Nishnawbe Aski Nation Special Chiefs Assembly
November 13-15, 2012
On behalf of the NAN Executive Council and staff, I want to wish all the Chiefs and Councils, tribal councils, and NAN Affiliated organizations a Blessed Christmas and Prosperous New Year. Special Christmas greetings to all the elders, men, women, children and youth across Nishnawbe Aski Nation!

I want to encourage all families, moms, dads, single parents, and grandparents across Nishnawbe Aski Nation to continue to raise your children as best as you can. As parents, we all struggle some times; but the children will be grown before you know it. Enjoy this time with them, and I know that many parents are working, saving and planning as hard as you can for your children during the Christmas season. Your efforts are worth it.

Remember those in your community who may be having a hard time at Christmas; whether it be grief or loneliness. Reach out and make an effort to help someone this Christmas. We must all also keep in mind the children who are in care, and will not be at home or away from their communities due to family situations. It is my hope that families will be reunited where possible, and we all must continue to support one another in raising our families.

As we join together to celebrate this happy season, I want to encourage every member of Nishnawbe Aski Nation to look forward to our future and most of all I wish you Peace. Peace in our communities and Peace in our homes.

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

All the best to you and your family,

I pray you have a Blessed Christmas and Prosperous New Year

Grand Chief Harvey Yesno

**What is NAN?**

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (known as Grand Council Treaty No. 9 until 1983) was established in 1973. It represents the legitimate, socioeconomic, and political aspirations of its First Nation members of Northern Ontario to all levels of government in order to allow local self-determination while establishing spiritual, cultural, social, and economic independence. In 1977, Grand Council Treaty No. 9 made a public declaration of the rights and principles of Nishnawbe Aski.

NAN’s objectives are:

- Implementing advocacy and policy directives from NAN Chiefs in Assembly
- Advocating to improve the quality of life for the people in areas of education, lands and resources, health, governance, and justice
- Improving the awareness and sustainability of traditions, culture, and language of the people through unity and nationhood
- Developing and implementing policies which reflect the aspirations and betterment of the people
- Developing strong partnerships with other organizations

NAN is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities within northern Ontario with the total population of membership (on and off reserve) estimated at 85,000 people. These communities are grouped by Tribal Council (Windigos First Nations Council, Waswan Tribal Council, Sibogama First Nations Council, Mushkegowuk Council, Mataw First Nations, Keewatinook Okimakanak, and Independent First Nations Alliance) according to region. Six of the 49 communities are not affiliated with a specific Tribal Council.

NAN encompasses James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario’s portion of Treaty No. 5, and has a total land mass covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario spanning 19,000 square miles. The people traditionally speak three languages: Cree in the east, Oji/Cree in the west, and Ojibway in the central-south area.

NAN continues to work to improve the quality of life for the Nishnawbe Aski territory. Through existing partnerships and agreements with Treaty partners (governments of Canada and Ontario), NAN continues to advocate on behalf of the communities it represents for self-determination with functioning self-government.

**EDUCATION**

- Education
- First Nations Student Success Program (FNSSP)

**HEALTH POLICY**

- Health Policy and Planning
- Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI)
- Prescription Drug Abuse
- NAN Smoking Cessation & Prevention
- Community Awareness Initiative

**LANDS AND RESOURCES**

- Lands and Resources
- Forestry Program
- Climate Change Research Project

**HEALTH PROMOTION**

- Aboriginal Healthy Babies and Healthy Children
- Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Strategy
- AIDS and Healthy Lifestyles
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Food Security

**NATIONHOOD**

- Broadband Project
- Governance Secretariat
- Economic and Resource Development
- Land Rights and Treaty Research
- NAN/Canada Bilateral Protocol
- Land Rights and Treaty Research
- NAN/Canada Bilateral Energy Table
- NAN Licensing Program - Fur Depot
- NAN Treaty Discussion Forum

**YOUTH**

- Girl Power/Wolf Spirit
- Northern Aboriginal Youth Intergovernmental Network

**SOCIAL**

- Crisis Teams
- Men’s Healing Initiative
- Residential Schools
- Social Services
- Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP)

**ADMINISTRATION**

- Communications
- Finance
Aroland First Nation youth visited NAN’s office in Thunder Bay in October. They met with NAN Executive and Staff to discuss youth initiatives.

This year’s NAN Community Food Champion is the Aroland Youth Blueberry Initiative. Aroland First Nation began marketing blueberries throughout the region 6 years ago. In that time, they have become the largest supplier of hand-picked blueberries in Northern Ontario. Championed by Band Councillor Sheldon Atlookan generates between 30-50 thousand dollars per year. The profit from the sale of the berries then goes to youth initiatives in the community. The initiative is made possible by the collective actions of many individuals in the community.

September 24, 2012, Toronto: Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women (JWG). Back row (left to right): Maya Chacaby, OFFC; Katherine Műnish, OFFC; Danielle Maheu, Ontario Women’s Directorate; Lana Ray, ONWA; Doug Wilson, MNO; Susan Sedy, Ontario Women’s Directorate and JWG Co-Chair; Gary Lipinski, President of MNO; Chisanga Puta-Chelvey, Deputy Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues; Hanita Tiefenbach, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and JWG Co-Chair; Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs; Wanda Wabynne, MNO; Front row (left to right): Betty Kennedy, Executive Director of ONWA; Dawn Lavelle-Harvard, President of ONWA; Sheila McMahon, President of OFFC; Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director of OFFC and JWG Co-Chair; Laurel Bosten, Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues; Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs; France Pètutit, MNO; Harvey Yesno, Grand Chief, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

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ATTENTION
NAN YOUTH!!
Coming February 11-15th 2013
Oshkaatisak Niigaan Oji Gathering
With a focus on Life Promotion; Economic Development; Food Security
MORE INFO TO COME!!

Healthy Lifestyles Program
The NAN HIV/AIDS and Healthy Lifestyles Program support education, awareness and prevention in an effort to reduce HIV infection rates within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory.

For more information and for education sessions for community, groups, schools, centres, local radio and television programs, youth, Band Staff and Clinic Staff, etc. at no cost for the community, please contact Gwen Medicine at 1-807-625-4940 or by email: gmedicin@nan.on.ca.
The NAn Women’s Council is the voice of the women of NAN. NAN Women’s Council works to achieve and maintain healthy lives in all 49 NAN First Nations. The council ensures that women of NAN and their families have a voice in the governance of NAN.

We aim to:

• By being the voice of the women of NAN communities at a political level
• By taking their concerns to the NAN Chiefs
• By lobbying/advocating on behalf of the service agencies that empower these women so they can deliver vital programs/activities
• By advocating for additional funding, resources and further support

The NAN Women’s Council is in the process of having the vacancies replaced. The NAN Women’s Council would like to hear from you on what areas you have concerns on or how they can improve on raising awareness on issues within the NAN communities. For further information on the Women’s Council please contact Christine Simard-Chicago at 1-800-465-9952 or via email at csimard-chicago@nan.on.ca.

The NAN Women’s Council will strive to empower the women of NAN communities:

• By ensuring they have ways to express their concerns
• By being the voice of the women of NAN communities at a political level
• By taking their concerns to the NAN Chiefs
• By lobbying/advocating on behalf of the service agencies that empower these women so they can deliver vital programs/activities
• By advocating for additional funding, resources and further support

Vision:
The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Food Strategy aims to rebuild our food sovereignty across our nation in order to enhance our quality of life through access to food that is safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable for all our people at all times.

Objectives:

• All food sovereignty initiatives are community-based, community-owned, respect our rights, and the OCAP principles.
• By 2013/14, Nishnawbe Aski Nation has a food policy in place for all the organization's events, meetings, and gatherings.
• By 2013/14, NAN communities will be encouraged to host seasonal community feasts and celebrations that honour and resource our traditional foods.
• By 2015, 10 communities have community-based Food Charters and Food Plans endorsed by their Chief and Council.
• Increased food security in at least 50% of NAN communities by 2018 as measured by the NAN Community Food Assessment.
• By 2013/14, Nishnawbe Aski Nation Food Strategy should be in place within 5 years.
• Establish Nishnawbe Aski Nation Food Hub to cluster around community initiatives and focus on to existing programs and resources.
• Hold annual Food Symposiums
• Work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples
• Seek funding to support NAN Food Strategy and community initiatives
• Support holistic food system change by strengthening the 6 pillars of Food Sovereignty in Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty in Nishnawbe Aski Nation:

• By striving to re-enforce traditional role of women as counsel
• By being the woman's voice to NAN Chiefs.

The members of the NAN Women's Council are:

EAST
Jackie Fletcher, Missanabie Cree First Nation
Rebecca Friday, Kashechewan First Nation
Skylene Metatawabin, Fort Albany First Nation
Vacant
WEST
Lisa Beardy, Muskrat Dam First Nation
Annie Osikneegish, Nibinamik First Nation
Chief Lorraine Crane, Slate Falls First Nation
Vacant

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Nishnawbe Aski Nation Food Strategy

OxyContin Clones

ISSUE SUMMARY

On November 19, 2012, Federal Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq announced that she would not interfere in the approval process of generic versions of OxyContin.

NAN RESOLUTION/BACKGROUND

On November 25th, 2012 the patent for OxyContin expired, meaning that generic drug companies will be able to produce the same drug, formulation, under a generic name, oxycodone.

Generic versions of drugs can be sold/ dispensed at much lower dollar amounts than their brand name predecessors, making the drug more affordable and accessible to the public, which will eventually make its way to the drug trade. Additionally, generic versions of OxyContin will lack the “abuse- deterrent” features available in the newer OxyNeo with a coating that attempts to make the pills harder to crush and inject.

In a letter to her provincial counterparts, Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq said that there’s nothing in the Food and Drugs Act that indicates she could withhold the approval of generic OxyContin if the formula is considered “safe and effective” when taken as recommended. She maintains that the decision about which drugs are approved should not be a political decision, rather the decision should be made by Health Canada scientists on the basis of their safety of consumption.

Aglukkaq states that manufacturers of the drug will be required to report spikes in sales and changes in distribution patterns, in addition to Health Canada’s current requirements to report loss and theft. If evidence of abuse is uncovered, action can be taken, up to and including the revocation of their license to deal in certain types of medications. If required, matters could be referred to legal authorities. Her stance indicates that she will be imposing more regulations around reporting and monitoring, however there is no indication that anything will be done at the prevention and detoxification/treatment levels (excluding any pre-identified funding).

Aglukkaq has downloaded the responsibility of controlling the diversion of this drug to the provinces and territories.

FIRST NATIONS CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICTIONS

The Minister’s concern for only regulating generic version of OxyContin in situations where it is "used as directed" ignores the impact this drug has had on NAN First Nations. The extensive overprescribing of this drug in the past has led to widespread addiction, which has led to further illicit use by many people across the country, especially among First Nation citizens. The Minister is showing blatant disregard for the social impact OxyContin has had on First Nations.

It is expected that once generic companies manufacture and sell this drug, we will see an increase, once again, in the illicit use of this powerful and addictive substance.

RESPONSE FROM OTHER FIRST NATIONS, GROUPS, GOVERNMENT

On November 20, 2012, NAN issued a media advisory in order to convey disappointment with the Minister’s decision.

On October 26, Chiefs of Ontario sent a letter to Minister Aglukkaq urging her to intervene in the approval process. Ontario Health Minister Deb Matthews has expressed grave concern about the social impacts of the approval of generic OxyContin.

Other groups opposed to her decision:

• Ontario Pharmacists’ Association
• Ontario Medical Association
• Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
• Ontario Provincial Police
• The Canadian Health Policy Institute
• Various addiction experts

Follow-up:

On November 26, 2012, Health Canada approved six generic copies of OxyContin. The generic versions are similar to the previous formulation in the now discontinued OxyContin, which is considered ‘easier’ to abuse. The NAN Executive continues in their efforts toward persuading the Minister to reverse her decision on this matter.

NAN Executive Council is proud to announce the new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for Nishnawbe Aski Nation is Ms. Kathy Cheechoo. A member of Moose Cree First Nation, she has been hired for the position and we welcome Kathy with her management and administrative background to our organization. Ms. Cheechoo has also worked with the NAN Governance Steering Committee, as well as on a number of projects and initiatives within the Mushkegowuk Council, regional boards and her home community.

Ms. Kathy Cheechoo can be reached at kcheechoo@nan.on.ca.
Regional Economic Strategic Plan (RESP)

The Regional Economic Strategic Plan was a direct recommendation from the 2011 NAN Economic Summit; immediate work began on formulating this strategy. An RESP committee was formed with representation from each tribal area, Elders Council, Youth Council, and Women's Council. The committee is responsible for giving the NAN Economic & Resource Development Unit (ERDU) direction on those recommendations. It was determined that a Pre-Planning Phase was needed in order to develop mandates and destinations of how this strategy would evolve. From there the ERDU developed draft mandates and presented them to the people of NAN territory in order to obtain feedback. From the feedback given, it was established that the top three priority mandates were:

- General goods and gas services,
- Community gardens, greenhouses and storage facilities
- Forest and volunteer firefighters.

Resolution 12/10 “Economic and Resource Development Unit Regional Economic Studies Proposal” was developed with regards to the top three priority mandates and was passed by the Chiefs in Assembly in Cochrane in May 2012. The ERDU has begun collaborative process with the Public Health Education Department within NAN in order to assist with the implementation of Resolution 12/10. The Public Health Education Department has been working on Resolution 11/40 – “Support for Development of Food Security Strategy for NAN Territory” which supports the RESP mandates.

Extensive work has already begun on Resolution 11/40 through community based planning which has allowed for communities to plan for the future without the constraints imposed by external entities. Some of the successful projects through this initiative have been the “Get Growing Program” alternative marketing, and good food boxes which have allowed for our communities to explore new strategies for addressing food insecurity. The two departments completed a PATH training session where they developed team building skills, support networks and strategies that define a vision for the collaboration ahead.

The collaboration between the two departments is very exciting and is a start for more positive community projects that will increase food security and economic opportunities for community members.

MTO Information Sessions

The ERDU and MTO have completed three information sessions with over 60 participants from NAN Territory where a list of responses, questions and issues have been developed. A follow-up meeting with Chiefs has been held at Chiefs of Ontario Special Assembly November 27, 28, and 29, 2012 in Toronto and also at the Assembly of First Nations Meeting held on December 4, 5, and 6, 2012. A report will be finalized that summarizes the FN’s issues and inputs. The draft report will be provided to the First Nation representatives before Christmas holidays.

First Nation Communities Inventories

The ERDU has begun to develop a NAN wide data base of the First Nation Inventories, where Tribal Councils (TC) will have regional databases and FN’s will have a community database; this will give NAN First Nations and TC’s the advantage of being investment/development ready. The databases can then be developed into a NAN Census with accurate and up-to-date statistics. A pilot project with four (4) NAN FN’s was conducted in the fiscal year of 2011/2012 and due to the success of the pilot project the ERDU has submitted a Statement of Intent (SOI) and final application to INAC to fund Phase II of this project. The ERDU has engaged seven (7) NAN FN’s to participate in Phase II of the inventories project. Once completed, this project will be included as a component of the NAN Regional Economic Strategic Plan.

I Do Business National Summit & Tradeshows

The ERDU is partnering with the I Do Business National Summit and Tradeshows which will bring together business and literacy to support current and emerging First Nation Entrepreneurs from Coast to Coast to Coast. This event will bring out the importance of connecting economic development and adult literacy to support Aboriginal business development. This event will take place in Toronto, Ontario in March 2013. For more information regarding I Do Business please contact one of the ERDU Staff or visit: www.idobusiness.ca.
On November 14, 2012, two of the founding members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation were honoured for their outstanding contributions to the establishment and betterment of NAN. The Honouring Ceremony was part of the NAN Day of Prayer, which is a day set aside each year to address the high suicide rates in NAN territory through community healing. The day featured a Prayer Breakfast, an afternoon reflective service, and an evening ceremony at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School.

Chris Cromarty, of Wunnumin Lake First Nation, is a prominent leader who made a significant step in the progress of the Nishnawbe Aski people by publicly delivering the Declaration of the Rights and Principles of Nishnawbe Aski Nation to the government in 1977. As a Vice-President for seven years, he advocated, lobbied and negotiated for improved social conditions in our communities. His determination and perseverance has paved a way for our young people to pursue education, socio-economic independence, and continue the stance to regain our freedom and become a strong Nation. He understood that this is what our people needed.

Frank Beardy, of Muskrat Dam First Nation, has a long list of accomplishments he has been a part of that has improved the lives of the Nishnawbe Aski people. From helping to create the Windigo Tribal Council to assisting in the creation of the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, Frank’s resume is quite diverse. He served as a NAN Deputy Grand Chief in 1982, as the Grand Chief in 1983, and again, as a Deputy Grand Chief from 1985 to 1988. Frank also served as one of the founding directors of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Training Institute. On leadership, he has operated based on the values and principles he has learned over his many years—“Be respectful, patient, and aggressive when you have to be, not to be afraid and not to stand down on an issue.”
These discussions with the Government of Canada are now in their fifteenth year, having begun in 1997 while Charles Fox was Grand Chief. In August of 2009, the negotiators on both sides initialled the Governance & Education Jurisdiction Agreements-In-Principles (AIPs) signifying the formal negotiations concluded and that each side recommended the signing of the documents. Almost immediately, NAN began to see signs that Canada had a change of heart. And while NAN expected the AIPs to be signed in the winter of 2010, they remain unsigned to date.

There have been many delays, with the latest in 2011 when Canada came forward with two conditions before the Minister would sign the AIPs. These conditions were already laid out as items in the final agreement, but Canada wanted demonstration that NAN First Nations had the capacity to assume self-government agreements. They also wanted an idea of what our governance process would look like, especially at the territory-wide level.

Canada indicated they needed this information in order to develop a Memorandum to Cabinet for authority to precede into the Final Agreement negotiations. They also indicated that the requested information would help them estimate a timeframe for the negotiations and related costing. NAN expressed (in vain) that these were issues to be discussed in the Final Agreement negotiations stage, as per the terms of the AIPs, but the interests of INAC’s senior bureaucrats outweighed NAN position.

NAN continues to work for First Nations in the hope that this process will provide them with needed support in Governance and Education Jurisdiction. With this goal, and with the will of NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly to strive for the affirmation of self-government jurisdiction in Nishnawbe Aski territory, NAN’s Governance Secretariat will continue to participate in self-government negotiations with the government of Canada and/or Ontario.

It is of paramount importance, however, that community members be kept informed as it will ultimately be individual First Nation citizens who ratify the Final Agreements. For more than 10 years we had NAN territory Tribal Council Support housing the NAN Regional Governance Coordinator (RGCs) with the mandate to inform NAN members about this process. The RGCs will continue to work with communities this year to ensure they have working Community Governance Plans and to monitor their willingness to participate in the process by securing Band Council Resolutions (BCRs) supporting Governance and Education Jurisdiction.

NAN realizes that the current hold on negotiations has dampened some communities’ hope that this process will result in positive change in the near future. NAN is doing its best to maintain momentum and continues to provide support to communities through the RGCs, the NAN Negotiator and the Governance Secretariat.