

# MEDIA RELEASE

Attention All Media

**“FIRST NATIONS CONNECT” CONFERENCE**  
**Valhalla Inn, Thunder Bay, Ontario**  
**February 11-14, 2002**

**January 24, 2002** .....Keewaytinook Okimakanak through the Kuh-ke-nah Network (K-Net) of Smart First Nations Demonstration project, in partnership with Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), is hosting the “First Nations Connect” Conference at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, February 11 - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

The conference will be of interest to First Nations leaders as well as agencies, businesses, governments and organizations that work with First Nations. Administrators and planners, business and economic development leaders, IT and telecommunications managers, public works managers, health care and education managers and developers, local champions and project managers from across the north will join with representatives from all of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities at this conference.

Selected by Industry Canada as the successful applicant from proposals received from across Canada, Keewaytinook Okimakanak is delivering the Aboriginal component of Industry Canada's Smart Communities Demonstration Project nationally. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can enhance programs and services as well as capture economic opportunities in Aboriginal communities. The conference will showcase the work developed thus far and demonstrate to other First Nations from across Canada how technology in the digital age can open new doors of opportunity in virtually all sectors including economic development, health care and education no matter how removed the community is from major markets.

The conference will give delegates a chance to see working examples of on-line applications and services of ICTs so they can understand the possibilities and begin to incorporate them into all aspects of their community and organizational strategic planning. A goal of the conference is to develop a NAN-wide strategy to link all the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities to the Information Highway. A minimum of one delegate from each NAN community and four delegates from each tribal council will be attending.

Guest speakers from the industry, an IT trade show, IT demonstrations and an Internet café will also be features of the conference.

The agenda and conference information is posted on the K-Net website at:  
<http://smart.knet.ca/conference>.

You can contact the Conference Coordinator, DKA Marketing at (807) 473-4448 or [dka@baynet.net](mailto:dka@baynet.net), attention Tammy to arrange to speak with the conference spokesperson.