

Idle No More Flash Mob hits Brantford Mall

By Donna Duric
Writer

BRANTFORD, ONT - A crowd of 1,000 people from Six Nations and New Credit took shoppers by surprise Sunday afternoon at Lynden Park Mall in this southern Ontario city launching a sudden flash mob round dance ance in the middle of the afternoon Christmas rush.

In Hamilton on Christmas Eve a second Flashmob round dance surprised shoppers.

The two events join a growing list of "Idle No More" events hitting across Canada.

On Christmas Eve the Aamjiwnaag First Nation, in southwestern Ontario, marched through the streets of Sarnia Monday—the fourth day of its blockade of a CN Rail line that continues in the city.

The Aamjiwnaag First Nation said both the demonstration that began at Sarnia city hall and the ongoing blockade are part of the national Idle No More protests.

"Union leaders called Monday for provincial premiers to get involved in efforts to get the prime

minister to sit down with Spence.

"No one level of government is solely responsible for the poor living conditions on First Nations reserves," said Paul Moist, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employess, in a statement.

"And therefore it is in the interest of the premiers to help find a peaceful and safe resolution to this standoff." In the meantime Idle No More protests, demonstrations and flash mobs continued throughout the holiday.

In Brantford, Ontario, home to Six Nations of the Grand River and nearby Mississauguas of New Credit shoppers were surprised by the huge number of First Nations who sang, accompanied by drums as a huge round dance snaked its way through the mall.

Organized by Jai King-Green, Val King and Cathie Jamieson, the mall was overrun with Six Nations and New Credit people who drummed and danced in a circle around a large Christmas tree in the centre of the mall and made its way through the mall.

King-Green, who organ-



A flashmob of hundreds hit a Brantford mall. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

ized the flash mob thanked the crowd for coming together in unity.

While the drums pounded and people danced in a circle, volunteers handed out pamphlets of information to passersby explaining the Idle No More movement, which seeks to protest against Bill C-45, legislation created under Harper that First Nations say will extinguish treaty rights and dam-

age the environment.

Six Nations man, John Henhawk, involved in the Idle No More movement, implored the crowd to participate in two minutes of silence for hunger-striking Chief Theresa Spence, who hasn't eaten since Dec. 11 in a bid to force a treaty meeting with the Crown and Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"She's on a hunger strike

because the Harper government is trying to pass through legislation without consulting the Canadian people or the First Nations people," said Henhawk. "Once the legislation is passed, it's going to be destructive to Mother Earth and the waters."

He said the legislation will affect everyone who lives in Canada and cares about the environment.

"We are all one people," said Henhawk. "It doesn't matter if you're Irish, English, Anishinabe, or Greek. We are all one people to the land. We must keep fighting for the land. When we fight for the land we fight for the future generations."

He also called upon all Canadians of all origins to band together to fight against the legislation.

"This is not just a native issue," said Henhawk. "This is an issue that affects all of us so we must all unite on that front."

After about half an hour of dancing and drumming, the group ended the flash mob with drumming and repeated chants of "Idle No More."

King-Green said she couldn't believe the event garnered so much support and so many people.

"I was so excited when I got here this morning, I was shaking," she said. "I did not expect this many people to show up today. I was only expecting about 100 people."

Jamieson said the closeness of Six Nations and New Credit people made the event successful. With CP Files-