

Dokis First Nation
Community Report
2010 and 2011

This is the 3rd community report being presented to our membership as an update on issues and developments. Reports from 2006 to 2009 are posted on the First Nation's website at www.dokisfirstnation.com for your perusal.

1. LEADERSHIP

Elections were held in May 2010 with the following results:

Re-elected (3 rd term) – Chief Denise Restoule	
Re-elected	- Councillor Leonard Dokis
Re-elected	- Councillor Tina Restoule
Re-elected	- Councillor Roger Restoule
Re-elected	- Councillor Lindsay Dokis
Newly-elected	- Councillor Gary Dokis

- Term of office: May 2010 – May 2012. Consistency in leadership has allowed for continuation of planned projects and for completion of projects started.

2. FINANCIAL

The First Nation relies on the Department of Indian Affairs for its main source of funding. Since the funding is limited and does not fully address all the community's needs, it is imperative for all departments to be vigilant and to work within their yearly budget.

- In order to secure additional funding to address other needs and issues affecting our First Nation, the staff, management and leadership must submit proposals to diverse agencies for grants and contribution agreements. Financial reports and annual audits need to be submitted to all funders justifying expenditures.
- The audits of 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 show that our First Nation remains in a financially sound position. The audit for 2011/2012 should be available in July 2012. The combined efforts of staff, management and leadership in monitoring revenues and expenditures and prioritizing needs has contributed to positive audits for the past 6 years. Indian Affairs' assessment of our First Nation's financial position has Dokis listed as "low risk" meaning good financial management is present.

3. MANAGEMENT

Management continues to closely monitor the daily operation of the Band and all departments. Adherence to policies remains a top priority. This ensures that staff and departments are compliant with safeguarding the integrity of the Band, confidentiality of personal information and safety of operation. Consistency in ensuring that the same policies and rules apply to everyone, provides fairness and equality and eliminates favoritism and preferential favours. Emphasis is placed on lines of communication which defines the process to follow and clarifies roles and responsibilities. This eliminates micro-managing by Chief and Council.

4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Leadership continues to operate on the principles that to have a strong community, the membership needs to feel comfortable in voicing their concerns and expressing their views and opinions. Community input is important to guide leadership in making informed decisions and also to provide direction on band business.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

- Public band meetings are held every second Tuesday of each month. When a scheduling conflict occurs with this set date, the meeting is rescheduled to the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Band members are encouraged to attend these meetings to keep abreast of Band issues and undertakings. This is the venue to request land allocations, to clarify and discuss common issues and for leadership to be accountable to the membership by reporting on a monthly basis.
- Newsletters from the Band Administration and the Health Centre are delivered door-to-door on a monthly basis. Current information is provided by the programs on upcoming events and issues of interest. These can be mailed to off-reserve members for a minimal fee.
- Different information such as updates, job posting, meeting dates etc., are posted regularly on the website. This allows our off-reserve Band members to keep informed on areas of interest. Band members are encouraged to let us know what else they want posted and we will endeavor to fulfill these requests.
- Legislation dictates that specific mail outs have to be sent to all band members, including off-reserve. In order to ensure that these are received, our band members are asked to provide their current address to the band office.

- Postal Services – After many attempts and inquiries to have a designated postal code, Canada Post has finally agreed to issue “Dokis First Nation” with its own code. It should become available within the next few months along with new mailboxes that will accommodate parcel deliveries.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 1914 : Historical Building – Our little church will soon be 100 years old. Lack of maintenance over many years had left it in very poor condition. In 2010, the church was restored to “ as original” as possible, at a cost of \$50,000.00. The attached apartment was renovated with new windows, flooring, cupboards, furniture and painted at a cost of \$6,800.00. The elders and community are anxious for a Centennial celebration. The opportunity to acknowledge the history of the church, honor the efforts of our ancestors along with revisiting some of the many celebrations of the past 100 years, will be a memorable occasion.
 - LIBRARY EXTENSION – Grants totalling \$64,000.00 were received to extend and renovate the existing library in order to install new technology used for learning and for research. The entire building is now handicap accessible and better suited for public use. A band member is presently volunteering her time to teach computer courses. This is very appreciated. Thank you for your generosity.
 - MULTI PURPOSE COVERED RINK – Named “The Robert Restoule Memorial Facility” was built in 2010 at a cost of \$573,875.00. This rink is equipped for use as a ice rink, a tennis court, a basketball court and can be used for other sports or recreational events. Our proposal for funding was approved by the Federal and Provincial Governments and awarded \$334,400.00. Application to Hydro One netted a grant of \$20,000.00. Donations from individuals and local organizations totalled \$5,400.00. The band was responsible for the balance of the cost.
7. INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS – Again in this term, concentration focused on renovations and repairs to public and band buildings. Drywall repairs and painting were completed on our complex in November 2011. Research continues on how to improve the acoustics. A new parking lot was also added to accommodate more vehicles.
- Repairs and renovations were completed on many band rentals to improve energy efficiency.

- Windows at the Wellness Centre were replaced. New flooring, painting throughout and a shower room were installed. Health Canada covered these costs.
- A grant of \$29,500.00 was received from Health Canada to upgrade the heating system in the Health Centre. This should be completed by March 2012.
- Extensive repairs to the heating system at the elders residence was required. A building inspection revealed that this facility was poorly build. This is evident by the amount of ice build-up on the roof which has caused extensive water damage every year. Lack of insulation and ventilation in the attic have been identified as the main cause. Repairs are scheduled and the cost will exceed \$50,000.00. Many repairs have been required on this building which is less than 10 years old. It is apparent that the building code was not followed by the contractor and not enforced by the project manager who were retained at the time of construction.
- Mostly all buildings have been brought up to par. This would not have been possible without the assistance of the grants received.

8. HOUSING

- A grant of \$85,000.00 was received to assist 5 homeowners with either major renovations or with energy efficiency projects on their home.
- 4 Band members received individual loans of \$72,000.00 to build their own home on-reserve. The list for on-reserve housing requests is extensive. Unfortunately due to limited funds, only 2 loans per year have been available. With the repayment of loans, this situation is improving and will eventually allow for more construction of homes.
- Short-term revolving loans for minor housing repairs is also available and has benefited many homeowners.

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- HIKING NATURE TRAILS – Over the course of the past 6 years, much effort, work and funding have been spent on our trail system. Positive feedback has been received by school groups, adults groups, tourists, community members and diverse agencies. The involvement of many funders, the assistance provided by Nipissing University, the dedication of our staff in building the trails, bridges and rest areas, the research in the

local history, the research in traditional plants and medicines and the challenge of providing guided tours, all have made this project a success. The challenge still remains to identify on-going funding dedicated to support staff for continuity and upkeep of these local assets until such time that it becomes self-supporting.

- **QUARRY** – As of September 2011, the Band has opened its own quarry. Aggregates have been sold to the contractor upgrading roads off-reserve. Proceeds of this sale and the royalties have been deposited in our Capital Acct. in Ottawa. A stockpile of A-gravel is available for use on our local roads. This quarry could provide future revenue for the Band.
- **HYDRO PROJECT** – Since 1984, the numerous leaderships have explored the development of a Hydro Dam. However, for whatever reason, this had never materialized. In 2006, approval was received from the membership to give this idea one last attempt. Leadership was able to successfully move this project forward. With the introduction of the Green Energy Act and various government supports, hydro project development is now a very financially attractive opportunity with long-term benefits for the Band. By retaining an advisor knowledgeable in hydro projects, Council has been in a position to make informed decisions in negotiations and in partnering with a developer. Over the past 6 years, our advisor has secured grants available under Eco-Energy to cover his costs. To date the Band has spent a minimal amount of its own monies on this project.
- This project is classified as a very good project with no flooding on our lands, minimal or no environmental impacts and will utilize the existing dams owned and operated by Public Works Canada. The powerhouse will be located in the man-made channel that was blasted in 1954 by Public Works Canada. This site is known as the Portage Dam.
- The “OKIKENDAWT HYDRO PROJECT” was awarded a 40 year Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) contract by Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to purchase the power produced.
- The environmental assessment for both the powerhouse and the transmission line corridor has received approval from all government agencies.
- A lease agreement has been negotiated with Public Works Canada and is being finalized.
- The Department of Indian Affairs is preparing the land use permit for the transmission line corridor on reserve land. This is the process to follow since Dokis First Nation is not under its own Land Code for the administration of its own lands.

- A partnership agreement is being finalized with the developer, Hydromega Services.
- The project is expected to begin construction in the summer of 2012 for approximately 18 months. Employment will be available to our members during construction and also for operating the power plant once operational.
- It is estimated that the total cost of the project will be about \$50,000,000.00. An application has been submitted to the Ministry of Finance for the Aboriginal Loan Guarantee for the Band's 40% share of the cost. A lending institution has been approached for a long-term loan.
- The annual revenue that the Band will receive from the onset, from our share of the project, is forecasted to be quite sizable and will augment as the debt is paid down and eventually paid off. Under the partnership, there is the option to purchase additional shares.
- A trust will be set up for the revenue that will be generated to ensure that the proceeds from this project are re-invested into the community and spent on specific initiatives.
- A membership vote will be held on March 22, 2012 for final approval to proceed with this project.

10. ROADS AND BRIDGES

- DOKIS ROAD: With amalgamation in 1999, M.T.O transferred the Dokis Road to the Municipality of West Nipissing. However, West Nipissing refused to acknowledge its responsibility for the upgrades and maintenance of this road. Letters from leadership requesting to meet to address the poor condition of the road were ignored by the Municipality. As a result in November 2010, the Chief arranged a meeting with Minister Wynne of MTO to intervene with West Nipissing. The unsafe road condition was discussed and the Minister was informed that about \$400,000.00 was spent by the Band on this municipal road to ensure a minimal level of safety. The Minister promised to find a long-term solution in favour of the First Nation.
- In July 2011, the Chief was informed by the Minister's staff that one-time funding of nearly \$1 million was found to upgrade the road (culverts, brushing, ditching, A-gravel, proper sloping) and once completed, West Nipissing would be 100% responsible for the maintenance.

- The Band's next step is to request re-imburement for the \$400,000.00 spent on a municipal road.
- ON-RESERVE ROAD – Another near head-on collision on the bridge prompted leadership to re-align the on-reserve approach to the bridge along with the section of road that has caused many vehicle upsets into the ravine. Improved visibility has increased safety. Cost of this project was \$296,300.00.
- MAIN BRIDGE: A proposal requesting funding of \$1,030,000.00 was submitted to the Dept. of Indian Affairs for repairs to the main access bridge. The Band has stressed that total cost be covered by the Dept. and has rejected the Dept's offer of only \$700,000.00. Tenders are presently being requested for consulting engineering services for the design of the repairs.

11. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT/PROTECTION

- FORESTRY: A forestry assessment was completed to determine the health of the forest. A forest management plan has been developed. It maps and schedules a structured prescription for reforestation and harvesting. Proper management will develop a healthy forest for future generations.
- FISH AND WILDLIFE: Community discussions on emerging issues with hunting and fishing need to be addressed. Policies need to be developed to ensure responsible management of these resources for the present and future generations. The Resource Committee is taking a lead role in this exercise.
- SAFE DRINKING WATER: The Fed. Gov't conducted an assessment of the drinking water in First Nations in Canada. Even though our drinking water is safe, our water plant was determined to be deficient and requires modernization and upgrades of \$1,000,000.00. However, the government has not committed funding to address the recommendations in the assessment report.
- A grant provided funding to hire a water technician to develop a "Source Water Protection Plan". Nipissing University is working closely with our community on this project and has provided valuable training to staff members. The project is also gathering traditional knowledge on our drinking water.

12. EDUCATION

- POST-SECONDARY: Presently all eligible post-secondary students are being funded. Council has provided some funding increases in the cost-of-living allowance for all post-secondary students.
- PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS: The Band has tuition agreements with both the Rainbow Board and the Near North Board for on-reserve members attending school off-reserve. Funding received from D.I.A is presently not sufficient to cover their high tuition costs. Nationally, the Chiefs have been advocating for the federal government to remove the 2% cap that was imposed in 1996.
- ON-RESERVE SCHOOL: A drop in student enrollment precipitated the need to implement a full-time Kindergarten program. This was necessary to ensure that the Dept. of Indian Affairs did not close the school. New programs have been introduced in our local school (literacy, numeracy, special education). Up-to-date equipment and teaching tools have been procured and are incorporated as part of the daily curriculum.

13. HEALTH

Our First Nation is funded through First Nation Indian Health (Fed. Gov't) to provide prevention health programs in the community. Programs are offered to the general population with some geared to specific age groups or to persons afflicted with diverse health conditions. Mandatory public health services are provided by a Community Health Nurse and a visiting Environmental Health Officer.

- In recent years, the Provincial Gov't has entered into financial agreements with the Band to deliver specific programs including services in the home to help our seniors. Specialized services are contracted and offered locally when possible. (dietician, mental health assessments and counselling).
- The previous census identified Dokis First Nation as a relatively healthy community. This was attributed partly to our health department delivering wholistic, culturally appropriate programs to meet the needs of our residents. Other contributing factors were the individual's and the community's high values placed on the family system. The community's high expectations for a safe community, monitors and addresses non-acceptable behaviors and concerns such as violence and crime.

14. LANDS

- The Band was fortunate in accessing monies to have surveys done of public sites including cemeteries, gravel pits, public buildings, pow wow grounds.
- Under the Land Management Act, 25% (approx. .225) members are required to vote for a successful voting procedure. 2 previous attempts to vote on Land Management did not meet the required number as set out by legislation. As a result, the Dept. of Indian Affairs still has the responsibility to make decisions on our land matters.
- Some staff members are becoming more adept on the use of the GIS system and can now produce specific land maps. This will be very useful for ensuring more accurate records when doing land transactions.

15. EMPLOYMENT:

- Opportunities for training and skills development are available through the employment office. Providing exposure to broaden one's perception on careers, has been offered through career fairs and business recognitions.
- Meaningful summer employment was secured for qualifying students to gain work experience and to learn work skills that are important in the work force.
- Due to the semi-remote location of the community and the lack of own source revenue, employment continues to be a challenge especially for full-time employment. The Band office is the main employer and has roughly 50 employees.
- Local business owners employ a significant number of residents seasonally from April to November. These private business owners need to be commended for their employment contributions in the community.

16. HISTORY/ANCESTRY

- CRADLE ROCK: Years ago, there was damage done to the Cradle Rock that is below the rapids. The legend attached to this historical site has been passed down through the generations and is very significant to our people. A big thank you to the elder who found the solution on how to repair it and to the 2 young gentlemen who did the physical repairs.
- DEAD ISLAND: A sign identifying "Dead Island" in Georgian Bay as a burial ground was installed in 2011. Discussions and research are underway with the Chicago Museum to

plan for the stolen remains and artifacts to be returned to their original gravesite. This is expected to be a lengthy process. Thank you to the 2 elders; one for being passionate about reclaiming this sacred site and the other for painting the sign.

- **GENEALOGY:** Research completed by a band member (now deceased) was donated by her family to the band office. For the past 2 years, 2 band members have been sorting these documents and entering the information on appropriate software. Thank you to this family for the most generous donation and also to the Band member from Sudbury who has been volunteering her time.
- **MUSEUM:** A band member (University professor) has undertaken the task of researching the history of Dokis and its people. This will be shared with the community once completed. At community level, information is being gathered on the specific requirements needed to build a museum to house local artifacts, local history, local crafts and the culture of the people and community of Dokis.

17. CONSULTATION/GOVERNANCE/CONSTITUTION

- It is now part of legislation that First Nations have to be consulted by governments and private sector for all developments within our traditional territory. New funding through the Provincial gov't, is enabling the Band to respond to the numerous requests. The Band is in the process of developing its own consultation protocol for a structured consistent process that will allow the First Nation to make meaningful informed decisions.
- The elected officials of a First Nation must be accountable to its members on all Band operations and must report to the funders on the use of public funds. To ensure that one manages in a responsible manner, a strong governance structure with defined roles, responsibilities and policies must be in place. At present, research is underway to review what is existing and where improvement can be made.
- For many years, without success, the community has attempted to develop its own constitution which will allow for the development of local laws. Recently, a committee was generated to produce a draft document. Consultation and feedback from the membership will be sought prior to developing a final document that will be voted on.

18. LOTTERY AND GAMING REVENUES

In late 2010, the Supreme Court of Canada denied Rama's "leave to appeal" the latest decision of the Courts. Rama First Nation was ordered to pay out the monies owing to the 133 First Nations in Ontario. Dokis First Nation received its share \$1,035,395.00. The agreement with Casino Rama ended in March 2011. The new OLG agreement with all Casinos in Ontario came in effect as of April 1, 2011. The Band's annual share for 1 year is estimated at \$679,711.00. The use of these funds is defined by OFNLP(Ontario First Nation Limited Partnership) and must be spent on: Community Development, Economic Development, Health, Culture and Education.

19. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community support and involvement is necessary for community progress. This support has enabled leadership to address concerns, resolve issues and move forward for the betterment of the community as a whole. Your proposed solutions to issues have been invaluable. Thank you for your continued support.

20. CONCLUSION

To be elected to represent one's community and one's people is a huge responsibility. Council members have worked together to bring about changes to make Dokis a safer, healthier community with opportunities for growth and advancement. Communicating and working with our band members has remained a top priority by leadership.

Chief Denise Restoule
for) Dokis Band Council
February 2012