

Six Nations role in Battle of Beaver Dams commemorated

By Stephanie Dearing
THOROLD, ON

The Battle of Beaver Dams, one that was fought entirely by Six Nations warriors, was commemorated with three new plaques this past weekend.

Keith Jamieson, Executive Director of the Six Nations Legacy Consortium was present in Thorold for the events. Saturday, Six Nations Veterans attended a parade and flag raising ceremony, which included a Haudenosaunee flag, Jamieson said.

Six Nations planted a Tree of Peace (white pine) at the former battle ground, and three small plaques mounted

on a boulder were unveiled. A remembrance ceremony was held on Monday for all those who lost their lives in the battle.

Jamieson said a Haudenosaunee flag was also flown from the DeCew house in Thorold. "We wanted to make sure there was something at Beaver Dams which was specific for the warriors, because there wasn't."

The existing memorials made scant mention of Six Nations warriors. "We fought the whole damned thing," said Jamieson. "To do this now is terribly important because it is specific to our involvement. That's really why we wanted to do

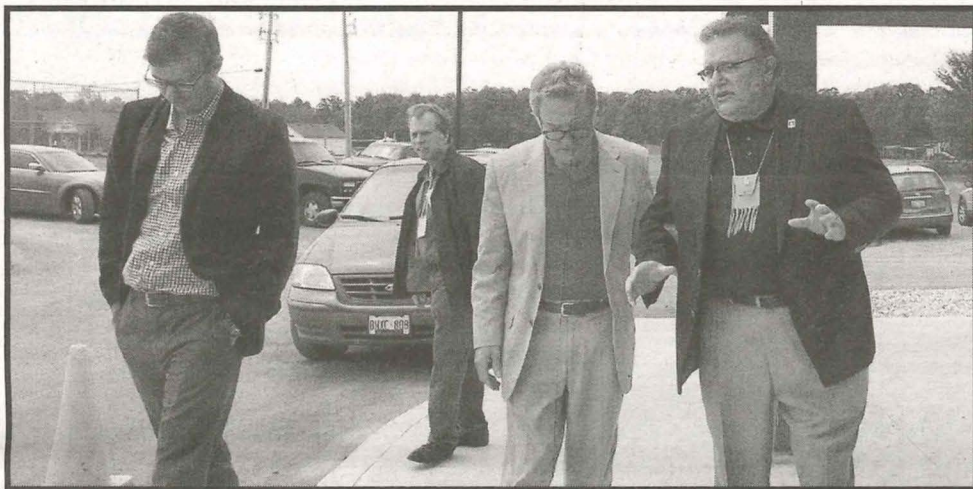
something there."

Approximately 400 warriors from Caughnawaga (or Kahnawake), Akwesasne, Tyendinaga and Six Nations repelled about 500 Americans at what is now called the Battle of Beaver Dams. Originally, said Jamieson, the battle was called the Battle of Beech Woods because the site was dominated by Beechwood trees.

But don't go looking in what is currently called the Battle of Beaver Dams Park for the plaques. Jamieson said the plaques were dedicated at what is now believed to have been the original battle grounds, which had once been home to the Welland



The original historical plaque commemorating the Battle of Beaver Dams, which was removed from the original battle ground and placed in what is called Battle of Beaver Dams Park in Thorold, barely touches upon the pivotal role Six Nations warriors played in repelling the American forces 200 years ago. (Photograph by Dave LaForce).



Chief Bryan LaForme greeted Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister David Zimmer outside the New Credit community centre Saturday morning. Zimmer said he had been delayed by traffic on the highway, but he had also stopped at New Credit's Country Style Donuts where Chief LaForme had been interviewed for a Globe & Mail article that was published on June 21. (Photograph by Stephanie Dearing).

Canal.

On Sunday, a reconciliation meeting took place between Six Nations and representatives from Caughnawaga and Akwesasne, Jamieson said. An exchange of gifts took place. Tom Deer and Curtis Lazore represented Caughnawaga and Akwesasne in the ceremony.

"There was a crowd there" for the ceremony, Jamieson said. "Not a big crowd, it was relatively small. But most of the people there have been trying to get this done for a long time ... It's been very difficult to get it through the bu-

reaucracy."

Even though the 1812 Thorold Committee did not promote the event very well, Jamieson said the Legacy Consortium was pleased with the outcome. "People wanted to see our presence on these sites," he said. The Legacy Consortium has worked to achieve that goal, and the it has been succeeding. He said Six Nations Historian Rick Hill wrote the majority of the largest new plaque that is now gracing the former battleground.

"We've been able to do things at Stoney Creek ...

now we've been able to do the same thing at Beaver Dams and hopefully we'll be able to get something in at Queenston Heights," said Jamieson. "We're hitting our mark. That's where we wanted to be. This is one piece of that."

"We're having influence," said Jamieson. "We get ourselves into the back room and we can influence it. That's the way it works, that's the way the world works. We're doing that whenever and wherever we can. If we get in there early, we can influence how things come out in the end."