area – 325 ha
Townsite – Moose Factory
Region – Ontario
Geographic Zone 4
Environmental Index
– Code D – between 50°
and 55° latitude

Moose Cree First Nation is located on Moose Factory Island on the Moose River, 15 kilometres south of James Bay. The terrain in the James Bay lowlands is flat and consists of wetlands and muskeg. The Moose River is under tidal influence, with an average variation of two metres. In 1673, the Hudson Bay Company established a fur trading post in Moose Factory, making it one of the oldest English-speaking settlements in Ontario.

Moosonee, a mainland community three kilometres away, can be accessed by rail from Cochrane (via the Polar Bear Express and Little Bear) or by air from Timmins. Moose Factory is accessed by water taxi or ice road. During spring breakup and fall freezeup periods, the only access to Moose Factory is by helicopter from Moosonee.



Moose Cree Aerial View

Multi-jurisdictional Challenges

The island of Moose Factory is approximately three by five kilometres and has a population of 2,800. The Moose Cree First Nation is situated on the northern half of the island. The Moose Cree membership is approximately 3,000; 1,600 members live on reserve. The island has a provincial compound, which is home to the Moose Factory Local Services Board, and a federal compound, which includes the Weeneebayko General Hospital and Ministik Public School. The hospital serves the Mushkegowuk region, including communities located along the west coast of James Bay.

The Local Services Board (LSB) is a municipal body established in 1987 to service the areas of Moose Factory that fall under provincial jurisdiction.

The Public Works Team

Moose Cree Public Works provides municipal services including water supply, sewage collection, garbage collection, and solid waste management for all three jurisdictions on the island. The department also provides bus transportation to the three schools located on the island.

The Director of Public Works, Les Jolly, reports to the Chief Executive Officer, Stan Louttit, and to the Public Works Committee. The committee is made up of two councillors and three community members at large. There is a total of 11 employees in the department. Pat Fletcher is the Manager of Operations and is responsible for daily public works operations. Raymond Small is the Water Plant Manager and is responsible for the operation of the water treatment plant. Les Jolly oversees both public works and water treatment operations, and coordinates all major and minor capital projects.

Moose Cree First Nation is in the process of acquiring ownership of the water treatment plant. Moose Cree staff currently operate the plant.

Training for Moose Cree staff is provided by the Ontario First Nation Technical Services Corporation, under the Circuit Rider Training Program.

Road maintenance, snow removal, and work requiring heavy equipment is sub-contracted to the Moose Cree Development Corporation. Housing projects are contracted out to local band members.

The Public Works Department is considering taking back responsibility and equipment for road maintenance in an effort to ensure service to the community remains a priority.

The First Nation has recently completed the construction of a new public works garage, a storage warehouse, and offices to be shared with the Housing Department.



Public Works' Garage

PUBLIC WORKS' EQUIPMENT

20 cubic yard rear-compacting garbage packer
Five school buses for student transportation
Ramjet flusher for sewer cleaning
One-ton stake truck
¾-ton 4x4 with snow plow
Road maintenance and heavy equipment owned by Moose Cree Development Corporation and private contractors

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply – The water treatment plant is located next to the hospital in the federal compound. Raw water is drawn from the Moose River, and treated by chemically assisted filtration with pH adjustment.



Aerated Lagoons

Wastewater – The sewer gravity collection system throughout Moose Factory Island is treated in a three-cell, continuous-discharge, aerated lagoon, which is owned and operated by Moose Cree First Nation.

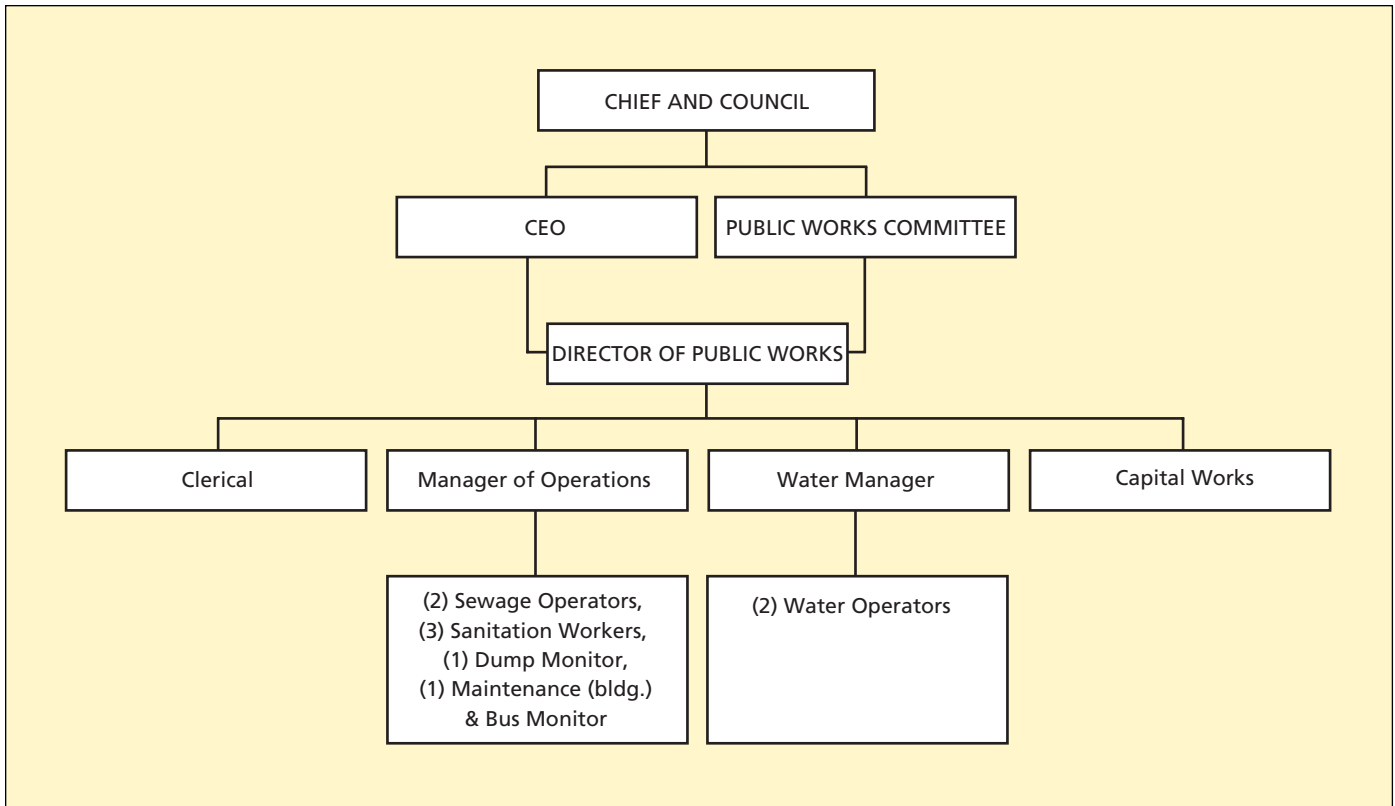
Roads – Road maintenance services are sub-contracted to the Moose Cree Development Corporation. In addition, private contractors are hired during peak times.

Garbage Collection and Landfill – This includes weekly collection, waste separation, and recycling at landfill. The Moose Cree Development Corporation is sub-contracted to provide compaction services.

Building Maintenance – Building maintenance is provided by Public Works' staff to all of the First Nation's assets and facilities. A work order system is utilized, and the manager handles all incoming requests.

School Transportation – The student transportation budget is used to subsidize salary dollars to assist other maintenance programs. Student transportation services are for all school students attending the three schools on the island.

PUBLIC WORKS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Community Support

Deputy Chief Charlie Cheechoo attributes his community’s success to excellent staff – including senior management and all other levels – and to support from the community. “The vast majority support what we do. Any criticism is followed by advice and suggestions on how to fix things.”

The community believes in involvement. There are generally two community meetings per year (these are always well attended), along with a more informal ‘meet the Chief night’, meetings for specific issues, and frequent home visits to elders and those unable to come to the meetings. Each committee has significant representation from community members, and there is an effort to obtain representation from different members of the community.



Les Jolly, Director of Public Works

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Mission of the Moose Cree First Nation is to revive and preserve our cultural, traditional and spiritual beliefs in order to enhance a healthier community in which we live together and respect one another for the betterment of our future.”

The community’s strategic plan includes a mission statement and a definition of community values. As part of the plan, goals are defined for each of the following areas: government services, housing, infrastructure, and public services. One of the goals outlined in the strategic plan was to develop a five-year community development plan. This plan was completed in 1997, and is now being updated.

A Strong Administrative Base

One of the keys to the Moose Cree First Nation’s success is the sound integrated administrative structure led by CEO Stan Louttit, which includes consistent policies and procedures, human resources, and financial accountability.

The Human Resources Department provides services to all of the departments of the First Nation. These services include employment and conflict of interest policies, assistance with hiring, and perform-



Administrative Complex

ance reviews. There is also a Health and Safety Committee with representation from each department, including Public Works. Specific health and safety training is now being implemented for Public Works staff.

Financial accountability is achieved through the preparation of an annual budget, which is approved by Council, followed by monthly reviews with the Director of Finance, Paula Spence. The accounting function is performed by the Finance Department. All expenditures are assigned to a budget category on the purchase order. Generally, the budget for the Public Works Department is balanced, although there is some occasional borrowing between budgetary categories.

The majority of the funding for the Public Works Department comes from core funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), supplemented by user fees which are collected for garbage collection, water, and wastewater services. The rates have been set on a cost-recovery basis.

The community's unique and strategic geographic location in the James Bay region provides economic and community development advantages, which has helped the Moose Cree First Nation make good progress toward achieving its organizational goal of self-reliance. The Mushkegowuk Council, a regional political and administrative Aboriginal entity, was established in the mid-1980s and is mandated by the board of chiefs to provide various services to its member First Nations. Moose Cree is one of the 10 First Nations of the Mushkegowuk Council.

Today, as the Moose Cree community continues to build its capacity, most – if not all – of the programs administered by the Moose Cree First Nation no longer require services from the Mushkegowuk Council.

The nearby community of Moosonee offers some opportunities for sharing equipment and labour; however, the river poses a significant barrier. The First Nation is working with Moosonee to find a common landfill site. The First Nation's current site, located on the island, is nearing the end of its useful life.

As there is limited area on the island for landfill expansion, the First Nation has approached the town of Moosonee, which is also looking for a new site, to develop a common site on the mainland. This would involve storing waste materials during the summer months and hauling to the site during winter.

Fire and Rescue – Service from the Heart



2002 Rescue Unit

Established in 1965, the Moose Factory Island Fire and Rescue Department provides community fire protection and emergency planning services. The fire department continues to be a strong element in the community, and is helping to shape the way public services are offered. This is due in part to its ability to respond to multi-jurisdictional needs, and to the strength and success of its fire and rescue operations.

The fire department consists of three full-time staff – the fire chief, deputy fire chief, and the assistant deputy fire chief – and approximately 25 volunteer firefighters. Because the fire department provides services to all three jurisdictions on the island, the Fire Chief, Douglas Cheechoo, reports

to Moose Cree CEO Stan Louttit and to the Moose Factory Fire Council. The Council is made up of representatives from the Moose Cree First Nation, the Local Services Board, and the Weeneebayko Health Ahtuskaywin.

It is evident that both Chief and Council place a high priority on the mandate and activities of the Fire and Rescue Department. The department is equipped with modern fire suppression equipment, resources to deliver a sound community fire prevention program, and a sound administrative support division to ensure that organizational goals and objectives are achieved. In addition to local community achievements, the competitive Moose Factory firefighter team has represented its community well in Aboriginal firefighter competitions, winning the Ontario championship for the last three years and placing second, third, and fourth in Canada in 1999, 2000, and 2001 respectively. Although Fire Chief Cheechoo is proud of these efforts, he expresses concern that the team not lose focus on their purpose, which is to serve the fire protection needs of the community.

Fire prevention and public education form an important part of the department's mandate. Staff provide regular inspections for residential houses (inspections also cover home heating units) and commercial buildings. They work closely with the school to provide fire prevention education. The Fire Chief says that they prepare some of their own fire prevention posters and are always looking for local, culturally appropriate material, and are interested in developing additional educational material in Cree.

The Fire and Rescue Department often shares training resources and opportunities with other communities, but it does not participate in mutual aid agreements, due to the community's remote location.

Though closer to home, the Moose River presents a sufficient barrier to discourage attempts at formal mutual aid with Moosonee, although the communities assist each other whenever possible.

Doug Cheechoo has been with the department for 24 years, and has spent the past 10 as fire chief, and he says that he “still looks forward to coming to work every day.” His advice to other communities is, “maximize the use of what you have, do not expect to be fully equipped right away. It takes time, dedication and commitment to achieve organizational objectives. Through creativity, there are things that you can do with a minimal budget. Get the community involved. Basic fire prevention is still required even if you have a fancy, well-equipped station. Be patient and don’t give up. We (firefighters) work directly from our hearts.”

In order to foster similar dedication and commitment in his team, awards are presented each year for best attendance at training sessions, best attendance at fire calls, rookie of the year, and officer of the year.

Training in saving lives is taken seriously, with continuous, hands-on training for all members of the department.

The fire department also plays a lead role in coordinating search and rescue (SAR)

services for the island. The James Bay coast is a vast region that experiences extreme cold, tide, and wind conditions, with sudden changes in weather.

In the traditional lifestyle of the James Bay Cree, the river and bay are used to travel to hunting and trapping locations in the spring and fall, when weather and travel conditions are at their most uncertain. With the growing eco-tourism industry in the area, the number of visitors using the lands and waters is steadily increasing.

The demand for search and rescue operations has also risen over the past decade.

As a result of the James Bay tragedy in September 1999, in which eight out of 11 First Nation members travelling to a fall harvest area died in a boating incident, the Moose Factory SAR unit has played an important role in the development of a regional James Bay SAR organization. The unit recently hosted a regional conference to provide workshops and training, and to share experiences. The Moose Factory SAR was recognized with an Outstanding SAR Achievement Award by the National SAR Secretariat in November 2000 for its efforts.



Doug Cheechoo,
Fire Chief

Pat Fletcher, Manager of Operations, represents Public Works on the control group.

Not just a document sitting on the shelf, the emergency plan is put into action on a regular basis. During the annual spring flood season, the Control Group is on alert, monitoring water levels and ice breakup patterns daily. The plan details the approach for notifying community members and outlines required actions, depending on the severity and risk of flooding.

Chief and Council place a high priority on emergency services, including police, fire, ambulance, radio communications, and search and rescue. The First Nation has prepared a business plan for a community Emergency Services Centre that would house each of these services and act as a central control command centre.

Fire Council Provides Model for Public Utilities Commission

The Fire Council and Fire and Rescue Department have been so effective at meeting the needs of the three jurisdictional areas on the island and at providing top-notch service that the community is considering using this approach as a model for providing all community public services. The First Nation is currently completing a joint organizational review of public safety and municipal services for the island. Services under review include:

- fire protection;
- search and rescue;
- emergency planning;
- ambulance services;
- policing;
- garbage collection;
- water/wastewater management;
- road maintenance;
- street lighting; and
- airport maintenance.

Emergency Planning

An important function of the fire department is the coordination of emergency services for the island. The Moose Factory Island Emergency Plan is updated regularly. The Emergency Operations Control Group consists of Moose Cree Chief Norm Hardisty, an emergency measures coordinator, Deputy Fire Chief Bruce Nelson, a police officer, Fire Chief Doug Cheechoo, and representatives from the Departments of Public Works, Communications, Social Services, and Health Services.

**MOOSE FACTORY
ISLAND FIRE AND
RESCUE
– MISSION STATEMENT**

“To save lives and protect property through prevention, preparedness, education and response.”

The concept is to form a Public Utility Services Commission that would provide both emergency and municipal services for the entire island. Suggested representation on the commission may include four commissioners from Moose Cree, two from the Local Services Board, and one from the hospital.

Les Jolly envisions that a technical services unit to provide planning and design services may also be part of the commission. Incorporation of the commission might offer advantages in increased borrowing power and limited liability.

Looking Toward the Future

A current priority for the Moose Cree First Nation Chief and Council is the construction of a proposed Community Emergency Services Centre, as well as the formation of a Public Utility Services Commission, to provide coordinated public municipal and emergency services with representation from all jurisdictions on the island.

The Community Emergency Services Centre on Moose Factory Island will be key to improving and expanding the community's public safety services. The amalgamation of fire, police, community emergency planning, and search and rescue services within an appropriately designed state-of-the-art building will streamline operations, facilitate maintenance and management, as well as derive long-term efficiencies.



Housing Subdivision

This project will encourage and facilitate collaboration and communication among public safety providers, increasing the effectiveness of emergency-response coordination, planning, training, and public safety education. The Moose Cree First Nation is in the process of establishing a technical services unit to provide enhanced engineering services such as design, planning, development, and field review services.



Moose River

Eco-Tourism

Moose Cree offers winter and summer expeditions, including cross-country skiing, snowmobile trips, snowshoe expeditions, trap-line tours, and canoe trips. Aboriginal guides provide a cultural experience, offering story-telling, traditional foods and medicines, camping in teepees, and the remote wilderness lifestyle of the James Bay Cree.

To complement this program, the First Nation is constructing the Wa-sh-ow James Bay Wilderness Centre, an eco-tourism and adventure travel camp, which will offer guided tours during all seasons. A recent article in National Geographic Traveler describes a "ski-with-the-Cree" expedition in glowing terms.

"Through effective negotiations by all parties, we can provide the best municipal service comparable to that of any community."

Les Jolly, Director of Public Works

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Community involvement and support
- Model of multi-jurisdictional council
- Strong, stable administration
- Dedicated leadership
- Advanced capability for fire and rescue and emergency operations

FIRST NATIONS CONTACT

Les Jolly
 Director of Public Works
 Moose Cree First Nation
 P.O. Box 190
 Moose Factory, ON P0L 1W0
 Tel: (705) 658-4619
 Fax: (705) 658-4734
 Email: les.jolly@moosecree.com

OUIJÉ-BOUGOUMOU CREE NATION



Sharing the story

The community of Oujé-Bougoumou is located in the James Bay territory of Quebec. The people of Oujé-Bougoumou are Eenou, their language is Cree, and their homeland is Eenou Astchee. After being relocated from site to site over a period of decades, a permanent community was finally established during the early 1990s. Although there were advantages to creating a community from scratch, they were also faced with the overwhelming challenge of planning all aspects of their community at one time. One critical element of the master plan was that of public works. Oujé-Bougoumou proved to be more than capable of meeting the public works challenge, and through perseverance and determination were able to develop solutions that blended conventional technologies with innovation and tradition. The resulting infrastructure system is compatible with the surrounding land and with the culture of the people it serves.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population – 700
Reserve Area – to be determined
Townsite - Oujé-Bougoumou
Region – Quebec
Geographic Zone 2 – within 60 km of a service centre
Environmental Index
– Code B – between 45°
and 50° latitude

Website: www.ouje.ca



Dislocation - A People On The Move

For much of the last century, Oujé-Bougoumou Eenou have been a people in transition. Between 1920 and 1970, the villages of the Oujé-Bougoumou people relocated seven times. This was mostly due to the increasing presence of mining in the area.

Over 70 years ago, prospectors for gold and copper entered the vast Oujé-Bougoumou traditional territory, which stretched over 2,500 square kilometres in northern Quebec. Mining activities, camps, settlements, and towns repeatedly displaced First Nations settlements. Apart from the physical disruption imposed by these activities, there were also environmental impacts,

which affected the close relationship of the Oujé-Bougoumou people with the land and water. Hunting and trapping have always been an important part of their traditional way of life.

In the 1970s, the people of Oujé-Bougoumou realized that lands covering their traditional territory were of much interest to entities such as governments and private-sector resource development corporations. In order to assert their presence, the people divided into six groups and dispersed to take up residence at encampments in various areas of their traditional territory. This, however, led to social problems with respect to education, health, economic development, and to ongoing interpersonal, family, and social situations.

In 1989 and 1992 respectively, the Oujé-Bougoumou people concluded agreements with the Province of Quebec and the Government of Canada, securing financial contributions toward the construction of a permanent village. Jurisdiction over the traditional territory of Oujé-Bougoumou has never been relinquished, and even today the First Nation continues to battle to protect its right of access to the land.

The new community site was essentially built between 1991 and 1996. Two of the key leaders and advisors in Oujé-Bougoumou during the planning, creation, and development of the village were Paul Wertman and Abel Bosum, the chief at the time. Bosum recalls, “We came to realize very early in the planning of our new village that the process in which we were involved was in a sense like having a clean slate, a clean piece of paper upon which we were charged with the responsibility to write the first chapter of our community’s future. We were not obliged to build the village in a particular way, and we did not have any preconceived ideas about the best way to proceed. What we did have was a very profound sense of responsibility, which came from the fact that we all realized that we were building our new village not only for ourselves, but also for the future generations of our people.”

**PUBLIC WORKS’
EQUIPMENT**

All-purpose 10-wheel truck
 Three-ton truck
 Three general maintenance pickup trucks
 Maintenance service vehicle
 Backhoe
 Small bulldozer
 Excavator
 Small tractor (snow removal, street cleaning)
 Small lift (warehouse)
 Zoom-boom

*Community Planning
and Design
– Creating an Inspiring Living
Environment*

From the beginning, the community leadership recognized the long-term importance of effective public works. Abel Bosum explains, “Our negotiations were essentially about costing out the implementation of a community master plan. By tabling such a document, we felt confident that we were in a position to implement a truly holistic and comprehensive

plan. Further, we realized that by planning comprehensively, we would also have the ability to include future operations and maintenance considerations in our decision-making. We were in a position to make decisions which clearly would reduce municipal maintenance costs while also conforming to community preference, respecting environmental requirements, and addressing cultural and aesthetic considerations as well.”

An important starting point for the community plan was the selection of the site itself. During negotiations with the federal and provincial governments, the people began to consider what was important in creating their community. Six potential community sites were selected and evaluation criteria were established. The criteria included:

- suitability for construction;
- proximity to hunting territory;
- water quality;
- availability of fire wood;
- aesthetics and view; and
- accessibility.

The preferred site selected by the community was not acceptable to the province on the basis of poor accessibility and related costs. Consequently, the second choice became what is now the site of Oujé-Bougoumou.

In order to develop a community plan that would service generations to come, numerous community meetings were held. Paul Wertman recounts the direction given by the elders: “The community should be economically stable, non-destructive to the land, in harmony with the environment, and not a just a ‘southern-style’ community imported to the North. What the vision really boiled down to is what is now referred to as ‘sustainable development’.”



Community Plan Reflecting Traditional Circular Design

In keeping with this vision, the selected community site had several advantages that were favourable to the construction of an efficient community. The land is sandy and slopes gradually southward to the shore of Lake Opemiska. The sandy conditions allow for more cost-effective construction, and advantage can be taken of the southern exposure for passive solar heating of buildings. The gently sloping terrain also enables gravity to assist with sewage collection, minimizing the number of pumping stations required. Both water and sewer infrastructure have been designed to conform with the natural terrain in order to reduce construction and operating costs. This approach fits well with Oujé-Bougoumou's goals of minimizing environmental impacts and reducing of energy consumption.

Building on the vision developed in community meetings and articulated by the elders, a master plan was established. All of the elements of the master plan contributed to a common theme: to create a social living environment that was compatible with the natural environment. Some of the elements of this plan that are evident in the community include:

- a concentric road layout with most community facilities situated at the core;
- a 'horizontal' architectural theme, creat-

ing a deep connection to the earth by constructing buildings with predominant and bold roof-lines and walls of minimal height; and

- an area set aside for traditional dwellings available for communal use and for the educational purposes of those visiting the community.

Paul Wertman emphasizes that the investment of time, care, and creativity can result in very positive social outcomes. "Architecture is extremely important to a community. It can create a visual landscape that speaks to a people's cultural background. It can generate a feeling that inspires people to shape their lives to match. This was an extremely important lesson for us."

Oujé-Bougoumou engaged an aboriginal architect to work with it for both the community and building design.

Living in a permanent village setting has required an adjustment for some community members. After all, it was not very long ago that some hunting families would only enter towns or villages during the summer season. While the permanent village setting represented security, it also meant a change of lifestyle and way of thinking.

District Heating - Turning Waste Into Energy

The entire community is heated by a district heating system. Hot water, generated from a central plant, circulates in buried pipes throughout the community. Only small heat exchange units are required in each house and building. Paul Wertman says the concept "fits in very nicely with the general set of principles as articulated by the elders." It became even more

DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEM - FEATURES

- Burns wood waste
- Uses hot water, not steam, to convey heat
- Typically consumes 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of sawdust per year
- Costs \$25,000 per year in fuel for the entire village
- Uses fuel oil for peak load and as a backup fuel source
- Includes several automatic functions: stoking, backfire prevention, combustion, ash collection, load matching, water-temperature control
- Wood- and oil-fired boilers
- Emits lower nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions compared to an oil-fired system
- Variable-speed, water-pumping system
- Distribution system: 600 metres of steel pipe, 2,300 metres of plastic pipe
- Heat transfer stations and radiators at individual buildings
- Energy meters for billing purposes
- An outside consulting engineer is retained for ongoing technical advice



Community District Heating Plant



Administration Building – Cultural Design Elements Common Throughout Community Architecture

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply – Groundwater well

Wastewater – Gravity collection, one pumping station, and an aerated lagoon system.

Roads and Walkways

Garbage Collection and Landfill

Public Building Maintenance

Public Landscaping

District Heating

Public Works also maintains the lodge, school, and health clinic by contract.

appealing when it was found that vast quantities of sawdust from a nearby sawmill could be used as an inexpensive fuel source. The annual fuel cost for the entire community is only \$25,000.

When Oujé-Bougoumou constructed its district heating system, the initial capital cost for the biomass boiler plant and distribution piping was relatively high. However, due to relatively low fuel and operational costs, the lifecycle costs are remarkably low. Equally important are the associated benefits of employment generation, reduced environmental impact, and the retention of energy dollars in the community.

This productive use of waste wood is consistent with the Aboriginal approach of drawing no more from the environment than is necessary and using whatever waste is produced for useful purposes. This cost-effective and innovative technology is proving to be one that is practical and consistent with Oujé-Bougoumou's philosophy of sustainable development.

Public Works – From Humble Beginnings

While negotiations were still under way, the people decided to settle at the selected site, living in tents – even during winter months – to make a statement of their intentions and determination. Paul Wertman reflects on earlier days spent at the new site. “Oujé-Bougoumou was looking to find every possible way to bring attention to its cause and living conditions. Leaders recognized the importance of instilling confidence in the people and assuring them that they would eventually achieve their goal of establishing a new community base. But in the meantime, they had to improve living conditions and not just wait for the ‘big apple’. Improving living conditions meant ensuring that even while people were living in frame tents, appropriate water supply and waste treatment facilities were being put in place.”

These were the humble beginnings of public works in the new community of Oujé-Bougoumou. Today, the Public Works Department employs 15 people.

Freddy Bosum is the newly appointed Executive Director of Capital Projects and Public Works. Freddy was a councillor for eight of the past 12 years, and is presently on the Board of Directors for Eanou Compane, the development corporation for the village. In his new role, Bosum has high expectations for the department. “Our system presently functions well,” he says, “but there’s always room for improvement. Perfection is not achievable, but that doesn’t stop us from working toward it.”

In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness, several aspects of the department are under review. Under the revised organizational structure of the department, the

Executive Director has three main areas of responsibility: housing, capital works, and operation and maintenance. Capital works are handled directly by the Executive Director, whereas the Housing Construction Manager and the Director of Public Works report to the Executive Director in their respective areas of responsibility.

The Director of Public Works is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the district heating system, infrastructure (water and sewer), roads, walkways, garbage collection, landfill, and buildings. The Public Works Department has contracts with the Cree School Board and the Cree Health Board and Clinic for janitorial, building, and yard maintenance. These services are also provided for community-owned buildings such as the police station, fire hall, sports lodge, craft shop and Ministry of Natural Resources building. Public Works also works closely with other departments and organizations such as Environment, Recreation, Culture, Eenu Compane, and the Cree Trappers Association.

A Well-Trained Team, During Construction and Beyond

Virtually all staff of the Public Works Department were involved in some way in the construction of the community's infrastructure. Construction contracts typically required the involvement of local community members. Involvement not only provided employment opportunities, but also opportunity for long-term involvement in public works' delivery. As Paul Wertman says, "Our staff knows the location of every pipe and every valve. After all, they were there when it went in the ground."

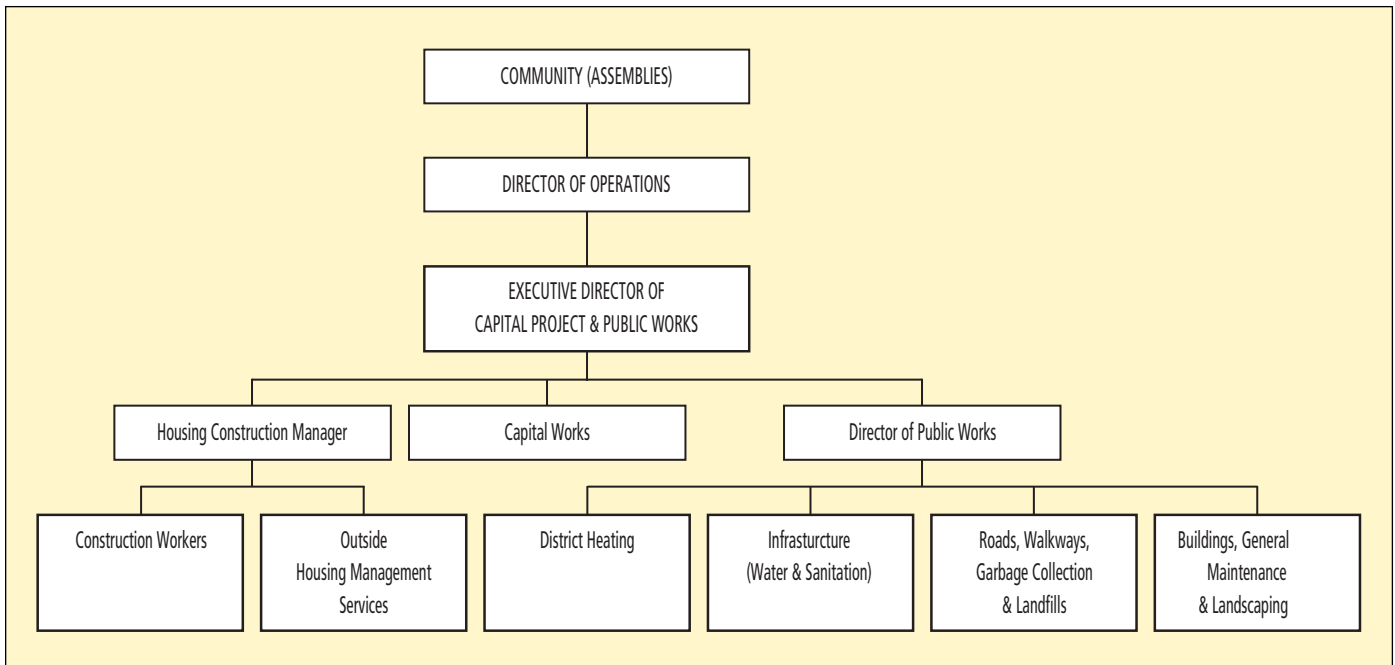
Contracts for all major facilities also required for the preparation of operation and maintenance manuals to provide clear procedures for the proper upkeep of facilities on an on-going basis. By using these manuals and as-built drawings as a reference, Public Works staff has followed a plan of regular maintenance, and become very familiar with the facilities in the process. Troubleshooting, therefore, can

usually be handled by staff without requiring the services of an outside technician. This on-the-job training is complemented with regular training sessions to upgrade skills.

All capital works in the community are managed by the local development corporation. Once a project is completed, the facilities are turned over to the Public Works Department for operation and maintenance.

Oujé-Bougoumou has positioned itself for a financially stable public works operation. Their start-up situation benefited from the fact that the community was constructed during an economic recession, so labour and materials were obtained at a relatively low cost. This allowed for additional items, such as paved roads, to be included in the scope of work.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Financial Stability and Sound Management

In Oujé-Bougoumou, public works are based on a foundation of financial stability and sound management practices. Funds are derived from a combination of annual transfers from the federal government, user fees, equipment rentals, and revenue from contract services. All federal funding is transferred in block, and the First Nation is responsible for its allocation.

Abel Bosum explains the philosophy that underlies the effective management of public works funds: “Our municipal maintenance functions are carried out within a larger context of local self-government. It is locally that the decisions are made regarding the prioritization and allocation of total community revenues. Again, this is done on a comprehensive community-scale basis, by assessing needs, priorities, and goals. The responsibility rests with the community leadership for the development of responsible annual budgets, just as with government anywhere. It is this same governmental structure that establishes zoning regulations and by-laws regarding a range of issues,

from dog control to environmental protection. All new projects or facilities, in fact, require prior approval and authorization by our local Environmental Administrator before being built. Even our entire construction plan needed to be presented to, and be assessed by, our Environment Administrator before we could put a shovel into the ground.”

Once a year, the Executive Director works with senior staff to submit the budget for the upcoming year. A budgetary committee, consisting of the Director of Operations, the Treasurer, and the Head Accountant, will either approve it or request that priorities be re-examined in order to balance it. Freddy Bosum says, “We have to focus on what we need, not necessarily what we want. It requires some give and take.”

During the course of the year, the Executive Director reviews the budget, purchase orders, and accounts payable with senior staff on a weekly basis. The Accounting Department provides a centralized service, which includes monthly statements.

Bosum comments, “One of the first things I want is to get a handle on the annual spending patterns of our department. It’s important to be aware of the seasonal aspects of our operation and how this affects the cash-flow situation. That way we can monitor where we are with our spending at any point and know exactly where we stand.” A general community service fee is implemented on a fixed-rate basis. The fee covers services such as insurance, as well as heating, water, sewer, and management.

Bosum emphasizes the importance of staff being empowered to stay on track. “In the past, we’ve had some difficulty with requests to undertake activities that stray from our priorities. We are now putting in place policies to ensure that work is undertaken only after passing through the appropriate channels, regardless of who is requesting the work. This approach is strongly supported by Chief and Council.”

Another of Bosum’s tasks is to assess the department’s training program. This means analyzing the qualifications and training that staff have and identifying areas that require improvement. “In some

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Visionary leadership
- Determination
- Effective use of outside resources
- Blending of tradition with innovation
- Sound financial management



Celebrating Success
- Opening of Waapiitiwewan School

sectors, we have written manuals with job descriptions and information that will help our staff to carry out their function. In other sectors, we have yet to fully develop this sort of material.”

The Public Works Department is working toward a formal asset management program. The community places a high priority on maintaining a good record-keeping system including as-built drawings and contract documents.

“We are presently working on our five-year community plan,” says Bosum. “Our approach is to involve every sector in the community that may be affected. Typically, a committee will have representation from elders, youth, traditional hunters, professionals, and at least one woman.”

Vision

Much can be learned from the experience gained by the Oujé-Bougoumou people in creating their community. Paul Wertman emphasizes, “A critical key to success is excellent leadership and consistent vision. It is also important to back up that vision with the practices, procedures, and rules so that the community can withstand changes in leadership and personalities.”

The vision that Oujé-Bougoumou adopted was one that would inspire its community members. In order to achieve that vision, a significant investment of resources, time, will, and creativity was necessary. Paul Wertman considers that it was certainly worth the effort and ponders, “Do you pay for an inspiring vision or a disposable community?”

The planning of a community from the ground up has distinct advantages and challenges. Wertman sums it up when he says, “You can dream your dreams and the only limit is the resources at your disposal. The challenge is to modify your dream to adjust to the resources.” What could an existing community learn from Oujé-Bougoumou’s experience of creating an inspiring living and social environment? Wertman says, “The biggest challenge would be to break the existing way of thinking.”



Typical Housing Unit

Housing To Be Proud Of

Oujé-Bougoumou takes pride in its housing program, under which four or five houses are constructed every year. Some of the features of the program include:

- it is self-developed and financed;
- house designs enable community members to build their own houses;
- it is appropriate to Cree culture;
- efficient maintenance and heating (R-2000 and beyond);
- the associated Home Ownership Program encourages asset protection and instills pride; and
- members can choose a rental program with options to purchase.

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE

The community features an adjacent traditional village which is frequently used for cultural and community events and plays a part in the community's cultural tourism programs.



Astiugamikw -Traditional Dwelling

FIRST NATION CONTACT:

Mr. Freddy Bosum
Executive Director of Capital Projects &
Public Works
Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation
Oujé-Bougoumou, QC

Tel.: (418) 745-2519
Fax: (418) 745-3544
E-mail: freddy@ouje.ca

PEIGAN FIRST NATION



Sharing the story

Peigan First Nation is a mid-size community situated in the foothills of Alberta's Rocky Mountains. Public works are delivered by a close-knit team of well-trained personnel. A computerized maintenance management system is the backbone of operations, maintenance, and record-keeping, generating work orders that provide guidance for daily activities. Success is credited to inspirational leadership and an investment in people with high expectations for performance.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population – 2,200
Reserve Area – 45,000 ha
Townsite – Brocket
Region – Alberta
Geographic Zone 1 – within 50 km of service centre
Environmental Index
– Code B – between 45° and 50° latitude



Peigan is located along Highway 3 between the towns of Fort Macleod and Pincher Creek west of Lethbridge in the province of Alberta. The community is nestled up against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, near the U.S. border. The Oldman River winds its way just north of the highway, while the townsite of Brocket is located on reserve, south of the highway.

The Pikani people are part of the Blackfoot Nation, which includes tribes in the Montana and Alberta plains area. As traditional plains people, their lifestyle relied heavily on the buffalo. When the herds began to disappear, the Pikani turned to ranching.

The population on reserve is currently 2,200 people. The reserve lands consist of approximately 45,000 hectares. About 60 per cent of the

population live in the townsite of Brocket, while the remaining population is largely rural.

At one time, the mandate for looking after public works functions was under the portfolio of the Housing Department. In 1982, Public Works was set up as a separate entity, with the purpose of maintaining capital assets funded by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). In January 1986, Floyd Provost was appointed as Director of Public Works.



Old Man River Valley



Work Orders

Work Orders - The Backbone of Peigan Public Works

Prior to returning to the First Nation to take on this position, Floyd had worked for an oil company in Pincher Creek, and in the mining industry in Thompson, Manitoba. It was through this experience that Floyd was exposed to the idea of maintenance management and the work order system. When INAC was looking for communities to pilot the operation of a maintenance management system, Floyd accepted the opportunity. “We made a commitment, so then we had to jump in with both feet,” Floyd indicates. “We told them, give us a chance and we’ll make it work.” And so began the laying of the foundation for a small but successful public works system.

Floyd goes on to explain that the original system provided by INAC for the pilot had been designed for building maintenance and was not robust enough to handle the variety of infrastructure services in the community. Floyd wanted a system to cover water, sewer, roads, buildings, fire protection equipment – everything that was being funded through Public Works. This led to the implementation of the Total Management System (TMS), a program originally designed to maintain infrastructure in the penal system in the United States.

Part of the pilot program included funds

for a maintenance management officer. Floyd indicates that their initial approach was to search across Canada for the right person. They hired a Certified Engineering Technologist (C.E.T.) who was working for a municipal engineering department in operations. When the individual moved on to another position, Floyd’s response says much about his approach to people management: “We hire someone and train them. If they came through our door and went on to another position, then I feel good that we helped put them there.”

Later, Floyd canvassed consultants and other business associates to learn what they looked for in a candidate in order to ensure stability and longevity in the position. The answer was to find someone with roots and connection to the geographic area. Floyd now hires based on recommendations from his various contacts in the consulting, government, and municipal arenas.

The present Maintenance Management Officer is Randy Wolf Tail, a Peigan community member and C.E.T. in training. Randy, who has been on the job for just over nine months, proudly shows off the TMS system on his computer. He says though it took him a little while to get to know all the things that the system can do, it is a fairly straightforward program. The TMS system generates work orders based on preventative and routine maintenance, and tracks completed work and the maintenance costs for each piece of equipment.



Randy Wolf Tail – Maintenance Management Officer

Weekly work orders generated by the computer determine the Public Works Department’s priorities. The work orders are sorted and placed in a hanging basket in the front lobby. Staff pick up the work orders each morning to determine the day’s activities. At the end of the day, time spent on each task is recorded on the work order sheets. The completed work order information is transferred back to the TMS system with time and equipment codes in order to update the database.

“For me,” Randy indicates, “I like it because you can go back anytime. For instance, everyone was questioning when was the last time we pumped out this sewage holding tank, so I went to the program, and within a few seconds I was able to tell them when we had done it last. It’s a helpful machine – I’m really amazed.”

**PUBLIC WORKS’
EQUIPMENT**

- Three graders
- Two gravel trucks
- Garbage truck
- Two water tankers
- Two vacuum sewage trucks
- Tractor

The Public Works Team

There are approximately 20 people on staff, with four people in the office and the remainder in the field. Randy Wolf Tail is the Maintenance Management Officer; Casey Provost, the Accountant; Lisa Stufco, the Dispatcher; and Floyd Provost, the Director.

In addition to water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, roads, garbage collection, and building custodial services, the Public Works Department also pro-

vides security, assists with cemetery maintenance, and looks after ice maintenance at the arena. The Public Works Department is also responsible for capital project implementation for all infrastructure projects. The First Nation is currently constructing a new slow sand filtration water treatment plant.

In 1988, Floyd was appointed Fire Chief, and so all staff members of the Public Works Department automatically became members of the voluntary fire department.

Peigan has a mutual aid agreement with several neighbouring municipalities for emergency services, all of which use volunteer forces. The nearest paid fire department is in the city of Lethbridge, 80 kilometres to the east.

Floyd believes strongly in training and certification. His Maintenance Management Officer was able to travel to the U.S. for MMS training. Both Randy Wolf Tail and the water operator have received training

from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) to obtain Level I certification. The arena operators have received training from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and are certified as Level II ice maintenance operators. The First Nation has bought a heavy equipment certification course and all drivers obtain the required qualifications.

Extensive training is required for firefighting. As firefighting school can be very expensive, Floyd capitalizes as much as possible on courses being offered in nearby communities, often sending team members to participate in training exercises.

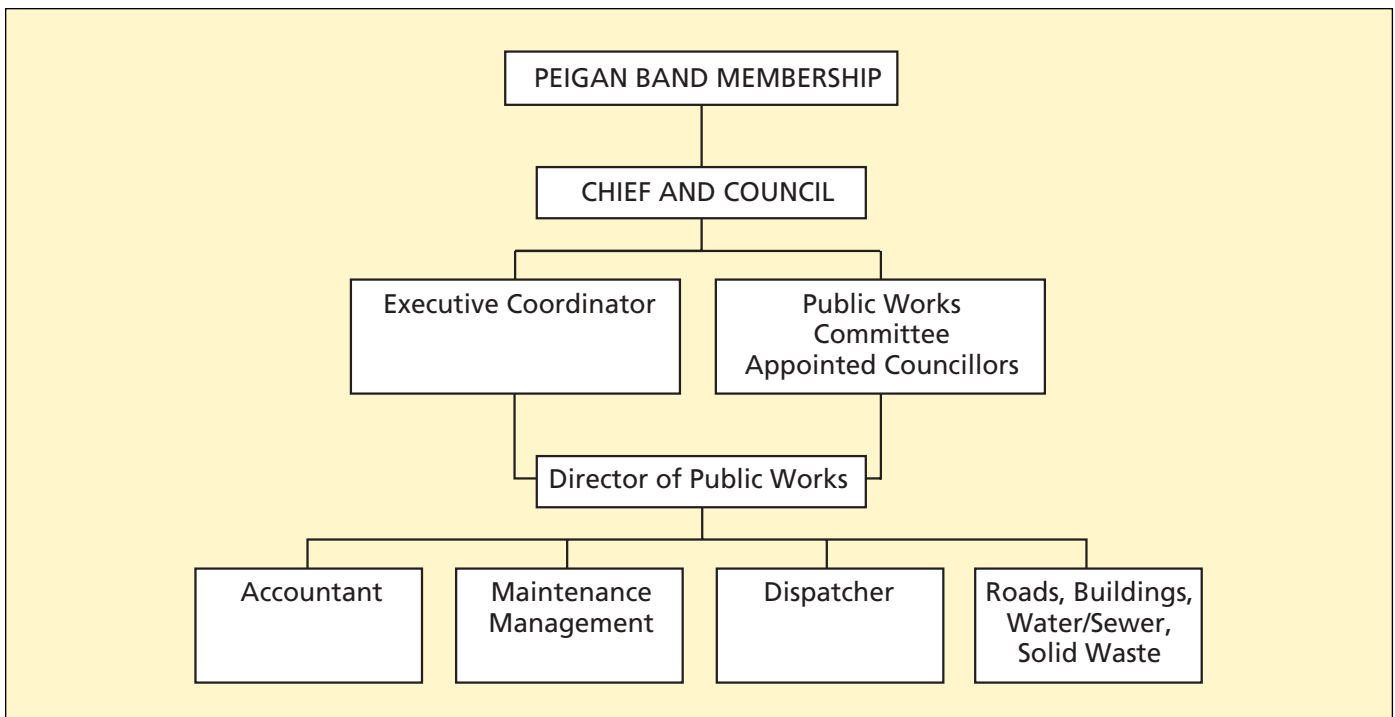
With an insufficient volume of work to maintain trained tradespeople on staff, Floyd often encourages local businesses to hire and provide training to community members by agreeing to use their services for all of the First Nation's business. Several individuals who have obtained

their start in this manner now operate their own business on reserve.

Health and safety are also important. Each of the men in the field carries a two-way radio and is in constant communication with Lisa at the front desk. Lisa keeps a log of the time and location of all truck haul staff. Drivers radio in at each building where they stop. This allows Lisa to monitor their progress and ensure that things are going well. It also allows Lisa to track who has received service and helps in future scheduling and answering calls from community members.

When asked about human resources practices such as annual performance reviews, Floyd indicates that there is no formal evaluation; rather, he conducts on-going day-to-day reviews. Each morning, he reviews the work orders completed on the previous day with staff on an individual basis, discussing any problems and improvements that could be made.

PUBLIC WORKS' ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply – Supply wells draw from a gravel bed filter in the floodplain of the Old Man River across the highway from the community. The distribution pumping and chlorination is located behind the Public Works office. A new slow sand filtration treatment plant is currently under construction.

Approximately 60 per cent of the houses are connected to a piped water distribution, while the remainder receive truck haul service.



Wastewater – The collection system is a combination of gravity pipe and truck haul. Treatment is provided by a four-cell, facultative lagoon.

Roads

Garbage Collection and Landfill – This is based on fee for service (the fee is waived for elders)

Building Custodial

Arena and Community Hall – This includes bookings and ice maintenance

Security and Cemetery Custodial

Fire Protection – Public Works Department employees are automatically members of the volunteer fire department. Lisa Stufco acts as the dispatcher for emergency services.

Capital Planning and Asset Management

Peigan is midway through the third update of its community plan. The plan is then used to generate a five-year capital plan. Floyd indicates that at times, the plan appears too ambitious compared to the available funding. However, Floyd indicates patiently that he is willing to take small steps and a phased-in approach to implementation. For example, the community is currently on the sixth phase of an eight-phase plan to implement piped infrastructure servicing.

When it comes to asset management and budget planning, Floyd relies heavily on the Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS), which is updated every five years. And, of course, the TMS is the main vehicle used for asset management planning. Floyd identifies three types of work orders – routine, preventative, and maintenance projects/equipment replacement – all three of which are budgeted and funded from the department’s annual maintenance budget.

The ACRS report can help to identify requirements in the third category. For instance, the community’s facultative sewage lagoon was constructed in the 1970s. A recent ACRS report identified a minor saturation problem and seepage along some of the berms. Repair work for the berms included removing and replacing the clay core, covering by pit run, and capping with armour stone.

Peigan relies on existing technical standards whereas regulatory guidelines. Federal guidelines are generally followed, whereas provincial guidelines are often used because they are more specific (one example is with septic system design).

“Staff is self-motivated enough to leave their signature on each job.”

Floyd Provost, Director of Public Works



Brochet Townsite

Accountability

The department operates on a balanced budget. Accounting is provided by Casey Provost on a part-time basis. Casey also provides accounting services for the Human Resources Development Department, another organization of Council. Casey is a recent college graduate in business administration with a major in accounting. He has been working for the Public Works Department for a year and a half.

Books are kept using both ACCPAC and Quick Books accounting packages. Inputs to the programs are taken from the completed work orders each day. With over 500 cost accounting categories, Casey is able to keep track of the department’s operations, and can show Floyd where the department is at relative to the budget at any given time. Casey says that the trick is to “keep the income and expenses together.”

The budget is prepared annually and the formal review and audit is done on an annual basis. However, Casey regularly reviews the actual versus budgeted amounts with Floyd. The income side of the budget is almost entirely funded by INAC through the community’s contribu-

tion arrangement. User fees are charged for some services, including:

- garbage collection (the fee is waived for elders);
- septic tank cleaning;
- community hall rental;
- loam and gravel hauling; and
- equipment rental.

Floyd reports to Council through the Public Works Committee and the Executive Administrator. The committee is made up of four councillors, and is involved in funding issues, approving the annual budget, setting priorities, and health and safety issues.

When asked how he manages the problem of Council interfering with the everyday operations and decision-making of the department, Floyd replies that during the orientation for each new council, he is allotted two hours to introduce councillors to the public works program and issues. Floyd takes this time to outline the department's responsibilities and what is achievable with the funding it has. He also tries to get councillors with technical backgrounds to sit on the Public Works Committee, so that they will have a better insight into the issues facing the department.

One example quoted by Floyd is how roads are prioritized for snow removal. The Road Snow Removal Policy is made clear to all councillors and community members: the main roads are cleared first; next on the priority list are community members the Health Department identifies as 'at risk' (including expectant mothers, dialysis patients, and the elderly with identified health concerns). The problem of conflicting priorities and expectations is not uncommon. Floyd has compared notes with other local directors from neighboring municipalities and First Nations at an informal rap session during

a meeting which happened to follow a particularly bad snowstorm. "It was like an AA meeting – we had to get it all out," he says.

When asked about accountability, Floyd refers to the contribution arrangement and to the objective of the department, which is to keep the facilities at or near their original condition. "The work order system provides accountability, as every employee must account for their hours spent and each hour is charged to a cost account. Staff is self-motivated enough to leave their signature on each job."

As the department operates on a balanced budget, non-routine expenses are forecasted and budgeted as required. For example, every four years gravel is crushed and stockpiled; money is set aside each year for this activity. Floyd adds, "Plus, I'm very afraid of auditors. I don't know who I'm more afraid of – auditors or dentists."

When it comes to record-keeping, Floyd admits that they are hoarders. In addition to computer records, paper documents are filed by year and by asset. When they recently sold a used generator to a neighboring community, they were able to supply manuals and work histories dating back to 1987.

Partnerships and Outside Services

Floyd relies heavily on expert technical services. Funding is set aside each year for inspection services and technical advice from consultants and other experts in the field. Floyd favours the development of long-term relationships with consultants and tradespeople, because he believes in the advantages of continuity, which include knowledge of the system and building trust. Regional INAC policy allows contracts less than \$50,000 to be

awarded at the First Nation's discretion.

Although the local Tribal Council does not have a public works component, Peigan does make use of the provincial Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG) as a resource. Councillor Daniel Northman is the Peigan representative to TSAG and attends regular planning and information sessions. The First Nation also participates in TSAG workshops and training sessions.

Floyd encourages partnerships and interaction with neighboring municipalities and First Nations, including participation in professional organizations and groups. He is involved with several such organizations in his roles as Director of Public Works, Fire Chief, and Director of Disaster Services. In addition, the water operators participate in the provincial operators association. The mutual aid agreement for emergency services involves considerable interaction with neighbouring communities. In high-stress situations such as grass fires, train derailments, and highway accidents, cooperation and interdependence with neighbouring forces are critical.

A separate department of Council has been set up to liaise with local power, gas, and telephone utilities.

Peigan Public Works operates an open-door policy to assist other First Nations in any way that it can. Several First Nations have shown interest in the community's MMS and Floyd hopes that he has been able to help them in this area.

"We have an open-door policy to assist other First Nations."

Floyd Provost, Director of Public Works

Emergency Planning

Several years ago, Floyd identified the need for emergency planning in the community. After repeated efforts to bring attention to this matter, the chief at the time finally answered his concerns by appointing him Director of Disaster Services. Over the years, under Floyd's direction, a detailed and comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan was developed. Floyd recalls the flood of 1995 and how "all we had was a draft." Soon after, interest in the plan intensified and the draft was finalized into the current version.

The Vision – A Healthy Community

Floyd quietly acknowledges the compliment on what he has managed to accomplish, but he says it's not all fun and games. Dealing with many of the tragedies can be emotionally exhausting for staff, and Floyd sometimes finds it takes a lot of effort to keep everyone going.



Pikani Campus Education

His admonition to his team is "to be the best." He says, "Sometimes, you look at the rest of the equipment that the other fire departments have, and think, 'At least we can outwork them'."

Floyd is an inspiring leader for his team and in his community. He sets a high benchmark for his people and asks them to bring the bar up another notch each day, serving their community in a better fashion and trying to do better than yesterday. His vision is for a healthy community. He explains the motivation behind his leadership: "This is my reserve, these are my people. I have a moral responsibility to do the best I can for them."

WEATHER DANCER I

With the recent deregulation of electricity, wind power is of increasing interest. A number of pilot wind-generating projects have been sponsored by the Alberta government.

In a joint venture with EPCOR Power Development Corporation, Peigan Indian Utility Corporation recently commissioned 'Weather Dancer I', the community's first wind turbine. Standing 72 metres high, Weather Dancer I will generate approximately 2,960 megawatt hours of electricity each year for the community.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Inspirational leadership
- Investment in people
- High benchmark of performance
- Integrated MMS based on work orders
- Cost accounting

FIRST NATION CONTACT:

Mr. Floyd Provost
Director of Public Works
Peigan First Nation
P.O. Box 40
Brocket, AB TOK 0H0

Tel.: (403) 965-3883
Fax: (403) 965-3931

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER

Sharing the story

Six Nations of the Grand River, near Brantford, Ontario is Canada's largest First Nation in terms of population and has a comprehensive public works system. The key to successfully operating a system of this scale is to have a well-organized management plan and to be committed to that plan. At Six Nations, a sound system of policies and procedures has been developed and is implemented with vigour. Input and involvement is provided by the management and staff of the Public Works Department and also by community members, leaders, and representatives of other departments. This is an example of a relatively large First Nations community that has, over the years, guided the evolution of its Public Works Department to one that is effective and accountable.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population – 11,000
 Reserve Area – 18,200 ha
 Townsite – Ohsweken
 Region – Ontario
 Geographic Zone 1
 Environmental Index – Code A – less than 40° latitude

Website: www.sixnations.ca

Six Nations is the largest First Nation in Canada, and is home to the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora people. It is situated in the heart of the Grand River watershed in southern Ontario. Urban centres such as Brantford, Burlington, Hamilton, and Toronto are easily accessible by car.

As you cross the Chiefswood Bridge leading to Six Nations, there is immediate evidence of the co-existence of the natural environment, local heritage, and public works' infrastructure. The community water treatment plant is situated along the river shore, alongside the historical homestead of poet E. Pauline Johnson and Chiefswood Park, home of the Six Nations Champion of Champions International Pow Wow.

Beyond the Chiefswood Bridge is the village of Ohsweken, the developed core of Six Nations. Six

Nations has a total land area of approximately 18,200 hectares and is approximately 12 kilometres square. Six Nations has experienced tremendous growth in the past decade with the impact of Bill C-31, and with other factors that have encouraged people to move back to the community: in 1985 the total membership was 11,627, with 6,987 people living in the community; in 2001, membership was approximately 21,000, with about 11,000 living in the community permanently. As the community has grown, so too has its need for essential services. Over the course of the past 20 years, the Six Nations Public Works Department has evolved and adapted to meet these increasing demands and changing times.



Chiefswood Bridge

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply - Grand River

This includes

- conventional filtration package plant,
- elevated storage reservoir,
- piped water in Ohsweken, and
- private wells in rural areas.



Water Treatment Plant

Sewage Treatment

- This includes a gravity collection system in Ohsweken, facultative lagoon treatment, and septic system/holding tanks in rural areas.



Sewage Pumping Station

Roads

- 171 km.

Fire protection

- four fire halls.

Schools

This includes

- five elementary schools,
- both regular and traditional language classes offered, and
- students bused to nearby communities for high school.

Landfill

- open pit landfill method.

Working Towards A Vision

“We look to other (outside) communities to see what they have and aspire to achieve the same. That is what our community members deserve and that is our goal.”

Councillor Roger Jonathan, Chair of Public Works Committee

The story of public works at Six Nations is one of pride and commitment. Once a small department consisting of only four people, the Public Works Department now includes a staff of 40 to 50 full-time employees. It is responsible for roads, bridges, schools, water and sewer, waste disposal, and fire protection in the community. It also offers administrative support to emergency response activities. People working in the Public Works Department recognize the importance of the services they provide and of the health and safety of the community.

As with many First Nations communities, Six Nations has a community plan and a capital plan, which are periodically updated. Dayle Bomberry, Director of Public Works, considers the capital plan to be a useful tool for planning purposes and for looking ahead to future servicing requirements so that the Department of Public Works “doesn’t get taken by surprise when certain things come up.”

“Every decision we make and every activity we undertake is for the health and safety of Six Nations.”

Dayle Bomberry, Director of Public Works

Increasing Expectations

The development of the Public Works Department has had its challenges. As the community has grown and diversified, so too has the need for public works services.

Expectations for an improved level of service have increased, standards have become more rigorous, environmental protection has become more prominent, and the risks associated with public and employee health and safety have demanded increased attention. “It seems that people’s expectations of public works services are increasing, but there is not a corresponding awareness of all that is involved in delivering that level of service and the associated costs,” explains Dayle.

Six Nations has responded to these challenges with perseverance, resourcefulness, and innovative approaches. While Public Works staff are proud of what they have been able to accomplish with limited resources, they see opportunity for improvement and continue to work toward their long-term vision of public works in the community.

Organization Is Essential

The organizational structure of the Public Works Department has been developed with careful consideration and planning. Job descriptions are in place for all management and staff positions. In the past, Six Nations has had a director of operations to coordinate the various departments. The present portfolio system involves the assignment of a councillor responsible for each department and committee.

The Public Works Department is managed by the Director of Public Works. Dayle Bomberry has held this position for just over a year. As with many managerial positions, much is required of Dayle to juggle the demands of what some consider to be the largest and most diverse of the community’s departments. In order to meet these demands, Dayle works closely with his managers in the areas of administration, school maintenance, roads,

water/sewer, landfill, and the fire department. Some of the features of the organizational arrangement include:

- clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and job descriptions;
- opportunity for mentoring and sharing of departmental history;
- policies, including guidelines for their implementation; and
- mechanisms for regular policy review and updates.

Funding arrangements have an impact on the organizational structure as they do with many aspects of public works delivery. According to Bomberry and former Director of Public Works Duff Davis, there are several examples of this:

- Much of the focus for funding is presently on water. While it is recognized that this is a critical service, there is concern that other services are ‘slipping’ due to a lack of funding.

- School maintenance and fire protection might otherwise be independent departments, allowing a greater focus on their mandates. Due to a lack of funding, Six Nations has opted to provide these services under Public Works.

- Due to the allocation of funding, the design and construction of infrastructure for many Six Nations subdivisions is coordinated by the Housing Department, and not turned over to Public Works until construction is complete.

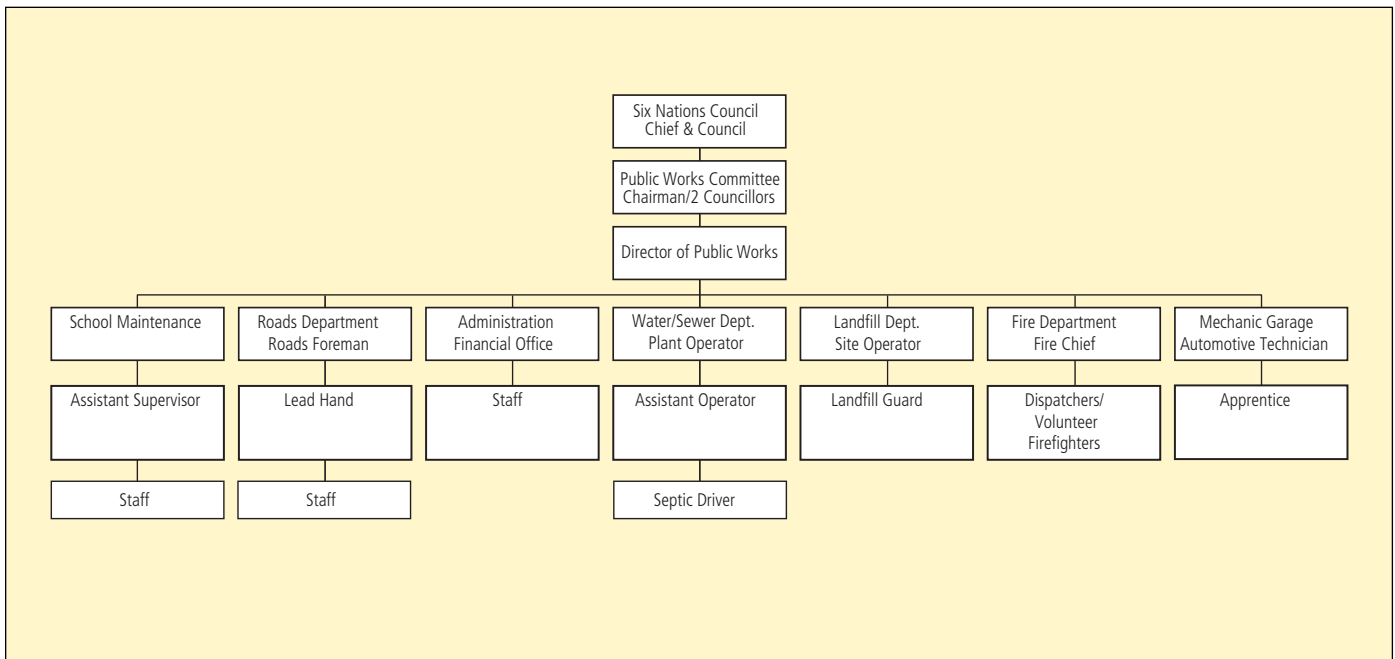
The staff of the Six Nations Public Works Department takes pride in fulfilling their roles as part of a team tasked with delivering essential services to members of their community. Six Nations Council has placed competent and committed people in positions of responsibility. It has given them the tools to fulfill their responsibilities by creating a sound framework of policies and procedures, which serves as a guideline for action and decision-making. Checks and balances are in place to ensure

that departmental objectives are met effectively and efficiently.

According to Councillor Roger Jonathan, Chair of the Six Nations Public Works Department, community leadership plays a significant role in developing a successful public works delivery program. He emphasizes the importance of having political leaders who stay focused on their assigned role instead of getting distracted by the day-to-day administration and operation of the department. In his view, this means:

- ensuring that qualified, capable people are in the right positions;
- developing clear, effective policies;
- having confidence in the policies and in staff to do their jobs, without undue interference;
- keeping the lines of communication open so that political leaders know what the public works people need to ‘get the job done’; and
- providing the necessary support, including the pursuit of available funding.

PUBLIC WORKS’ ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PUBLIC WORKS' EQUIPMENT

Landfill compactor
Septic disposal truck
Truck for environmental management
Truck - commercial leasing
Truck for public works
Four tandems (with snowplow and sand/salt attachments)
Two graders
Loader/backhoe
Loader
Tractor/mower
Bust crusher
Bulldozer
Excavator
Two utility trailers
Four fire pumps
Two rescue trucks
Fire tanker
Solid waste compactor
Portable pumps
Portable generators

Policies and Procedures Provide the Framework

"Policies and procedures are there when you need them ... they run themselves."

Councillor Roger Jonathan, Chair of Public Works Committee

The success of Six Nations Public Works is partially attributable to the development and implementation of sound operational management policies and procedures. Some community initiatives that are applied within the Public Works Department in cooperation with other departments include the following:

- *Employee Policy* – for consistent expectations of performance and conduct;
- *Hiring Policy* – establishing a fair and

consistent process for hiring competent and qualified personnel;

- *Tendering Policy* – ensuring a fair and effective process;
- *Emergency Measures Plan* – working with other departments for emergency preparedness;
- *Health and Safety Committee* – for the protection of employee and public health and safety; and
- *Environmental Procedures* – working closely with the Environmental Department in the area of spill reporting.

In February or March each year, the Public Works Department reviews the policies of each sub-department. The Director of Public Works obtains input from each of the supervisors regarding recent learning experiences and potential improvements to policies affecting their specific services. Together, the team pinpoints situations that have arisen in the previous year that have the potential to occur again. The best approach for dealing with these situations is identified and, if appropriate, included in the policy framework. The Director then presents recommended policy revisions to the Public Works Committee.

Generally, revisions are substantiated on the basis of financial grounds and/or community need. If policy revisions are expected to have a significant direct impact on community members, a public awareness and information-sharing initiative is launched.

New Approaches to Financial Management

As a result of pressures for expanded services and funding limitations, the Public Works Department is struggling to maintain a balanced budget. Tom Darnay, Director of Finance, indicates that it is one

of the few departments of Council which tends to run a deficit.

"At times we go ahead and do what we know makes sense and what must be done, even if the funding is not available. This can lead to the perception of mismanagement. It can also lead to a deficit situation, which is something we are working very hard at avoiding," explains Sherry Lickers, former Financial Officer of Public Works. "Still, we must do what needs to be done."

As is the case with many public organizations, Six Nations Public Works is finding new ways to reconcile the difference between the need for essential services and community facilities, and the limitations in available funding and resources. Six Nations has worked to make the best use of what is available by:

- clearly defining needs and priorities;
- focusing efforts on finding alternate sources of funding;
- cost-sharing among departments (i.e., bulk purchase agreements and equipment sharing);
- 'fee for service' billings;
- conducting detailed quarterly financial reviews and a variance analysis (budget versus actual spending), using a computer-based financial management system, accountable to the Finance Department; and
- developing policies for purchasing, tendering, and spending approval limits.

Public Works Chair, Councillor Roger Jonathan, sees a strong need for community politicians to dedicate a significant portion of their time to the pursuit of funding sources. He emphasizes that this effort should not be taken lightly and should not be underestimated. Funding channels and opportunities are limited, so best use must be made of what is available. This may mean finding alternate sources to supplement core funding.

Six Nations Public Works is also changing the way it does business. End users are now paying directly for some of the services and facilities that they benefit from. Some examples of these include water/sewage usage (based on metered water use), connection costs, entrance culverts, and the rental of school gymnasiums.



Water Tower

Public Works' billing policies are backed by rigorous collection practices. For instance, if a water bill is not paid, the user receives verbal notification, then written notification. After 30 days, water to the user is 'cut off' and, if necessary, a collection agency is called upon. Collecting fees can be difficult for Public Works staff because, as they say, "We see these people every day." Nevertheless, the approach has been successful. Strong support from the community's leadership has been essential in carrying out the strategy. To further assist with collection, staff feel it would be useful to undertake team-building and conflict-resolution training.

Some services that were once provided free of charge – these include garbage collection and snow removal of private driveways for handicapped individuals – are now provided by local businesses. Likewise, certain aspects of recycling and hazardous waste management are handled by outside businesses. In such cases, the Six Nations Public Works Department assists in the public awareness and coordination activities necessary to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

Although the use of local suppliers is a factor in purchasing and tendering decisions, other important factors include the qualifications of service providers, the quality of

purchased goods, and competitive costs. Tom Darnay indicates that preference to local suppliers is limited to a maximum of 10 per cent over pricing of the lowest bid.

Six Nations makes efforts to identify opportunities for inter-departmental spending efficiencies through shared resources and bulk purchasing of services, including:

- office supplies;
- phone services;
- life and health benefits;
- audit tendering;
- vehicles;
- electrical and mechanical services; and
- insurance.

Insurance coverage is an important aspect of the Six Nations risk management strategy. Insurance is covered by a comprehensive policy that includes all departments of Chief and Council. The insurance is tendered every three years, typically to the lowest bidder. This process is overseen by the Finance Department. Due to the complexity and critical importance of insurance coverage, Six Nations has hired an independent risk assessment company to evaluate risks and compare them to policy coverage and to review bids and make recommendations.

These are just some of the approaches being taken by Six Nations to deal with the gap between public works needs, and the



Six Nations Recycling Program

funding available to meet those needs. Dayle Bomberry sees this issue as the greatest challenge for his department in the future.



New Moccasin Trail Subdivision

MILESTONES IN PUBLIC WORKS DEVELOPMENT

1969	Opening of first water plant
1971	Opening of initial sewage lagoons
1983	Construction of a new Roads Department garage
1983	Construction of the Chiefswood Bridge
1986	Landfill placed under Public Works jurisdiction Construction of Public Works administration staff office
1988	School Maintenance Department transferred to Public Works
1988	Renewal of the water plant in Chiefswood Park
1988	Construction of a new water tower
1990	Construction of new sewage lagoons
1990s	Development of a maintenance management system

“We are not limited by vision or planning. We are limited by funding. Funding formulas and approaches must be re-evaluated.”

Dayle Bomberry, Director of Public Works

Protecting Assets and Managing Operations

With funding limitations and for reasons of public health and safety, Six Nations recognizes the importance of protecting their capital assets. “In many cases, we know what the logical thing to do is, in order to maximize the life of our equipment. We know that in the long run it’s better to give it the necessary attention before problems compound,” says Roger Smith, School Maintenance Supervisor. “The problem is, there is no funding to do what we know should be done. Sometimes we have no choice but to do it anyway.”

Six Nations is actively using a computerized Maintenance Management System (MMS). Staff find it a useful tool to identify and track maintenance requirements, particularly at the water treatment plant.

Six Nations also makes use of existing and available standards and guidelines wherever practical. Useful sources of such information include the Ontario First Nation Technical Services Corporation and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The Roads Department makes use of the Ontario Provincial Standard Specifications.

Information management is another key ingredient. Records are archived and dedicated staff convert written material to microfiche for filing and long-term storage.

Human Resources – Developing Capable and Confident Personnel

Most staff consider the Public Works Department to be a good place to work, have a sense of accomplishment and belonging that comes from serving their community, and are appreciative of their designated role.

The hiring policy at Six Nations provides for three or four people to carry out the interview and selection process: a representative from the Human Resources Department, the director from the appropriate department, the direct boss of the position to be filled, and a member of the community. A roster is kept of community members who have received special training in employment-hiring techniques.

Finding qualified candidates is very important to the success of the department. “We can’t afford to hire people who are not qualified,” says Sherry Lickers. “The funding that is available for training is very limited, so what is available must be directed to keeping people current and sustaining their qualifications.”

Although staff satisfaction and commitment is high, Dayle Bomberry notes that it is sometimes difficult to keep highly trained staff, as Six Nations often cannot compete with wages available to individuals looking outside the community.

The department recognizes the value of staff who are comfortable with interpersonal networking. People with these skills and aptitudes can assist in increasing the collective awareness of the community in terms of what is current, applicable, and useful, capitalizing on opportunities for funding, technical training, and capacity building.

Performance reviews are a regular and mandatory part of personnel management at Six Nations. The employment policy allows for a four-step disciplinary process: i) verbal notification; ii) written notification; iii) suspension; and iv) termination.

Another aspect of human resources is employee health and safety. The Public Works Department has been so successful in fostering an awareness of safety issues that it has been incorporated into the everyday psyche of the staff. Gary VanEvery, Roads Foreman, notes that his staff will often stop and adjust the approach to a task in order to address safety concerns.



Accounting and Clerical Staff

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Strong leadership
- Sound policies and procedures
- Cooperation
- Checks and balances
- Mentoring

**VOICE OF EXPERIENCE
– PASSING ON
KNOWLEDGE
THROUGH
MENTORSHIP**



Dufferin Davis
Director of
Technical
Services

Duff Davis was the first official Director of Public Works at Six Nations and held that position for 13 years. He has made many of the decisions that have influenced the way public works are delivered at Six Nations.

Duff Davis is presently Director of Technical Services, a position that allows him to pass on the benefits of his knowledge, experience, and skills. Duff also provides advice to other departments on matters involving technical assessments and the tendering of technical projects.

Phil Montour, Director of Lands Research, is responsible for several information management programs at Six Nations. According to Phil, "We are presently putting the information systems in place that will assist us in ensuring the continuity of knowledge. For now, we are still in a transitional phase and continue to rely on people like Duff who retain much of our cumulative knowledge."

Dayle Bomberry, new to the role of Director of Public Works, says, "Having Duff available has helped me to familiarize myself with the position." In time it will be his turn to pass on his knowledge and to mentor others at Six Nations, who will be responsible for public works in the future.

**Public Relations - Community
Comes First**

The Six Nations Public Works Department makes every effort to establish strong public relations, focusing on public awareness, education, consultation, and communication. Some examples of issues and events having significant public relations aspects at Six Nations include:

- water quality issues, particularly for the source, the Grand River;
- mould and septic system concerns at local schools;
- Clean Up Week;
- Hazardous Waste Day;
- recycling practices;
- fire safety;
- septic system and holding tank management; and
- the implementation of user fees.

The Public Works Department uses several methods to assist in its public relations efforts, including local newspapers, community talk shows on local radio, and face-to-face contact by office and field staff. Still, word of mouth is considered to be the most influential factor affecting the community's perception of the department.

Looking Ahead

Dayle Bomberry expects that while the range of services provided by Public Works will likely remain the same for the foreseeable future, their scope and method of delivery are likely to improve. Six Nations plans to spread the geographic reach of core public works services to include more people in the community. Another goal is to take full advantage of emerging technologies, not only in the area of infrastructure implementation, but also for administrative functions. "If our accounting processes become more exact,

then facts will be facts and we will be in a better position to continue to provide necessary services to protect community health and safety."

**BLACK ROCK
OPERATION
– RUNNING GRAVEL**

The company Canadian Gypsum mines hydrous calcium sulfate on Six Nations lands. In return for these rights, the company gives black rock tailings to the Six Nations Public Works Department, provided that they pay for transportation, stock piling, and distribution. Six Nations Public Works provides the personnel and equipment to transport the rock to a stock pile property owned by the community. Not only is the rock used for all public works needs, it is also provided to the community by two methods: Public Works will deliver to a community member for a transportation fee; or local independent haulers (members of Six Nations) may haul rock to their own stock pile, on a rotating, time-limited basis, and sell it for profit.

This operation is an example of Public Works working successfully in a mutually beneficial arrangement with the commercial sector and members of the community.

**CONTACT
INFORMATION:**

Dayle Bomberry,
Director of Public Works
Six Nations of the Grand River
P.O. Box 2000,
Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0

Tel: (519) 445-4242
Fax: (519) 445-4763
Email: daylebomberry@sixnations.ca

WESTBANK FIRST NATION



Sharing the story

Westbank First Nation is situated in the heart of the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, sandwiched between Kelowna and Westbank in one of Canada's fastest-growing development areas. The First Nation's entrepreneurial spirit in its approach to growth has led to the substantial development of both residential and commercial leases. This brings challenges and opportunities to the Public Works Department, as it finds the need to be accountable not only to community members but also to non-native residents and for commercial contract work. With a relatively small on-reserve population of 375 band members, the community has established strong connections with the adjacent municipality, and has brought in highly qualified senior staff to expand knowledge and raise standards in order for the First Nation to compete with neighbouring municipalities for developmental opportunities.

QUICK FACTS

On-reserve Population
Band Members – 375
Non-members – 8,000
Reserve Area – 2,161 ha
Townsite – Westbank
Region – British Columbia
Geographic Zone 1 – within 50 km of a service centre
Environmental Index – Code C – between 50° and 55° latitude

Website: www.wfn.ca



Westbank First Nation (WFN) is located in the heart of the Okanagan Valley, on the west side of Okanagan Lake. The land base consists of five reserves (numbers 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12). Most of the development occurs on reserves Tsinstikeptum Numbers 9 and 10. The reserve is located adjacent to the city of Kelowna and the community of Westbank in the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

WFN is one of seven Aboriginal communities within the Okanagan Nation, a division of the Interior Salish. The traditional lands of the Okanagan people extend along the length of the Okanagan Valley from the south-central interior of British Columbia into northern Washington State. The Okanagan people were hunters and gatherers and were noted to be semi-nomadic. Their staple diet consisted of deer, salmon,

and rabbit as well as roots, berries, and various other plants.

Westbank got its name from the first post office established in 1902 on the west side of the lake. In 1960, WFN became a separate entity independent of the original Okanagan Indian Band. The current on-reserve population is approximately 375 band members.

The Okanagan Valley, and in particular the area in the vicinity of the lake, is one of the fastest-growing areas in Canada. This provides opportunity for economic development for the WFN. Most of the



Westbank Administration Building

development projects within the WFN are located on land privately held by band members. The land is typically leased from 15 to 99 years, depending on the type of development. There are presently several sizable residential developments, resulting in a non-member residential population of approximately 8,000 people. There is also significant commercial development along the highway corridor; this includes the Westbank shopping centre with several tenants, including: Zellers, Extra Foods, Tim Horton's, Wendy's, Taco Time, First Choice Haircutters, Radio Shack, Starbucks Coffee, and Work World Clothing.

The WFN Administration is divided into the following departments: General Administration, Taxation, Finance, Lands, Planning and Development, Public Works, Human Services, and Intergovernmental Affairs. WFN also owns several businesses, including Heartland Economics and The Trading Post.

Public Works and Utilities

The Public Works Department was first organized in 1992, and was led by Lloyd Eli Sr., the supervisor/foreman of the former maintenance department. This corresponds roughly to the time the water system was built to service IR 9, which the WFN funded through contributions from developers in order to facilitate residential and commercial development for the area. Over the years the department has grown, and now there are approximately 15 individuals on staff, including seasonal workers and a licensed mechanic.

The Public Works Department offers the following services: grounds maintenance, building maintenance, roads, and band housing construction. The department also works on contract to provide grounds maintenance and other services to commercial lessees.

WFN Utilities looks after water and sewer services. WFN Utilities is run by two certified operators. The assistant operator also acts as the clerk responsible for infrastructure record-keeping and maintenance scheduling. WFN Utilities is currently updating its computerized inventory system to track information based on connection record and legal description.

The residential lessees are charged taxes comparable to those charged by municipalities to cover the provision of local government services, such as fire protection, recreation services, by-law enforcement, planning and development, etc. Some of these services are provided by agreement with the Regional District of Central Okanagan. User fees for water and sewer services are collected separately by WFN Utilities. A flat rate is charged for residential customers, while many businesses are metered and pay based on usage.

WFN has developed a comprehensive set of community by-laws dealing with such matters as taxation and assessment of reserve lands, subdivision of land, garbage and waste, dog control, business licenses, etc. WFN relies on federal standards; however, when the federal codes are silent on a particular issue, provincial standards and regulations are often applied.

WFN ensures staff members under the BC Workers Compensation Board and therefore must comply with certain provincial regulations, such as those for health and safety. Other areas where provincial models are used include servicing agreements, policies for late-comers fees in development servicing, and environmental protection and conservation issues.



Commercial Development



Commercial Development
Extra Foods Mall

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Water Supply – Water is withdrawn from Okanagan Lake, treated with chlorine disinfectant and pumped into the distribution system. One intake and pumphouse system services IR 9; a second is under construction on IR 10 to replace an aging system. Water and wastewater services are provided by WFN Utilities.

Wastewater – The sewage collection system is connected the regional wastewater system. A manufactured home park and some residential areas in IR 9 are serviced by septic systems.

Roads – WFN roads are serviced by Public Works. The highway and some internal roads are maintained by the province.

Building Maintenance – This includes maintenance of band buildings.

Grounds Maintenance – This includes contracts with commercial lessees for grounds maintenance.

It is likely that should WFN develop standards, they will draw heavily on existing federal and provincial codes. The proposed Self-government Agreement allows for the First Nation to develop their own autonomous regulations providing that they are at least equivalent to federal standards and technical codes.

Although there is no formal environmental code of conduct, Director of Public Works Rob Richardson indicates that “there is pride here of being as good or better than the next guy, of being seen as a leader.” Current practice is to follow

Canadian Environmental Assessment Act guidelines and to consult with the appropriate agencies and use the most stringent standards. A recent water intake project, which integrated special features for fisheries protection, attracted local media attention and raised questions around the level of protection provided by other intakes in the area.

WFN is currently preparing an emergency preparedness plan. The plan draws from various municipal models and from a model prepared by EPCOR Power Development Corporation in Edmonton.

position of Director of Public Works and hired Rob Richardson on a part-time contract to fill this position temporarily. Rob’s background is in municipal engineering. Past employers include the cities of Kelowna and Regina.

Rob’s mandate, in part, is to assist the Public Works Department to increase accountability and to operate within a balanced budget. Part of the incentive for increased accountability is to ensure that expenditures reflect the funding source; sources include taxation, INAC and self-funding.

- PUBLIC WORKS’ EQUIPMENT**
-
- Three snowplows
 - Two sanders
 - Tractor
 - Bobcat tandem gravel truck

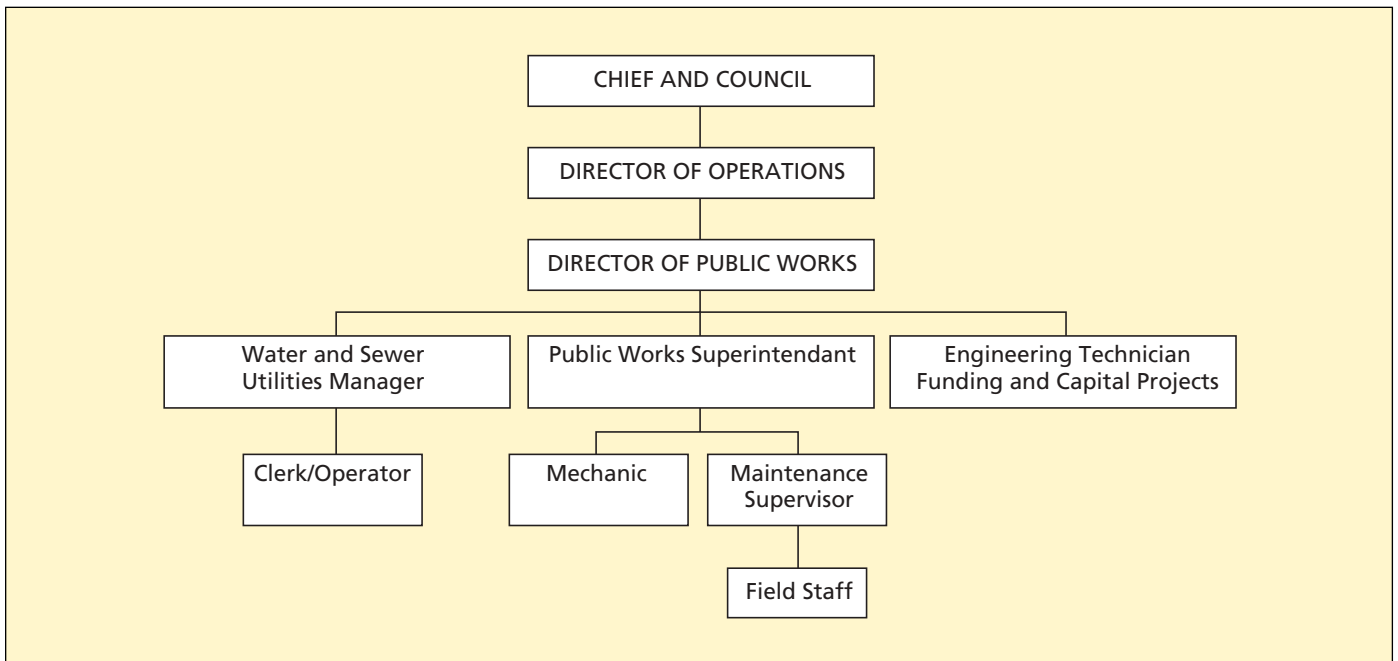
Energy management initiatives include ensuring that all new equipment installed is of high efficiency.

Accountability

When it was determined that the Public Works Department was consistently running a deficit, Council considered contracting out operations and maintenance functions. Instead, Council created the

It became apparent that the Public Works Department was serving as a social program of sorts to create jobs. The department had become a dumping ground for tasks that needed to be done, without awareness of where the funding was coming from to complete the work. During this time, the department was asked to provide firewood for band members. The firewood was being sold for \$75 a cord, but was costing approximately \$225 to provide. Public Works recognizes that there

PUBLIC WORKS’ ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



may be a wish to subsidize firewood for elders, but this should be a recognized objective and the cost for this service acknowledged.

Although quotes were given for work contracts for the commercial lessees, staff had little information to use in order to estimate the bid price or to ascertain whether the department was able to break even. In some cases, the work itself was not being invoiced on a regular basis.

In order to address these issues, a cost-accounting system has been implemented. Staff are asked to keep timesheets, and assign all time and equipment use to a cost centre. Invoices are then generated on a regular basis, based on this information.

In order to deal with internal requests for service, a requisition is now required. A cost estimate is provided and must be approved by the requesting department or organization, which is then billed at the conclusion of the work. If the work is not covered under core funding, the funds must come from the requesting organization's budget.

This work is being implemented with the part-time assistance of Christine Zuba, an accountant on contract with various organizations under the WFN Council. Christine indicates that implementation is being phased slowly, in order to gain acceptance by both staff and other departments and organizations. One of the challenges is to get information back to operations quickly enough to be used in decision-making.

Human Resources

Human resources functions, such as performance reviews, are being implemented by Council but have not yet worked their way down to the operations level at Public Works. Rob expects that this will happen over the next year, as the accountability program is established. Significant value has been placed on training in the department. Equipment operators have received training, and staff have carpentry journeyman and apprentice designations. Water operators have received certification under the provincial program. Health and safety is also on the priority list.



Aerial View of Westbank

Capital Planning

WFN recently completed a physical development plan showing proposed land use for development. This plan forms the basis for capital planning. Capital planning is addressed by the Capital Committee, made up of representatives from the Departments of Housing, Lands, Finance, and Public Works, as well as one Councillor. This committee is responsible for drafting a five-year capital plan and for coordinating the efforts of these organizations.

Rob Richardson is assisted by an Engineering Technician, Loretta Swite. Her role involves following up on funding programs and specific capital projects in the areas of water, sewer, and roads.

Discussion with Michael (Mickey) Werstuik, one of four Councillors, indicates that Council's vision for Public Works is to be a stand-alone department operating on a balanced budget. Councillor Raf DeGuevara indicates that the objective is to maintain fair and acceptable standards for everybody – band members and lessees – on WFN lands.

Partnership with Neighbouring Municipality

WFN is currently in the last five years of a 15-year agreement with the Regional District of Central Okanagan to offer basic services such as 911, crime stoppers, hospital, dog control, landfill, transit, parks and recreation, and emergency services. During the agreement, the First Nation has seen tremendous growth, leaving the Regional District anxious to renegotiate the terms of the agreement. WFN for its part is working toward independence, hoping to decrease its reliance on the Regional District's services.

WFN is currently working with the Regional District in a bid to obtain funding for an expansion of the regional sewer system. The First Nation sees that this expansion will enable the servicing of IR 10 and increase the development potential of significant portions of WFN lands. Councillor Mickey Werstuik indicated that Council would like to see additional commercial development on this land, because commercial leases have the advantage of operating as business arrangements.

Self-government Initiative

WFN signed a Self-government Agreement in Principle with the Government of Canada in July 1998. The vote for ratification of the final agreement was set for September 24, 2001.

The impact of self-government on public works is expected to be in the area of land use regulations and zoning by-laws. References in community newsletters prior to the ratification vote express concerns about the development of Certificate of Possession lands under the current system. Self-government will give Council greater control over land use, and provide greater accountability of Council to the membership.

The results of the ratification vote were mixed. Although the majority of votes cast voted for ratification, an absolute majority, or the majority of all eligible votes, was required to ratify the agreement. At this point it is unclear how WFN will move forward on this issue.

SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The proposed self-government agreement addresses both environmental assessment and public works issues. Following are excerpts from the implementation plan:

- Westbank First Nation will pass environment assessment laws and will seek to harmonize WFN's environmental assessment regime with that of Canada. WFN may enter into agreements with other governments to enhance cooperation and coordination of respective environmental functions ... to facilitate efficient and effective application and avoid duplication.
- WFN will assure consistency between federal health and safety standards and those Westbank laws passed under this jurisdiction.
- Westbank law with respect to public works, community infrastructure, and local services shall prevail over federal law, so long as WFN health and safety standards and technical codes ... are at least equivalent to federal health and safety standards and technical codes.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Entrepreneurial initiative
- Cost accounting
- Use of outside resources
- Partnership with neighbouring municipality
- Comprehensive set of by-laws and development guidelines

FIRST NATION CONTACT:

Rob Richardson, P.Eng.
Director of Public Works
Westbank First Nation
575 Hwy 97 South
Kelowna, BC V1Z 3J2

Tel: (250) 769-2449
Fax: (250) 769-2443
Email: rrichardson@wfn.ca

Sharing The Story

Annex B

List of Attendees

Diplomat Room

Embassy Hotel and Suites

25 Cartier Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario

March 4 - 6, 2002

List of Attendees

Miawpukek First Nation

Rembert Jeddore
Director of Public Works
Miawpukek First Nation
Box 10, Conne River Reserve
Conne River, NF A0H 1J0
Tel: 709-882-2470
Fax: 709-882-2292
Email:
rembertjeddore@hotmail.com

Tammy Drew
General Manager
Miawpukek First Nation
Box 10, Conne River Reserve
Conne River, NF A0H 1J0
Tel: 709-882-2470
Fax: 709-882-2292
Email: TDrew@cancom.net

Moose Cree First Nation

Mr. Stan Louttit
Chief Executive Officer
Moose Cree First Nation
P.O. Box 190
Moose Factory, ON POL 1W0
Tel: 705-658-4619
Fax: 705-658-4734
Email: stan.louttit@moosecree.com

Les Jolly
Director of Public Works
Moose Cree First Nation
P.O. Box 190
Moose Factory, ON POL 1W0
Tel: 705-658-4619
Fax: 705-658-4734
Email: les.jolly@moosecree.com

Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation

Paul Wertman
Advisor
Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation
900-81 Metcalfe St.
Ottawa, ON K1P 6K7
Tel: 613-761-1655
Fax: 613-761-1388
Email: ouje@ca.inter.net

Peigan First Nation

Floyd Provost
Director of Public Works
Peigan First Nation
P.O. Box 40
Brocket, AB T0K 0H0
Tel: 403-965-3888
Fax: 403-965-3931
Email: peiganpw@telusplanet.net

Six Nations of the Grand River

Dayle Bomberry
Director of Public Works
Six Nations of Grand River
P.O. Box 131
Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0
Tel: 519-445-4242
Fax: 519-445-4763
Email: daylebomberry@sixnations.ca

Roger Jonathan
Chairman, Public Works Committee
Six Nations of Grand River
P.O. Box 5000
Ohsweken, ON N0A 1M0
Tel: 519-445-4242
Fax: 519-445-4763
Email: rogerjonathan@sixnations.ca

Westbank First Nation

Raf DeGuevara
Councillor
Westbank First Nation
515 Highway 97 South
Kelowna, BC V1Z 3J3
Tel: 250-769-4999
Fax: 250-769-4377
Email: rdeguevara@wfn.ca

Rob Richardson
Director of Public Works
Westbank First Nation
515 Highway 97 South
Kelowna, BC V1Z 3J3
Tel: 250-769-2449
Fax: 250-769-4377
Email: rrichardson@wfn.ca

University of Manitoba

Ian Skelton
Associate Professor and Head
Faculty of Architecture
Department of Planning
University of Manitoba
201 - Russell Building
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Tel: (204) 474-6417
Fax: (204) 474-7532
Email: iskelton@cc.umanitoba.ca

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs

Caroline Davis
Assistant Deputy Minister
Corporate Services
Department of Indian and Northern
Affairs
13th Floor - 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-956-8188
Fax: 819-956-8193
Email: davisca@inac.gc.ca

Elizabeth Logue
Senior Policy Analyst
Socio-economic Policy
and Programs
Department of Indian
and Northern Affairs
19th Floor- 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-994-0057
Fax: 819-953-1974
Email: logueee@inac.gc.ca

Barb Frizell-Bear
Senior Policy Analyst
Self-government Policy Branch
Department of Indian
and Northern Affairs
Room 2008 - 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-953-5790
Fax: 819-953-3855
Email: frizellbearb@inac.gc.ca

Real Property Services for INAC

Terry Williston
Director General
Real Property Services for INAC
Public Works and Government
Services Canada
8th Floor - 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-994-6456
Fax: 819-953-9395
Email: willistont@inac.gc.ca

Elliot Rodger
Director, Strategic Direction
and Initiatives
Real Property Services for INAC
Public Works and Government
Services Canada
Room 8H1 - 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-997-8267
Fax: 819-953-9395
Email: rodgere@inac.gc.ca

Kyle Lambier
Community Development Advisor
Real Property Services for INAC
Public Works and Government
Services Canada
8th Floor - 10 Wellington Street
Hull, QC K1A 0H4
Tel: 819-953-8892
Fax: 819-953-9395
Email: lambierk@inac.gc.ca

Neegan Burnside Ltd

Ken Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
Neegan Burnside Ltd.
Suite 140, 203 Packham Ave.
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4K5
Tel: (306) 652-6879
Fax: (306) 652-6497
Email:
ken.thomas@neeganburnside.com

Heather Mackenzie
Neegan Burnside Ltd.
106 B - Scurfield Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3Y 1G4
Tel: 204-949-7110
Fax: 204-949-7111
Email: heather.mackenzie@neegan-
burnside.com

Doug Feniak
Neegan Burnside Ltd.
1272 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1Y 3A7
Tel: 613-563-0378
Fax: 613-563-3377
Email:
doug.feniak@neeganburnside.com

Special Guests

Ila Bussidor
Sayisi Dene First Nation
Tadoules Lake, MB R0B 2C0
Tel: 204-684-2013

Jerome Denechezhe
Northlands First Nation
Lac Brochet, MB R0B 2E0
Tel: 204-337-2571
Fax: 204-337-2714

Sharing The Story

Annex C

Related RPS for INAC Publications

Related RPS for INAC Publications

The following are related publications intended for First Nations officials as well as federal and First Nations self-government negotiators. These have been developed for and are available from Real Property Services for INAC headquarters and regional offices (see Annex D) and on its website <http://pwgsc.gc.ca/rps/inac/content/about-e.html>. In addition, RPS for INAC has available a variety of other information and awareness courses and publications related to public works in Aboriginal communities.

Building Capacity for Sound Public Works in First Nations Communities - A Planning Handbook (Institute on Governance, March 2001)

This handbook is a planning guide for First Nations whose goal is to achieve significant improvements in managing and delivering public works in their communities. It presents approaches to build capacity and ways to prepare a capacity-building strategy.

Compendium of Information and Training Resources and Self-Assessment Tool (Neegan Burnside Ltd., May 2001)

This compendium commences with an overview of various aspects of public works, their importance, and the various activities and responsibilities involved. It then provides selected information and training sources and resources available from Aboriginal, public- and private-sector organizations and institutions by province and territory, nationally and internationally for the various public works functions (water/wastewater, land use and community planning, fire protection, etc.). It also provides a self-assessment tool to enable users to consider some of the particular aspects and principles of good public works management as they apply to their communities. The tool is intended to assist community leaders, public works managers, technical and operational staff, and others to increase their awareness of their present situation regarding public works management and delivery and to consider what directions the First Nation might wish to take for the future.

Compendium of Provincial Public Works Statutes (Institute on Governance - March 1999)

A "road map" for federal negotiators and their Aboriginal counterparts in addressing the scope of public works provisions in self-government agreements. The compendium provides a synopsis of provincial statutes relevant to the following six public works functions:

- building and safety codes;
- water and sewage;
- solid waste;
- roads and bridges;
- parks and recreation; and
- land use planning.

Attention is paid to standards and regulations, inspection procedures, appeal or redress mechanisms, and offences and penalties.

Backgrounder - Public Works Functions in Self-Government (Institute on Governance - March 27, 2000)

This looks at public works in First Nations communities, including the existing legal and policy frameworks, roles and programs, and capacity-building approaches. It also explores the issue of public works in the context of self-government.

Public Works in Small and Rural Municipalities (Institute On Governance - March 1999)

This paper provides a synopsis of how various public works are managed in small and rural municipalities across Canada. It illustrates various approaches to public works management (chiefly financing, administration, and training), and examines some of the public works trends and challenges faced by small - and often remote - communities: government devolution of responsibilities, the growing use of public-private partnerships and user fees, problems of technology transfer, increased citizen expectations in service quality, and limited resources (time and funding) for staff training.

Self-Government Agreements and the Public Works Function (Institute on Governance - October 1998)

An examination of how public works functions are treated in four sets of Aboriginal self-government agreements. It includes an analysis of self-government agreements with regard to (a) the similarities and differences with the tiered governance model developed by the Royal Commission On Aboriginal Peoples; and (b) the treatment of the public works function as it relates to the government's Inherent Right Policy.

The Public Works Function in Canadian Jurisdictions (Institute on Governance - October 1998)

This paper describes the legal and regulatory relationship between provincial governments and municipalities in Canada in the areas of land use planning, building codes, roads and bridges, parks and recreational facilities, water and sewage systems, and solid waste collection and disposal. Financing options available for selected functions are also examined.

Sharing The Story

Annex D

Real Property Services for INAC Offices

Real Property Services for INAC Offices

Ontario Region

55 St. Clair Avenue East
Room 623
TORONTO ON M4T 1M2
Tel.: (416) 973-8019
Fax.: (416) 954-4748

Quebec Region

Place Jacques-Cartier Complex
320 St-Joseph Street East
Quebec QC G1K 9J2
Tel.: (418) 648-3836
Fax.: (418) 648-4040

Manitoba Region

275 Portage Avenue, 6th Floor
WINNIPEG MB R3B 3A3
Tel.: (204) 983-6269
Fax.: (204) 983-1626

Saskatchewan Region

2221 Cornwall Street, 2nd Floor, Room 215
REGINA SK S4P 4M2
Tel.: (306) 780-6741
Fax.: (306) 780-7242

Atlantic Region

40 Havelock Street
P.O. Box 160
AMHERST NS B4H 3Z3
Tel.: (902) 661-6304
Fax.: (902) 667-0783

Alberta Region

9700 Jasper Avenue, Room 630
Canada Place
EDMONTON AB T5J 4G2
Tel.: (780) 495-5137
Fax.: (780) 495-6445

Yukon Region

105-300 Main Street
WHITEHORSE YT Y1A 2B5
Tel.: (867) 667-3946
Fax.: (867) 393-6707

British Columbia Region

1401 - 1138 Melville Street
VANCOUVER BC V6E 4S3
Tel.: (604) 666-5152
Fax.: (604) 666-5159

Nunavut Region

P.O. Box 400
Building 2225
IQALUIT, NUNAVUT X0A 0H0
Tel.: (867) 975-4646
Fax.: (867) 975-4647

Northwest Territories Region

P0 Box 518
YELLOWKNIFE, NT X1A 2N4
Tel.: (867) 766-7110
Fax.: (867) 873-588

HEADQUARTERS

Real Property Services for INAC
10 Wellington Street, 8th Floor
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
HULL QC K1A 0H4
Tel.: (819) 994-6456
Fax.: (819) 953-9395