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STAR/JOURNAL photo: Jill Hayward

Simpcw First Nation signs Mutual Benefits Agreement with Kinder Morgan

By Jill Hayward
North Thompson Star/Journal

"The rights of the Simpcw people have been addressed," stated Chief Nathan Matthew last Tuesday, as the Simpcw First Nation moved into a Mutual Benefits Agreement with Kinder Morgan Canada's Trans Mountain Expansion Project.

"The rights and title of Simpcw are being recognized by the people who come into our traditional lands," said Matthew.continued on page 18

(L-r) Simpcw First Nation Chief Nathan Matthew shakes hands with Ian Anderson, president of Kinder Morgan Canada, after both parties signed a Mutual Benefits Agreement regarding the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Officer's initial polite warning unheeded by



STAFF/JOURNAL photos: J.P. Hayward

Children of the Neqwayqwelsten School in Chu Chua drummed a welcome song to open the Simpcw First Nation and Kinder Morgan Canada Mutual Benefits Agreement Signing Ceremony that took place in the Chu Chua community hall on Tuesday, May, 10.

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Simpco signs with Kinder Morgan

Ian Anderson, president of Kinder Morgan Canada (KMC), addressed those in attendance, saying, "Kinder Morgan is looking forward to working with everyone as we move into the coming years." He thanked those who participated in the negotiation of the Mutual Benefits Agreement and noted that Simpcw's Keith Matthew was an integral part of these negotiations. He also thanked the KMC negotiating team of Regan Schlecker, Peter Forester and Jeff Smith for their work.

"We started in this area in 1952," said Anderson in his address to the Band. "We've been here for a very long time, but it is only the last 10 years that we have gotten to know each other in a deeper way, to know your community, and what is important to you. We've learned a lot together with Keith in those early days. We didn't always agree on everything, but we found a way."

"We are excited about the project. And we will do everything in our power to leave the land, the water and the animals in better shape than we found it. That is our commitment to you."

Chief Matthew thanked those who served on the Simpcw negotiating team, Keith Matthew, Jennifer Hill, Sam Phillips and James Foster.

"These people were chosen by Band Council, and they did a very good job of negotiating for us," said Matthew. "The rights of the Simpcw people have been addressed."

Matthew went on to talk about the disruption that installation of a pipeline can do to the land. "Building a pipeline truly is a disturbance to the land," he said, "We really had a lot to talk about. Our interests are laid out in a cultural policy."

He noted that the environmental aspects to be considered were immense. "There are a 100 different streams crossing the area that run along the Upper Fraser and into the North Thompson. This affects the land, the air, life... We have attended to all of those, and the agreement that we have signed addresses this."

"We will be able to constantly monitor all of the activities taking place in our lands and will have direct access to Trans Mountain on any issue that we may have."

He noted that all of the invasive construction to the land area will be repaired.

"Our First Nation has the greatest amount of land that the pipeline will pass," said Matthew.

"We also do communicate with the other First Nations in its path."

"The Simpcw are organized and stick together, and we take seriously the negotiation that has gone into the agreement. We will protect and respect the interests of our people and other people in putting in this pipeline."

"We didn't get all we wanted, and they didn't get all they wanted," said the Chief, "Our parents and grandparents would say 'good', that we have negotiated to protect the land and our people."

Anderson stated the project should start to get underway in the area by fall 2017 or into 2018. "There will be lots of jobs and lots of work. Your community can share in the prosperity that will come from this project. This project will create a lasting relationship for decades."



Simpco presented Kinder Morgan Canada president Ian Anderson an engraved mirror, and KMC in turn presented a ceremonial paddle and plaque to Simpcw. Pictured (l-r) are Simpcw Council members Tom Eustache, Tina Donald, Chief Nathan Matthew, Council member George Lampreau and Kinder Morgan president Ian Anderson.