



Chief and Council meet with NCN Members in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson

NELSON HOUSE, Manitoba – December 10, 2003 – The Future Development Office of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has received excellent feedback from Members following a series of meetings and dinners where details of the proposed Wuskwatim hydroelectric generation project were presented.

'Meet and greet' dinners held in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson in the last week of November and the first week of December, were attended by 385 Members, including many children and elders. In addition, nearly a hundred more attended smaller meetings targeted at elders and youth.

"Members have been very interested in the project," says NCN Councillor and Future Development Portfolio Holder, W. Elvis Thomas, who has made presentations to off and on reserve Members at the meet and greet dinners and other meetings with elders and youth.

"Our Members are mostly concerned with how the project will be funded, how the profits will be spent and what jobs and training opportunities are available," Thomas says.

"The other main issue is how the generating project will impact the environment,â though Thomas says those concerns have been well addressed by the Environmental Statements, which were developed using the Traditional Knowledge of elders and resource users, as well as the scientific knowledge of engineers and environmental scientists.

"Once Members understand how environmental risks have been addressed and minimized they are better able to focus on how the project will benefit our First Nation.

"We have heard from many Members and feel we are making progress in creating awareness and understanding about Wuskwatim, and the benefits it offers our community, now and in the future, but we have more work to do. We want our people to be able to make informed decisions on this project."

Thomas says the Future Development Office, with the assistance of Community Consultants, will continue to meet regularly with Members prior to the vote on the Project Development Agreement, expected to be held after the Clean Environment Commission makes a

recommendation to Manitoba's Minister of Conservation.

The CEC hearings are scheduled to begin March 1, with meetings in Winnipeg, Thompson and The Pas, and conclude April 7.

WHERE THREE RIVERS MEET

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