Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) just wrapped up the very successful PhotoVoice Project coordinated by the Oshkaatisak Program. The goal was to collect photos from youth across NAN who wished to share what being a First Nations person meant to them. NAN received over 4000 entries. To the right are some of the entries.

Projects like these and other NAN updates and news items will be highlighted in this quarterly newsletter along with archival photos, like the ones above. This year marks the 35th anniversary since the leaders of NAN presented its Declaration of Principles and Rights to the Ontario Premier and the people of Canada.
Message from the Executive Director

In this edition of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) newsletter, The Advocate, you will find news about upcoming events, NAN’s 35th anniversary, and highlights of recent activities and community visits.

It’s important that NAN share its contributions, updates, and events with the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Whether it’s through NAN’s daily media releases, or through the numerous news releases made to the media, our message is being heard. Updates to our social media networks through Facebook and Twitter are reaching new audiences while posting to our website is done almost daily. We need to continue to reach out and move with the times, so a publication like this is important in continuing that legacy of informing the people of NAN of our efforts, successes and work on your behalf.

Several NAN departments have contributed to this newsletter, so make sure you check out the latest news and updates from the Economic Development and Health departments. We will continue with this publication on a regular basis that will include updates and information from other departments.

Over the past few months, we have seen many interesting events take place at NAN. January saw our first Chiefs Energy Conference, which was followed by the Oshkiesiin Niigaan Oji Gathering, the Women’s Forum, and an FASD/Healthy Babies Conference.

Without the assistance of NAN staff, elders, youth, and community members, these events would not have been as successful nor as rich and rewarding for its participants.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation will be celebrating 35 years this year when the leaders of NAN first signed the declaration of unity declaring ourselves a free and sovereign nation. This declaration was presented in 1977 to the premier and his cabinet. We will be honouring this declaration at the Keewaywin Conference this summer.

It is a good time to reflect on the ongoing efforts our leaders are making and the achievements we have made over the decades. So many dedicated people have passed through our doors over the years contributing to the strong spirit of NAN and for that we are grateful.

On behalf of NAN Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chiefs, we look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Chief’s Assembly and the Keewaywin Conference this August in Kashechewan First Nation.

Unity, Strength, Success

David Fletcher, Executive Director
Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Executive Director David Fletcher

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 nationalism
- 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 around 45,000 people. These communities are grouped by Tribal Council (Windigo First Nations Council, Wabun Tribal Council, Sibogama First Nations Council, Mushkegowuck Council, Matawa First Nations, Keewayatinook 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 210,000 square miles. The people traditionally speak three languages: Cree in the east, Ojibwe in the west, and Oji-Cree 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.

NAN Sectors

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 Fish Habitat Program 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 Postcode NAN/Canada Bilateral Energy Table NAN Licencing Program - Fur Depot Treaty Discussion Forum

YOUTH
Girl Power/Wolf Spirit Intergovernmental Network on Northern Aboriginal Youth

SOCIAL
Crisis Teams Men’s Healing Initiative Residential School Truth Social Services Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP)

ADMINISTRATION
Communications Finance

STAFF PROFILE

There is a lot of truth in the saying that Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) will never be the same after Sandra Brown retires later this year.

Over her 17 years with NAN, she has assisted families and First Nations in the worst of times: fires; floods; plane crashes; searches; suicides and family losses. Her leadership role in this capacity has been vital to the organization and will always be thankful for her dedication. She has trained numerous frontline workers in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, First Aid/CPR, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Suicide Prevention and Fireweed Training for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse.

Sandra loved her work and the people she worked with knew this. NAN will miss seeing Sandra racing down the hall to the photocopy room, to her office with her jumbo mason jar in hand. NAN will miss her positive attitude, her cactus that is bursting out of her office, and her calm, cool, collectiveness at the resolutions table.

The years of hard work and commitment in this vital position at NAN is appreciated not only within the office but also in the First Nation communities you’ve worked with. NAN will miss seeing you on a Saturday behind your desk working away as if it was any normal weekday. NAN will also miss your attitude towards helping out in our office whenever you are called upon.

Happy retirement. NAN wishes you good luck as you begin yet another journey in your life. Meegwetch Sandra.
The NAN Economic and Resource Development Unit (pictured) visited Attawapiskat First Nation to attend the Mushkegowuk Council regional housing conference this past February. Left to right: Lydia Big George, Kristine Racine, Jessica McAulghlin, NAN Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit, Attawapiskat Chief Teresa Spence, Mushkegowuk Grand Chief Stan Louttit, Jason Smallboy.

NAN Staff along with representatives from Bell Aliant visited Wunnumin Lake First Nation this February to check on the development of the Broadband Expansion Initiative. Pictured are Michelle Deroody, Chris Bell, Dino Radocchia, Julie Dupuis, Janet DiFrancesco, Randy McAllister, Dan Baxter, Travis Roissineau.

Through a Chiefs Resolution work has begun on the NAN First Nation Strategic Housing Action Plan. Deputy Grand Chief Les Louttit, the Economic and Resource Development Unit, and successful consultant Daniel Brant have begun to undertake a feasibility study and business plan for a corporation. James Danielson with CMHC, Saverio Rizzo Housing Inspector/Coordinator with Matawa and Wesley Bova, Engineer/Manager Technical Services with Matawa at a recent meeting at NAN.

NAN Oshkaatinak Council hosted their annual youth gathering in February in Thunder Bay to promote health, education, culture, and success among NAN youth. Since 2004, the “Seven Sacred Teachings” gathering has delivered instructional workshops to help our youth regain their cultural identity and learn to effectively and safely deal with life’s troubles. MC Stan Wesley is pictured with Fort Severn students Katrina Kenostchik and Alanis Baxter.

NAN staff Shirley Salt and Donna Simon accept the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Great Grants Award 2012 Chair’s Award from OTF and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. NAN and Kashechewan First Nation youth won the award for the Kashechewan First Nation Youth Video Project in March 2012.

NAN Grand Chief Stan Beadry (left) visited the Cat Lake First Nation Health Centre April 11 during a media visit to the community along with Liberal Critic for Aboriginal Affairs Carolyn Bennett (far right). From left to right is Centre staff Joyce Quepuquis, Corrine Jeremiah, Gracy Apetawakeesic, Debbie Tait and Samuel Saksiep (front).
Food program a hit in Fort Albany

By Joseph LeBlanc and Gigi Veeraraghavan

For several years, community members in Fort Albany First Nation have been actively engaged in finding and implementing community-based solutions to their community’s food system issues for a number of years. Members of Netaweketata (the community’s food security committee) have been ordering food from “southern” suppliers in Cochrane, Timmins, and Thunder Bay and selling it to community members through alternative markets for a number of years and through monthly Good Food Boxes since December of 2011.

Netaweketata has been working with Nishnawbe Aski Nation through the Get Growing Project, as well as True North Community Co-operative in Thunder Bay and FoodShare Toronto to address the challenges in their community created by the high cost, poor quality, and lack of availability of healthy foods. Fort Albany First Nation is one of the five communities selected to participate in the Get Growing Project. Through Get Growing, community-based initiatives related to food, such as gardening, hunter’s support, and import food marketing, will be implemented with the support of NANS’s Community Project Co-ordinator.

Netaweketata, True North Community Co-operative, FoodShare Toronto, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation are currently piloting a project that assesses the viability of the Good Food Box. The first food order was placed on December 1, 2011. After being transported by refrigerated truck and train to Moosonee, it was delivered by air to Fort Albany First Nation on December 9th. Netaweketata sold the food through Good Food Boxes and an alternative market on Saturday December 10th.

The food box offered the first week in April is listed below as well as a price comparison with The Northern Store.

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Are you looking for an opportunity to see if this is the right field for you? Well this is your chance. In April 2012, the University of Toronto’s Faculty Law launched their new Aboriginal Youth Summer Program (TAYSIP) for Aboriginal high school students who are interested in the study of law.

Applications for the program can be obtained from and are to be submitted to Lisa Del Col, Aboriginal Law Program Coordinator at lisa.delcol@utoronto.ca.

Good luck to all NAN applicants and be sure to share your exciting news with us!

Attention former Stirland and Cristal Lake School students

Windigo First Nations Council and NAN are pleased to announce that Justice Watt, of the Ontario Court of Appeal, ordered on March 27th, 2012, that Canada’s request to temporarily stay (freeze) the terms of the Order of Chief Justice Winkler (in which the Chief Justice declared that Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake are Indian Residential Schools) was denied.

This means that any applications now submitted for the Common Expense Payment (CEP) and/or Independent Assessment Process (IAP) in relation to these two high schools MUST BE PROCESSED by Service Canada and the IAP Secretariat, respectively, notwithstanding the fact that Canada’s appeal from the Chief Justice’s Order has not yet been heard.

We strongly recommend and urge all former students of Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake high schools to fill in and out submit their applications particularly for the CEP now. If you already submitted your CEP application, or are unsure of the status of your CEP application, you should file a new CEP application to ensure that your application is not missed by Service Canada.

Are you a High School Student Interested in a Career in Law?

The University of Toronto’s Faculty of Law launched their new Aboriginal Law Program. Applications are open to high school students interested in a career in law.

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Forest Fire Season

This year Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) (via their Northwest Regional Fire Management Center) will be working together on the gathering and distribution of Fire Forest information on a daily basis.

NAN will receive daily reports from various MNR sources on priority fire information, statistics and safety messaging. Other information will potentially include postings on all active fires in northwestern Ontario listed by district, size, condition/status; fire number and location using basemaps; regional emergency response activities; a listing of new fires within the last 24 hours and a breakdown on past fire seasons compared to the current fire situation; including the number of fires and hectares burnt. NAN will also be receiving fire situation updates for northeastern Ontario.

By Joseph LeBlanc and Gigi Veeraraghavan

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Applications for the program can be obtained from and are to be submitted to Lisa Del Col, Aboriginal Law Program Coordinator at lisa.delcol@utoronto.ca.

Good luck to all NAN applicants and be sure to share your exciting news with us!
The purpose of the NAN Smoking Cessation & Prevention Community Awareness Initiative is to address the disproportionately high rates of smoking among NAN communities, and also encourage youth to avoid smoking. This will be achieved through creating awareness by providing training and resources to the First Nations Communities that are culturally appropriate, easily accessible and NAN specific.

Objectives:

• To increase the number of NAN community members becoming aware of smoking cessation and prevention as its primary focus and prevention of cancer in NAN communities as its primary goal;
• To improve awareness of the different strategies needed to support healthier lifestyles changes and increase smoking cessation and prevention within NAN communities;
• To provide a NAN Smoking Cessation and Prevention Community Awareness initiative that promotes holistic, healthier living;
• To evaluate the smoking cessation education project by each individual taking part;
• To create an NAN-specific Tobacco Control Strategy to support policy development, best practices, research, training, education and community action.

Target Population:

All members of NAN communities will be targeted by this initiative. Those who are looking to quit smoking will be the primary focus of the smoking cessation, while non-smokers will be the focus of the prevention side of the initiative. The development of a NAN-wide Tobacco Control Strategy will focus on the well-being of all NAN members.

NAN Resources & Initiatives:

NAN with the help of a grant from Pfizer Canada and the Northern Diabetes Health Network has developed the following resources that have been and continue to be distributed to the First Nations:

• “Get Unhooked” Stop Smoking pamphlet
• Smoking and Diabetes Pamphlet
• “The Gift of Living” poster
• “Trash the Ash” NAN youth anti-smoking poster
• Smoking Prevention Lesson Plan for Grade 3 & 4
• Colouring Contest Winner posters
• PSAs – played February and March on Wawatay
• “100 Reason Why You Should Quit Smoking” poster
• Wawatay – 2 full page newspaper ads completed
• Seven Magazine poster ad

Some of the resource materials are available in Oji-Cree, Cree, Ojibway and English and are can be downloaded from the NAN website or by contacting Susan Bale at sbale@nan.on.ca or 1-800-465-9952.

2012 Keewaywin Awards

In recognition of outstanding achievements and dedication to the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Nominate someone from your community today!
Nomination deadline is July 3, 2012
Categories:
• NAN Women Award
• NAN Elder Award
• Emile Nakogee for Outstanding Leadership Award
• NAN Youth Award
Awards to be presented at XXXI Keewaywin Conference
Kashechewan First Nation August 2012
Nomination forms are available at nan.on.ca
Or by calling 1-800-465-9952

The Keewaywin Award Recipients 2011
Honouring Our Gifts

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Aboriginal Healthy Babies/Healthy Children program hosted a three-day conference for program staff in the NAN communities. The conference MC was Stan Wesley, who made sure the event was welcoming and fun for all. We would also like to acknowledge Elder Dora Beardy who provided us with insight and wisdom from her years of working in the health care field.

Topics ranged from Traditional parenting (Linking the past to the present), Understanding Prescription Drug Abuse and Your Role in Responding, FASD Foundations, Sensory Integration and Tie Blanket making, how to complete reports.

A special thank you to the family who shared their story of living with FASD on a daily basis.

On the last day we celebrated the community workers for all the gifts they bring to their communities to help families feel supported. This is not easy work and we wanted to honor the commitment these workers bring to the programs.

A small commitment, lifelong rewards

Breast feeding is more than just providing nutrients to your baby... It cleans the entire oral/nasal cavity. The brain grows at a rapid rate in the first two years, breast milk provides the baby with all the nutrients it needs to build a healthy brain.

Breast feeding enhances Brain Development.

Breast feeding decreases the risk of diabetes.

Breastfeeding decreases the risk of Obesity.

Prolonged use of bottle feeding has been linked to obesity. Studies are finding that prolonged bottle feeding may encourage a child to consume more calories during the day and at night.

Aboriginal Healthy Babies and Healthy Children program supports Breast Feeding.

Contact: Tricia Atlookan, Early Childhood Coordinator, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Tel: 807-625-4901 Fax: 807-623-7730 email: tatlookan@nan.on.ca

Program increasing interest in health careers

The Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI) hosted a Science Fair & Health Careers Expo targeting NAN youth in November in Thunder Bay. A total of 62 youth attended which made this a very successful event. A film which highlights this event has been produced and will be distributed to all those who attended in April 2012. This film will also be available on the AHHRI website.

The goal of both the AHHRI and the First Nations & Inuit Health Careers Program (FNICHP) is to increase interest in health careers amongst NAN youth.

The AHHRI also hosted a Health Careers Fair which took place In February, as part of the 2012 Oshkatsak Niigaan Oji Gathering that was held in Thunder Bay. This event was well attended and feedback was positive.

The AHHRI http://ahhri.nan.on.ca website is dedicated to the promotion of health careers, as well as publication of “The Pulse” a NAN newsletter specific to the promotion of health careers. The website has been regularly maintained/updated, and the fourth and final quarterly issue of the newsletter had been drafted and printed before March 31, 2012.

The FNICHP funds the NAN Health Careers Grant Program. This community based funding initiative, which grants up to $5,000 per community for the coordination and implementation of events and/or activities that promote health careers, was offered again this fiscal year.

Through the FNICHP funding promotional giveaway items have been produced. These are shared with NAN communities and affiliated organizations throughout the year at special events such as career fairs, workshops, meetings, etc.

For more information please contact Loretta Sheshequin at lsheshequin@nan.on.ca or 1-800-465-9952.

The Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Strategy (ARGS)

This program supports communities in their efforts to reduce the harm associated with problem gambling and is sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The program focus is on the development and delivery of wholistic approaches that address mental health and addictions in a culturally appropriate manner and include prevention and education initiatives; staff training; resource development and advocacy and support.

‘NEW’ TOLL FREE HELPLINE POSTER – This Spring 5,000 posters will be distributed to all health, social, educational and recreational sites across Northern Ontario.
I

in the past, our Nishnawbe Aski Nation economy was simple. We were connected to each other, but were not connected to the world outside. Our economy was based on our ability to survive through hunting, fishing and gathering. When European settlers came to North America, the dynamics changed. Our traditional lands were developed and our First Nation people were impacted in many ways. One thing was certain; we were no longer alone and our economic future lay in the cooperation and compatibility with others. In the Nishnawbe Aski Territory, one of our first economic development ventures was the fur trade. Since the fur trade our people have grown to become leaders in the Ontario economy. Successful First Nation people and businesses are sprouting throughout the NAN territory. Our journey is not over. Recent developments in the NAN First Nation Territories and initiatives that are being developed are; the First Nation Community Inventories Project; the NAN Regional Economic Strategic Planning – Pre-Planning (RESP) that will be commencing in May/June 2012.

Successful First Nation people and businesses are sprouting throughout the NAN territory. Our journey is not over.

The ERD Unit in February 2012 based on areas of strength. Due to the success of the first phase, the unit is currently working on a presentation that will be delivered at youth gatherings among others that will engage youth from their perspective, with games, economic development related ice breakers, music, presenters, economic and resource development related prizes, etc.

Economic Development Officer Training & Business Portal

The ERD Unit is investigating the possibility of having a NAN Executive Director of Knowledge (EDO) training course that is developed specifically for NAN EDO’s. A curriculum and proposal have been developed and the Unit is in the process of moving this project forward. The Unit is also investigating the potential partnership of a Business Portal that would have tools, resources, networking, workshops, best practices etc. that could be utilized by Economic Development Officers and the 49 First Nations.

NAN Regional Housing & Infrastructure Corporation Feasibility Study & Business Plan

In November 2009 the NAN Chiefs in assembly passed a resolution supporting the NAN First Nation Strategic Housing Action Plan and further mandating the NAN Executive to carry out the strategy by working with an interim working group. The resolution further charged the interim working group to explore options for a regional housing corporation. The foundation for the regional strategy developed a “Business Approach” by bundling the needs and maximizing economies of scale hopefully to obtain better prices, services and quality. The Economic and Resource Development Unit has hired a First Nation consultant to complete a feasibility study and business plan strategy for a NAN Regional Housing and Infrastructure Corporation. The Unit is expecting an interim report for the Spring Chiefs Assembly in May 2012.

From the fur trade to broadband

Quality Market and the Nutrition North Program offers choices for Northern Ontario

Quality Market launched its online store in April. The move by the Market into the world of online grocery sales and offering Thunder Bay pricing, with a reasonable handling charge is generating excitement across the region on First Nations communities. Prices in the north are often far higher than in Thunder Bay and other southern centres. Nishnawbe Aski people in remote First Nations communities can shop online to get their food orders placed.

Successful First Nation community inventories project

The Economic and Resource Development Unit engaged five communities in the NAN territory to take part in the First Nation Community Inventories Project. The first phase is running successfully and we are accepting letters of intent and support from other communities wanting to participate in the second phase. (For Letter of Intent e-mail jmclaughlin@nan.on.ca or call 807-625-4947) This project promotes and supports a strong investment attraction climate for the First Nation community. The project consists of the development of an Asset Inventory of the community, a Market Study and a Needs/Gap Analysis which will allow for the community focus areas of concern, and build on areas of strength. Due to the success of the first phase, the unit wants to engage 15 communities in the second phase and the remaining 49 First Nations in the third phase.

Regional Economic Strategic Planning – Pre-Planning

Mandated by the Chiefs in Assembly after the passing of Resolution 101/93 – “NAN Economic Development Regional Strategy and Framework”, the NAN Economic & Resource Development Unit (ERD Unit) has begun the Regional Economic Strategic Pre-planning. The ERD Unit has undertaken a series of workshops across Northern Ontario in order to obtain feedback from their respective First Nations and affiliated organizations on draft economic mandates. The draft economic mandates have been developed by the ERD Unit and Regional Economic Development and Resource Development Planning Committee (RESPC) in February 2012 based on many interviews, meetings and feedback sessions that took place in 2011-12. The draft economic sectors are to assist in the development of the proposal for the Regional Economic Strategic Plan (RESP) that will be commencing in May/June 2012.

Youth Initiative

The ERD Unit started off by targeting First Nation students with a survey that had questions targeted at what economic and resource development is a youth perspective. The Unit realized that our youth were confused at the true meaning of Economic and Resource Development and knew something had to be done to assist them in understanding its importance. The Unit hired a youth intern to provide transferable knowledge, skills and experience in the Economic and Resource Development field, to utilize a youth perspective and to better engage the youth of NAN. The Unit held a video interview with six youth at the NAN Oshkiahtaaq Gathering regarding Economic Development to determine their perspectives.

The Unit provided a presentation “Economic Development 101” and a Proposal Writing presentation to the six youth and remaining conference participants. Succeeding the presentations, those same youth were asked what they had learned. The response was that they all had grasped the importance of economic development and how it could impact their communities. The video of this project will be delivered to participants, schools, communities and to other groups to educate more youth. The ERD Unit has also made it a point to attend all regional youth gatherings to present on Economic and Resource Development in order to instill the importance of the subject. Some of the attended gatherings are Girl Power Wolf Spirit, Mattagami Career Fair, and Mushkewziqew Regional Youth Conference. The ERD Unit is currently working on a presentation that will be delivered at youth gatherings among others that will engage youth from their perspective, with games, economic development related ice breakers, music, presenters, economic and resource development related prizes, etc.

Th e ERD Unit has begun the Regional Economic Strategic Planning – Pre-Planning (RESP) that will be commencing in May/June 2012.
Nishnawbe Aski Nation will be celebrating 35 years this year when leaders of Nishnawbe Aski Nation first signed the declaration of unity declaring themselves a free and sovereign nation. This declaration was presented in Toronto on July 6, 1977 to Ontario Premier William Davis and his cabinet.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is compiling and digitizing old photographs and documents from this time to keep accurate records of these important events. We are seeking more photographs and documents to include in our files and for publishing. If you have photographs that you would like to contribute to this important project, please email communications@nan.on.ca or call (1-800) 465-9952.

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