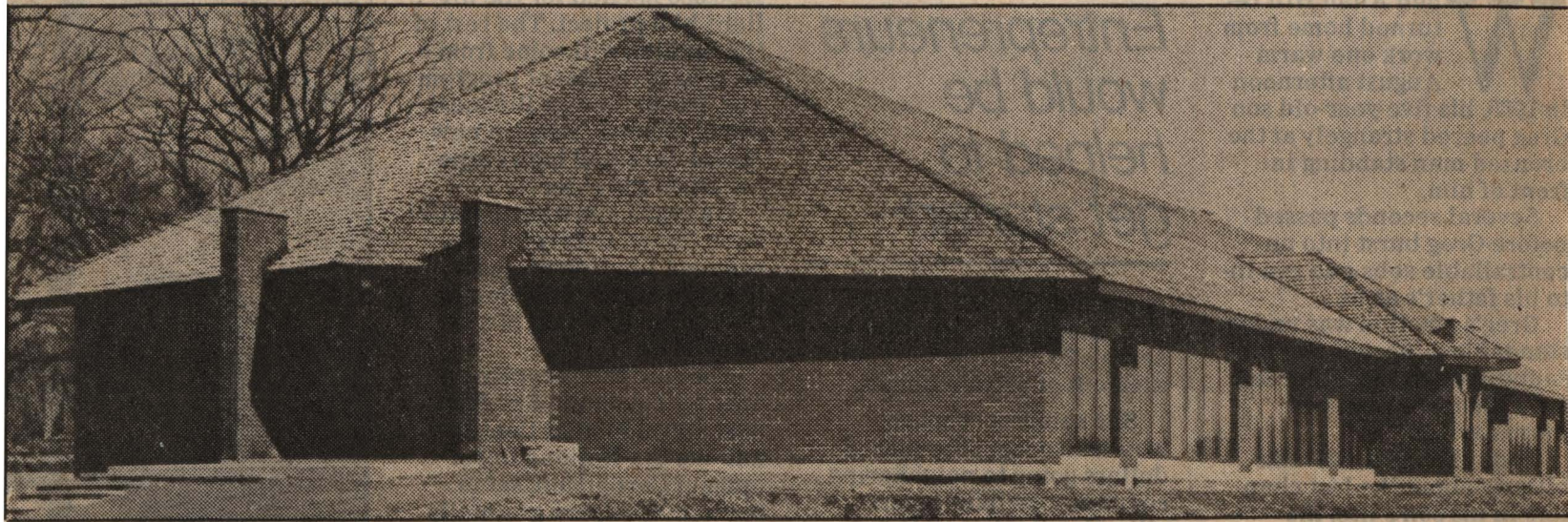


March 31/90

New office

complex uses longhouse design



The \$1.8 million building is built on the style of the traditional longhouse.

Expositor Photo

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Shades of traditional native culture are meeting the contemporary concept of profits and development at the new Eagle's Nest Business Complex.

A \$1.8 million building, built in the style of the traditional longhouse, is the first of three that will form a triangle on the reserve land in Brantford.

The courtyard, formed inside the building triangle, is historically an Iroquoian gathering place, says Chief William Montour. "In the summertime the breezes have a cooling effect and during the winter the structure protected them from the cold prevailing winds," he said.

The property was originally band land before it was given to the New England

Indian Affairs department main tenant in Eagle's Nest

Co; in the 1920's. The land was returned to the band and has been farmland until the recent development.

About 75 per cent of the financing for the first building came from the Peace Hills Trust Co., an Alberta native-owned trust company. The remainder was raised by the Six Nations council with an additional \$100,000 grant coming from the department of Indian Affairs.

The major tenant is Indian Affairs. Employees from offices in Ontario will move into the building in May to form the department's Southern District Office. The other tenant is a native law firm, Staats, Edward. Chief Montour says con-

struction on the second building should begin in September depending on how many leasing commitments the council gets from local businesses.

"We want all offices; we

don't want any retail. We think shopping would detract from the business atmosphere," said Chief Montour.

At the building's official opening in March, the Indian Affairs regional director general, Gerry Kerr, said:

"The benefits are obvious. The community has acquired an important capital facility which will continue to reap economic benefits far into the future, and a deep sense of pride which goes with the successful completion of this complex."

The Six Nations Community Development Corporation, funded by Industry, Science and Technology Canada and operated by band council, was given \$2.5 million for the next three years.

Lewis Staats, general manager, said the corporation will make direct loans to new and existing businesses for businesses on and off-reserve.

The Six Nations-New Credit Community Futures Committee, funded by Canada Employment and Immigration offered a native entrepreneurial training program for about 30 students last fall. The committee is also starting a program that will provide money for people on unemployment insurance who want to start a business.

Mr. Cooke said economic development on the reserve has been a slow process because of the tradi-

tional native values:

"Traditionally we produced things only for survival and everything was shared. When people went hunting and they brought back deer, rather than preserving it, they would share it with the community. That's been with us a long time; it's a matter of teaching — you have to share things, you don't hoard everything."

He said when the Europeans came they created divi-

sions in native society. There were those who adhered to traditional beliefs as opposed to the European religions. The Indian Act imposed a difference between non-status Indians and status Indians. There was also a division between the Metis, whose ancestry is part European, and the natives.

"Because of all these divisions, jealousies crept in; and a bit of that jealousy shows itself in business. Because somebody has taken

that initiative and become self-sufficient there may be bitterness in the community," said Mr. Cooke.

He said attitudes are slowly changing and organized gatherings for young people on reserves help natives to find a happy medium between the principles of capitalism and the traditional need to share.

"To me, before we get into business here, we have to do a lot of community healing."