

First Nations Connect Conference

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Keynote Address

Grand Chief Stan Beardy

Wednesday, February 13, 2002

NAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS/I.C.T. CONFERENCE

NAN KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

GOOD MORNING. IT IS VERY EXCITING FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS MORNING, AT THE INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK KEEWAYTINOOK OKIMAKANAK AND THE STAFF OF K-NET FOR BRINGING US ALL TOGETHER AND ORGANIZING THIS IMPORTANT EVENT. THIS CONFERENCE MARKS ONE MORE STEP IN NAN FIRST NATIONS PROGRESSION TOWARD SELF GOVERNANCE AND INDEPENDENCE. IN ORDER FOR US TO REGAIN COMPLETE SELF DETERMINATION AND DEVELOP A A REAL ECONOMIC BASE, IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AND BUILD CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE NAN TERRITORY.

I LOOK OUT, OVER THE ASSEMBLY AND SEE REPRESENTATIVES FROM FIRST NATIONS, TRIBAL COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. SOME OF US HERE ARE EXPERTS IN ALL AREAS AND PHASES OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS. OTHERS ARE LEARNING AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN. STILL OTHERS HAVE COME TO FIND OUT JUST WHAT THIS INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IS ALL ABOUT. BUT WE HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON; EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR LIVES HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY ICT. MOST OF US JUST CALL IT THE

“INTERNET”. THOSE FUNNY THREE W’S AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY WEB ADDRESS STAND FOR “WORLD WIDE WEB”. COMMUNICATION OVER THE INTERNET OR WORLD WIDE WEB HAS SHRUNK THE WORLD.. GOVERNMENTS AND INDUSTRY HAVE QUICKLY ADOPTED THIS TECHNOLOGY THAT TEARS DOWN INTERNATIONAL BARRIERS, ALLOWS INFORMATION TO TRAVEL AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT AND LETS PEOPLE MEET FACE TO FACE OVER THOUSANDS OF MILES WITH THE CLICK OF A MOUSE BUTTON. IN EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD PEOPLE ARE USING THE “INTERNET” TO EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS AND THEIR OPPORTUNITIES. IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR DELIBERATIONS TODAY, CONFERENCES SUCH AS THIS COULD OCCUR WITHOUT ANY OF US LEAVING OUR COMMUNITIES, FOR A FRACTION OF THE COST AND MUCH MORE OFTEN THAN THEY DO NOW. IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN WORKING TOGETHER AND FORMING OUR OWN WEBS, NAN FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR PEOPLE CAN ENJOY ALL OF THE BENEFITS OF INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN KEY AREAS SUCH AS EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL PURSUITS SUCH AS ART, MUSIC AND RESEARCH.

I’M ALWAYS SURPRISED WHEN WE INTRODUCE WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE “NEW TECHNOLOGY” TO THE ELDERS. SOME ELDERS WHO HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO VIDEO CONFERENCING SUGGEST THAT IT IS JUST GETTING BACK TO THE TIME WHEN WE COMMUNICATED TELEPATHICALLY. WHETHER IT IS NEW OR OLD THE POINT IS

THAT WE MUST EMBRACE THIS TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO SECURE OUR PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA AND THE WORLD.

- WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAP PAST THE BARRIERS IF REMOTENESS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION THAT HAVE HINDERED OUR DEVELOPMENT.**
- WE WILL SKIP THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND PARTICIPATE INSTEAD IN THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION.**
- IN ORDER FOR US TO PARTICIPATE AND BENEFIT FULLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TRADITIONAL LANDS NORTH OF 50, WE MUST HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AT THE HIGHEST STANDARD FOR ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR PEOPLE.**
- WE MUST USE THIS TECHNOLOGY TO CRAFT A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR RESOURCES IN OUR TERRITORY. WE MUST ENSURE THAT WHEN THE NON RENEWABLE RESOURCES ARE USED UP, AND THE SHORT TERM RESOURCE INDUSTRIES MOVE ON, THAT OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE BENEFITTED AND ARE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR**

OWN DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BROAD BASED SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC STRATEGY. THE WHOLE WORLD MUST BECOME THE MARKET FOR OUR UNIQUE AND SCARCE RESOURCES. WE MUST LEARN TO CUT OUT OR BECOME THE MIDDLE MAN AND TO CAPTURE THE PROFITS THAT ARE GENERATED IN OUR TERRITORIES USING OUR RESOURCES.

- NETWORKING AND WEBS SUGGEST INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION. IN THIS TIME OF LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES, IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR US TO TALK TO ALL GROUPS AND INTERESTED PARTIES. WE MUST SHARE OUR INITIATIVES, EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES. OUR COMMUNITIES, COUNCILS AND INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT MUST ACCESS STATE OF THE ART INFORMATION. WE MUST FORM NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH EVERYONE WHO SHARES OUR INTERESTS AND CHALLENGES.

- WE MUST RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES AND LEADERSHIP AMONG OUR OWN FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENTS AND INDUSTRY TO UTILIZE AND SUPPORT THOSE INITIATIVES.

THE NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION EXECUTIVE HAS A MANDATE FROM THE NAN CHIEFS TO PURSUE INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND TO ASSIST IN ENSURING HIGH SPEED BROAD BAND CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL NAN FIRST NATIONS AS PROMISED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNDER THEIR CANADA CONNECTS PROGRAM. IN MEETING THIS MANDATE NAN HAS DETERMINED TO RECOGNIZE THE LEADERSHIP SHOWN BY KEEWAYTINOOK OKIMAKANAK'S K-NET AND THEIR SMART COMMUNITIES PROJECT. WE WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH K-NET, FEDNOR AND OTHERS TO SEE THAT ALL NAN COMMUNITIES ARE CONNECTED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO BROAD BAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS.

IN ORDER TO MEET THIS MANDATE WE HAVE ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES IN FORMING THE NAN ICT STRATEGY:

- TO SERVE FIRST NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE NAN REGION BY ASSISTING THEM IN ACCESSING ROBUST, HIGHEST-SPEED ACCESS TO CURRENT STATE-OF-THE-ART INTERNET; NEXT GENERATION INTERNET SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY.**
- THROUGH DEMONSTRATION, TO ACT AS THE CORNERSTONE FOR THE ACQUISITION AND USE OF NAN REGION WIDE ADVANCED COMMUNICATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.**

- TO ACT AS THE CATALYST FOR FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS TO GAIN EXPERTISE ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAINING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THE ADVANCED SERVICES REQUIRED FOR NEXT GENERATION EDUCATION, BUSINESS, SCIENCE, MEDICINE, ENTERTAINMENT, AND GOVERNMENT.
- TO FACILITATE THE CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS OF NAN FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS IN BUILDING AND MANAGING THE BEST HIGH PERFORMANCE AND ADVANCED SERVICES NETWORK POSSIBLE.
- TO ASSIST FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS TO LOBBY AND EDUCATE GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE TO THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATING AND WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS.
- TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR THE CREATION OF AN INTERNAL NAN COMMUNICATION AND I.T.C. STRATEGY TO ENSURE BEST USE OF RESOURCES AND GREATEST SUCCESS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.
- TO ENCOURAGE RECOGNITION AND SHARING OF SUCCESSFUL

INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES AMONG THE FIRST NATIONS.

- TO WORK CO-OPERATIVELY WITH ESTABLISHED INITIATIVES AND EXPERTISE, SUCH AS THE KU-KE-NAH SMART PROJECT NOW UNDERWAY.**

I BELIEVE THAT SUCCESS IN MEETING THESE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES WILL ENSURE A STRONG NAN INTERNALLY AND INTERNALLY. I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS NECESSARY TO OUR SURVIVAL NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR ATTENDING AND LOOK FORWARD TO PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE WITH YOU.

MEEGWETCH.