Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

Thursday April 17, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

KASHECHEWAN TO STAY WITH NAPS, NEGOTIATIONS POSITIVE

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy together with Kashechewan First Nation Chief Jonathan Solomon announced today the James Bay coastal community will remain policed by Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) while negotiations between the police service and the governments of Ontario and Canada are proceeding positively.

"Provided both levels of government are coming to the table in good faith, it seems Nishnawbe Aski Police Service could have a negotiated agreement that will enhance policing not only in my community, but in other NAN communities," said Kashechewan First Nation Chief Jonathan Solomon, adding his main priority is addressing and resolving the shortfalls in policing to ensure proper health and safety for his community. "Both Ontario and Canada are aware of the challenges and exactly where the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service is under-resourced and that an agreement must address all areas of deficiency."

Solomon announced a 30-day deadline in February demanding both the Government of Ontario and Government of Canada address the growing policing crisis in his remote community of approximately 1500 people. He extended this deadline in March based on a commitment by both governments to negotiate together with NAPS a long-term strategy addressing the ongoing and cumulative infrastructure challenges experienced by the police service.

NAPS, which is funded 48% by the Government of Ontario and 52% by the Government of Canada, 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.

The police service was forced to close two detachments in February after reporting failure to meet basic needs such as proper lighting, washroom facilities, monitoring capabilities, and cell construction. In addition, the NAPS detachment in Wunnumin Lake First Nation was closed March 20th for the same reasons, particularly the lack of washroom facilities and use of slop pails as displayed in the short documentary film *NAPS: A Sacred Calling (2008).*

"Negotiations between NAPS and both levels of government are looking positive at this point and there's been a serious effort on the part of federal and provincial negotiators to resolve the ongoing infrastructure challenges of the police service, however this is not a one-community issue," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "We have police detachments across NAN territory failing to meet basic standards and it's up to NAPS, Ontario, and Canada to work together to develop long-term and viable solutions to put the police service in a position to operate up to basic standards."

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 *Michael Heintzman, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906.* **Visit www.nan.on.ca to view short film documentary *NAPS: A Sacred Calling.***