

The Gordon Post

Message from the Chief

Greetings to all the George Gordon's First Nations Band members.

I would like to begin this newsletter by thanking those who sup-

Chief Glen Pratt



ported me in the past election. I trust that your faith in me is not misguided. I would also like to thank those First Nation members who chose not to support me in this spring. Your hesitancy to endorse my candidacy will motivate me to work hard to improve the conditions for our members, both on and off reserve, and ensure that I remain open to new ideas and initiatives.

Since this is the first edition of our newsletter in my new term, I'd like to take a little space to make GGFN members aware of some of the changes I have implemented, and plan to implement, in order to improve the services we provide to our membership.

Good leadership, I think, comes not only from good ideas, but also from creating a well-organized, professional office that can get things done. One of the first things we have done is move to a portfolio system, similar to what the FSIN, AFN, federal and provincial governments, and many other First Nations use.

This means that each Council member is in charge of a specific area, and it is his or her responsibility to make sure that the strategic plan items get done. The portfolio system also allows each council member to focus on a area, rather than being pulled in many directions.

Later in this issue you will find a list of the Councilors and their portfolio assignments.

Another change that is coming is the implementation of good policy and legislation to govern our community AND our leadership. A full report on the governance portfolio can be found later in this issue, and members will be kept informed of our progress. All pieces of legislation will be brought to Band Membership meetings for discussion as they are developed.

Right now, much of leadership's attention is focused on business opportunities, particularly in the

area of natural resource development. We are working to ensure that any ventures we undertake benefit all our members, and that those benefits will last and not simply be a short-term gain. Our challenge is to make decisions that aren't hasty, while at the same time not lose any opportunities that can benefit our community.

Finally, a major part of good leadership is open and regular communications with the people I represent. I am, therefore, working on a communications strategy, including a regular newsletter, that will make sure that GGFN membership is kept fully up to date on what decisions your leaders are making, what issues will be coming forward, and what state our finances are in.

We will start our improved communications with Band membership meetings in Saskatoon (May 26), Regina (May 27) and Gordon's Education Centre (May 31-June 1).

In closing, I'd like to say that I hope we can all work together to reach our common goal of a better quality of life for our members, now and in the future.

Special points of interest:

- > GGFN Portfolio Assignments
- > TLE Audit and Strategic Plan
- > Financial Update
- > Making Business Partnerships

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GGFN Portfolio Assignments



Chief Pratt will oversee all portfolio areas and provide assistance to Councillors on major issues

A portfolio system of governance assists Chief and Council in achieving results, and allows Council members to focus on a particular area's goals.



GGFN will benefit from the portfolio by clearly indicating who is responsible for progress in specific areas.

Council Member	Portfolio Responsibilities
Chief Glen Pratt* *Chief Pratt sits <i>ex officio</i> on all portfolios	Governance Outside Agencies Communications
Councillor Donna Anderson-Blind	Finance & Band Administration Child Care Sports and Recreation Chair: Pow Wow Committee
Councillor Dennis Bird	Brighter Futures Health NNADAP Recovery Centre Seniors
Councillor Nathan Bitternose	Education Public Works and Housing Urban Membership
Councillor Bonny Gordon	Culture Social Development TCFS Veterans
Councillor Dennis Hunter	Employment & Training Justice LFD Chair: Police Management Board
Councillor John McNab	Prairie Lodge Housing Corporation Public Works & Housing
Councillor Bryan McNabb	Lands & Resources Post Secondary TLE
Councillor Hugh Pratt	CDC Economic Development Gaming Security Inc Chair: GGFN Holding Company Board

Governance Portfolio Report—Chief Glen Pratt

Every healthy and prosperous community is a result of good governance. As a public servant, a leader must find balance between taking direction from the people he/she is elected to represent and being unafraid to make decisions on behalf of those same people who chose him/her for a leadership position.

Good governance and policy, ratified by band members, are the best tool for finding this balance. As such, we have begun a slate of governance development and completion designed to ensure the efficient, accountable and transparent operations of our Nation's government.

This fiscal year, we will focus on the following:

GGFN Constitution. This document lays out the roles, responsibilities and benefits for Band Membership. It is an agreement between the people and their government regarding how things will be run. The *Constitution* includes an organization chart that shows how the GGFN government will be organized.

GGFN Election Act: This document ensures that the leadership selection process is fair and transparent and sets out a process for dealing with inappropriate practices.

GGFN Financial Management Act: This piece of legislation helps to separate GGFN business from politics. It ensures that the funds that come into GGFN are handled in the most efficient and economic manner possible, and that accurate financial records are kept. It also ensures that all financial matters are consistent, so that favouritism and nepotism is eliminated.

GGFN Communications Strategy: This strategy will improve communications between GGFN government and administration and our band membership. It will ensure that there is a process for band members to access information that they need to ensure that their community is governed in an effective way. It will also keep membership up to date on events and initiatives that are relevant to them.

While the current law only requires that the *Constitution* and

the *Election Act* are ratified by band membership, it is my intention to bring all GGFN Acts to full membership meetings for input, revisions and ratification. In this way, our laws will be laws that are made by our people and will, therefore, be respected by all our community members.

Another important area under development in the governance portfolio is the creation and improvement of GGFN governance committees. These committees ensure community involvement and input into GGFN operations. Until now, some Committees have been highly effective, some rarely meet, and some areas have no committee to provide community involvement at all.

We are, therefore, developing an organizational chart that will identify the necessary committees, and Terms of Reference that will apply to each committee. These Terms of Reference will detail how committee members are appointed, how long their term is, and clearly detail their roles, responsibilities and limitations.



A Constitution is an agreement between citizens and their government.

“Democracy, good governance and modernity cannot be imposed or imported from outside a nation.
Emile Lahoud, former President of Lebanon

The GGFN administration is undertaking professional development and capacity building among our existing staff



Finance, Administration and Child Care—Councilor Donna Anderson-Blind

Finance and Administration is one of the most important portfolio areas, as it deals with financial management, human resources and smooth and efficient band operations.

In this portfolio, we are working to ensure that our operations incorporate the latest best practices and exceed industry stan-

dards.

In order to achieve those goals, we are updating and revising the *GGFN Personnel Management Regulations*, improving our financial administration by both working with the Chief's office on completion of a *Financial Management Act* and undertaking a series of in-house professional

development seminars for our staff. These seminars include:

- Grammar and writing skills
- Proposal writing;
- Time management;
- Financial management;

GGFN Administration is working to improve time/financial and project management skills



The GGFN Head Start Program will be hosting its Graduation on June 17, 2010 with 12 graduates!



The GGFN Head Start Program will honour the achievement of 12 graduates on June 17, 2010

Finance and Administration Continued

- Document control systems; and
- Computer Skills.

In this way we intent to build capacity among our GGFN administration staff as well as create a safe, consistent and productive work environment.

As most of you are aware, there have been some staffing changes as we work towards ensuring we have the best people working for our members.

I would like to welcome Derek Morris to the position of GGFN Director of Operations. Derek comes with years of experience in Public Works, and has worked with various other First Nations agencies.

As many of you know, Rita Pratt has moved to the position of Director of Finance. We'd like to thank Rita for her years of service as Band Manager. Rita's move to finance from the position of Band Manager allows her to focus on financial administration, and to assist Derek in the development of sound financial

policy.

Over the next few years, we will focus on building capacity among our existing staff and recruiting highly qualified individuals to fill vacant positions. We will also work towards updating our policies, where necessary, and developing processes to ensure the best service to our membership.

Head Start—submitted by Vicki Lonethunder-Head

As most of you are aware, the Head Start program's goals are to support 3-4 year old children and their families by providing opportunities to share valuable experiences that are vital for healthy early childhood development. GGFN Head Start opened in 2000 under the guidance of GGFN leadership and the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council. It is currently staffed with 2 positions: Vicki Lonethunder (Coordinator) and Tammy Pelletier (Early Childhood Educator).

The GGFN currently has 12 Head Start graduates in 2010. The last

day of school for the children is on June 17, 2010, and we will be holding the graduation ceremony and BBQ on that day as well. On June 14, we will be taking the children on a field trip to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, followed by a viewing of the movie *Shrek Forever*.

For the 2010-11 year, the Head Start "round up activities" will beginning at the Open House on May 31 and will continue until the 2010-11 Head Start school year in mid-September.

The GGFN Head Start Program welcomes all community members to participate in our ceremony to honour the achievements of our children, and would be particularly pleased to have our community's leaders attend the graduation on June 17, 2010.

For more information about the Head Start program, please contact:

Vicki Lonethunder

Band Office: 835-2232

Email:

Economic Development Update—Council Hugh Pratt

Currently, the economic development portfolio is extremely busy, as we work to ensure that GGFN is both people-ready (we have qualified individuals to fill jobs) and business-ready (we are a well-run organization that draws investor confidence).

Our holding company has been working hard to develop partnerships with industry to ensure

that our members make the most of any opportunity that arises through development in our area. Therefore, we are considering partnership agreements with two groups:

1. Those who would provide services to a mining company that may open a potash mine on our traditional lands.

These partnerships depend upon an agreement between GGFN and the mining company, and we are working with BHP to develop an agreement that would ensure that GGFN would have both employment opportunities as well as

Economic Development Continued

first crack at any contracts for services or products the mine requires.

2. The second group of agreements is with industry development that is not dependent upon a mine being built. We are looking for opportunities to enter into partnerships with industry that would allow us to develop our own GGFN owned businesses.

On May 10-11, the GGFN Chief and Council, along with a few technical staff for support, traveled to Calgary to meet with a number of companies who have expressed an interest in partnering

with GGFN. Each company gave a presentation on what they do and how they thought we could work together for economic benefit. The costs of the trip were covered by a joint contribution from the companies that presented.

We will continue to work with industry to develop opportunities for employment, training, business ownership and community prosperity.

This portfolio area is also responsible for the operations of the GGFN retail center. We have been working with the store's management and staff to ensure that there is accountable and

transparent operations, and that the store is a profitable business.

Finally, we included the Director of the GGFN security company in our trip to Calgary. This trip provided an opportunity for our security company to network with other companies that provide both security and emergency services and to discuss some of the industry's best practices and business development.



GGFN's position in the potash belt may bring economic benefits as a spin-off of potash mine development

Housing & Public Works: Councillors Nathan Bitternose and John McNab

There can be no doubt that a lack of adequate housing and that poor quality roads are two of the most pressing issues facing First Nations communities across the country. As the Councillors responsible for these areas, we are constantly searching for new and innovative solutions to these shortages.

Housing Update—submitted by Ashley Morris

The GGFN Housing Department will be undertaking 35 Canada's Economic Action Plan (CEAP) renovations this year. These renovations will be divided into 19 CMHC Units and 16 band units. We will also be replacing 2 burned homes.

Currently we are waiting for final approval from INAC and CMHC on CEAP dollars to begin the renovations. **We are also looking for community involvement to assist in re-building Madeline**

Pratt's burned home. Like Habitat for Humanity and other similar organizations, we are hoping that our community will come together and offer their free labour to assist us.

Our next steps are to post advertisements for contractors to begin the CEAP renovations and to organize our community to rebuild a home of one of our valued senior citizens.

For more information or to volunteer call:

Ashley Morris:

Office: 835-2513

Email:ashleym71@hotmail.com

Public Works Update—submitted by Jared Lonethunder

On GGFN, the main road has been in use since 1981, which makes it 29 years old. Over the past 15-20 years, traffic has increased to the

point where the road is in very poor condition, particularly when it rains.

Currently, the main road sees 750-1500 cars per day. With that rate of use, the road has become very worn down and in need of repairs. The clay cap is no longer protecting the surface of the road, and gravel is needed for roads and driveways throughout our community. Since there is not enough funding to our Operations and Maintenance budget, we are doing some gravelling through our band base capital budget. We are also looking at ways to increase funding, negotiate an asphalt road with our business partners, costing out clay capping and asphalt and developing our own gravel business to cut costs.

In the meantime, we will continue grading side roads and with the planned gravelling for this fiscal year.

The recent activity in the natural resources industry presents many opportunities for GGFN



GGFN Public Works is working to find innovative solutions to poor quality roads



The provincial government's refusal to sell land and its proposed sell-off of Crown Lands in June act as a barrier to First Nations wishing to fulfill their TLE.

"The Provincial Government's planned fire sale, everything must go, of public lands in Saskatchewan this June is simply a way to ensure that First Nations will, once again, not have choice land to choose from when the time comes for us to make our TLE purchases." Chief Pratt, *The Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, May 13, 2010

Lands Portfolio—Councillor Bryan McNabb

The issues of current concern in the lands portfolio center mostly around the TLE shortfall and the acquisition of lands. These issues, mostly due to current policy changes within the provincial government, have been extremely challenging, and we have taken a number of steps to meet those challenges.

Currently, GGFN has to reach TLE shortfall of 8,900 acres. The deadline for purchase of these acres is in June 2010. In addition, our TLE agreement allows us to purchase 115,000 acres in total.

The challenge arises with the provincial government. First, the Saskatchewan Government has indicated that it is no longer a "willing seller" when it comes to First Nations. Muskoday First Nation is currently in litigation against the province due to a refusal to sell land that Muskoday had chosen under its TLE agreement.

However, after working with Chief Pratt's office and Vice

Chief Lyle Whitefish of the FSIN, we were able to raise public awareness and get the attention of Minister Bill Boyd and Premier Brad Wall on this issue. The province has assured us that we will be able to purchase any parcel of Crown land that we identify.

Further, Saskatchewan's intention to release Crown lands for purchase in June means that industry may purchase all the choice lands while GGFN, and other First Nations, try to raise the capital required to buy TLE lands. GGFN has joined with many other, non-First Nations organizations in protesting this plan, including participating in a staged protest on the steps of the Saskatchewan legislature.

Our second challenge is in developing a TLE strategic plan. We need to carefully consider the balance between reserve expansion and economic development, and I have been working with the GGFN Economic Development

portfolio, the FSIN, and the GGFN Chief's office to ensure that we purchase lands that can be put to good use, either providing living areas for our members or land suitable for business development.

The TLE department is currently working to identify suitable lands for purchase and to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that no lands purchased under our TLE agreement lie idle.

We are also working on the development of a *GGFN Land Use Policy* and a *Land Management Act*. These governance documents will ensure that all GGFN members have input into the use of our lands and will set out a fair and consistent criteria for the use of all our lands, on and off reserve.

In this way, we will be able to ensure that every community member benefits from our decisions regarding allocation and development of GGFN TLE land purchases.

Veterans Portfolio—Councillor Bonny Gordon



GGFN member, Arthur Anderson, has recently completed his first year, of a 3 year term, as the SFNVA's Regina-Qu'Appelle branch President.

The GGFN Veterans' portfolio has been working with the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans' Association (SFNVA) to ensure that our GGFN Veterans receive the information, advocacy and recognition that they so richly deserve. Indeed, one of our own Veterans, Arthur Anderson, has been elected as the President of the SFNVA's south branch.

Our last surviving WWII Veteran, Mr. Howard Anderson, recently

travelled to Holland to participate in the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Holland. There he participated in ceremonies meant to honour those soldiers who didn't come home from Europe.

The SFNVA will be hosting its annual spring assembly at the Dakota Dunes Casino on May 28, 2010. GGFN will assist its veterans to attend this meeting, and as Veterans portfolio holder I will also attend to ensure that I

am up to date on veterans issues and proposed solutions.

GGFN is also participating in the SFNVA's fundraising golf tournament this year, and we have entered a team to play in Yorkton on August 26, 2010.

This portfolio will continue to work with our own veterans and with the SFNVA to ensure that veterans are receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Financial Update

Currently GGFN Finance Department is working to prepare for the 2009-2010 financial audit.

Preparations for the audit include reviewing all the financial documentation for the past fiscal year to ensure that they are accurate and complete. These documents will then be turned over to the auditors, who will prepare the formal audit that is presented to our membership and to our funders.

The completed audit will be made available to all our members at a membership meetings, along with a summary of revenues and expenses. In addition, we are working on a way to make the financial information available through a password protected page on our web site. In this way, members only will be able to access regular financial updates.

current and past audits, and other financial information.

The finance department is also working with the GGFN administration to finalize all our funding agreements for the 2010-11 fiscal year. As always, INAC, FNIHB and other funding agencies are slow to respond, and a complete list of all agreements should be ready in June.

Finally, GGFN has submitted a number of project specific proposals under INAC's proposal funding. Included in these proposals is governance development, board training, and capacity development for GGFN staff. If successful, these proposals will enable us to improve the quality of services delivered to our members through qualified and trained staff and leadership.

We have also made arrangements for all staff to have access to a proposal writing workshop that will be delivered in-house over the summer. This workshop will assist our staff, especially department heads, in preparing winning proposals which will increase the amount of funding GGFN receives for program/service delivery.

As was mentioned earlier in this issue, part of the work plan for the GGFN Finance Department this year is the development of improved financial policy and processes, based on best practices. The Chief's office will be working towards completion of a *GGFN Financial Management Act* and the Finance Department will undertake a financial policy review to identify policy gaps.



Preparations are underway for the GGFN 2009-10 audit.

GGFN Finance Department is finalizing fiscal year 2009-10 for the audit completion in June.

Innovative Instruction at GGEC

The George Gordon Education Centre has partnered with the Horizon School Division and GGFN Administration to bring an innovative approach to education at our high school.

In addition to the regular curriculum, the GGEC is striving to equip our children with life and employment skills that will enable them to seek employment after graduation.

One of these programs is teaching Grade 12 students to prepare for jobs in the hospitality industry.

The Horizon School Division is providing a food preparation

course to our Grade 12s, including chefs to assist in making nutritious meals. GGFN has provided the 640 Diner as a facility to undertake this instruction, and GGEC makes time in the curriculum for the students to take this training.

The result is delicious meals prepared by our students at the Diner for band members to sample.

On May 21, 35 tickets were distributed among band members for a meal of ceasar salad, chicken and dessert.

While the meal was delicious, the real value is in the training for

our students. Grade 12s learned about the hospitality industry, what is like to work in a restaurant, the demands of a busy food service operation, and the rewards of a job well done.

They also learned how to prepare a meal that is healthy and nutritious...a skill they can use at home as well as in the employment industry.

The partnership between GGEC, the school division and GGFN will continue to work towards providing our children with practical life and employment skills in addition to their regular studies.



Grade 12 students at GGEC prepared a nutritious meal for 35 lucky band members on Friday, May 21 at the 640 Diner.



The possibility of a potash mine, and other resource development industries, present both training and employment opportunities for GGFN members.

GGFN is working to ensure that our members are ready to take advantage of the employment and training opportunities that arise from the economic development opportunities in our area.

Employment and Training Portfolio Report- Councillor Dennis Hunter

Employment and Training is a new portfolio designed to help us prepare for the current economic development opportunities. We are currently working with INAC on the Active Measures that they will be implementing over the next few years in First Nations communities.

Because this is a new file, we are looking carefully at our next steps and determining the best recommendations and practices to begin implementing employment and training strategies for our membership.

First, we are coordinating meetings with both INAC and the province to discuss strategies to implement opportunities for our membership who are currently between 18-25 years of age and on Social Assistance. We require funding to staff the Employment and Training area, including an Employment and Training officer, a Human Resources officer and funds to pay the current staff appropriately so that we may recruit and retain the best peo-

ple. We are also working closely with the economic development portfolio to ensure that all our business partnerships and agreements include employment and training opportunities for GGFN members. This may include tri-partnership agreements between our industry partners, GGFN, and training institutions such as SIIT, Carlton Trail, SITAG, etc.

One of the most basic needs for most employment opportunities is a valid Saskatchewan drivers license. We are coordinating a meeting with Saskatchewan Government Insurance to look at ways to facilitate driver training and drivers licenses for those GGFN members who don't currently hold a valid license.

Another important area for Training and Employment is the Labour Force Development (LFD) file, and we are working closely with the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council to ensure that

TATC is providing opportunities to GGFN.

Accordingly, we are working, through TATC, with all training institutions and employment centres to ensure that our trained members are finding gainful employment. We are also meeting with SITAG to ensure that their existing programming is meeting the needs of our members and that new programming is being developed that will meet the labour force needs of industry. Our goal is to train and find employment for any of our members who want to work.

Given the boom in the resource industry, we have to look at training that is being offered for the long-term with partners in our area. Any resource development within the TATC area will require a labour force, and we are working to ensure that GGFN members are trained and ready to fill any employment opportunities that arise from these partnerships.

Education Report—Councillor Nathan Bitternose

The George Gordon Education Centre (GGEC) has regular Council meetings to ensure that all concerns and issues are being addressed. Council meetings are held the first Monday of every month at 2:00pm in the school library.

Currently, the GGEC offers a variety of programs over and above the regular curriculum. For example, GGEC offers cultural programming that includes

pow-wow signing, drumming and a multi-cultural week. We also provide many wellness programs, including NNADAP, a health clinic and visits from the RCMP.

Extra-curricular programs available to students include sports, like volleyball, golf, badminton and cross-country running; the winter carnival, science fair, earth day fair and scholastic book fair; holiday dinners, GGEC

student incentive programs and newsletters from both the GGEC and the student council.

Recently, the GGEC has been experiencing a high rate of absenteeism. We are asking all parents to make sure their children are in school, and when a child is absent without calling in, GGEC staff will call the parent to notify them.

It is the GGEC policy to hold back students who do not meet the



GGEC staff are taking a pro-active approach to prevent bullying through awareness workshops and conflict resolution training for students.

Education Report continued

requirements of their grade level.

Also, GGEC is hosting a workshop, called "Girl Power" that targets girls between the ages of 10-15 years. This workshop will help girls develop their conflict resolution skills, and help address the high rate of bullying and conflict between female students.

GGEC is also working to prevent cyber-bullying, which is a problem that is on the rise across the

country. At GGEC, staff have been made aware of a rise in this problem among our middle year students. Our RCMP community liaison officer, Constable Dyck, will be coming to our school to do some awareness sessions with students in an attempt to be pro-active and address this issue before it spreads.

Finally, one area of concern is the use of the GGEC gymnasium. We wish to ensure that equipment is cared for and left clean

when the gym is used. We will be looking at ways to create a policy that governs the use of our gym, and to develop an agreement for all users that includes proper care and respect of our beautiful facilities.

The next GGEC school council meeting will be held on June 7, 2010. All members of the community are welcome to contact the school to have their issues or concerns addressed on the agenda.



The George Gordon Education Centre is a beautiful facility that offers many advantages, extra-curricular activities and programs to our students and community.

Justice Portfolio Report—Councilor Dennis Hunter

Recently, the TATC Police Management Board (PMB) along with Chief Glen Pratt, signed a new agreement to work towards the development of a policing program for the 4 TATC First Nations.

TATC is working with the federal government to find funding for this policing program. We are also working on providing training for the PMB and the development of a Justice Committee that would be made up of members from each First Nation. These members would then report directly to the Chief and Council of their respective First

Nations.

At GGFN, we have arranged for the Staff Sergeant of the Punichy detachment to report regularly to the Chief and Council. At our last C&C meeting, Staff Sergeant Greg Abbot and Constable Ken Wilkins provided an update on crime statistics in our area.

The RCMP also provided an update on the Cadet Core program. This program currently has no members from GGFN participating due to a lack of volunteers. The RCMP will work with the GGFN Justice portfolio to try and attract volunteers and cadets to

this program, which will continue to be administered by the TATC.

Parents and community members who are willing to volunteer to help the cadets are urgently needed. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Dennis Hunter at the band office or staff sergeant Abbott as soon as possible.

Finally, the Justice portfolio is focusing on reducing the sale and use of drugs in our community. The RCMP has stepped up its enforcement on drug crimes, with 3 searches resulting in arrests in the past few months.

Three search and seizure warrants were issued to the RCMP to crack down on the use of drugs in our community. All three resulted in drug charges being brought as well as the seizure of marijuana and cash.



The GGFN Justice portfolio is extremely concerned with the sale, use and possession of drugs in our community. We are working with law enforcement to crack down on the sale of illegal drugs, especially marijuana, and looking at strategies to address the illegal use of prescription drugs.



The Touchwood Agency Tribal Council oversees the Touchwood Agency Child and Family Services.

To date, on GGFN, there are 45 children in care on reserve as opposed to 77 in care off reserve.



This bungalow in Regina rents for \$1,475/mth. Prairie Lodge Housing Corporation is working to build homes in urban centres for GGFN members to rent at affordable rates.

TATC ICFS Update—Councilor Bonny Gordon

Touchwood Child and Family Services Inc. has welcomed Pasqua First Nation as a member band to the Agency since our last newsletter. As of December 1, 2009 Pasqua has joined Touchwood Child & Family Services Inc.

Touchwood CFS Inc. would like to welcome Bonny Gordon, Gordon's Board Member, she began her tenure April 1, 2010. Also we welcome to our staff is William Crowe-Buffalo, Prevention Manager of the agency. He began employment with the agency of as April 19, 2010.

Touchwood is now into its 17th year of service to the member first nations with the primary focus on

the safety and well being of our children. Its mandate is to provide services to children in need of protection and to assist those families whose children are in care by way of providing services to the families so their children can be returned to them.

An important event to look forward to this summer is the Cultural Camp scheduled for July 19th to the 23rd which will be held on Fishing Lake First Nation this year. Last year Gordon First Nation hosted the Cultural Camp. The Cultural Camp is being organized by the Prevention Program of TCFS Inc. with William Crowe-Buffalo heading the program. For further information you may contact William at 835-2600.

Members of the six first nations as well as their friends and families who may reside out of the Touchwood area are welcome attend the camp.

To date, on Gordon First Nation, there are 45 children in care on-reserve as opposed to 77 children in care off-reserve. The number of children in care on-reserve has drastically been reduced compared to the number of children in care since the agency began operation in 1993. It is the desire of Touchwood Child and Family Services to change the delivery of services from children in care to intervention and prevention services to our families of Touchwood.

Prairie Lodge Housing Corporation Update—Councilor Dennis Hunter

The goal of the Prairie Lodge Housing Corporation is to provide good quality, energy efficient homes at an affordable price to our urban membership.

Currently, we are working to build 20 units in the City of Regina through a partnership with CCL Homes. We are also looking at building homes in other cities as well.

Successful urban housing requires many partnerships and cooperation between several GGFN portfolios. We are working with the cities to locate land suitable for housing projects, while simultaneously working with the GGFN TLE department to

identify and possibly open negotiations for the land.

As always, funding is a challenge as we are working with government and non-government funders, such as the federal government grant stream, home builders, banks and municipalities to ensure the funding is in place to create a successful home building plan.

GGFN members are currently paying up to \$1,200 per month in rent. Our goal is two-fold.

First, we want to provide affordable housing for rent to our urban membership through the acquisition of land in the cities of Regina and possibly Saskatoon.

Second, we want to build units that we can then sell to our members at a reasonable price so that they can own their own homes.

Currently, mortgages on average homes in Regina and Saskatoon are around \$900—\$1,000/month, depending on the type of mortgage and interest rates. Home ownership, therefore, reduces monthly accommodation expenses for our members. The issue is providing the down payment.

The Prairie Lodge Housing Corporation's goal is to build 100 units in the cities within the next 5 years.

Income Support Program—Councillor Bonny Gordon

Currently, GGFN is taking a proactive approach to income support. We are working with TATC's Labour Force Development, Post Secondary, NCBR and income support workers as well as our industry partners to develop employment and training opportunities designed to relieve those currently receiving Social Assistance.

In addition, we are also drafting a proposal that would allow us to recruit an assessment officer,

who would work with S.A. clients to determine their skills, interests and training needs as an alternative to income support.

We understand that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has plans to bring about policy changes that would see all 18-25 year olds cut off of income support. We are working hard to ensure INAC consults with First Nations on this, and any other, policy changes.

We are also developing partner-

ships and training to ensure that our youth, especially those facing Social Assistance cut-offs, are involved in training and capacity development initiatives to ensure they can take advantage of the employment opportunities in our area and beyond.

GGFN Social Development portfolio is working with all GGFN portfolio areas, including economic development, Training and employment, and education to reduce our members' reliance on Social Assistance.

Veterans' Cairn

George Gordon's First Nations is planning on unveiling a Veterans Cairn on November 11, 2010.

We would like to extend a special thank you to former Councillor, Herman Blind, for his commitment to the Veterans during his term in council.

We are planning an unveiling

ceremony, to be held on November 11, 2010, and are working with Veterans and Elders to ensure that the appropriate protocol is observed.

We would like to invite all our members to join us in this important event.

Details of the ceremony will be

provided through this newsletter as they become available, and anyone wishing to participate in planning is welcome to contact Bonny Gordon at the GGFN Band Office.



Monuments to Canadian soldiers exist all over the world, including a monument in England to honour the Canadian Air Force Veterans (left) and the National Aboriginal Veterans monument in Ottawa (right).

GGFN plans to honour its veterans on November 11, 2010, with the unveiling of a Veterans Cairn to ensure that our members who offered their lives are not forgotten.

[When you get home, tell them of us and say,
For their tomorrow, we gave our today.](#)



We're on the web:

www.georgegordonfirstnation.com

Our History

During World War II, the children of George Gordon's First Nation knitted over 300 pairs of socks to send to the soldiers who were fighting overseas. The finished socks were delivered to the Red Cross, who then distributed them to soldiers who were in the cold and wet trenches of Germany and other war-torn European nations.

During war-time, one of the greatest dangers a soldier could face was developing foot problems as a result of the cold and wet conditions and the constant marching. Being unable to walk put a soldier's life in great danger. These hand-made, warm, woolen socks were a "life-saver" for many a young Canadian.



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Coming Events

May 26, 2010	GGFN Saskatoon Band Members' Meeting FNUniv Gymnasium 6:00—9:00 pm
May 27, 2010	GGFN Regina Band Members' Meeting The Gathering Place 6:00—9:00 pm
May 31—June 1, 2010	GGFN Membership meeting George Gordon Education Centre 10:00 am
June 17, 2010	GGFN Head Start Graduation Ceremony
August 20-22, 2010	GGFN Pow Wow
November 11, 2010	GGFN Unveiling and Remembrance Ceremony



The George Gordon Pow Wow is an opportunity to celebrate our culture, heritage and traditions.