

# Six Nations Band Council holds opening of new plant

By Donna Durie  
Writer

Six Nations \$41 million, state of the art, water treatment plant was officially opened last Friday and water from the plant is now flowing into community homes.

About 50 people - politicians, project staff and community members - turned out for a grand opening ceremony held at the new plant last Friday.

Although it was a day of celebration, Six Nations Band Council says the new plant is just the tip of the iceberg in getting clean, potable water to all 2,200 homes on the reserve.

The new water treatment plant will only service about 700 users in the village of Ohsweken.

Six Nations Band Council needs over \$100 million in funding to extend pipes to the rest of the territory.

"We've got a lot of work to do," said elected Chief Ava Hill. "This is only going to distribute water to nine per cent of the community. We need to come up with funding to get to the other 91 per cent."

The plant, which became operational in late December, came to fruition under former elected Chief Bill Montour.

He negotiated \$26 million of the \$41 million needed in funding from the federal government with the help of Brant MP Phil McColeman. His council then took out a \$15 million loan from the Bank of Montreal to cover the remainder of the project costs.

The need for a new water treatment plant was a major item on the Six Nations/Haudenosaunee land rights table discussions that evolved from the 2006 land reclamation.

Confederacy Chiefs had negotiated a new plant at the table and shortly afterwards the band left the table. Within a few short months the band and MP McColeman announced the new plant that had been born at the land rights table.

During his speech Friday Montour gave credit to previous band councils for laying the groundwork in making the plant a reality. "This has indeed been a fight," he said during the grand opening ceremony. "I've got to give credit to (previous councils). Under (the late former elected Chief) Wellington Staats, his council identified that we had to do something different about water because our demographics point to the fact that our population is burgeoning." He said "We've got to get this water to 2,200 other



**MPP Dave Levac, Cayuga sub-chief Leroy Hill, Elected Chief Ava Hill and councillor Bob Johnson listen for former elected Chief Bill Montour's speech at the opening. (Photo by Donna Durie)**

homes. 315 homes on Six Nations don't even have any water. That's a sad thing to say in the most developed part of Canada, in southern Ontario. It's going to be a hard job. I

know you can do it, Ava." MP Phil McColeman said he remembered taking tours of the old water treatment plant with Montour in the mid-2000s and noticing many components

of the aging plant were being held together by duct tape.

"This project is very important for the future economic growth and  
**(Continued on page 3)**