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TURTLE ISLAND

*The official newsletter of the membership of the
Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake First Nation.*

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ALGONQUINS OF ONTARIO OFFICIALLY OPEN CONSULTATION OFFICE IN PEMBROKE



Pembroke, Ontario (January 11, 2010) – A new Consultation Office for the Algonquins of Ontario was officially opened today by the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and the Honourable Brad Duguid, Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

In front of local officials, representatives from all levels of government and other guests, the two Ministers jointly cut a ribbon to mark the official opening of the 5,262 square foot office that has been established to co-ordinate a wide variety of consultation activities with government departments, ministries or agencies.

The Ontario Algonquins, representing people of Algonquin descent living in an area covering 9 million acres within the watersheds of the Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers, are in the midst of negotiations with the Governments of Canada and Ontario towards the settlement of an outstanding land claim dating back to 1772. The Traditional Territory of the Algonquins includes the National Capital Region in Ottawa and Algonquin Park. The Algonquins, along with the federal and Ontario governments, have jointly agreed to attempt to reach an agreement in principle (AIP) in 2011.

*“This office opens the door for productive dialogue on economic development opportunities and other matters of importance to both Ontario and the Algonquins,” said **Ontario Minister Brad Duguid**. “We look forward to working with the Algonquins of Ontario and other interested parties to develop a settlement of the Algonquin land claim that will benefit the entire region.”*

*“Our government is pleased to support this new consultation office,” said **Federal Minister Chuck Strahl**. “This office will provide a separate venue, away from the negotiation table, to address development issues within the claim area. This will allow our negotiating teams to focus on resolving the claim. We look forward to continuing to work together towards an agreement that will provide economic certainty for the Algonquin people and their neighbours throughout eastern Ontario.”*

*“On behalf of the Algonquins of Ontario, we thank both the governments of Canada and Ontario for their respective commitments and financial support that have allowed us to establish this office,” said **Chief Kirby Whiteduck** of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, speaking on behalf of the First Nation and the nine other Ontario Algonquin communities. “Our consultation efforts will continue to be respectful of the many non Algonquins who live, work and make their homes in our Traditional Territory. We believe that Algonquins can live, work and enjoy living together with our non-Algonquin neighbors through mutual respect and open dialogue.”*

While the negotiations continue to settle the outstanding land claim, the Algonquins have entered into an agreement with the Governments of Canada and Ontario on consultation about activities or projects in the Traditional Territory. These consultations are taking place away from the land claim negotiation table and are led by elected representatives of the Algonquins (known as Algonquin Negotiation Representatives or “ANRs”) working with the affected government departments, ministries or agencies. The Algonquins of Ontario have established the consultation office in Pembroke to co-ordinate that work which now includes more than 200 files. The office will also support the Algonquins’ work with local municipalities and businesses.

The new office will allow governments, including Canada and Ontario as well as municipal governments throughout the Traditional Territory, to consult the Algonquins of Ontario and the 10 Algonquin communities they represent on proposed activities or projects in the region while the negotiations are ongoing. Consultation activities through the Traditional Territory currently involve, among many other issues:

- Working with the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry to establish new protocols for mining exploration and development activities on land where aboriginal rights have been asserted;
- Engaging in consultations with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and other stakeholders in response to the report “Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Provincial Park;” and
- Continuing discussions with regards to redeveloping the Rockcliffe and Lansdowne Park Sites in Ottawa.

Please Note - this office is not intended for the regular community business of the membership of the Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake First Nation. We still maintain our office in the Village of Golden Lake (behind the Post Office). (613) 757 0765.