Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐧᑭ ᐃᐣᑯᓂᑲᓇᐣ ᐅᑭᒪᐧᐃᐣ
100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

Monday June 2, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN RESPONDS TO NEW ROWE CHARGES

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, together with members of the NAN Men's Healing Initiative, recently learned of new sexual abuse charges being laid against convicted pedophile Ralph Rowe in Kenora last week and acknowledged the courage that the new claimants have displayed in coming forward with their allegations.

"This predator was in our communities for many years and the magnitude of his abuse is becoming clearer with each new charge," said Fiddler who attended the Rowe trial in Kenora last year that resulted in Rowe's conviction of 20 counts of sexual offences involving First Nations boys in northern Ontario between 1977 and 1987.

"Across the lifespan individuals who were sexually abused as children face many challenges and recovery is frightening and confusing because of the betrayal and violence that is part of abuse. An important aspect of healing is breaking through the silence around this kind of deep trauma and some may never get to that point," said Fiddler. "These new charges are indicative of the fact that healing is happening and that is hopeful. It's so shameful however that so many families have suffered at the hands of one individual."

Rowe, a former Anglican minister and Boy Scout master, is currently serving a three-year sentence in a federal penitentiary in British Columbia. He now faces an additional 15 charges of sexual abuse involving 12 individuals. A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for August 19-22, 2008 in Kenora.

"The impact of Ralph Rowe has been devastating to our people and communities, but victims of sexual – and any type of abuse – must feel confident that they will be supported when they come forward to bring justice to these atrocities," said Fiddler, noting that high rates of suicide and jail time have been connected to Rowe's years of abuse.

Rowe worked in at least 18 NAN First Nation communities between 1971 and 1986. He served four and a half years of a six year sentence in 1994 for indecent and sexual assaults involving boys aged 6 to 16.

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.

***

For more information please contact *Michael Heintzman, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906.*