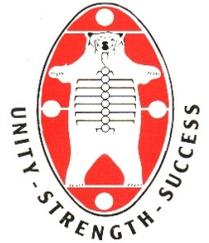# First Nations Connect Conference

MEDIA RELEASE

NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION BECOMES A LEADER IN CONNECTING RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES TO BROADBAND

Associates for the ICT industry and the federal government were also in attendance. Several NAN communities participated via two-way videoconferencing . The conference showcased the ICT advances already made in many of the remote communities and previewed the on-line opportunities soon to become reality.

NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy stated today that as a result of the pioneering efforts of Keewaytinook Okimakanak's K-Net Services through the Smart Communities Program of Industry Canada, the unlimited potential of on-line access can now be tapped by every community of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Stated Grand Chief Beardy,

> "It does not seem so long ago that some of our remote communities could not even obtain telephone or radio access. Today they are connecting with the world. Over 60% of NAN's population is under the age of 29; on-line access will give our youth the opportunities that were never available in the past.

> One of the goals of this conference is to develop a NAN-wide strategy for online access onto the virtual highway, or as some people call it, the Broadband Network. The conference has brought us together to develop this network that we will be a model to be followed by other communities and regions across Canada and around the world.

> Through the past few days of the meetings we are convinced that can soon be the First Nations leaders of online programming and services in Canada. As a result of our commitment to take command of new technologies, NAN communities have the ability to reap the unlimited potential that is now within our reach."

Topics at the conference included Information & Communication Technology (ICT) & Health, ICT & Education, ICT & Network Infrastructure, ICT & Our First Nations Communities, ICT & Economic Development, ICT & Community Planning, ICT & Women & Youth, ICT & Government.

For more information, contact David Paul Achneepineskum, Executive Director, NAN at (807) 623-8228 or Brian Beaton, K-Net Services Coordinator at (807) 737-1135.