

# Agreement protects river

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thing they can to keep the river clean, but we haven't had a hell of a lot of success with these guys up river. But we hope everybody can see the value of having a good clean watershed where we can swim, and the fish aren't contaminated."

Minister of Indian Affairs, Jane Stewart told the group how "proud" she was to be the Member of Parliament for an area that has a "unique" and "historic" agreement in place.

"I hope you understand that what you've got here is unique in the country of Canada," she said.

She said the agreement is the first of its kind in Canada and is being used as a model for other municipalities and aboriginal communities to use in working with each other.

Stewart said the early days of the negotiations were difficult for both Six Nations leaders and their municipal neighbours.

She said Brantford's plan to drill under the Grand River to place sewer lines for future industrial development, triggered a reaction from Six Nations that set the groundwork for the agreement.

"Concerns were being raised by our neighbours to the south and there was no real process, no way of dealing with them," she said.

"We started out with some very strong words that clearly indicated we didn't know each other very well. Thank goodness wise sense prevailed."

The Indian Commission of Ontario spokesman Michael



**INAC minister Jane Stewart shows off the brand spanking new Mississauga's of the New Credit poster. The poster was presented by Chief Carolyn King at the signing Friday.**

Coyle, who mediated the agreement, said he has received a number of requests by native groups for copies of the agreement to use as a model in their own disputes.

Stewart said part of the problem has always been that fear and misunderstanding are still prevalent among First Nations and surrounding communities from the heart of urban British Columbia, to northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan and in the Atlantic provinces.

"This is something I can use in my box of tools as Minister of Indian Affairs, that is a real experience, that says it doesn't have to be this way," she said.

Dunnville Mayor Lorraine Bergstrand said she was opposed to the agreement more than the others because she feared it would threaten landclaim negotiations between First Nations and higher levels of government but now says she supports it as a document of co-operation.

Friel said the agreement has helped smooth negotiation between Six Nations/New Credit and Brantford.

New Credit Band Council Chief Carolyn King said while her community doesn't border the Grand River and is the smallest to be a part of the agreement, "we're looking to develop too."



**A long line of copies of the Grand River Notification agreement lined a long table Friday. Each copy had to have an original signature for all the politicians to receive.**