Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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100 Back Street, Unit 200 Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730

NEWS RELEASE

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2013 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN PREPARES FAMILIES FOR JOINT INQUEST INTO DEATHS OF SEVEN YOUTH

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler today marked the second anniversary of the disappearance of one of seven NAN youth who died under similar circumstance while attending school in Thunder Bay since 2000, by assisting the families of the youth prepare for a joint inquest into their deaths.

Jordan Wabasse, a 15-year-old from Webequie First Nation, was reported missing on February 8, 2011. After months of searching by police, family and community volunteers his body was recovered from the Kaministiquia River.

"Today we remember the tragic loss of Jordan and each one of these youth as we prepare for this long-awaited inquest, and our thoughts and prayers are with their family, friends and communities," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who holds the Justice portfolio at NAN. "We are now working closely with the families to prepare them for the inquest and to ensure that the necessary legal, cultural and other support services are in place before they begin what is sure to be a very emotional and painful ordeal."

An inquest into one of the seven youth, Reggie Bushie, was halted in 2011 after the Chief Coroner of Ontario found that the jury roll for the Judicial District of Thunder Bay was invalid. Due to the similarities in all seven deaths, NAN called for a broader inquiry to fully investigate the circumstances surrounding each of these deaths and to find ways to prevent such tragedies from happening again. The Chief Coroner announced a joint inquest into seven deaths on May 31, 2012.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.

For more information please contact: *Amy Harris, Director of Communications – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625-4906 or cell (807) 252 2806 email aharris@nan.on.ca*