

Unique project designed around community needs

By George Young
Sage Writer

ILE-A-LA-CROSSE

Ile-a-la-Crosse will soon be home to a unique building that will combine the community's new school and its new health care facility.

Construction has already started on the building, which will see a high school, health centre and long-term care centre combined under one roof.

The two-storey structure will include a community school space that will include a large gymnasium with spectator seating, industrial arts labs, a performing arts space and classrooms for grades 7 to 12.

The health section of the building will include an 11-bed hospital, a 17-bed long-term care wing, a family healing centre, an emergency department, radiology department and labs.

The building will also have space for meeting rooms, a daycare, public health and mental health services, adult education

and community recreation, as well as for community Elders and spiritual counselling.

"Basically what happened is that we were planning to replace Saint Joseph's Hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and the community got wind of that and started talking about the possibilities of a joint facility because they were planning an addition to their school, Rossignol School," said Richard Petit, director of corporate services for the Keewatin-Yanthe Regional Health Authority.

"And we started talking and it only made sense to build one building to save on space, the ground work, you name it. So we now have a joint-use project."

The facility will provide one-stop shopping for health needs in the region, Petit said.

The decision to combine the health facility with a school was primarily an economic one as many common building services and spaces can be used by both sections. Certain functions, such as ventilation, will be separate for safety reasons.

Another reason for the combined building is the career opportunities it creates for high school students in the health sciences, Petit said.

"There exists an opportunity to see RNs, nurses, special care aides, lab people, doctors. The opportunity for the students to see what is happening in the health field and be a part of that in terms of volunteering, job shadowing, career planning. It's endless."

The combined facility can also be used as a training centre for health staff, eliminating the need to send people to Saskatoon for training.

But the biggest opportunity exists, Petit said, in being able to bring Elders and young people together.

"For some reason the Elders really enjoy watching the children and that connection bridges the gap between the Elders and the children."

Louis Gardiner, chairperson for the Ile-a-la-Crosse School Division, spoke of the importance of the partnership for the



A new facility being built in Ile-a-la-Crosse will be home to the community's new high school, health centre and long-term care centre, as well as providing space for other community activities and services.

community.

"If we work in partnership we will accomplish a lot of our goals," he said. "To make our community healthy we need to work in partnership to build a future for our young people."

Gardiner believes a combined building that brings young people and Elders together will help to promote Metis culture and will bring the community together as

a whole.

Saskatchewan Health is funding the capital portion of the combined facility, but the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse has to raise the money needed to pay for equipment and furnishings. Approximately \$850,000 needs to be raised.

Construction of the new facility is due to be completed sometime in 2007.

Academic examining Indigenous approach to teaching

Herman Michell, a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, is conducting research on Indigenous-based science education. A fluent Cree speaker with Inuit, Dene and Swedish ancestry, Michell is focusing his research on the Woodlands Cree.

Michell's interest in science education in the Aboriginal

community began with a question: "Why are Aboriginal students critically underrepresented in science-based fields?" This question is particularly crucial in a time when First Nations communities are taking more control over their lands, resources and communities, he said, which means there is a greater need for

First Nations people to receive education and training in the sciences. This instruction, he believes, should be from a uniquely First Nations point of view.

There is "diversity in First Nations cultures in diverse contexts" and these traditions and contexts need to be reflected in any Indigenous-based science

education model, Michell said.

Aboriginal students today face significant challenges that make it difficult for them to stay in school, including a heritage of colonization, the residential school legacy, and a youth population plagued by suicides, alcohol and drug abuse and poverty. For this reason, Michell wants to ensure that "youth are reconnected with their languages, traditions, values, Elders and land." This reconnection is necessary in all areas of study, the sciences included.

Teachers also face significant challenges when trying to teach science from an Indigenous perspective. "There have been Native teacher education programs since the 1970s," there are still very few First Nations science teachers today," Michell said. He frequently makes presentations to educators across Saskatchewan, and has found teachers are "hungry for curriculum guidelines and

strategies around how to implement Indigenous science based education." He also regularly visits First Nations communities and schools, encouraging Aboriginal youth to pursue careers in science, health, environment and technology sectors.

The son of trappers and himself of Woodlands Cree heritage, Michell grew up in the remote community of Kinooosao in northern Saskatchewan. He received his bachelor of arts in Sociology from the University of Winnipeg in 1990, then completed course work in a post-baccalaureate diploma in Educational Psychology and Special Education, specializing in school counselling. He has a masters of Education in Aboriginal Education from the University of British Columbia. He is currently an assistant professor and head of the Science department at the First Nations University of Canada.

Message from the Minister of Learning The Honourable Andrew Thomson

As Minister of Learning, it is my pleasure to proclaim
October 16-22 as Education Week 2005.

Saskatchewan's centennial year provides an opportunity to celebrate both our past successes and our bright future, in education as in other areas. As we begin our second century as a province, investing in education is one of the best ways to ensure a positive future for Saskatchewan and its people.

This year's Education Week theme is
Celebrate Learning! Celebrate Saskatchewan!

The 2005 Education Week Advisory Committee chose this year's theme as an expression of just how much we have to celebrate.

Best wishes in celebrating Education Week and for a fulfilling 2005-2006 school year.

Sincerely,

Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister of Learning



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