



# OMUSHKEGO ISHKOTAYO TIPACHIMOWIN

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A publication of Five Nations Energy Inc.  
Volume 3 Issue No. 2

## The Switch from Diesel to Grid Power

The people in the communities of Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, and Fort Albany are making the change from diesel-generated electricity to grid-based power. Although electricity from the transmission line will be more affordable, reliable, and more environmentally responsible than diesel-generated power, community members must understand that there will still be occasional power outages from time to time.

Residents of the three communities can look to the people who lived in Moose Factory when they switched from diesel to grid power in 1974 to learn what to expect. Merv McLeod, a Project Advisor to Five Nations Energy, recalls that time.

“As people in the community realized that the availability of electricity was greater, they began to replace oil and wood heating with electric heating – which was a lot more convenient,” he said.

There were problems with the new power supply in Moose Factory, mainly because the old Ontario Hydro had chosen to use a submarine cable that ran beneath the river. During the spring breakup, the ice took the cable out, leaving the community without power for close to 5 weeks. Mr. McLeod said, “The loss of power meant more than



*River crossing of the Omushkego Ishkotayo near Fort Albany*

missing NHL games, unfortunately. For some people, it meant a struggle to stay warm. A number of people in the community lived in tents for a time, since they were smaller and easier to keep heated than their houses.

The problems experienced by the residents of Moose Factory were taken into consideration when the Omushkego Ishkotayo line was designed. This is why all of the lines are overhead, not buried beneath the ground.

Unfortunately, there were some major outages this spring, which were caused by high winds and some of the

wires being too close together. Cecil MacDonald, Transmission Manager of Five Nations Energy, explained, “The second wire from the top touched the top wire during heavy winds this spring, causing a short-out and loss of power to the communities. We are tightening the top (sky) wire on the line in order to avoid this problem in the future.”

Even though the residents of the three communities may experience power outages from time to time once they are connected to the transmission

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The Omushkego Ishkotayo Tipachimowin is a free publication sponsored by Five Nations Energy Inc. on behalf of the Mushkegowuk Power Companies. The purpose of this publication is to keep the Mushkegowuk Communities as well as other members of the public informed about the Western James Bay Transmission Line Project and other issues associated with energy use.

Five Nations Energy Inc. is a federally incorporated non-profit corporation that was started for the purpose of building and maintaining a 138kv electrical transmission line from Moosonee to Attawapiskat, On. This line will connect three remote Cree communities and will cover a distance of 275kms. For more information contact Mr. Ed Chilton, Project Coordinator at 1-705-658-4222 or visit <http://www.fivenations.ca>.

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# Construction Completed!

After many years of hard work, construction of the Omushkego Ishkotayo (Western James Bay Transmission Line Project) has been completed. The installation of the poles (or structures, as they are called) was completed by March 7, and total completion of transmission line construction occurred on March 15, 2002. The three substations, one in each of the communities of Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan have been built, and the communities of Kashechewan and Fort Albany are currently connected to the provincial grid through the transmission line. The Attawapiskat substation is scheduled to be commissioned in September, 2002, and will be energized this fall.

Unusually warm winter weather delayed the start of construction this past winter. The winter road was needed in order to transport equipment, and the weather wasn't cold enough to freeze the road as early as FNEI's

contractors would have liked. The first poles of this year were set on February 4, and even though there was a late start, the crews were able to complete the transmission line on schedule.

A celebration of the completion of the transmission line was held jointly with the Mundo Peetabek Education Authority, who was celebrating the grand opening of the Peetabek Academy in Fort Albany. The event was held on May 30, 2002. Representatives from all of the communities involved in the project as well as from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, SNC Lavalin Inc., Pacific & Western Credit Corp., Bank of Montreal, Power Budd LLP, Fraser Milner LLP and McLeod Wood Associates were in attendance. The festivities included a banquet and a performance by "The Spence Band" who opened for "Blue Rodeo".

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*Chief Theresa Hall from Attawapiskat First Nation, Marissa Linklater, Jessie Sutherland, Karen Etherington and Ed Metatawabin cut the ribbons to celebrate the completion of Omushkego Ishkotayo.*









Left: From left to right: Ed Chilton, Project Coordinator; Elaine Hughie, Kashechewan Power Authority; William Sutherland, Director of Five Nations Energy Inc.; George Hughie, Kashechewan Power Authority;

Right: Paul Wesley and Cedar Metatawabin lead the procession at the Celebration in Fort Albany.

## The Importance of Paying Your Electricity Bills

It is crucial that the community members and organizations that are customers of the three Local Distribution Companies (LDCs), Kashechewan Power Authority, Fort Albany Power Corporation and (when it is activated) the Attawapiskat Power Corporation pay their bills promptly. These three companies are locally owned and operated, and it is in everyone's best interests that these companies continue to run in a safe and effective manner providing electricity to the communities.

As local companies, the LDCs will treat all of their customers fairly. Customers who do not pay their bills on time will be disconnected and won't receive power. After all, it is not fair to the people who do pay their bills if the people who don't pay continue to receive electricity service. We cannot stress enough – please pay your bills on time!











*Left: Chief Mike Metatawabin of Fort Albany First Nation addresses the crowd at the Celebration in Fort Albany.*

*Below: The audience at the Celebration of the opening of the Petabeck Academy.*



## **New Services Company to Provide Support for the Western James Bay Electricity Sector**

The three communities of Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan have formed a new jointly owned company 3981584 CANADA Inc., which has temporarily been nicknamed the Services Company. The Services Company is a federally incorporated for profit corporation that will provide maintenance and other support systems for the Omushkego Ishkotayo transmission line and the three local distribution systems in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan. Each of the three communities will hold equal ownership in the corporation, and will

have equal representation on the Board of Directors.

As the construction phase of the Omushkego Ishkotayo project draws to a close, the project team for Five Nations Energy Inc. became aware of some important issues facing the Western James Bay Electricity Sector. As the new market rules for the electricity industry became known, the project team realized that Five Nations Energy Inc. could not continue provide the high level of support to the communities that it has since the project began. As a regulated transmitter, Five

Nations can only transmit power, and perform operations and maintenance on its transmission line. The company could not continue to provide the coordination and technical assistance that it currently provides to its owners, the three First Nations and their respective local distribution companies. At this time, Hydro One Networks Inc. provides maintenance and emergency services support to Five Nations Energy Inc. Northern Ontario Wires has similar

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## Debt Retirement Charge - How to Claim an Exemption

### What is the Debt Retirement Charge?

The Debt Retirement Charge (DRC) is a new charge for most electricity users in Ontario that will be used to pay down the former Ontario Hydro's \$38 billion debt. When Ontario Hydro was broken up into several companies in 1999, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation (OEFC) was formed to hold this debt, and other assets. Status Indians and First Nations purchasing electricity that is consumed on reserve, however, can be exempted from this Debt Retirement Charge.

### Who gets an exemption?

Status Indians, Indian bands and Band Councils that are consuming electricity on reserve can get a Debt Retirement

Charge exemption. Status Indians, Indian bands and band councils that buy electricity for use off reserve must pay the DRC. Also, corporations owned by Status Indians cannot be exempt from the DRC.

### How do I get an exemption?

Individuals should give the following information from their Status card to their local distribution company:

- Their name;
- The band name or registry number; and,
- The federal identification card number.

First Nations and band councils must complete an Exemption Certificate and submit it to their electricity supplier. The

electricity suppliers for the communities are as follows:

#### Attawapiskat:

Hydro One Remote Communities (Attawapiskat Power Corporation as of Fall, 2002)

#### Kashechewan:

Kashechewan Power Authority

#### Fort Albany:

Fort Albany Power Corporation

#### Moose Factory:

Hydro One Networks Inc.

If you have any questions about the Debt Retirement Charge please contact the OEFC at 1-866-728-8804 for more information.



*Project Advisor Merv McLeod and Legal Council Peter Budd hold the Five Nations Energy Inc. cake up for the camera.*

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**Congratulations to Michel Hall on his Retirement**

Five Nations Energy Inc. would like to congratulate Michel Hall on his retirement. Mr. Hall was a Senior Engineer with SNC Lavalin Inc., Power Division, and as Project Manager, he played an instrumental role in the development and construction of the Omushkego Ishkotayo project. Mr. Hall participated in the feasibility study, engineering, procurement, construction, commissioning and training aspects of the project.

Mr. Hall's career includes over 30 years of experience in the engineering field. He has conducted numerous environmental, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies both within Canada and internationally. He has also directed the design and construction of power lines, substations, mines and mills.

FNEI wishes Mr. Hall well on his retirement and would like to thank him for all of his hard work in making the Omushkego Ishkotayo project a success.



*The crowd gathers at the Fort Albany substation for the ribbon cutting ceremony.*

## Cecil MacDonald, Five Nations Energy Inc.'s General Manager

Cecil MacDonald began working for FNEI in May 2001. Cecil is a licensed electrician and linesman, and has an extensive background in the electricity field, dating back to the early 1970's. Before he came to FNEI, Cecil ran his own company, CecMac's Electric, which primarily serviced First Nation Bands, federal and provincial departments such as the Ministry of Government Services and Public Works Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, as well as many businesses in the private sector and personal individuals.

Cecil began his electrical apprenticeship with the Department of National Defense at Moosonee in 1970. After the closure of Department in 1975, he worked for the Moosonee Public School Board for a year as a maintenance worker.

Moving on to the Ministry of the Environment, Cecil was an Operator for the water and sewer plant until August of 1978, when he left to complete the theory portion of his electrical apprenticeship through Northern College. Once finished the theory, Cecil spent three years at Ontario Hydro during the late 70's and early 80's to begin his apprenticeship. He received linesman theory training through the Ontario Hydro training center in Orangeville, and left Ontario Hydro in 1982.

Cecil then spent four and a half years as an underground electrician with Kidd Creek Mines. Always eager to upgrade his skills, he did further electronics training during this time. He left Kidd Creek Mines in 1986 to start his own business, CecMac's Electric.

Cecil says that he has become very familiar with the three communities serviced by Omushkego Ishkotayo



through running his own business. He contracted in Moosonee and Moose Factory in the late 1980's and serviced Albany and Kashechewan during the early 90's as well as Attawapiskat and Peawanuk. Between 1996 and 2001, Cecil was primarily in Fort Albany, but spent time in Kashechewan as well.

Since he started as General Manager for Five Nations Energy Inc., Cecil has been assisting the local distribution companies (LDCs) with their distribution systems, as well as assisting with new subdivisions and new areas of growth by conducting assessments of their present systems to determine where upgrades are required. He has also coordinated the work that needed to be done by the linesmen working on the FNEI transmission system.

When there is a problem with the electrical distribution system, the LDC calls Cecil and then he calls the

emergency services provider if required. When asked if he has ever climbed the distribution line poles, Cecil said, "A few times – mostly during power outages."

Over the next six months, Cecil will be working towards bringing Attawapiskat online and getting the Attawapiskat Power Corporation up and running. Currently, the planned date for the Attawapiskat station testing and commissioning is during the week of September 23, 2002, with the transfer of load scheduled for some time in the fall.

Another area of concentration for Cecil is getting the five apprentices qualified and licensed. Once the apprentices are trained and able to work on the line, it will save the

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communities a lot of money. Right now, the communities must fly in emergency services crews to service the transmission line and distribution systems. It costs \$2500 for a charter to fly in the crew, plus whatever labour is required to fix the problem. These costs are paid by the LDCs. Once the local apprentices are qualified, this is money that will be saved and long outages will be reduced.

On the personal side, Cecil has been married for almost 32 years to Rita, with whom he has two daughters and one son who is deceased. Cecil has seven brothers and six sisters, and has two grandsons and one granddaughter.

Cecil noted that he went to high school with many residents of Attawapiskat, Albany and a few from Kashechewan. He has renewed a lot of friendship since working in the North and has even met a lot of relatives that he never knew previously in Kashechewan.

In his spare time, Cecil has had the opportunity to play for the Albany River Rats in the old timers' hockey league. Cecil comments that he has to play hockey in order to keep in shape to keep up with his grandchildren. He fishes when he gets a chance, and also hunts moose and water fowl. Cecil enjoys reading – he reads the Bible almost every day on account of his Christian beliefs. Cecil attends the Brethren Church, which is non-denominational, in Timmins when he is able.

*Chief Mike Metatawabin, Fort Albany First Nation and his son, Meshan.*



*Right: Ernie T. Sutherland, President, and Reg Blair, MP.*