

## **Column Seven**

### **The Algonquin Land Claim – Economic Development**

*by Robert Potts, Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel for the Algonquins of Ontario*

Enhancing the economic capacity of the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) is an indispensable element woven throughout the Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). From early in the treaty negotiations – and as set out in the Statement of Shared Objectives – the AOO, Canada and Ontario committed to expanding the economic opportunities for Algonquins while also benefitting and promoting general economic and commercial activities throughout the Territory.

The finalization of a modern-day Treaty will enrich the Algonquin presence across the Territory, including the nation's capital, and build upon the Aboriginal presence and vitality within Canada. It will also build a foundation for increased economic opportunities for the AOO, while ensuring the cultural and social fabric of the Algonquin people is maintained and strengthened in years to come.

Together, the land and capital components proposed in the Preliminary Draft AIP will be critical to the future economic prosperity and cultural recognition of the AOO. The benefits of a secure land base and increased financial capacity will provide new investment opportunities as well as the ability to create new Algonquin programs and services, including education, training opportunities and health care initiatives. Such platforms will create key economic opportunities that nurture and respect longstanding cultural and spiritual practices of the Algonquin people, while providing the training and education needed to promote self-sufficiency and success in today's economy.

The Algonquin people will also be equipped with the avenues to contribute to the decision-making process regarding forest management and stewardship. The AOO and Ontario are committed to working cooperatively to maintain support for the existing forest industry, while increasing Algonquin participation in, and benefits from the forestry sector.

A Treaty will provide for unparalleled economic development opportunities that will not only benefit the AOO, but will also provide a tremendous benefit to our neighbours living within the Territory. A Treaty will remove the barriers to economic growth created by existing uncertainties and contribute to a more stable social, political and economic environment with greater potential for regional economic development, jobs and growth.

The AOO recognize that increasing Algonquin economic capacity is inextricably linked to the broader economic development of Eastern Ontario. As our negotiations move forward, the AOO

are already participating in a number of exciting economic development initiatives, including working with:

- Various private sector proponents and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines through the *Mineral Exploration and Development Protocol Agreement*
- Rideau Transit Group as the project lead for the Ottawa Light Rail Transit project to explore the availability and use of Algonquin personnel, equipment and materials
- Canada Lands Company through the *CFB Rockcliffe Participation Agreement* which establishes the direct participation and financial interest of the AOO in the development of one of the most desirable and valuable parcels of land in Canada

Through the Preliminary Draft AIP, the Algonquins of Ontario are united in our commitment to finding “win-win” solutions that will bring economic prosperity to Algonquins and our neighbours alike.

*This column is the seventh in a series providing insights into Algonquin history, the foundation for the land claim, elements of the Preliminary Draft AIP and next steps in the journey. The next column will focus on the ongoing consultation efforts on the Preliminary Draft AIP. For more information visit [www.tanakiwin.com](http://www.tanakiwin.com).*