

First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Network

Issue #1

Newsletter

September 2011

WELCOME



Greetings, as Regional Vice-Chief of Assembly of First Nations and Senior Chair of the Atlantic First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Network, I am pleased to take this opportunity to highlight how the

Network has been working together to meet the needs of First Nations communities.

The Network provides an opportunity for our communities, regional and tribal organizations and the government to work together to share information and discuss issues and possible solutions for matters related to housing, safe drinking water, wastewater and emergency management on reserve.

I wish to congratulate the members of the senior committee, regional committee and sub-committees for your dedication and continued commitment to promoting safer and healthier communities.

~ Morley Googoo
Chair, Senior Committee



Greetings everyone! Welcome to the first edition of the Atlantic First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Network newsletter. I am excited to say that there is a new means of learning

what is happening with the Network.

I want to thank Norah Ward and Simon Osmond for their continued support and initiating this newsletter. As Regional Chair of the Network I look forward to working with the committees (Housing, Water/Wastewater and Emergency Management) and continued collaborations with the Senior Committee as well as federal and provincial partners. I encourage readers to share the new publication with your community for new and current activity.

Welalin!

~ Roseanne Sark
Chair, Regional Committee

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Profile on: Kim Paul



Kim Paul
Chair of the Water & Wastewater sub-committee of the AFNHIN.

Kim Paul has volunteered to sit as a committee member of the Atlantic First Nation Housing & Infrastructure Network (AFNHIN) since 2007.

Her experience in working with First Nations and her commitment to working both collaboratively and proactively on important issues such as safe drinking water, wastewater, source water protection and emergency management is an asset.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm from Membertou First Nation, a community located near Sydney, Nova Scotia. I have two children, a daughter she is 22 and my son is 11. I'm in the crafts business and own a store called Mi'kmaq Gifts & Collectibles. I have been in the crafts business for approximately 10 years and I currently employ four people. My mom, Margaret Paul always made a lot of crafts and we use to sell them for her. So, naturally, I have a great appreciation for crafts such as baskets and beaded jewellery. I believe I got my entrepreneurial spirit from my mother.

I have been working for the Union of Nova Scotia Indians since 1995 as an Environmental Technician. I have a biology background from

Concordia University. I graduated in 1999 with a Bachelor of Technology in Environmental Health at Cape Breton University.

I helped to facilitate a source water protection plan for a First Nations community in Potlotek, a Mi'kmaq community in Cape Breton in 2007 and I am currently working with Eskasoni First Nation in terms of putting together a source water protection plan.

I also collaborate with Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) which works with Cape Breton Mi'kmaq communities on issues related to environment and natural resources. We helped develop Best Management Practices and that took awhile. We are in partnership with UINR on developing a communications strategy which we haven't done yet but has to do with water source protection.

Tell us about the water festival.

The water festival helps to educate the Unama'ki communities on the watershed protection plan process. I didn't want it to be a workshop because only certain people get invited to workshops so I wanted it to be more

of a community event. The idea is to educate participants on the importance of water but also the importance of protecting our valuable resource. I am currently planning another water festival in early spring of 2012.

What is it about the job that you find rewarding?

The most rewarding aspect of what I do as an Environmental Technician it being able to work with First Nations communities - being able to empower communities to develop action plans to address their environmental concerns. Kimberley has volunteered to sit as a committee member of the Atlantic First Nation Housing & Infrastructure Network (AFNHIN) since 2007.

Her experience in working with First Nations and her commitment to working both collaboratively and proactively on important issues such as safe drinking water, wastewater, source water protection and emergency management is an asset. She believes that "education is key, the more you learn about issues that affect First Nations the more you want to help."

Who We are and what We do

The Atlantic First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Network (AFNHIN) was created in 2006 to support an integrated First Nations and government approach to addressing challenges related to safe drinking water, wastewater management, emergencies management and housing needs.

The AFNHIN has membership from First Nations communities, Tribal organizations and Government Departments. The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APCFNC) is the Secretariat to the network.



The AFNHIN works together to make recommendations and take actions that support First Nations communities to address water and wastewater, housing and emergency management priorities.

Charlie Levi, Elsipogtog Housing Director

Tell us a bit about yourself.

When I was 16 I quit school because I thought I knew everything. I was married in 1971 and I took a course in carpentry. I worked in the States for awhile in carpentry and came home and kept working as a carpenter in Elsipogtog. In 1980, I got my GED and decided to go back to school when I realized I didn't know everything. (He laughs). I applied for the two year Civil Engineering Technology Course in Moncton and I also retained science courses that I needed in order to finish. I graduated in 1983 and from there I took building construction management options. That summer I applied for a job at the Elsipogtog band office and I got it. I worked on Operation and Management with Water and Sewer. I did that for three to four years and the Housing department put me on their Housing program. So since then I've been a Housing Operation and Management Director and the Director of Capital and Infrastructure since 1987.

In terms of any hobbies, I like to kayak and I organized kayaking and canoeing expeditions in the past. Ten of us would canoe sometimes along the Richibouctou and Miramichi rivers.

Why did you choose a career as a Housing Director?

When I was younger my dad was a carpenter, electrician and mason. I used to help my father with his work such as home building and electrical. I had my hand in housing since I was a teenager. Basically I didn't choose it. I gradually moved into it and I was taking over a lot. There was no one qualified here to do it. Right now I deal with Housing and Infrastructure, Operation and Management (O&M) and the Fire Department. The O&M looks after the water, sewer and maintenance of public grounds and buildings.

What are your day to day duties as a Housing Director?

Basically I attend meetings with all the different Government and non-Government agencies, such as Atlantic Policy Congress and North Shore Mikmaq District Council, INAC, Health Canada, CMHC and the Province of NB. I do up reports and at the first and end of each year, I do up the budgets of everything that's under my program. I have supervisors, managers, and foremen who look after day to day duties involved in housing. We meet regularly as a team or sometimes individually about any problems or concerns that I can help manage.

What's been happening since I started working for the band is I co-managed the building of the new school back in the 90's. We got a new water tower. We didn't have water storage capacity before so through INAC, we've constructed a 250,000 gallon reservoir. This year we're doing a 45 lot subdivision for homes so that involves building a road, lots and sewers to put houses in later.

We're also going to put in sidewalks and storm sewers in Elsipogtog this year. It's a 2 year project starting this year.

What are the challenges that you encounter on a regular basis in providing housing?

In a community like this, having staff coming in regularly to work is an

issue as well as the amount of holidays that happen. The other challenge is Chiefs and council requesting things be done that we can't do because of budget restraints and community members coming in to see us and they are very frustrated with their housing issues.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

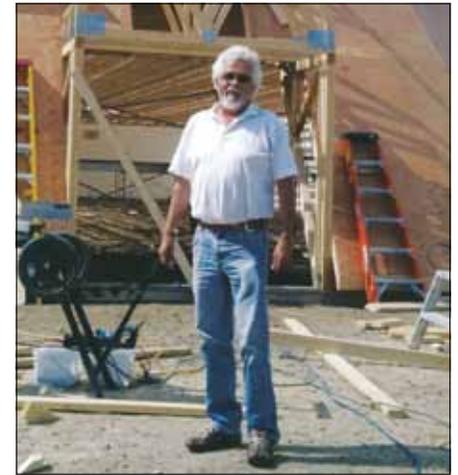
When a proposal or project is completed and the end results are what we expected. For example, we have a youth internship where we got four individuals doing housing data for us such as researching the

occupants, their address, who lives there, the number of people living there, the condition of the house, interior and exterior all by using a software that we purchased a few years back that we can get reports out of. What the youth got out of it was using a laptop for the first time, knowing the building materials and how a house is built and constructed.

How would you encourage others, especially our youth, to pursue a career in housing?

Right now, the housing Department is working with Economic Development and have opened up a New Brunswick Community College accredited 40 week course teaching carpentry, plumbing, electrical and air exchange. This is the second year of offering this course in Elsipogtog. There are about 10 students in the course now and they're all youth. When they're finished their course, the New Brunswick Community Colleges will guarantee the students a seat for whatever they wish to get their diploma in.

I'm trying to encourage graduates to go into civil engineering now because of the changing environment of the community. The community is getting bigger and there are new technologies coming out and we need the youth to be familiar with that and use these technologies. What we've also done is begun to use Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF). We've trained 12 certified community members, two of which are women and we now have today two that are certified or above grade installation. The community hall we're building is made out of the ICF, specifically Integraspec so we're now using up to date technologies in terms of housing and infrastructure.



Charlie Levi, Director of Housing & Infrastructure for Elsipogtog First Nation, standing in front of the building construction stages of the new Elsipogtog Community Hall.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Community-based Water Monitors' and Water Operators' Workshop

October 25-27, 2011
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, in collaboration with Health Canada and Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada, will be hosting a joint workshop for community-based water monitors and water operators.

For more information, please contact Colleen Francis at:
1-877-667-4007
colleen.francis@apcfnc.ca

An All Hazards Approach to Emergency Management: Are you Prepared?

November 28-30, 2011
St. Mary's First Nation, New Brunswick

An Emergency Management Gathering will be held at the Cultural Centre in Saint Mary's First Nation.

For more information, please contact Matilda Ramjattan at:
902-436-5101
mramjattan@mcpei.ca

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Contact us with any ideas for future newsletter articles. We want to hear from you!



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