

Great weather draws crowds to Three Fires

By Stephanie Dearing
NEW CREDIT

The theme of the 26th annual Three Fires Homecoming Pow Wow, hosted by New Credit, was "Our Story." The fabulous weather saw at least 300 people turn out for Saturday's Grand Entry.

The pow wow, said Chief Bryan LaForme in his welcoming address, "is a celebration about a people, a way of life and a culture. We are here

to share with you."

LaForme reminded those in attendance of the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. "Without the participation of First Nations, Canada wouldn't be the country it is today."

Special guest Chief Stan Beardy, the newly elected Ontario Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations travelled for "three sleeps" to New Credit from his remote fly-in village, Muskrat Dam,

located close the Manitoba border after he accepted an invitation from Chief Bryan LaForme.

"I want to acknowledge the Creator, to give thanks for this beautiful day, the songs, the dances that came with us as people," said Beardy in his opening address Saturday.

Beardy said the songs and dances performed during the pow wow "are gifts of the Creator" that had been with the people "since the time of creation."

"I believe firmly in my heart First Nations will once again be strong nations," said Beardy. "Our culture rises again." He told the gathering "it is very important to teach the little ones to be sure they understand the values, the principles and the history" of First Nations people. "In the future we will be proud nations again," and said the way to that future was to follow the Seven Teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth.

"What we do these next two days truly are gifts because we celebrate who we are," said Chief LaForme.



Chief Beardy gave a few moments to Tekawennake after the Grand Opening on Saturday. "I came here because it's important to show my support," he said. He clarified later saying he was showing "support to my brothers and sisters in the south in their

struggle to relearn."

"I believe it's important for the little ones to celebrate. They need to understand the sacrifices we made to make Canada what it is today ... that it's okay to be Indian, to be proud of that," said Beardy.

The in-demand Chief

Beardy was asked to do a live on-air interview with CKRZ 100.3. During the brief interview, Beardy spoke about Muskrat Dam saying, "My village has been there for 7,600 years. I know that because of the artifacts that have

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Chief Stan Beardy (right) met Brantford Mayor Chris Friel (middle) Saturday afternoon at the New Credit Three Fires Homecoming Pow Wow. Friel and his wife Wendy (far left) have been coming to the pow wow for years. (Photograph by Stephanie Dearing).