

# Six Nations has to grow own revenue to survive, Elected Chief

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Writer

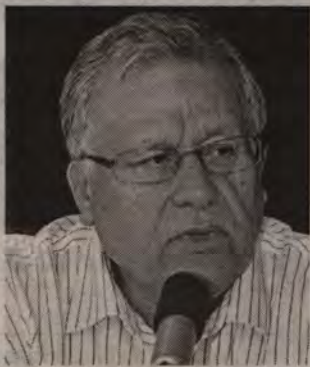
Six Nations could be facing a grim economic future if the community doesn't start bringing in more of its own revenue, said Elected Chief Bill Montour.

The comments came at council's Annual General Meeting last week, saying he has stopped expecting the government to adequately provide funding for Six Nations services and infrastructure, citing years of cuts that will only continue to get worse.

"When I hear people talking about, 'the government owes us, there's a fiduciary obligation'...I can't see it. In fact, a friend of mine once said, 'you can't eat fiduciary.' It's non-existent."

He said the onus is on Six Nations now to start bringing in the money.

"We've got to come together and start looking at



**Elected Chief Bill Montour**

opportunities, projects that have the potential to bring millions of dollars into this community," said Montour. "But we've got to work together. We can't have people coming along saying, 'I'm going to issue a cease and desist order because I don't like that' or 'you have no authority,'" he said.

"I don't believe it's about anybody having authority; it's about us at Six Nations moving proudly into the future. We can only do that

together."

He cited continuing fall-out from the 2008 global recession as a reason to worry about the economic future of Six Nations.

"I believe everybody in Canada is in for a rough time," said Montour. "The downturn in the world economy is dragging on and on and on. We're lucky in Canada because we have a strong banking system that has been able to withstand a lot of the attack," he said.

"But from the First Nations perspective, there's a more dismal picture," said Montour, citing continual government funding cuts.

Two days before the meeting, Montour said council received notice from Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada that another funding cut was coming to Six Nations, in the amount of \$200,000.

The federal government cut the \$2.4 million Band Advisory Services funding nationwide saying the expertise bands need are now available in professional First Nations organizations.

Over the last four years, he said, Six Nations has lost about \$900,000 in government funding.

It cost \$71 million to run the community last year. Most of that came from Six Nations' own-source revenues.

"The federal government is one of the lowest contributors," said Montour. "This community raised the majority of money needed around this community for our own efforts (through gaming revenues, lease revenues, user fees, etc.," he said.

"The biggest threat I see is we're dealing with a Conservative government that

is no friend of Indians. We're suffering the effects of that right now."

Council only received \$40.7 million in government funding in 2011-2012. Council's expenses totalled over \$66,000,000, leaving a \$26 million deficit. If it weren't for the community's \$28,000,000 in own-source revenue, Six Nations would have been in third-party management.

Montour said the community has a lot of problems to fix: a better education system, a better health system, more responsive social programs, youth suicide, drugs, and family violence, to name a few.

"These issues, in my mind, are going to be detrimental to our community if we don't get a hold of them now," he said. "I don't want to be a wet blanket on everything but I think

there are opportunities here, too."

Montour said this year's accomplishments include beginning construction of the \$40 million water treatment plant (council has a \$15 million bank to foot its share of costs), and a Samsung Renewable Energy deal to build a green energy park on unceded Six Nations land in south Cayuga that would net the community between \$33 million and \$55 million over a period of 20 years.

He said the Six Nations community has to look to the future.

"We have a number of people in this community who want to live like we used to. We can't do that. This is the year 2012. Economically, culturally, socially; change has happened. In fact, change is the only constant on this journey we can depend on."