



Kahnawá:ke Ratítsénhaiens

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Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk News Release

MCK to commemorate Quebec Bridge Disaster 100th anniversary

(Kahnawá:ke – 17, Ohiari'kó:wa/July 2007) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawá:ke (MCK) is pleased to announce that it will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Quebec Bridge Disaster by erecting a monument for the 33 Mohawks killed in the accident. The monument will be unveiled at a special ceremony at which the Community will be invited to attend on 29, Seskéha/ August, the anniversary date. The location of the monument will be discussed with the Committee.

This will not replace the much larger monument being planned by the Quebec Bridge Disaster Committee, which is unlikely to be ready in time for the anniversary. This smaller monument was ordered on Wednesday, July 4.

The MCK also announced that it has donated an additional \$10,000 to the Committee in order to have a celebration on August 29, raising the MCK's total contribution to \$20,000.

As well, the MCK is pleased to announce that it will be donating whatever technical expertise and manpower (where possible and feasible) towards the larger project and to the celebration. This should lower costs significantly.

Background information:

On Monday, 16 Ohiari'kó:wa/July, approximately 50 Kahnawa'kehró:non crammed the Monday Council Meeting for a 3-hour discussion on the topic. It was evident that some community members believed the MCK's monument meant that the larger project would be stopped, which is untrue. Some felt that the MCK was trying to take over the entire project, which they discovered was also incorrect. Rather, Chief & Council mandated the Capital Unit to build the

larger monument for the Committee, at no cost to the Committee, saying they could build it for a fraction of the cost. The offer was made in May.

The Committee finally admitted publicly that they were, in fact, offered this but felt it was never properly explained to them, while the MCK felt that their offer was rejected. Obviously, it was a misunderstanding by both parties. The Committee then expressed interest in having the Capital Unit assist in portions of the larger project.

Chief Johnny Montour explained that the intent all along was to donate approximately \$50,000 towards a completed monument, which would be erected by 29, Seskéha/August. When it became obvious that the project would not be completed in time and that fundraising had not come close to expectations over the last two years, the MCK felt it had a responsibility to the Community to use that money to build a completed monument by 29, Seskéha/August.

Several elders from the original Committee, including Melvin Diabo, Leonard Bordeau, Billy Two-Rivers, Stuart Phillips and Josie Horn, were on hand to say that this is what they wanted all along and some wondered why both monuments could not be used and respected. Their suggestion to celebrate the smaller one on the anniversary date while continuing to work towards the larger one was a compromise that was met with mixed reactions. Coincidentally, this suggestion is basically the position that Chief and Council have been supporting. Two-Rivers added that there are currently 4 different monuments which already exist, dedicated to the men.

On a final note, the MCK would like to acknowledge the hard work being done by the Quebec Bridge Disaster Committee and hopes to work together to honor the men.

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