Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday February 28, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN COMMUNITY GIVES FEDS DEADLINE TO ADDRESS POLICING CRISIS

OTTAWA, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy together with NAN Deputy Grand Chief RoseAnne Archibald supports the message of Kashechewan First Nation Chief Jonathan Solomon as he presented the Government of Canada with the same 30 day deadline he brought to Ontario earlier this week regarding the need for both levels of government to address the growing policing crisis in his remote First Nation community.

"First Nation policing should not be treated and resourced less than its provincial counterparts," said Kashechewan First Nation Chief Jonathan Solomon whose James Bay community of approximately 1500 is currently policed by Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) which experiences ongoing and cumulative infrastructure challenges as displayed in the short documentary film *Nishnawbe Aski Police Service: A Sacred Calling (2008).*

"Ministers at both levels have heard our concerns and while we didn't get a firm commitment from Minister Day, he did agree the status quo in regards to policing cannot continue. I expect that with the announcement of the federal budget this will be addressed before March 25th, as the health and safety of our community members and officers continues to be compromised."

Solomon's message comes after meetings with provincial Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and federal Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day this week.

NAPS was forced to close two detachments this month. Kasabonika Lake First Nation's NAPS detachment was closed February 1st after reporting cells failed to meet basic needs such as proper lighting, washroom facilities, monitoring capabilities, and cell construction.

NAPS serves 39 of NAN's 49 communities. Despite negotiations to address infrastructure needs with provincial and federal representatives since 1994, only one NAPS detachment meets national building code standards. 13 modular detachments (trailers) have been installed as a temporary solution – Kashechewan's detachment operates out of one of these trailers.

"The federal budget announced $400 million to recruit officers across Canada while NAPS officers are working and living in conditions that would be completely unacceptable in any other municipal or provincial police service," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief RoseAnne Archibald who holds the policing portfolio for NAN. "15 NAPS detachments have no toilets, plywood walls, and in some cases no cells at all."

NAPS is funded 48% by the Government of Ontario and 52% by the Government of Canada. Ministers from both levels are meeting in coming weeks.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario. Kashechewan is one of NAN's communities and is part of Mushkegowuk Tribal Council.

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For more information please contact *Jenna Young, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4952 or (807) 628 3953 mobile.* **Visit www.nan.on.ca to view short film documentary *NAPS: A Sacred Calling*.**