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NEWS RELEASE

Friday January 19, 2018 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PRIME MINISTER VISITS PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION

PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Pikangikum First Nation Chief Dean Owen are pleased to welcome Prime Minster Justin Trudeau for a community visit to the remote Ojibway community today.

"This event has been eagerly anticipated, and I am very pleased that the Prime Minister has honoured the commitment he made last year to visit Chief Owen and the people of Pikangikum. This is the first time that a sitting Prime Minister has visited NAN territory, and we are honoured that the Prime Minister has come to see first-hand the many positive things that are happening in Pikangikum," said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. "This is an historic day, and we hope this signals the beginning of a renewed Nation-to-Nation relationship between the people of Pikangikum and the Government of Canada."

Among the activities the Prime Minister participated in:

- Dedication of the Eenchokay Birchstick School, which opened in 2016 to replace the former school lost to fire in 2007, & assembly with the school's nearly 1,000 students.
- Update on the Wataynikaneyap Power Pikangikum Distribution Line Project, connecting Pikangikum First Nation to the electrical grid in Red Lake, that will end the community reliance on diesel generation.
- Meetings with Pikangikum Chief & Council, Elders, Youth Council.

"We are honoured that Pikangikum is the first NAN community the Prime Minister has visited, and we are pleased to welcome him and all of our guests to our growing community," said Pikangikum First Nation Chief Dean Owen. "We are eager to show the Prime Minister our beautiful new school full of youth who are eager to learn, and look forward to him hearing directly from our young leaders. By making time to visit us, the Prime Minister is sending a powerful message to our young people that I hope will inspire them to follow their dreams and reach their full potential."

The community welcomed many dignitaries including: Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott; Indigenous Services Parliamentary Secretary Don Rusnak (MP, Thunder Bay-Rainy River); MP Bob Nault (Kenora); and representatives of Wataynikaneyap Power.

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