

GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES (EYYOU ISTCHEE) / CREE NATION GOVERNMENT

## ISSUE 3

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This summer the Cold War  
cleanup is underway in  
Eeyou Istchee and across  
Canada



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This newsletter features a profile on Linden Spencer, an entrepreneur and youth chief of Eastmain and his message to youth

## COVER:

*Thank you to everyone that contributed to this issue's images and content.*

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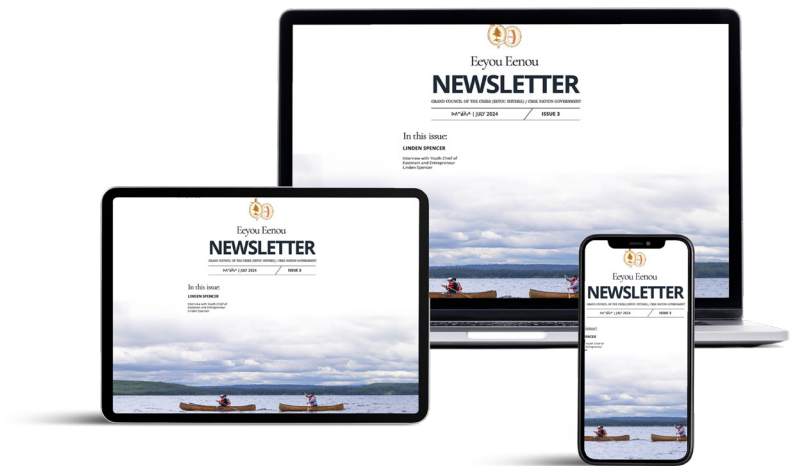
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**LATEST ISSUES**



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# 1. RETURN OF THE EYYOU ISTCHEE SUMMER GAMES

MISTISSINI, JULY 14-21, 2024

AFTER A 13-YEAR HIATUS, THE EYYOU ISTCHEE SUMMER GAMES ARE BACK BRINGING TOGETHER 6 CREE COMMUNITIES IN A SPIRIT OF COMPETITION, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

The Eeyou Istchee Summer Games began on July 14th, with over 500 athletes joining in the opening ceremonies from Mistissini, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Washaw Sibi, Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui. The games bring together young athletes aged 9 to 18 from across the Cree territories to compete in over 40 events, including track, field, and aquatic sports. These competitions are designed to promote sportsmanship and excellence while highlighting the importance of community and cultural exchange. In addition to the youth events, traditional games for adults are also included, emphasizing the preservation and celebration of Cree traditions.

Cultural activities play a significant role in the games, with CNACA organizing several workshops and activities each day. An artisan market, immersive mural at the Youth Centre, and workshops at the Cree Justice tent were also offered.

Events were livestreamed by the James Bay Cree Communication Society and brought together online and onsite spectators from throughout the Cree Nation offering an important opportunity to celebrate youth athletes and strengthen ties between communities.

"I want to congratulate each athlete that was part of the Eeyou Istchee Summer Games. While so many of us celebrate athletes that have achieved so much. I want you to all realize that every one of you are capable of achieving greatness and this is your moment to shine."

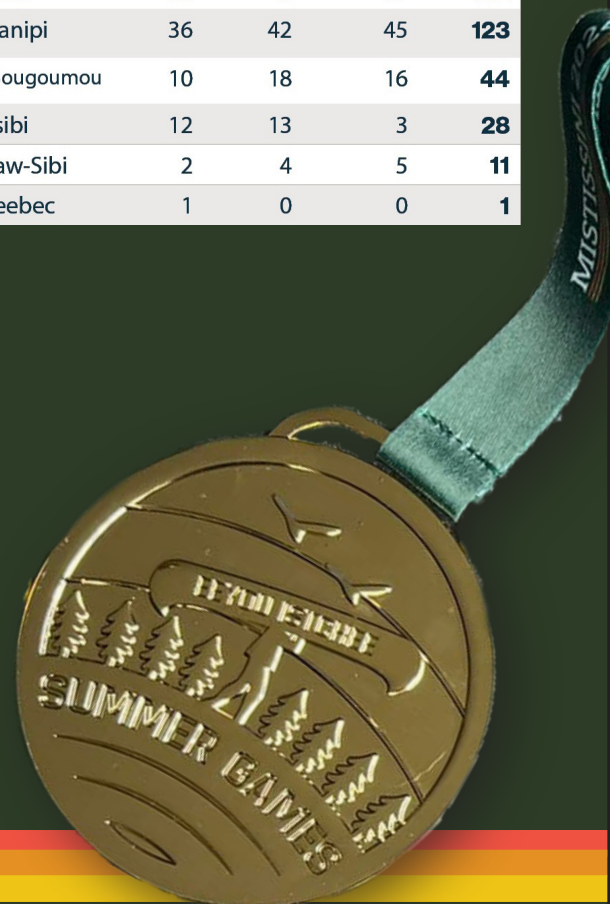
- Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty



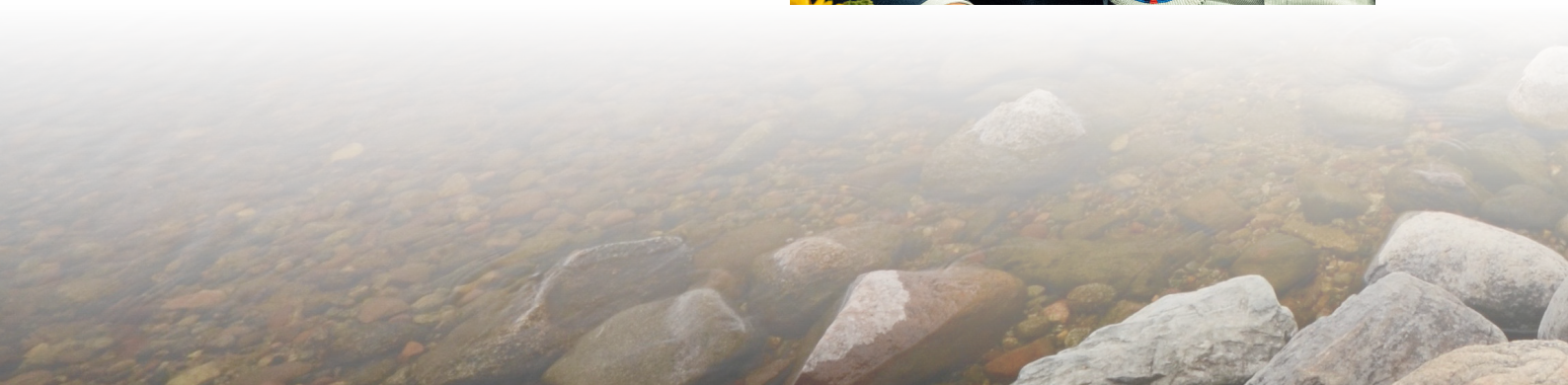




| COMMUNITY      | GOLD | SILVER | BRONZE | TOTAL |
|----------------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| Mistissini     | 68   | 48     | 35     | 152   |
| Waswanipi      | 36   | 42     | 45     | 123   |
| Ouje-Bougoumou | 10   | 18     | 16     | 44    |
| Chisasibi      | 12   | 13     | 3      | 28    |
| Washaw-Sibi    | 2    | 4      | 5      | 11    |
| MoCreebec      | 1    | 0      | 0      | 1     |









"SIMPLY, IT'S BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN NON-INDIGENOUS CORPORATION, COMPANIES, ENTREPRENEURS AND FIRST NATIONS. TO OPEN THEIR EYES TO ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT FIRST NATIONS REPRESENT FOR ENTERPRISE. WE HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS, WE HAVE DIFFERENT VALUES, WE HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY, BUT WE ALL WANT THE SAME COMMON GOAL, A BETTER LIFE FOR OUR FAMILIES."

Waswanipi Chief Irene Neeposh was present and was spotted participating in an interactive networking activity on topics such as, social acceptability, territorial overlap and economic development vs culture and tradition.

This is what she had to say about her experience.

"Deeply appreciated the economic circle for Indigenous peoples. A collection of thoughts on fostering self-sustainability and preserving cultural heritage in modern times. Meegwetch!"



Former Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses says it is a valuable experience for First Nations in the province to come together exchanging information and sharing valuable experiences.

"It's a good movement to have to ensure inclusion in the economic development of Quebec as well as in our respective communities. It creates spinoffs and provides job opportunities, contracts, training, skill development, and know-how for our people."

The next gathering of the Grand Economic Circle will be hosted by the Atikamekw Nation, November 12, 2024 in Trois-Rivières.



# CREE NATION BUSINESS SUMMIT

Hosted in collaboration with the Department of Commerce and Industry and Eeyoupreneur, the Cree Nation Business Summit will be happening in Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee.

# ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Wemindij, Eeyou Istchee.

## BOARD COUNCIL WASKAGANISH

Meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government in Waskaganish, Eeyou Istchee.





## 4. NEW HYDRO QUEBEC PRESIDENT AND CEO MEETS WITH CREE LEADERSHIP



***New Hydro Québec President/CEO Promises Not to Repeat the Mistakes of The Past***

***"IF WE WERE THINKING ABOUT DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT. IT WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH YOU,"***

***PROMISED HYDRO-QUÉBEC'S MICHAEL SABIA TO GRAND CHIEF MANDY GULL-MASTY.***

Hydro-Québec's President and CEO made the announcement at the Cree Nation Government Board Council meeting in Nemaska this May. His comments were in response to a Radio-Canada article speculating Hydro-Québec is planning more high voltage transmission lines in Cree Territory.

"The answer is no, we have no such plan," or any other development plans behind closed doors he went on to explain.

Mr. Sabia is very new to the position, inheriting the job from his predecessor who stepped down last April.

He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and has Economics and Political Degrees from the University of Toronto and Yale. He served as the Deputy Minister of the Department of Finance Canada from 2020 to 2023.

In November Sabia tabled a plan to better position Quebec for what he calls 'the inevitable energy transition around the world.'

In Nemaska he prematurely revealed Hydro Quebec's new wind energy plan which he called ambitious, requiring much determination.





"What we've been doing so far is not working," Sabia stated saying HQ's goal is a series of wind power facilities capable of creating 10,000 megawatts of power or more. Hydro's offer of partnership for these projects is open to any Indigenous community interested who would not only be partners, but equity owners.

The president and CEO then took some hard questions from Chiefs and band representatives.

Nemaska's Chief Clarence Jolly asked for better maintenance of Hydro constructed roads, like the infamous Route du Nord, connecting his community to the outside world.

Eastmain Deputy-Chief Daniel Mark-Stewart questioned the CEO about Cree consent and Chiefs Irene Neeposh and Micheal Mianscum had questions on Hydro Quebec's failure to provide Crees with meaningful jobs.

Chief Daisy House highlighted how projects need to be accepted by communities rather than imposed on by the south.

In the end, most present were satisfied with Mr. Sabia's responses and some remarked his answers were transparent, inclusive, candid and even refreshing.

None were more pleased than Youth Grand Chief Adrian Gunner (not present at the meeting), who questioned why the Cree Nation Youth Council was told they were ineligible for Hydro-Quebec sponsorship money for the first Cree Nation Summer Games happening this summer.

"Consider it done," was Sabia's immediate response.

In closing Hydro's president told everyone to keep their eyes open for more Indigenous-focused wind energy announcements and initiatives this summer.

Regarding Cree/Hydro relations Sabia reminded the Cree Nation not to take anything for granted.

"Talk is talk, but you have to keep us to account"

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty reminded the president that next year is the 50th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA and, although it is a challenging subject for Crees, she invites him to join us in commemorating the milestone.







## 7. Mid-Canada Line Cleanup is underway!



*The Mid-Canada Line Cleanup is underway in Quebec and being led by Cree traditional land use experts.*

*The Mid-Canada Line is a series of decaying military bases stretched across the 55th parallel. The long obsolete radar stations were built in the 1950s as a Cold War early detection system protecting North America from Soviet attack.*

There are 42 sites in need of cleanup in Quebec with seven chosen for this pilot project, and four of those sites in Cree territory, running through Whapmagoostui and Chisasibi traplines. Three are in the Whapmagoostui region and one on a Chisasibi trapline. Cree land users, a Whapmagoostui group and a Chisasibi group, are hired for cleanup teams and have been trained in wilderness first aid, workplace safety, and spill management.

Kristy Franks is the Cree Nation Government's Environmental Advisor working hand in hand with communities and band councils. There are also two environmental experts from the south with experience working on similar jobs, but the focus is on the project being led by Cree land experts.

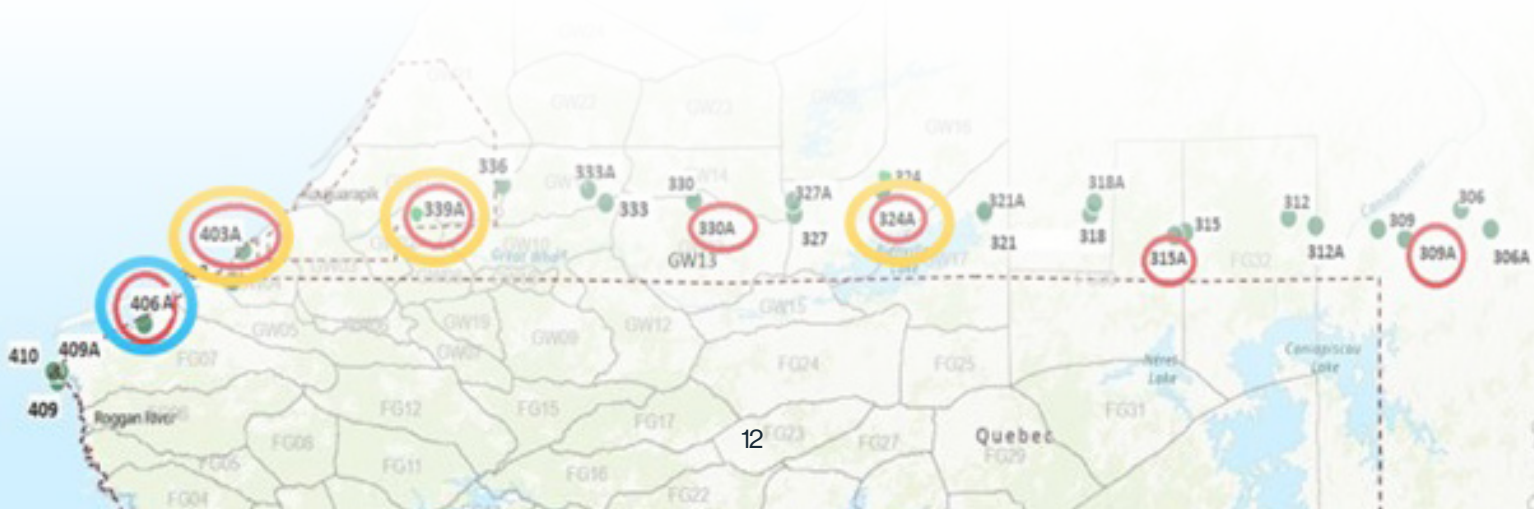
*"This is such a beautiful project as an example of teamwork, there are loads of people involved. Land users are really happy this is happening after so many years," Kristy said.*

Phase One of the cleanup is cleaning out physical debris (such as old oil drums and pipe) from sites and then assessing the extent of contamination and the need for further environmental cleaning of soil and water from fuel leaks.

*"For some of the sites we know there is contamination. It's obvious, you can smell fuel when you move the soil with a shovel," Franks said.*

The cleanup project is funded federally, but the seven sites chosen for the pilot project did not meet federal levels of contamination so it was decided that the Quebec government will be paying those costs with 100 percent of the funds going directly to communities.

Visits to all four Cree sites have been done and work is underway with Phase One scheduled for completion by October 2024. The big project upcoming in later phases will be cleanup of the site at Cape Jones which will be a big one.



## 7. BEING YOUTH CHIEF AND AN ENTREPRENEUR

Interview with Linden Spencer



***Entrepreneur and Youth Chief from Eastmain Linden Spencer is the proud owner of three companies. Linden has been in business partnership with his brother Lindros since 2020, co-owning his first construction business Eastmain Excavation.***

Coming in right in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the company started out on rocky ground but, with the help of the CNG and relief funding provided to businesses in the Cree Nation, Eastmain Excavation is now hitting pay dirt.

Linden also owns a bus service, Nouchimi Mayheux and EGJ Nouchimi a construction company handling large scale civil projects in the James Bay area. Linden credits his business sense to his upbringing.





"MY DAD GREW UP A BUSINESSMAN, THAT'S WHERE I GET MY 'GO TO' MENTALITY," HE SAID. "HE DID A GREAT JOB RAISING US AND I WANT TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS. I OWE HIM A HUGE THANK YOU FOR WHERE WE ARE TODAY."

Eastmain Excavation's first job was landscaping around the community of Eastmain and the jobs kept coming. With each successful venture, Linden says the key to their success was continuously investing back into the company.

As an indication of their success, the company has just recently purchased a 36-ton shovel worth around \$300K and a flatbed truck worth close to half a million dollars.

The company was also instrumental in providing local training, offering residents the chance to receive their CCQ construction safety certificate, a requirement for everyone working in construction.

"I'm actually proud of it, everyone who did the course got their safety card," Spencer admitted.

The company is now in the process of bringing back the construction safety course this summer and, in conjunction with Apatisiwin Skills Development, they are also planning to provide a local operator's training course in excavation.

"Don't quit", is Linden's advice to his fellow Cree youth.

Linden has two daughters and a partner Naomi Linklater from Moose Factory.

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"DON'T QUIT, THERE IS GOING BE A DOOR THAT'S SHUT ON YOU BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER DOOR THAT YOU CAN GO THROUGH. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP, DO SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE AFRAID TO DO AND JUST BELIEVE IN YOURSELF." BECAUSE ANYONE CAN DO ANYTHING WHEN THEY BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES."

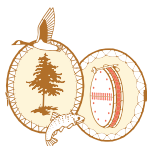
***Linden Spencer***





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