

# Chippewas of Rama receive 35-year lease on casino life

TORONTO—Anishinabek Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee is hopeful that First Nations in Ontario and their relationship with Chippewas of Rama First Nation will improve now that a new agreement has been signed between the host community for Casino Rama operations and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG).

The 20-year agreement, with additional 10 and 5 year options, takes effect August 1, 2011 when the current agreement ends, and will provide additional financial benefits for Rama First Nation, including one-time funding of \$2.3 million for a new training and development centre.

The announcement came in mid-January, just days after the Ontario Court of Appeals ruled

against Rama's claim that it was entitled to 35 per cent of the casino's net profits in perpetuity, instead of for the first five years of operation, as lawyers for the other 133 First Nations in the province had argued.

"This money will help our

communities fix their broken infrastructure, allow more citizens access to post-secondary education, address housing problems and give them a chance to put their economic development plans in motion," said Madahbee. "Our communities need the funds in these tough economic times to get on the road to self-sustainability."

Chippewas of Rama – which was known as Mnjikaning when the litigation began in 2001–withdrew from the Union of Ontario Indians in 2004 and have not since been active members of the 40-community Anishinabek Nation.

"As far as our relationship goes with Chippewas of Rama, they are Anishinabek and a part of our family," said the Grand Council Chief. "They have good leadership."



**This is what a \$4700 quillbox looks like. – See Page 29.**