

Pays Plat reservation gearing up for its annual Pow Wow

by Darren MacDonald
The News

Pays Plat Pow Wow organizer Kenny Goodchild says that, in terms of importance to the community, the annual pow wow is as big as Canada Day is in the rest of the country.

"It's definitely a community-oriented event," says Goodchild, who's a member of the six-person Pow Wow Committee. "It's a celebration of life."

The Pow Wow runs Sept. 11, 12 and 13 this year, and

Goodchild says they're expecting a minimum of 100 people to attend.

"It's basically three days of dancing and singing," he says. "We'll have various booths set up selling things like non-alcoholic beverages, moose meat burgers, wild rice—traditional native meals."

The Pow Wow opens with the grand entry, which Goodchild describes as the most "gallant" time to attend the ceremony.

"That's when we have all the dancers marching into the sacred circle at one time," he says. "It usually runs for about half an hour."

In addition to the grand entry song, a veteran's song and a flag song is also performed.

"Flag songs are sung in honour of the Canadian and American flags, as well as the Nishnawbe Eagle Staff," he says.

"And the veteran's song is meant to honour anyone who's served in a war, peacekeeping force, or who's engaged right now in any military activities."

Non-natives are also welcome to attend the pow wow, and Goodchild says they can even participate in certain ceremonies.

"We're going to have social dances in the evening where anyone who's not Indian can participate," he says.

The evening dances are called "49er" style dancing, where everyone gathers around in a circle to form a chain. The dance itself follows train-like movements.

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A new feature this year is the permanent arbour at Pays Plat, which operates as the centre for all of the event's activities.

"It's the only permanent pow wow centre of the 11 Indian bands east of Thunder Bay," he says.

Natives from Geraldton, Nakina, Duluth, Fort Frances, Heron Bay, Nipigon, Thunder Bay, and North West Bay will be attending the Pays Plat Pow Wow. Also in attendance will be eight drum groups and an elder from Fort Frances—Jim



Kenny Goodchild beside the permanent arbour at Pays Plat.

Windigo—who will act as master of ceremonies.

"This is a non-alcoholic gathering," says Goodchild. "Anybody can come, but they shouldn't expect to come here and find anything (alcoholic) to party with."

Filane homcoming

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reception, but maybe we could have a drawing of it there," says McArthur.

The township also plans to honour the Olympian. Reeve Bob Krause says a welcome home banner will be put up near Filane's home at the Cosiana Inn.

"And we're also planning to honour him at our annual Christmas party where we honour the citizen of the year and stuff like that," says Krause.

And before Filane left, Krause says the township gave him a cheque for a few hundred dollars, and a township flag, buttons and pens.

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