



The Omushkego Ishkotayo Tipachimowin is a free newsletter published by Five Nations Energy Inc.

The purpose of this publication is to keep the Mushkegowuk Communities as well as other members of the public informed about the Five Nations Energy Inc. Transmission Line Project and other issues associated with energy use.

Five Nations Energy Inc. is a federally incorporated non-profit corporation that owns and operates a 138kv electrical transmission line from Moosonee to Attawapiskat, ON. This line connects three remote Cree communities to the main Ontario transmission grid and covers a distance of 270 kms.

For more information contact visit <http://www.fivenations.ca>. Cree translation provided by Greg Spence.

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**ᓄ ᓂᑕᑕᑎᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ**

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# Five Nations Energy Inc. Celebrates 10th Anniversary

On September 30, 2007, Five Nations Energy Inc. (FNEI) celebrated its 10th anniversary. FNEI is the only transmission company in Ontario that is owned and operated by First Nations and has overcome many challenges during its first ten years.

Five Nations Energy Inc. was created in September of 1997 to explore the feasibility of connecting three remote First Nation communities (Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan) to the main Ontario power grid. At the time FNEI was formed, electricity for all three communities was being supplied via diesel generators by the former Ontario Hydro Remote Community system. The diesel generators had numerous drawbacks, and by 1997, economic development and community growth was inhibited by the limits of the electricity systems in place. Vast natural resources are located in the region, but the lack of infrastructure has held back development.

The three communities often experienced service outages which were particularly difficult as many residents

and businesses rely on electric heat in the winter time when temperatures fall below minus 40 degrees Celsius. Diesel generators are noisy, bringing diesel fuel into the communities is costly and risky to the environment. There are no all-weather roads to the communities, and fuel is brought in by barge in the summer season or on the seasonal winter road which is open for less than 3 months in the winter. The leadership of the communities believed that the transmission line project, called "Omushkego Ishkotayo" (Cree for "fire through the muskeg"), would improve the quality of life for community members.

When the corporation was founded in 1997, the electricity market in Ontario was in a state of change. Deregulation was underway, and the new market rules were being developed. Bringing a new transmission company into existence during this time was very challenging. "Just as we would make plans for how the system would operate and explain them to the community members, the market rules would change," remembers Ed Chilton, Project Coordinator. "The changing regu-

latory environment, and a lack of capital along with the political environment of five First Nation communities with their different views and objectives, really presented a challenge. Many people thought this project would never happen, but we persevered and overcame the challenges," he said.

SNC Lavalin Services was awarded a design-build contract for the transmission line system, with the actual construction sub contracted to PowerTel Utilities Contractors Limited. Due to the fact that much of the transmission line route is over muskeg, the bulk of the line's construction could only take place during the winter months when the ground was frozen.

Three local distribution companies, (one in each community to be connected to the line) were created at the same time as FNEI, and each local distribution company each owns 1/3 of FNEI. The transmission line was energized to the community of Fort Albany in November 2001 and to Kashechewan in December 2001. The switch to energize the community of Attawapiskat was thrown on

*Continued on next page*

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IN MEMORY OF  
**CECIL G. MacDONALD**  
October 24, 1949 – July 1, 2007



The Lord saw you getting tired  
And a cure was not to be,  
So He put his arms around you  
And whispered, "Come with me."

With tearful eyes, we watched you suffer  
And saw you fade away,  
Although we loved you dearly,  
We could not make you stay.

A golden heart stopped beating,  
A beautiful smile at rest,  
God broke our hearts to prove  
He only takes the best.

It's lonesome here without you  
We miss you so each day,  
Our lives aren't the same  
Since you went away.

When days are sad and lonely,  
And everything goes wrong,  
We seem to hear you whisper,  
"Cheer up and carry on."

Each time we see your picture,  
You seem to smile and say,  
"Don't cry, I'm in God's keeping,  
We'll meet again someday."  
*author unknown*

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the people and organizations who showed their support through the thoughts, prayers, visits, condolences, help and most of all their love.  
Lovingly remembered by: Rita, Janice, Mike, Ryan, Leah, Jamie, Jade, Janica, and step-grandsons Justin and Jordan.

# FNEI System Upgrade and Telecom Network Update

*Contributed by Ed Chilton, Project Coordinator, Five Nations Energy Inc.*

In 2006, Five Nations Energy Inc. undertook a Capital Project to raise the standard of our substations and transmission lines to improve the reliability and delivery of electricity to the communities north of Moosonee. The standards that we use are the same as the standards to which other transmission line companies in Ontario, such as Hydro One Networks, Great Lakes Power and Canadian Niagara, operate. When we built the existing transmission system, we only had enough funds to build a system to deliver electricity, without the necessary equipment in place in the event of a failure of major piece of equipment at the substations.

In the original plans for the Omushkego Ishkotayo transmission system, spare transformers (weighing 40 tonnes) were purchased for the Attawapiskat and Fort Albany substations. Kashechewan had a fairly new diesel generation station which was to be used in the event of a system failure. The spare transformers were in cold storage and if a transformer failed, it could have taken up to 20 days until the failed transformer was removed, the spare put in place, and energized. FNEI's Capital Project includes placing the spare transformers in position to switch transformers more quickly. The plan is that we could complete the switch-over within hours, not days or weeks.

We completed the work at the Attawapiskat Substation in May 2007 and plan on completing the work at the Fort Albany Substation in late summer 2008. We have placed the order for a second transformer for Kashechewan, which will mean that the transformer can be delivered via the Winter Road in 2009 and completion of the installation later that year. Five Nations Energy had to wait for a final decision from Kashechewan whether the community would relocate before completing the design of the unit. If the community had decided to

re-locate, the whole system in Kashechewan would have been rearranged with different equipment to serve a new community.

The estimated cost of the Capital Project is \$13 million and Five Nations Energy borrowed \$9 million from two lenders which will be repaid over a period of 20 years.

An important part of our Capital Project is the installation of a fibre optic telecommunications system to allow us to monitor our systems on a real-time basis. At the present time, we are using the dial-up analog microwave system which is outdated and overloaded. Equipment is in place that automatically dials-up to our substations every 30 minutes, but

this could mean that the power could be off for 29 minutes before we knew it and could take corrective measures to restore power. With the new telecommunication system, we will be able to monitor at all times and if there was a failure, correct it sooner and restore the delivery of electricity. We should have that system up and running by July 2008.

When we designed the new fibre optic telecommunication system between Moosonee and Attawapiskat, we made sure that there was enough capacity for the use by the communities, replacing the obsolete analog microwave system. The Mushkegowuk Council is the proponent who is looking for funding from the various levels of governments to allow the communities to connect to the modern fibre optic system and improve the telecommunication systems in their communities. Five Nations Energy Inc. is

a licensed and regulated transmission line company who can only operate in the electricity sector. We are not allowed to operate as a telecommunication company, but we are prepared to lease available space on our system to others to make a modern communications network available to the James Bay communities.

*Continued from page 3*



*A helicopter installs the top section of the high voltage support.*

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Photos by Michel Sutherland, Fort Albany, ON



community. People continue to complain to FNEI about the costs of energy, but FNEI has no role in determining the rates people pay. The rates are determined by the local distribution company and are approved by the Ontario Energy Board. FNEI is paid a specific amount set by the Ontario Energy Board and based on the amount of energy transmitted in Ontario.

Five Nations and its community owners are years ahead of other communities, with established local distribution and ownership of transmission lines. We have reason to celebrate and be proud of our accomplishments and to look to the future to work together to make FNEI and the three LDCs a stronger team.

