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NEWS RELEASE

Friday August 22, 2008 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NEW CHARGES AGAINST RALPH ROWE COMMITTED TO TRIAL

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, together with members of the NAN Men's Healing Initiative, welcomed a judge's order in Kenora court Friday for convicted pedophile Ralph Rowe to stand trial on new charges of sexual assault.

"The magnitude of his abuse is becoming clearer with each new charge, and it is imperative that we bring this predator to justice," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin 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.

Rowe attended a preliminary hearing in Kenora this week where he faced an additional 15 charges of sexual abuse involving 12 individuals. All of the charges that went before the court have been committed to trial. One individual's charges were stayed for one year and one individual's charges were withdrawn. A trial date has not been set.

"Breaking the silence around this kind of deep trauma is an important part of the healing process, and while some of the survivors may never reach that point, I acknowledge the courage new claimants have displayed in coming forward with their allegations," said Fiddler, noting that high rates of suicide and jail time have been connected to Rowe's years of abuse. "Our focus now is to support the survivors as we prepare for trial. Justice must be served before the survivors and their families can focus on healing and rebuilding the communities that were devastated by his abuse. It will take along time to erase the long-standing impacts caused by Ralph Rowe."

Rowe, a former Anglican minister and Boy Scout master, 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. He is currently serving a three-year sentence in a federal penitentiary in British Columbia.

Several members of the NAN Men's Healing Initiative (formerly the Ralph Rowe Survivor Network) attended the preliminary hearing and will attend the trial.

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.

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