



ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION

P.O. Box 248
Attawapiskat, Ontario P0L 1A0

Attawapiskat declares State of Emergency

Attawapiskat, ON, November 23, 2013, The Chief and Council of the Attawapiskat First Nation declared a state of emergency to be in existence as of 1:50 pm, November 22, 2013, due to a fire which displaced approximately eighty community members who resided at the East End Shelter Trailers.

The shelter complex was donated to the community by De Beers Canada in 2007 to provide temporary emergency shelter for the community.

Earlier in the week, the community suffered from a severe winter storm which caused a blackout within the community when Attawapiskat was dropped from the Ontario Electrical Grid. Electrical Service was also interrupted to other communities on the James Bay Coast. Service to the Electrical Grid was restored on Wednesday to the community, and efforts were successful in restoring power to community houses late Wednesday evening using local linesman, with the exception of the East End Shelter Trailers. Prior to this emergency power was provided to the community by use of electrical generators, however due to limited capacity they could not handle the entire needs of the community.

Despite alternate shelter arrangements being made available at the Community Hall during the power outage earlier in the week, some residents elected to remain behind in the shelter complex. The community activated the Community Hall to be used as an emergency shelter since Monday afternoon, and most residents had relocated to the community hall which was with power and services.

In the late evening of November 22, 2013, an accidental fire occurred at the East End Shelter Trailer, caused by a candle used for illumination, causing severe damage to one residential suite and severe smoke damage to one wing of the two wing complex.

Given the severe shortage of housing, and alternate facilities within the community, the Leadership were unable to provide alternate immediate, short term accommodations within the community for displaced members until assessments are completed.

The Leadership reached out to Emergency Management Ontario, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to provide assistance to the community, and the affected residents have been evacuated to the City of Kapuskasing.

Chief Theresa Spence said "I would like to thank Mayor Spacek and the citizens of Kapuskasing for assisting in this current emergency, and on behalf of my Council, and community thank you"

The Attawapiskat First Nation is located on the north shore of the Attawapiskat River, 500 kilometers north of Timmins, Ontario. The community of Attawapiskat, has an on Reserve population of 1800 members, and whose traditional territories include areas of the Ekwan, Attawapiskat, and Lawashi River Basins.

For additional information, please contact Wayne Turner, Executive Director, (705) 997-2166, or by e-mail wayne.turner@attawapiskat.org