

Pan-Am Torch arrives in New Credit



New Credit athletes Cam Sault, who plays for the Brantford Blast after a long career in the pro ranks, and 13-year-old athlete, Ryann LaForme lit the caldron at a welcoming ceremony held at the Mississaugas of the New Credit reserve Friday. The Mississaugas are the official host of the Pam-Am Games which will be played on their traditional territory, today's Toronto. PHOTO BY JIM WINDLE.

By Jim Windle

NEW CREDIT - The Pan-Am Torch made its way through Brantford and the Mississaugas of the New Credit, Friday along with an entourage of dignitaries, a former Olympian and TV sports personality Ron MacLean who MC'ed the event.

New Credit Chief Bryan LaForme, dressed in traditional regalia, was bustling with pride as the torch was carried into the grounds behind the Council House.

Chief LaForme officially welcomed everyone to the Mississaugas of the New Credit Territory.

"The summer of 2015 marks the first time that the Pan-Am Games will have had a First Nations official host, in that they will be played on our

territory, in our land, in Toronto," he said. "This event today gives us an opportunity to showcase our community. Our biggest hope is that when our visitors leave our lands that they take a part of us with them."

Other Aboriginal partners to the Games include the Six Nations of the Grand River, Huron-Wendat Nation and the Métis Nation of Ontario. The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte will host the torch on July 3.

Co-MC, water polo star Mohawk athlete Waneek Horn-Miller who competed under the Canadian flag, told the audience that she always took the warrior spirit with her into the pool.

Horn-Miller put the importance of these games into focus with a

few statistics.

"There are 41 countries participating in the games," she said "Over 10,000 athletes and coaches as well as officials, 23,000 volunteers, 250,000 visitors are expected to watch 51 sports, 19 of them are Olympic qualifiers."

Ron MacLean offered a few little known sports stories about Wayne Gretzky and Harry Jay Smith, Jay Siverheals, better known off reserve a Tonto.

Former premier David Peterson was among the dignitaries as well.

"There is a lot of things like about and I wanted to be here," he told the *Two Row Times*. "The Mississaugas of the New Credit are the official hosts of the Games this year and First Na-

tion will be very important part of the opening ceremonies. We all know about the past but this is about the future."

Liberal Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer officially congratulated Regional Chief Issador Day, who only two days before, was voted in as the new Grand Chief of the Chiefs of Ontario, who was also present.

"I am looking forward to a fruitful and successful relationship with you, Regional Chief Day," he said also committing to a "relationship with respect and fairness

for everything First Nations have contributed to this province and this country."

Grand Chief Day made reference to the spirit of unity he felt in the air.

"This is my first official speaking event since being elected two days ago, and I did everything I could to be here," he said. "What we are seeing here today marks a great day of hope, and a great day of moving forward."

"On behalf of all the First Nations on Ontario, I want to congratulate Chief LaForme and the committee of the Pam-

Am Games," he said.

Mississauga singer/songwriter/musician Mark LaForme, "the Mississauga Rattler, performed with his band and had a special song for MacLean. LaForme traveled with the late Stomping Tom Connors for years and performed "The Hockey Song" in his honour.

Opening ceremonies designed by Cirque du Soleil, will include many references to Canada's original peoples when the games are officially opened, July 10th with closing ceremonies July 28th.