



SUMMER 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 Summer 2026 issue of the Waasigan Transmission Line newsletter.

Waasigan continues to build momentum across northwestern Ontario. From progress on the ground to the people contributing their skills and experience, this issue takes a closer look at what we're accomplishing together through a **50/50 equity partnership**. It's a reflection of the continued collaboration, commitment and shared success that are helping move the project forward.

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Built together.



PROJECT UPDATE

Season in review.

FIRE SEASON UPDATE

Wildfires had a serious impact on many First Nations communities across Northwestern Ontario this July, and our thoughts are with everyone affected. Valard worked closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources throughout, adjusting operations to keep work safe. As risk grew in July, foundation work and other higher-risk tasks were paused for several days, and crews were evacuated from the Sapawe camp and part of the Phase 1 right-of-way. Where it was safe and approved by the Ministry, our teams kept moving on anchors, tower assembly, erection, grounding, and wire stringing, alongside environmental monitoring, bird nest surveys, and erosion control checks.

INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

June marked National Indigenous History Month, with June 21 recognized as National Indigenous Peoples Day. We remain grateful for the partnerships that guide this project and committed to learning, growing, and moving forward together.



JOINT INSPECTION & SAFETY WALKABOUT

A joint site inspection with Valard, Hydro One, GLP, LEG, and Apache was completed at one of the tower sites while a crew prepared for erection. The team reviewed safe work-at-height procedures, live line clearance, heat illness prevention, and emergency response readiness, confirming that safety measures on site are being followed.

TOBACCO OFFERING

A Tobacco Offering Guideline has been developed for the project with support from project partners to educate employees and subcontractors on the cultural significance of tobacco offerings and respectful participation. The Waasigan project now conducts a weekly tobacco offering at Monday tailboards, reflecting Indigenous community feedback and the project's commitment to respectful practices on the land.



**CLICK HERE OR
SCAN BELOW TO
READ THE GUIDE:**



PROJECT UPDATE



QUANTA CRAFT LEADERSHIP TRAINING (QCL)

Valard delivered Quanta Craft Leadership (QCL) Level I training to teams across the company, including at Waasigan. The program is built for field leaders, foremen, supervisors, and construction managers. Built around three core principles: lead your people, plan your work, and run your business, the course helps participants build the skills and confidence needed to navigate the challenges of their roles while strengthening the next generation of leaders across Valard.

CAMP TOUR

Maggie Kavanaugh and Bradley Howardson hosted a camp tour for the Lac Seul First Nation Community Engagement Coordinator, providing an inside look at camp life, employee supports, accommodations, and cultural spaces available to community members working on the Waasigan Project.



VALARD INDIGENOUS RELATIONS TEAM UPDATE

Maggie Kavanaugh has moved on from Valard to become Director of Operations for her community, Eagle Lake First Nation. While the Valard team will truly miss having her, she is taking on an important new role, and Valard looks forward to seeing her success.

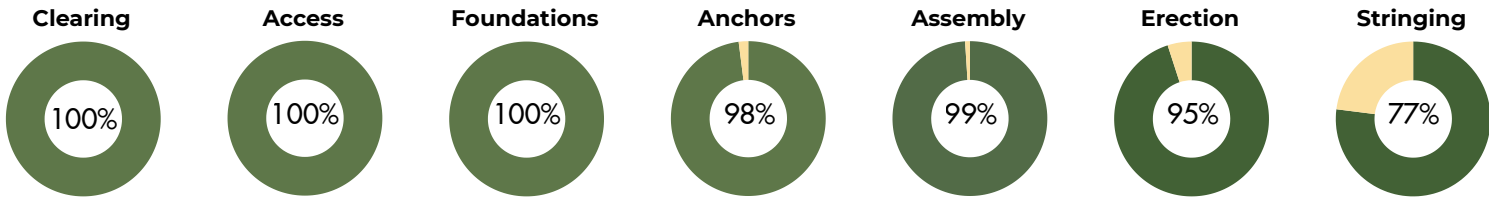
Valard is in the process of hiring a new Indigenous Relations Advisor to carry this important work forward.

Construction progress.

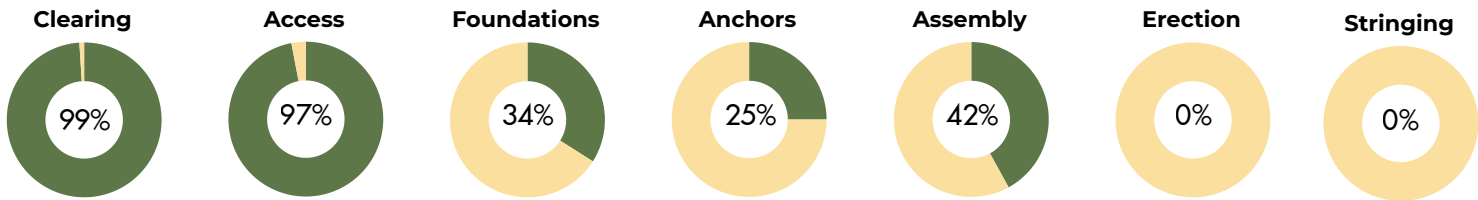
FROM THUNDER BAY TO DRYDEN, BOTH PHASES PUSHED FORWARD THROUGH A CHALLENGING WILDFIRE SEASON.

Construction continued across both phases of the Waasigan Transmission Line this summer, with Phase 1 steadily progressing toward completion this fall.

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



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

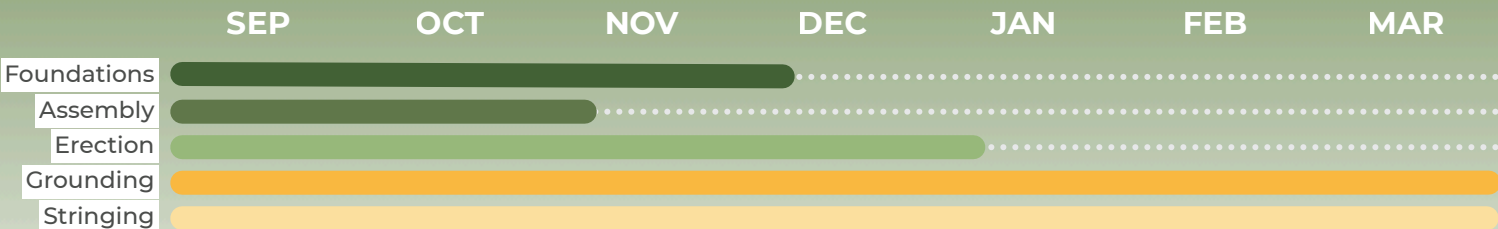


Wildfire conditions temporarily slowed some activities during July, but as conditions improved and it was safe to do so, activities ramped back up throughout August. Any previously restricted work has since recommenced, with activities returning to normal operations.

Valard also kept communities informed about land restoration planning, access road route changes, anchor foundation work following regulatory approval and helicopter-supported foundation work in Phase 2, which began in August.

Looking ahead, Phase 1 tower Erection and Stringing are expected to wrap up by early October. Reclamation will start in Phase 1 in September. Work will continue to shift toward Phase 2, with Foundations work until November, Assembly into October, Erection continuing through December and Grounding/Stringing into late March, 2027.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE (PHASE 1 & 2 COMBINED)

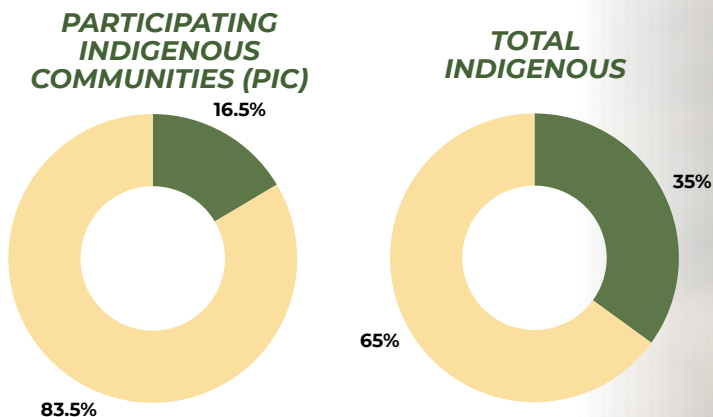


Workforce Statistics.

Behind every kilometre of clearing and every tower raised are the people doing the work. This season, that meant continued growth in Indigenous employment and training, alongside real momentum toward Phase 1 completion.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

Indigenous participation continues to shape this project at every level, from direct hires to subcontracted crews working across both phases.



519,436

CUMULATIVE INDIGENOUS CONSTRUCTION HOURS

1,720,551

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION HOURS TO DATE

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Training remains a core part of how this project builds long-term capacity, not just for today's work, but for careers that outlast it.

49

INDIVIDUALS IN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

12,450

CUMULATIVE HOURS LOGGED BY PARTICIPATING INDIGENOUS WORKERS

LOOKING AHEAD: IN-SERVICE DATES

With Phase 1 activities well underway and steadily progressing, the project is looking toward its next major milestones.

NOVEMBER 2026

Phase 1 (Thunder Bay to Atikokan)

END OF 2027

Phase 2 (Atikokan to Dryden)

INSIDE THE PROJECT

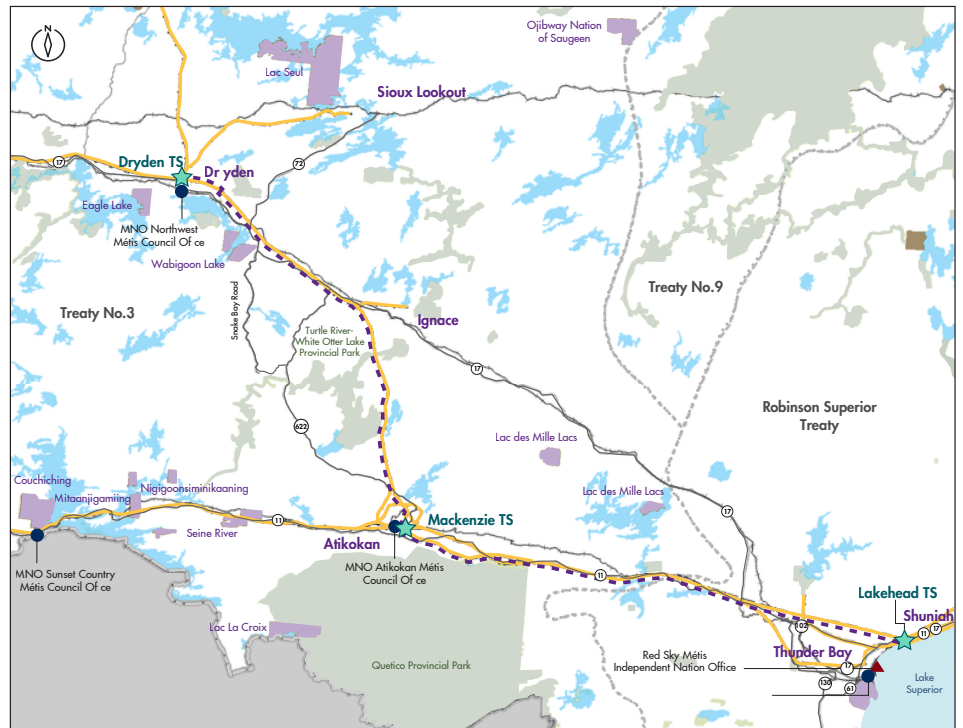


WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE

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.



Project Stories.



Follow the project:
FACEBOOK.COM/WAASIGAN



BEHIND THE SCENES: ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Ever wonder what an Environmental Monitor does on the Waasigan project? Watch this behind-the-scenes video with Environmental Construction Lead Erin Jaggard, showing how monitors serve as the link between construction and environmental stewardship, from identifying culturally significant sites to making sure traditional knowledge and protection plans are honoured every step of the way.



← Watch the **Video**
SCAN THE QR CODE OR [CLICK HERE](#)



LIVE FROM THE FIELD

Live from the field! Meet Sage Whitecrowe from Seine River First Nation, who is part of an all-Indigenous Assembly Crew and is currently working at Tower 147. Sage is accompanied by Cathy Banning, who is leading Tazhawaabanjigeyook - a First Nations Monitoring Program. Meegwetich to both Sage and Cathy for their continued hard work this summer season.

Going above & beyond.

RECOGNITION THIS SEASON WENT TO THE PEOPLE WHO SET THE STANDARD, ON THE LINE AND IN CAMP, THROUGH LONG DAYS AND SUMMER HEAT.



Workhorse Award

• **Nolan Logelin** was recognized with the June Workhorse Award presented by Michael Chaffey. As a project mechanic, Nolan has shown outstanding technical skill and consistency, handling key repairs in-house and getting every task done on time. He takes real pride in keeping the crews running.



Gift of Appreciation

• **Leah Toman** was presented with a Valard luggage bag by Gina Chalk at August's All-Hands Safety Meeting. When a worker became unwell and was in distress, Leah responded immediately and put her first aid training into action. Her calm composure and quick thinking under pressure played a critical role in getting him the emergency care he needed. Thank you, Leah, for showing what it means to look out for one another.



Workhorse Award

• **Mike Genaille** received the Waasigan Workhorse Award, presented by Adam Sheasgreen at August's All-Hands Safety Meeting. Mike took the initiative to walk new labourers through safe operating procedures, review tailboard information, and explain the ERP and emergency preparedness protocol. He's always the first to help out and brings a positive attitude to site every day.

Events & Relationships.

Summer brought no shortage of chances to connect. From career fairs to community presentations to a golf course full of partners and supporters, our team spent the season building relationships that reach well beyond the job site.

OYEP PRESENTATION

Valard delivered a careers and project presentation to Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP) students, giving them a look at what it takes to build the Waasigan Transmission Line and the career paths available on projects like it.

HEALING ENERGY GOLF CLASSIC

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's second annual Healing Energy Golf Classic brought together First Nations leadership, industry partners, and community supporters at Whitewater Golf Club on June 11. Proceeds are supporting three Northwestern Ontario organizations, with the total raised to be announced at a Beneficiary Luncheon in September.

COMMUNITY CAREER FAIRS, OPEN HOUSES, TOURS, POW WOWS & MORE

Connecting with community took a lot of forms this summer. Our team joined the Rainbow Alliance Dryden Pride Flag Raising Ceremony, and on National Indigenous Peoples Day, Hydro One shared a beautiful day with partner Fort William First Nation, celebrating alongside the community's powwow.



Leadership on & off the line.

CONFEDERATION COLLEGE'S COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's Chief Executive Officer, Peter Collins, was honoured as Confederation College's Community Partner of the Year.

This significant recognition celebrates his leadership and commitment to creating meaningful education, training and employment pathways for First Nations people. It also reflects the strength of Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's relationship with Confederation College and the shared work being done to help community members develop skills, access training and prepare for long-term careers.

The award recognizes Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's broader role in bringing First Nations communities together in ways that respond to community priorities and create lasting benefits beyond the Waasigan Transmission Line Project.



For Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's seven participating Indigenous communities, this is an important acknowledgement of what can be achieved through First Nations-led partnerships built on relationships, respect and a shared commitment to helping people succeed.



*Congratulations,
Peter!*

Reclamation & Environmental Stewardship

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR SPOTLIGHT: CYNTHIA PITCHENESE

Cynthia Pitchenese, a Tazhawaabanjigeyook Monitor and member of Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake First Nation), brings thorough preparation to every site visit, researching the location ahead of time and understanding the Environmental Assessment commitments tied to each area. Her attention to detail has made her a natural team leader, helping develop field forms training for fellow monitors. Her work reflects what the monitoring program is built on: bringing Indigenous knowledge directly into how this project gets built.



SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA LEE

Jessica Lee, a member of Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake First Nation), is this year's recipient of the Laric Capital/Gwayakocchigewin LP Scholarship. An active youth leader since 2023, Jessica delivered the closing address at the 2024 Chiefs of Ontario Fall Assembly, speaking on the importance of supporting First Nations youth transitioning out of care. This fall, she begins an Honours Bachelor of Arts at Lakehead University, majoring in Political Science (Pre-Law) with a minor in Economics.



GLP ELDERS AND MONITORS RETREAT

GLP hosted a three-day Elders and Monitors Retreat at Seine River First Nation from June 22-24, bringing community Elders and project Monitors together to talk restoration, reclamation, and erosion control. The gathering also included a boat tour and fishing outing, closing with a traditional fish fry, and time built around sharing knowledge and strengthening relationships on the land.

RECLAMATION: RESTORING THE LAND

As construction wraps up in different areas, reclamation work is already underway. Reclamation means restoring work areas, right-of-way, access roads, camps, and laydown yards, to a stable, self-sustaining condition: replacing topsoil, restoring drainage, and encouraging native vegetation to take hold again. Reclamation begins as soon as work is finished in an area rather than waiting for the whole project to be done, reducing how long land stays disturbed. Participating Indigenous Communities play a key role throughout, helping identify which access roads should stay in place, which areas need extra monitoring, and where seasonal access matters most. With reclamation underway, Phase 1 is turning a corner, land restoration moving forward alongside the final push on assembly and grounding.



SCAN THE QR CODE OR CLICK
HERE TO **READ MORE ON RECLAMATION**

LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin

Training, Employment & Business Development



LINE CREW GROUND SUPPORT PROGRAM COMPLETION

Five students completed Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's Line Crew Ground Support Program on July 22: Samuel Penagin, Spencer Wesley, Lhea Lyons-Thomas, Hailey Kabatay, and Elijah Morris. Hailey was also recognized for perfect attendance throughout the program.



COMMUNITY BUSINESS SUPPORT EVENT SERIES

Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's 2026 Community Business Support Event Series, delivered in partnership with the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, brought practical guidance on business planning, financial readiness, and project participation to Fort Frances (June 9-10) and Dryden (June 17-18). The series reflects Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's ongoing commitment to helping First Nations entrepreneurs and community-owned businesses build the readiness to take part in the Waasigan project and other regional developments.

Celebrating 1 Year

Troy Kingbird
Tyrone Gagnon

Justin Gardner
Taylor Machimity

Sage Whitecrowe
Donovan Pitchenese

Reagan Cameron
Keal Whitecrow

It's been one year since many Indigenous workers joined Valard's Assembly Program. Congratulations to the team members below.

Spotlights & Success Stories

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: LAC SEUL BATH & BODY

Brandy Botham, a member of Lac Seul First Nation, turned her own wellness journey into Lac Seul Bath & Body, a home-based business offering natural bath and body products alongside services like reflexology and aromatherapy. After attending Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's Dryden Business Workshop, Brandy formalized her business, strengthened her financial plan, and is now pursuing a Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund grant to grow her inventory. Her goal: build something sustainable enough to keep expanding, and one day pass what she's learned on to her daughter.



"The workshop gave me clearer direction and greater confidence in the next steps for my business. It helped me strengthen my plan and continue building a business focused on helping people feel better through healing naturally."



STUDENT SUCCESS STORY: BROOKE BOUCHER

Brooke Boucher, a member of Fort William First Nation, completed Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program in September 2024, followed by the Build Your Future: Summer Trades Skills Camp. She first learned about the training through Chi Mino Ozhitoowin's Facebook page and applied looking for practical experience and a path toward steady, meaningful work. Daily transportation support made all the difference, without it, Brooke says she wouldn't have been able to attend consistently or complete her certifications. She's now working toward a Traffic Controller position with Multi Trades through LiUNA Local 607, with her sights set further down the road on starting her own heavy equipment company.



"I hope my journey inspires my family and friends to take that first step. I want everyone to succeed."

GET INVOLVED

Find **your place** on the line.

JOBS · BUSINESS · EVENTS

The Job Board

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

www.cmo-fn.ca/work/jobs →



Business Directory

Indigenous or community owned?
Register for potential opportunities.

cmo-fn.ca/business-development →



SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

Healing Energy Golf Classic Beneficiary Cheque Presentation & Sponsor Appreciation Luncheon.

CMO will announce the total funds raised through the 2026 Healing Energy Golf Classic, present contributions to three beneficiary organizations and recognize the sponsors and partners whose generosity helped make this community impact possible.

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