

# Six Nations green energy projects start paying off in 2015

By Donna Durie and Lynda Powless, Writers

Six Nations will start to see millions flowing into the community this year from an estimated \$120 million in green energy deals negotiated by both the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council (HCCC) and Six Nations Band Council (SNEBC).

By 2035, the end of the 20 year deals, \$120 million in total revenues will have been received by the SNEBC and Confederacy.

The SNEBC is expected to receive an estimated \$4.5 million a year for the next 20 years based on its current projects, with the first \$4.5 beginning to flow this year (2015).

The HCCC is expected to begin receiving \$1.02 million a year based on current projects.

But 2014 already saw three of band council's energy projects begin to pay dividends to the community valued at \$257,000.

The First Solar Walpole Project, worth \$227,000 (already received); the NextEra Energy Project, worth \$8.7 million; and the Capital Power project, worth around \$7 million were scheduled to send \$15,000 each (\$30,000) last fall to post secondary according to economic development charts.

The next year will see money start to flow from band council's remaining six projects: the Samsung-Grand Renewable Energy Park, the Penn Energy-Brantgate Solar Farm, the Boralex-Port Ryerse project, the Prowind-Gunn's Hill project, and the two Brant Renewable Energy projects.

Six Nations Economic Development (SNED) did not respond to requests for comment.

But at SNED community information sessions Planner Amy Lickers has told the community a trust fund managed by a community board of advisors will be set up in 2015 to manage and disperse the monies. She

said the monies could be used for a variety of community needs, from subsidies on residents' utility bills to youth initiatives.

The trust will be controlled by the Six Nations Development Corporation, which is being formed she says, through feedback from a 2011 community study called "We Gather Our Voices."

In 2011 SNED spearheaded 19 think-tank sessions in which they said they gathered community opinions on the issue of economic development.

Although the proposed framework declares the corporation will be "arm's length" from elected council, SNEBC is the 100 per cent shareholder, and there is the possibility that SNED and the departments under it could become departments under the corporation.

The 2011 study noted that there is general distrust within the community when it comes to band council's economic development ventures.

"There is a lack of trust in community leadership from a lot of community members," said Lickers when a final report on the study was presented to the community in 2013. "This leads to very limited strength because we don't have that unity in the community and it's hard for us to move forward because there is no strength, so we're always going back and forth. We tend to concentrate on a lot of our failures we've seen in the past. It has become our nature (not to trust)."

The report notes that band council has been pursuing economic development initiatives since 1979 with limited success.

"This can be attributed to a lack of business knowledge by political leadership, and a lack of transparency, accountability and due diligence," the report notes.

One of the most glaring examples of those failures is the notorious Grand River

Mills project, a yarn factory that would have been located in the still-vacant 70,000 sq. foot Oneida Business Park warehouse. Six Nations has since also lost \$5 million in the failed En-Eco Tops incinerator project at the landfill before launching an as yet to be heard, legal action to try and recoup those costs.

Despite those failed projects, SNED keeps plugging ahead with economic development opportunities, saying "economic independence is an absolute necessity for creating and maintaining a self-governing, healthy and sustainable community" on Six Nations.

The corporation would be run by a board of governors that is answerable to the community, the report says. Council can only own shares, not the corporation itself, according to the framework.

But there is lingering distrust against band council and any connection of economic development projects to band council was seen by some as negative, the report noted.

"That's why governance affects our economy," said Lickers.

Lickers said solving the governance issue is important to creating the corporation because there is an element of risk for companies getting involved with Six Nations development if there is a split in governance.

"We Gather Our Voices" project leaders had approached the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council to talk about the economic development corporation in 2013 but have not been able to get on the agenda Lickers said.

The HCCC, through its development and planning department, the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, (HDI) is also expecting money to start flowing into the community in 2015.

The HDI and HCCC have negotiated about \$20 million



**Green energy projects including windmills and solar farms are now dotting most of the landscape between Hagersville, Dunnville and Port Dover on lands Six Nations has an interest in. (Photo by Jim C Powless)**

in economic development projects on Haudenosaunee treaty lands despite hurdles placed in their way by both the SNEBC and Ontario, says HDI director Hazel Hill. "Ontario has been directing development components to deal with the band coun-

But, she said "there are still companies that won't meet with us. They are following the process of a simple phone call or letter thinking that is consultation and Ontario accepts that as consultation."

But she said, "we have to

tario told them to deal with the band. So Ontario was deliberately directing proponents to deal with the band council."

She said, "but now on top of that, the band council is telling people not to deal with HDI, or, if they do,



**Six Nations Men's Fire and community members objected to a housing development at Erie and Birkett Lane in Brantford on unceded Six Nations lands but the development went ahead with the developers choosing to work with a group of Six Nations people under the Mohawk banner. The "Mohawk Workers" are working with Guswhenta Holdings, they said, to have the land title of 12 of the 38 acres at Erie and Birkett Lane returned to them under the Ontario Land Registry. The HDI sent a letter of objection to Guswhenta Holdings at the time and the group explaining the developer needed to consult with the HCCC. Banks and financial institutions were also warned the title was not clear. (Guswhenta Holdings partner Brian Porter (left) met with the Six Nations Mens' fire at the development last summer.) The property has not been transferred to the "Mohawks". It isn't known what other compensation the group may have received. (TIN File Photo)**

cil since 2006. It wasn't until 2009 through the perseverance of HCCC, that Confederacy was placed on the Ontario list of first nations that needed to be consulted with and we have been able to negotiate with components since then," Hazel Hill said.

keep notifying Ontario Ministries that we require full engagement and free and prior consent."

She said "it's been a full uphill battle for the Confederacy and HDI.

"Samsung was very clear to us when they first engaged in the beginning that On-

they are not going to deal with the band."

Hill said the attitudes need to change.

"That's childish and unfortunate because they are hurting our community and preventing the community from getting more benefits

**(Continued on page 5)**