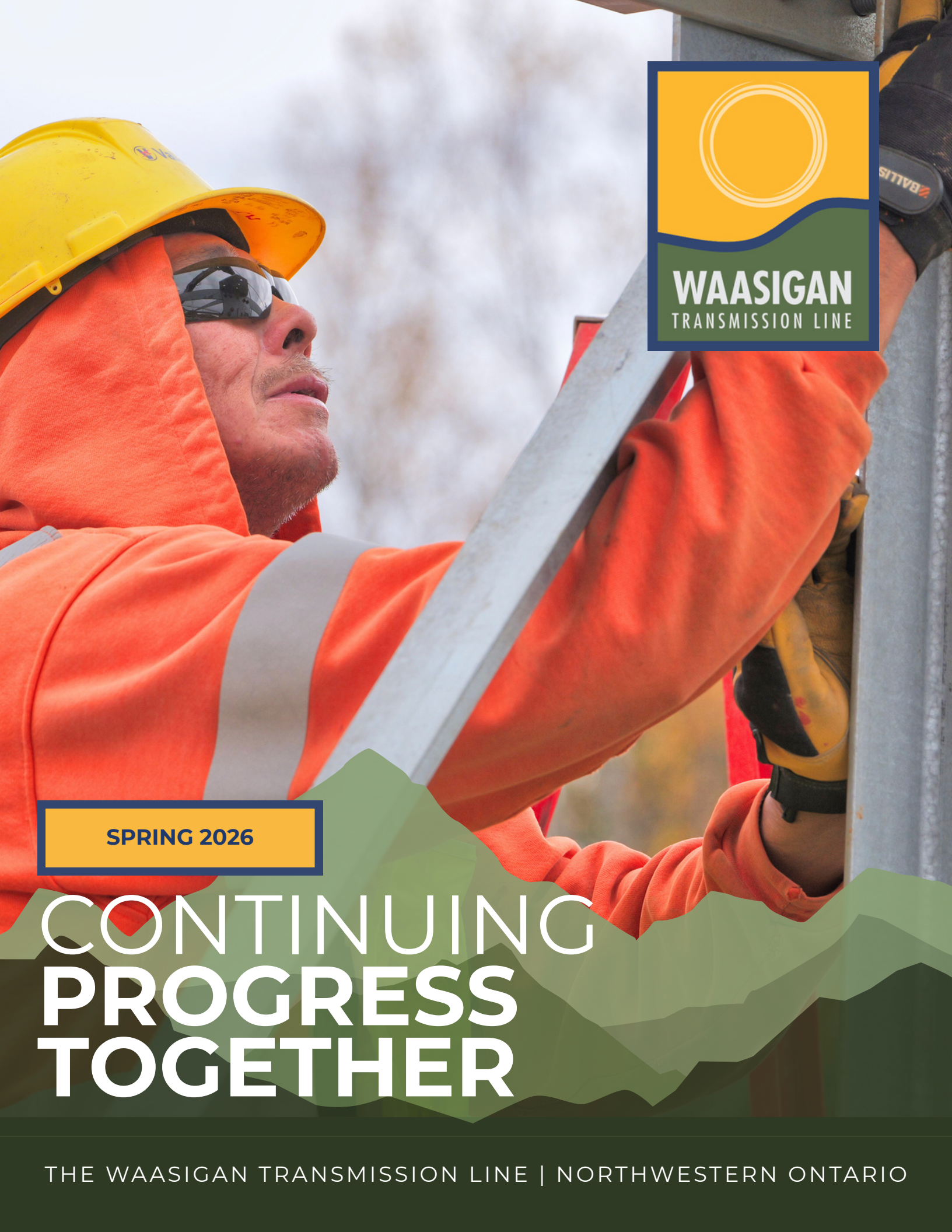




SPRING 2026

CONTINUING PROGRESS TOGETHER

THE WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE | NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

BUILT IN A GOOD WAY, TOGETHER

One line, many hands.

Boozhoo, and welcome to the Spring 2026 issue of the Waasigan Transmission Line newsletter.

Construction is underway across northwestern Ontario as crews continue advancing work on both phases of the transmission line. These pages highlight this season's progress in the field, the people making it happen, and the impact of the project for the nine partner communities building it together.



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Built **together.**



Our Path Forward.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

During the installation of a new transmission tower in March, an anchor system failure caused the structure to come down. No one was injured. Tower installation was immediately paused while a third-party investigation commenced. The investigation determined the precast concrete anchors were not installed in accordance with design specifications, resulting in the anchor failure. The failure was not related to the engineering design or material.

The work is being addressed carefully with involvement from Hydro One and partner communities. As part of the response, crews have inspected the impacted anchor types in Phase One. All of that anchor type will be reinstalled using additional process mitigation measures, increased supervision, and additional quality-control checks to ensure that remaining activities can be completed safely.

We ask that everyone continue to avoid active work zones and respect all posted signage. We appreciate the continued support of all partner communities.

FIRE SEASON PREPAREDNESS

Valard's 2025–2026 timber management and burn program concluded on March 31. Fire season preparedness measures have been in place across the project since April 1 and will remain active through October 31, alongside ongoing environmental management of watercourses, fish habitat and reclamation areas.



ALL-HANDS SAFETY MEETINGS

Project Paramedic Dan Reilly delivered an AED demonstration at the Sapawe Camp, helping crews build confidence using these life-saving devices.

The Medic Team then led a hands-on splinting and slinging demonstration, showing field crews when and how to use these techniques and adapt them using materials commonly found on site—the kind of knowledge that makes a real difference when it counts.



UTV (UTILITY TERRAIN VEHICLE) TRAINING

Canada Safety Council-Certified Instructor Derek Griffin delivered on-site Utility Terrain Vehicle training to crews working across the right-of-way (ROW), keeping equipment operation safe across the project.

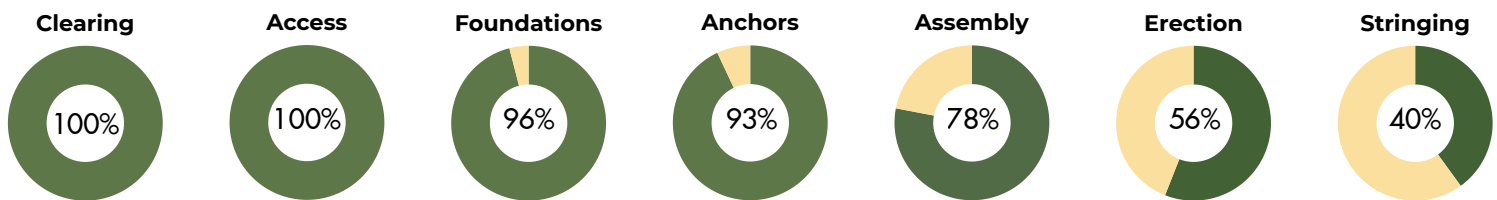
Progress on the project.

FROM THUNDER BAY TO DRYDEN, BOTH PHASES OF THE WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS THIS SEASON.

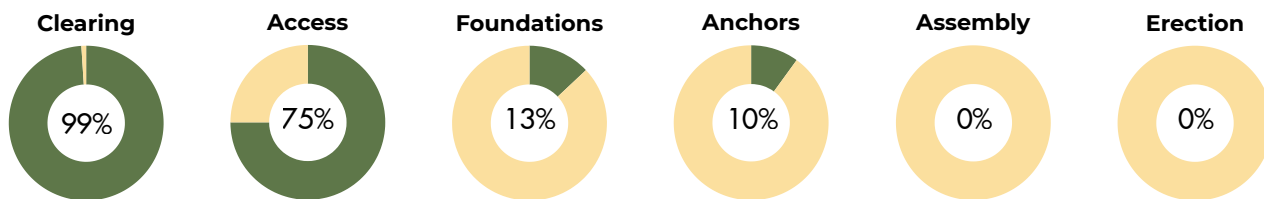
After a slowdown in April and early May, construction has resumed on the Waasigan Transmission Line project.

The Ignace camp reopened on May 11, and Participating Indigenous Communities were notified that work was restarting across both phases of the project.

Phase 1: Thunder Bay to Atikokan (% complete as of May 31, 2026)



Phase 2: Atikokan to Dryden (% complete as of May 31, 2026)



Construction is back in motion in both phases as crews return to the field. New access road construction is underway in work areas six through nine, and foundation crews have resumed work. Environmental monitoring will continue throughout the project to help protect the surrounding land and water during construction.

Valard has also shared updates with communities about the Phase 2 construction plan, including the use of helicopters to support foundation installation and tower erection in work fronts six through eight during the summer and fall of 2026.

Additionally, approximately 9 km of planned winter road will be converted to all-season road across multiple structure ranges. This change will help improve access to work areas and support construction activities going forward.

INSIDE THE PROJECT

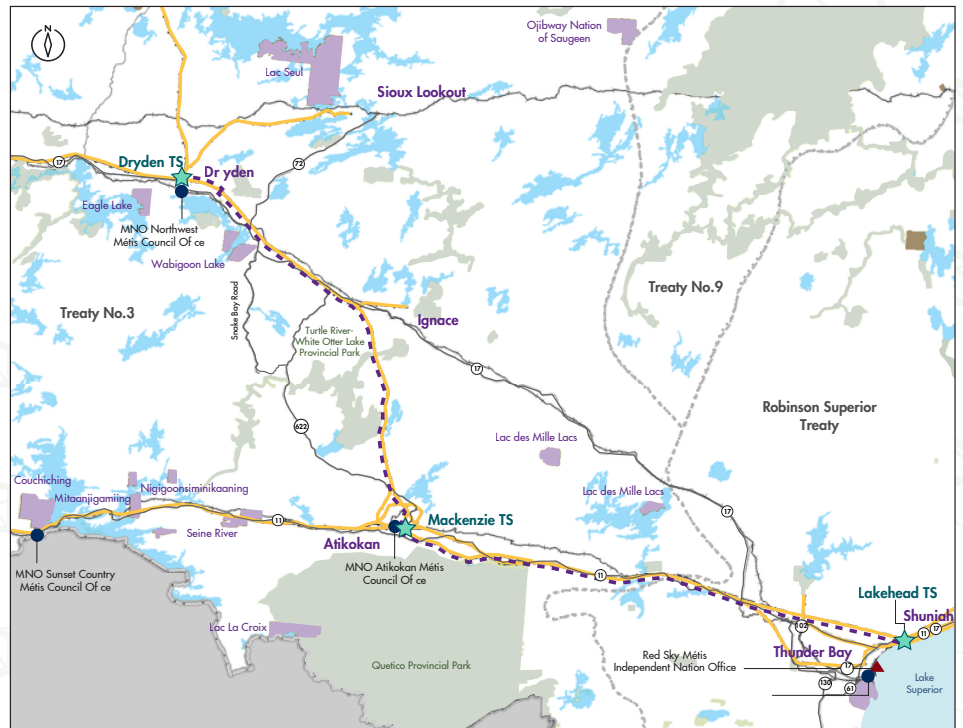


WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE

Map Legend

- Existing Transformer Station (TS)
- Selected Route
- Existing Transmission Line
- Highway
- International Border
- Red Sky Métis Independent Nation Office
- Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Council Office
- Treaty Boundary
- First Nation Reserve
- Provincial Park

The Waasigan route, Lakehead TS to Dryden. Visit HydroOne.com/Waasigan for the interactive map. Map credit: Hydro One.



Did you know?



Follow the project:
FACEBOOK.COM/WAASIGAN



With the warmer weather on its way, animals like moose and deer are highly active and frequently venture near highways to find newly growing vegetation.

Follow these core safety practices:

- Scan the shoulders of the road.
- Use high beams when appropriate at night or during dawn and dusk.
- Slow down, especially in signed wildlife areas.



Long before construction begins, projects like Waasigan undergo a rigorous Environmental Assessment (EA).

Our project teams are out in the field monitoring construction activities, checking that environmental protections are in place and working, observing habitats, and ensuring we keep our commitments.



Establishing this corridor is an important part of protecting both people and the surrounding environment. It creates a clearly defined work area for crews and equipment, helping minimize impacts to neighbouring properties, sensitive habitats, and culturally important areas.

At its core, the ROW is about building and operating critical infrastructure responsibly while supporting safe, reliable power for communities across Northwestern Ontario.

Going above & beyond

RECOGNITION THIS SEASON WENT TO THE PEOPLE WHO SET THE STANDARD, ON THE LINE AND IN CAMP, THROUGH LONG DAYS AND -40°C NIGHTS.



Workhorse Award

Melanie Vincent was recognized for her dedication and positive attitude on the project, consistently ensuring camps remained clean, comfortable, and welcoming.



Safety First Award

Randi Onakanakis was recognized for putting safety first every shift, including clearing snow off access road signs after heavy snowfall to improve visibility for drivers entering work zones.



Workhorse Award

Tommy Sinclair, Keith Schmidt, and Derek Griffin & Shane Byrde, worked after hours to restore power when both generators failed at camp, keeping 200+ workers safe in -40°C conditions.



Safety First Award

Eric Chase, stopped to help a local vehicle that had lost control and ended up in a swamp off Highway 11. Eric confirmed the individual was not seriously injured and helped them get out safely. When a Valard medic passed the scene, Eric stayed to assist while basic first aid was administered.

Events & Relationships

Beyond the ROW, this season was about showing up. Career fairs, cultural activities, and a night in Toronto brought partners together to celebrate what this project is building.

INDIGENOUS PARTNERS APPRECIATION EVENT

Following the First Nations Major Projects Coalition conference, Valard hosted an Indigenous Partners Appreciation Event attended by Valard President, Carey Kostyk and Chief Operating Officer, Dave Robb. The evening was opened by the Six Nations Smoke Dancers.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT & MENTORSHIP CIRCLE

The Employee Support and Mentorship Circle (ESMC) made dreamcatchers using kits from Bougie Birch, an Indigenous-owned business. The activity was a chance to connect, reflect, and bring a bit of culture and creativity into camp life.

CAREER FAIRS

Closer to home, career fairs with Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation, Fort William First Nation, and Lakehead University connected community members with jobs and training opportunities on the line.



Building the line **builds opportunity.**

Every kilometer of clearing, every foundation, and every structure going up across northwestern Ontario is a job, a training opportunity, and a step toward something bigger. The project creates Indigenous employment and opportunity across nine partner communities.

The project
creates
Indigenous
opportunity



TRAINED FOR THE TRADES

A full Heavy Equipment Operator cohort moved from orientation to graduation this season, while free business and trades workshops were offered across all nine partner communities. Through these training and skills development initiatives, Chi Mino Ozhitoowin continues to build a strong candidate pipeline, connecting community members to employment opportunities on the project and beyond.

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Through procurement commitments and partnership agreements, Indigenous-owned companies are actively participating in the project across a range of scopes — from civil and construction work to environmental monitoring, catering, and site services.

This participation is generating direct employment, skills development, and business revenue for community members, while helping build long-term capacity that extends well beyond the project itself. The economic benefits flowing to partner communities reflect a shared vision for reconciliation through tangible, lasting participation in major infrastructure development.

A PATH TO OWNERSHIP

The nine partner First Nations have agreements to invest in up to a 50% equity stake in the Waasigan Transmission Line, through the Gwayakocchigewin Limited Partnership (GLP) and their own separate agreements. Communities take part in ownership, with investment happening after each phase is in service.

FIRST NATION PARTNERSHIP

Project Partners

The nine partner First Nations are not just connected to the Waasigan project. They are built into it, through ownership agreements, environmental oversight, and a shared commitment to making sure this line gets built in a good way.

FROM BUILDERS TO OWNERS

Nine partner First Nations have agreements to invest in up to a 50% equity stake in the Waasigan Transmission Line. By investing only after each phase is in service, communities take part in ownership without taking on construction risk.

Seven of the nine partner First Nations are represented through the Gwayakocchigewin Limited Partnership (GLP). Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation hold their own separate agreements. Together, they are exploring a government-guaranteed loan to support the equity investment.

UP TO
50% OWNERSHIP STAKE
IN THE LINE

9 FIRST NATIONS PARTNERS

2 STAGES,
AFTER EACH PHASE IS IN SERVICE.

STAGE 1

Expected later this year, once Phase 1 is up and running.
Thunder Bay → Atikokan

STAGE 2

Expected by the end of 2027, once Phase 2 is in service.
Atikokan → Dryden



INDIGENOUS MONITORING ON THE PROJECT

The Tazhawaabanjigeyook Monitoring Program works alongside Valard during construction, focusing on cultural respect for the land, water quality, and fish habitat protection. Their monitors bring Indigenous knowledge to the field, ensuring the land and waterways are treated with the significance they hold for the communities who have depended on them for generations.

Their presence is not a formality — it is an essential part of how Waasigan is built. Their knowledge and guidance ensures the work respects the land and aligns with community values as we deliver 350 megawatts of electricity to the region.

LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin Employment



PUTTING TRAINING TO WORK

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin runs the training that feeds the Waasigan workforce. This spring, a full Heavy Equipment Operator cohort moved from orientation to graduation.



The cohort begins the eight-week Heavy Equipment Operator program.



Classroom knowledge and hands-on hours on loaders, excavators, and dozers.



Hands-On Training



The cohort graduates with confidence, certification, and a pathway into the skilled trades.



Graduation

Chi-miigwech to this season's graduates: Phillip Ottertail, Henry (Ira) Ottertail, Ariana Johnson-Potson, Justin Bottle, Shane Collins, and Spencer Wesley. Your hard work brought you here.

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin connects community members to real careers, on the Waasigan line and well beyond it.

Contact: training@cmo-fn.ca

3
SKILLED-
TRADE
PROGRAMS

1
FULL
GRADUATING
COHORT

Hiring Highlight

Did you know that 70% of the assembly crew members are Indigenous, including six crews that are entirely Indigenous? We remain committed to connecting qualified candidates with open positions on the project and creating meaningful employment opportunities for local communities.

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin Opportunity

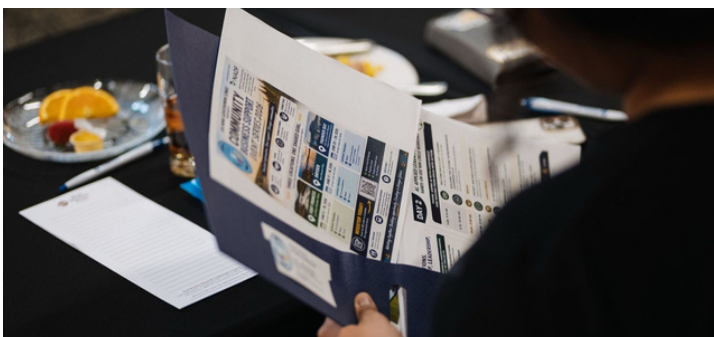
YOUTH · LEADERSHIP · BUSINESS

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin is building economic opportunity that outlasts the project itself, through business training, community investment, and partnerships that put Indigenous leadership at the centre.



INDIGENOUS-LED ENERGY AND ECONOMIC FORUMS

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin participated in national conversations on Indigenous economic growth and energy leadership, including the Spark Indigenous Energy Summit, Indigenomics on Bay Street, and the IESO First Nations Energy Symposium.



COMMUNITY BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin delivered CAPM training June 1 to 4 in Thunder Bay, supporting project readiness for community members and businesses connected to the Waasigan project.



Coming up, the 2026 Community Business Support Event Series, delivered in partnership with the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, will provide practical guidance on business planning, financial readiness, and project participation at three locations across the region.

Three locations:

- Fort Frances · La Place Rendez-Vous June 9–10, 2026 | Arrive June 8
- Dryden · Best Western Plus June 17–18, 2026 | Arrive June 16
- Thunder Bay · Best Western Nor'Wester Hotel and Conference Centre June 23–24, 2026 | Arrive June 22

Support provided includes accommodations, meals, and travel where applicable. Space may be limited, register early.

Register at cmo-fn.ca/businessworkshops

GET INVOLVED

Find **your place** on the line.

JOBS · BUSINESS · WORKSHOPS

The Job Board

Waasigan and regional roles — camp, trades, operations and more.

[cmo-fn.ca/
job-board](https://cmo-fn.ca/job-board) →



Business Directory

Indigenous or community owned? Register for potential opportunities.

[cmo-fn.ca/
business-
development](https://cmo-fn.ca/business-development) →



2-Day Workshops

Free entrepreneurship & business planning workshops with NADF.

[cmo-fn.ca/
businessworkshops](https://cmo-fn.ca/businessworkshops) →



SAVE THE DATE

Healing Energy Golf Classic June 11, 2026. A four-person scramble in support of mental health and addictions programs across our partner communities. cmo-fn.ca
Events: kboucher@cmo-fn.ca

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**WAASIGAN
PROJECT**



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