

# Zimmer hears laundry list of issues from band council

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versations with him soon," said Zimmer. "We have stresses and strains trying to get the federal government to sit down with us on exercising our joint responsibilities but we will keep pounding on the door."

Band Council presented Zimmer with a laundry list of concerns they want to see the ministry address, including land rights, policing, social assistance, roads, fire services, education and justice.

Zimmer said Wynne is "deadly serious" about moving forward with aboriginal issues and concerns. "She gave me a direction... that she wanted to really see a new relationship and

really opening the whole aboriginal file broadly on a whole host of issues," said Zimmer. "She particularly addressed issues here at Six Nations. She wants to see progress on a whole lot of issues in the ministry." Elected Chief Bill Montour said he is "cautiously optimistic."

"We gave (Zimmer) a whole list of issues that have to be dealt with," said Montour. "Let's be optimistic and move forward. Everybody has given us platitudes along the way and frankly, I'm sick of platitudes."

Montour said he's glad the provincial aboriginal affairs ministry is now a stand-alone ministry.

"I'm really pleased that she's seen the opportunity



**Ontario Minister David Zimmer (Photo by Chase Jarrett)**

of having a stand-alone ministry," said Montour.

He said Wynne is the only Premier in the province's history that held the abo-

original affairs portfolio.

"I think that's going to be a plus," said Montour.

Councillor Helen Miller said she wanted to see action on Six Nations' Ontario Works program, saying the community receives 50 per cent less funding to deliver social assistance programming on the territory compared to off-reserve.

"Six Nations is expected to implement the same Ontario Works program as the municipalities but not given the same tools or funding," said Miller. Zimmer heard that 50 per cent of Six Nations' social assistance recipients don't have a high school diploma. He pointed out the disparities in education between native and non-native stu-

dents.

On-reserve students get about \$4,000 less per year in funding compared to off-reserve students, which translates to \$50,000 over the course of the student's educational career, he said. That, in turn, leads to problems with unemployment and underemployment, he said. "In the long-term probably one of the best things we can do is provide higher quality education for aboriginal youth," said Zimmer.

Councillor Ava Hill questioned Zimmer about the Brantford Charity Casino sitting on Six Nations land. "We want our due share out of the Brantford Charity Casino," said Hill. "That is on a valid land claim. That casino sits on our land yet

when the money's divvied up the City of Brantford gets five per cent of the slots, the province gets millions, and Six Nations has gotten not one cent out of that casino."

Zimmer said he would look into that.

Well-known land rights activist Floyd Montour invited Zimmer to visit the Mohawk Workers at Kanata Village in Brantford, to which Zimmer agreed.

"I give you my public acceptance to have a visit," said Zimmer.

Zimmer was given a copy of the band's "Global Solution" booklet that details Six Nations' land rights. The elected Chief said he will set up another meeting with the minister on issues raised by the band council.