

Informality is working for relationship building

By Jim Windle

SIX NATIONS

Steps are being made toward melting the ice that may have formed between Six Nations and the County of Brant over the past three years since the battle of wills between Six Nations and Caledonia began over a proposed housing development of land claimed by the Crown to have been surrendered, but maintained by Six Nations that it was only let out to lease.

The Six Nations Elected Band Council and the Council for County of Brant have opened informal talks designed to restore a healthy relationship between the two communities.

According to Chief Montour, the talks are good, friendly, and even productive.

"We have been talking about a possible "Green Hub" area between our two communities," said Montour. "In fact we talk a lot about green energy ideas

Continued on page 2

Restoring relationships

Continued from Front

as well which could benefit Six Nations."

One of these ideas involves the Nanticoke plant where two huge 60 ton biomass burners are being tested to create electrical energy.

He explains that biomass is a compound using wood, hay, grass, and anything else biological that burns and pressing it into bricks. According to Montour it burns cleaner than coal and is much easier to produce.

"This could be beneficial to Six Nations," says Montour. "We've got a lot of undergrowth and dead trees and stuff around here that can be harvested out and made into biomass."

Another issue concerns the Middleport Bridge which was recently declared unsafe. The shutting down of that bridge has stranded a Six Nations family who live on the other side. Talks have begun to either have the bridge fixed or rebuilt.

"The County was informed that the location planned for their new twin-pad arena is on the Johnson Tract," said Chief Montour. "Possible concessions in ice rental or other benefits to Six Nations users is also being discussed."

But one of the most interesting proposals open to discussion was brought forth by Councillor Ray Mara-



Chief Bill Montour

cle who suggested a second bridge over the river to Six Nations, possibly at the end of Mohawk Road.

"I was pleasantly pleased that Mayor Eddy seemed warm to the idea," said Montour. "He said a second bridge might reduce the amount of truck traffic on Highway #54."

These are all points of discussion only at this point, but Montour is pleased that these open informal talks are happening again and would like to see them expanded to include Haldimand and Brantford.

The County and this present council has had fruitful discussions already which have resulted in the repaving of Highway #54 and the traffic lights at the Chiefswood Road intersection of High-

way #54.

"I don't think we have had these kind of talks with the county since 1991," said Montour who served as chief then as well. "They were called Tri-council meetings then and included Brantford."

There were also meetings since then which were called BRICK meetings which have gone by the wayside in recent times.

"What we are doing here now is restoring relationships," says Montour.

Provincial Aboriginal Affairs Minister Brad Duguid was in the area for informal talks with Haldimand Mayor Marie Trainer, Brantford, Brant, and Six Nations.

Montour describes those meetings as purely social in nature.