

# *Sharing the Spirit*

**An Akwesasne Cultural  
Tourism Strategy**

*Kenténha / October 2009*



She:kon Community Members,

One of our community's greatest strengths is our rich cultural history. Even today, we still have hundreds of artisans, whether they are basket makers, bead workers, pottery makers, quilters, or numerous other trades. This cultural strength is also one of our greatest weaknesses as we have not done enough to support these important trades.

Over the past year, a group of individuals got together to address that weakness. *Sharing the Spirit* is the end product of their effort. It represents a partner-based Akwesasne cultural tourism strategy to promote and enhance the skills and talents of our craftspeople. Its development had the support of all three Mohawk governments (St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs) at Akwesasne.

We are grateful to the management team for developing *Sharing the Spirit*. It recommends a number of initiatives for community consideration, including:



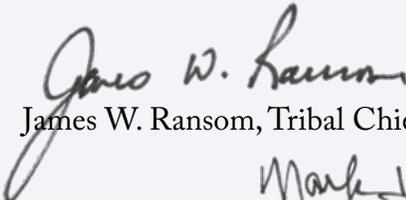


- Establishment of a Welcome Center to the Community
- A new Akwesasne Museum, Library, and Archive Facility
- Construction of an Eco-Resort
- Construction of an Art Park
- Enhancements of Ronathahon:ni Cultural Center
- Beautification and Revitalization of Rt. 37

We ask for your input into this strategy and ask that you send any comments/feedback by the end of September to:

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St. Regis Mohawk Tribe  
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Niawen:kowa for your time,

   
James W. Ransom, Tribal Chief    Monica M. Jacobs, Tribal Chief  
  
Mark H. Garrow, Tribal Chief



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# Introduction



Although it may be a challenging topic to address, Cultural tourism can represent opportunity. To Akwesasne artisans, it can represent promising opportunities based on what they know best, their own culture. It can serve as a source of income for them and a chance to showcase their talents and skills. It can also serve as a major part of the economic development of the community leading to the creation of jobs and increased traffic to small businesses.

Youth can be an active part of cultural tourism activities, helping the younger generation in the community to better understand their rich history and the role that culture plays in their lives. Ideally, cultural tourism can provide a venue to make sure that the history of the community and interpretation of its culture are accurate and complete and told from the community's perspective.

To others in the community, cultural tourism can be viewed as a threat if not properly completed. Clearly, there are parts of the culture that do not belong in the public domain. There are also some concerns that culture should not be "for sale." There is an intrinsic value to our culture that should not be assigned a monetary value. The key to a successful cultural tourism strategy is finding the balance between the opportunities it represents and the threats it can create.

"Sharing the Spirit" is a partner-based Akwesasne cultural tourism strategy that seeks that balance. It hopes to serve Akwesasne and the visiting public by creating and promoting informed cultural tourism that reinforces the cultural strengths of the community. "Sharing the Spirit" ensures that visitors are provided with opportunities to experience Akwesasne in a positive manner that respects our cultural heritage and environment. This will be achieved

through information sharing, networking, exploring ways to strengthen the Akwesasne tourism industry and promoting its partners in the delivery of cultural tourism experiences. Its objective is to promote the destination, increase the visitation, develop the industry and enhance its economic impact.

# Akwesasne Background Information



The Mohawk territory of Akwesasne is situated on the international border between Canada and the United States. It has been the home of Mohawks and other Iroquois of the St. Lawrence for thousands of years. Mohawk people are part of the vast Iroquoian language group which includes Native nations as far away from Akwesasne as the Cherokee. More closely related nations are the five original Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca who formed the confederacy approximately 900 years ago; and people of the Tuscarora nation, who traveled from North Carolina approximately 300 years ago to join them.



Originally, Akwesasne was the Mohawk name for the region surrounding the Long Sault rapids along the St. Lawrence River Valley between the Grasse River and the Salmon River confluences. Prior to European contact, villages would locate at a site within their traditional territory for a number of years

before relocating to allow the land to replenish itself. Following European contact, land use was increasingly restricted. Several families from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, near Montreal, settled in Akwesasne in 1755, as a Catholic mission community. The name of the mission became St. Regis, in honor of a priest who wished to come to North America, but had

died serving the poor in France. The name St. Regis is used within the community of Akwesasne to denote the village surrounding the Catholic Church there.

European contact brought boundaries to the community and diminished the extent of the traditional Akwesasne land base. Today, Akwesasne is located on 14,648 acres in northern-most New York State and on 11,711 acres in Canada. It is bisected by 12 miles of the U.S. - Canadian border along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. Figure I is a map of the community.

The governmental systems that are recognized by the United States and Canada are two elective systems named the “St. Regis Mohawk Tribe” and the “Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.” Yet, these are not the only two governments that are within the community. The Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs also continues as a traditional government situated at Akwesasne. The

people of Akwesasne continue to assert their right to define and re-define their identity and governance according to their own diverse set of beliefs.

One can find artists, pottery makers, craftspeople, bead workers, and people who continue to make traditional clothing. Traditional medicine keepers still practice in the community. Efforts are underway to preserve and grow original heirloom seeds (corns, beans, and squash) in Akwesasne. Akwesasne is famous for its basket making, a tradition that is still practiced today.

Lacrosse has continued from the time of Creation as an integral part of the life of the Mohawks. Today, one of its roles is as a focal point to invite others to the community. Iron working has become an important trade and important part of the culture of the Mohawk people as well.



# Partnership



Sharing the Spirit represents a public-private partnership, namely organizations, government, and businesses interested in furthering the objectives associated with this strategy. We hope to have this initiative supported by all three Mohawk governments (St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs) at Akwesasne.

It is proposed that this strategy include the development of a Cultural Tourism Association. Partners could be eligible for nomination and election as the Board of Directors or Officers of the Association. Each Mohawk government at Akwesasne could have one standing member designated to the board of the Association.

Potential private partners identified to date include the Akwesasne Museum, Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre, and the Akwesasne Notes Bookstore. Additional membership is open to artisans, craftspeople, businesses and organizations interested in tourism.

It is proposed that the Cultural Tourism Association become a member of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association and take advantage of the benefits offered by that organization. Aboriginal Tourism organizations in Canada should also be identified and joined.

## Management Team

The eight-person management team selected to spearhead this effort has a wealth of experience.

St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Chief James W. Ransom brings 30 years experience helping the tribe in many

capacities. He carries the portfolio for economic development, education, and environment for the Tribe.

Lindsay Tarbell serves as the Economic Development Planner for the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Technology Management and previously coordinated the development of the Tribe's Integrated Resource Management Plan.

Charmaine Caldwell serves as the Economic Development Industrial Commercial Officer for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. She brings 16 years of financial experience to the team.



Barbara Barnes serves as the representative for the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs. She brings 33 years of experience, most of it as the Executive Director of the Ronathahonni Cultural Centre, to the team. She currently serves as a Cultural Resource Elder for the Iohahioo Adult Education Center.

Sue Ellen Herne has served as Program Coordinator for the

Akwesasne Museum for the past 12 years. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and is an accomplished artisan who exhibits regularly in Haudenosaunee group shows.

Sarah Konwahawahi Herne previously served as the Museum Coordinator for the Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre for the past three years. She is currently working as a Jr. Policy Analyst for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Nation Building Program.

Sherril Lazare and Leona Francis are two recent graduates of the Iohahioo's Hospitality and Tourism Management course, having received Associates degrees. They were identified by the course instructor amongst 12 graduates to participate in this initiative. Sherril Lazare has ten years experience as a professional manager. Leona Francis has ten years experience in management and administration.

# Regional and Akwesasne Characteristics



Akwesasne is situated between the “Adirondack” and “Thousand Islands-Seaway” regions of northern New York State, southeastern Ontario and southwestern Quebec. Sixty-five thousand (65,000) United States residents and more than one hundred and five thousand (105,000) Canadian residents live within 25 linear miles of Akwesasne. On a broader regional basis, there are almost 665,000 US residents and more than 5.9 million Canadian residents within a 100-mile radius and more than 5.2 million US residents and 7.8 million Canadian residents within 200 linear miles of Akwesasne.

The Adirondack region offers an estimated 3,000 lakes, 1,500 miles of rivers and 46 different mountain peaks with numerous recreation opportunities including hiking, canoeing, rafting, climbing and a variety of resort villages. Thousand Islands-Seaway is home to over 1,800 islands and some 15 New York State Parks on Lake Ontario and along the St. Lawrence River offering fishing, boating and camping.

Akwesasne serves as a gateway to this region. Akwesasne has a rich history of cultural expression although this strategy is the first attempt to more formally organize it. The following paragraphs describe in greater detail the principal attractions of the Akwesasne community and surrounding communities that have a specific focus on Mohawk and/or Haudenosaunee culture.

*Akwesasne Museum* - Located on State Route 37, the Akwesasne Museum features exhibits on the continuing cultural heritage of the Akwesasne Mohawk people. The collection of the museum includes over 2000 photographic objects and over 700 ethnographic objects of various kinds. There is also a gift shop on site.

*Akwesasne Notes Bookstore* - Located on State Route 37, the Akwesasne Notes Bookstore carries hardcover and soft cover books, magazines, booklets and pamphlets specifically on Haudenosaunee and Native American culture, history and traditional teachings.



*A'nonwarako:wa Arena* - Akwesasne: Located on Kawehno:ke (Cornwall Island, Ontario), the arena is the host of many cultural events in Akwesasne, including the International Pow Wow, lacrosse, and hockey.

*Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre* - Located on Kawehno:ke, the Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre has served as an educational resource centre on Iroquois culture and history for the past thirty years. Its strength is in attracting teachers, elders, ceremonial leaders and sharing a common knowledge of Haudenosaunee culture, history and traditions. Its services and facilities include a travel troupe, museum exhibit and resource library.

*St. Regis Catholic Church* - According to documentary sources, the St. Regis Mission was established in the village of St. Regis over 250 years ago, in 1755, by French Jesuits. While the Onkwewonwe people used the territory for thousands of years before that, 1755 marked the first permanent settlement there.



## Access to Akwesasne

***Droulers/Tsiionhiakwatha*** - St. Anicet Quebec: Droulers is an archaeological site. It contains an open-air museum and interpretation center to discover the daily life of the Iroquois pre-15<sup>th</sup> century through the reenactment of a village located near the remains of the largest Iroquoian village unearthed by archaeologists in Quebec. A unique museum experience will lead you to visit longhouses, gardens, lookout posts and drying fish, with an experienced guide and interpreter.

***Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center*** - Onchiota, New York: Located within the Adirondack Park, the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center strives to educate the public in respect to Native American history with an emphasis on the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy). The facility is a 53-

Akwesasne is located on State Highway 37. It provides access to the Canadian border to the north and to the principal north-south transportation routes to the east and west. State Highway 37 travels west, approximately one mile from Akwesasne to the U.S./Canadian border crossing at the Seaway International Bridge from Cornwall, Ontario where it intersects Provincial Highway 138 and Trans-Canadian Highway 401. It continues west another nine miles to Massena, New York. From Massena, State Highway 37 travels southwest along the St. Lawrence River, approximately ninety miles to Watertown, New York where it intersects Interstate 81.

From Cornwall, Ontario, Provincial Highway 138 travels north approximately 25 miles where it intersects with Provincial Highway 417. Provincial Highway 417 provides direct access to Ottawa, Ontario, approximately 40 miles to the west. Trans-Canada Highway 401 travels northeast approximately 70 miles to Montreal, Quebec. From Cornwall, Trans-Canada Highway 401 travels west approximately 80 miles to Gananoque, Ontario where it intersects with U.S. Interstate 81 on the other side of the St. Lawrence River, across from Alexandria Bay, New York.



year old building that houses over 3,000 pre-and post-contact cultural artifacts, contemporary arts and crafts, diagrammatic charts, posters and other cultural items of the Haudenosaunee.

To the east from Akwesasne, State Highway 37 travels 21 miles to the southeast to Malone, New York where it intersects U.S. Highway 11. From Malone, U.S. 11 travels east approximately 50 miles to Champlain, New York where it intersects Interstate 87 near the New York/Quebec border. Interstate 87 provides direct access to Albany, New York, approximately three hours to the south and Montreal, Quebec, approximately 40 miles to the north via Provincial Highway 15.

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)



A SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or a business venture. It involves specifying the objectives of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable or unfavorable to achieving that objective. Strengths are the resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage. Weaknesses can be an absence

of certain strengths or can be the opposite of strengths. Strengths and weaknesses are considered internal factors. Opportunities are factors that stimulate growth and profit. Threats are factors that can prevent or inhibit growth and profit. Opportunities and threats are considered external factors.

Table I is a SWOT Matrix that examines the internal (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external (Opportunities and Threats) factors for the Sharing the Spirit cultural tourism strategy.

	<p><i>Priority Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on cultural strengths</li> <li>• More hotel rooms coming</li> <li>• Proximity to major markets in US and Canada</li> <li>• Benefiting from natural beauty of area</li> </ul>	<p><i>Priority Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased scrutiny at borders causing border crossing delays</li> <li>• Escalating gas prices</li> <li>• Competition from other venues</li> </ul>
<p><i>Priority Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of culture and place</li> <li>• High interest from tourists</li> <li>• Strategic location</li> <li>• Significant traffic</li> <li>• Many skilled people</li> </ul>	<p><i>Invest – a competitive advantage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Welcome Center</li> <li>• Design new museum</li> <li>• Design art park</li> <li>• Design youth theater</li> <li>• Design Eco-resort</li> </ul>	<p><i>Defend – mobilize resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and develop a tourism web site</li> <li>• Develop regional marketing strategy</li> <li>• Establish niche tourism attractions</li> </ul>
<p><i>Priority Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent negative portrayal of community</li> <li>• Sparsely populated areas around Akwesasne</li> <li>• Congestion of traffic</li> <li>• Insufficient hotel rooms</li> <li>• Lack of formal coordination</li> </ul>	<p><i>Decide (invest, collaborate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnership with St. Lawrence Seaway Administration</li> <li>• Develop partnerships with other tourism attractions</li> <li>• Identify tourism funding options</li> </ul>	<p><i>Damage control/Divest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish beautification plans for community</li> <li>• Emphasize cultural strengths of community</li> </ul>

# Profile of Tourism Possibilities



Table I: Tourism Visits for 2008

Tourism Facility	Visits
Akwesasne Mohawk Casino	1,000,000
Mohawk Bingo Palace	325,000
Droulers Archaeological Site	10,000
Akwesasne Museum	<5,000
Akwesasne Notes Bookstore	<5,000
Ronathahonni Cultural Centre	<5,000

One of the greatest strengths of the community of Akwesasne is the resourcefulness, talents and skills of its people. A recent review by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Economic Development Office indicated that there are well over 300 individuals in the community who are artisans and craftspeople. The list reveals they do beadwork, quilting, pottery, painting, poetry, drum making, cradleboards, music, illustrations and drawings, quillwork and photography.

One of the keys to the success of the Sharing the Spirit strategy will be the ability of existing cultural institutions, businesses, and individual artisans to work together in promotion of the strategy. The strategy will strive to incorporate the goals of institutions, businesses, and artisans in a way that minimizes duplicative efforts while taking advantage of the strengths within each institution, business and artisan.

The growing success of the Tribe's gaming establishments shows the disparities between gaming visits and cultural tourism related visits within and around the Akwesasne community. It also shows that if the right product/service can be developed, tourists will come to Akwesasne. Table I is a summary of tourism visits in and around the Akwesasne community.

It has been determined from speaking to other tribal communities that basing a cultural tourism strategy by focusing on Gaming Tourists is not the best strategy. Gaming tourists typically do not leave the gaming establishments to experience other tourism opportunities in the community. They are not there for that particular experience. Therefore, it will be a difficult challenge to target a marketing strategy around those guests. Instead, the Sharing the Spirit cultural tourism strategy will be based on focusing on other tourists within the region who would want a cultural tourism experience as part of their itinerary for travel. A marketing strategy can target gaming tourists on a small scale, gaining awareness of other tourist opportunities in Akwesasne for future visits to the community.



Funding of this cultural tourism strategy will be a challenge. Federal and state grants may be available for some of the activities. Others could be funded through the creation of a bed tax for hotels/motels operating in Akwesasne (the Cherokee model). It is expected that the governments of Akwesasne will have to subsidize some of the activities as well.

The Sharing the Spirit cultural tourism strategy has identified the following opportunities to facilitate greater attendance at Akwesasne cultural tourism locations.

## *A. Establishment of a Welcome Center*

A sub-committee, consisting of Leona Francis and Sherrill Lazare, researched Welcome Centers to identify key elements that should be included in the design of a facility. The basic elements include:

- » Vending Machines
- » Free coffee (Green Mountain may be interested in providing this service)
- » Restrooms that are handicap accessible
- » Pay Phone
- » Kiosk/ATM Machine
- » Newspaper vending machines
- » Large map of the North Country posted inside and outside for after hour visitors

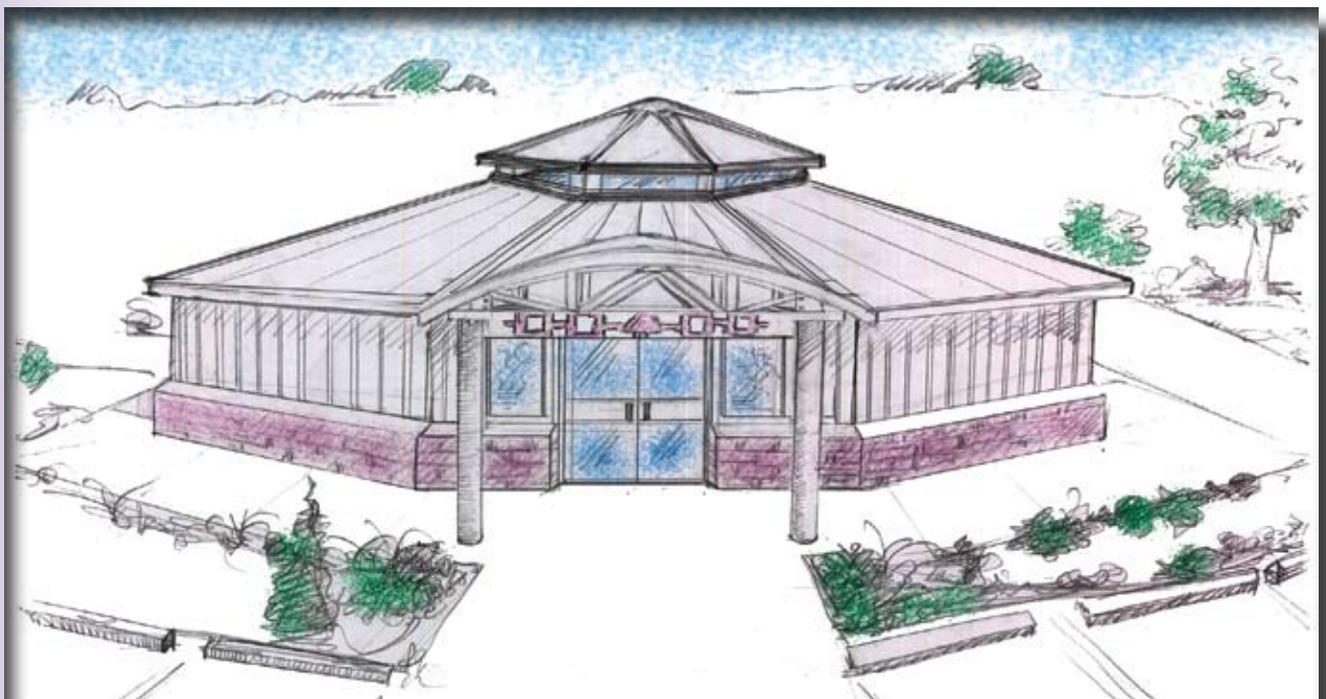
The Welcome Center can specialize to reflect the cultural spirit of Akwesasne. Displays can have samples of arts and crafts available in the community, including beadwork, fancy baskets, corn husk dolls, and paintings. A map of Akwesasne showing where these items can be purchased can be posted as well. Brochures and pamphlets of Akwesasne businesses and events can be developed and made available at the Welcome Center.

The Welcome Center will aid in providing the best information to educate tourists as to how to enjoy their

visit to Akwesasne while respecting community customs and practices. It can also serve as a Welcome Center for the greater northern New York area, for Massena, Malone, Lake Placid, etc. The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce has expressed strong interest in working with Akwesasne to create a regional Welcome Center.

Charlotte King, an Akwesasne artist, prepared a conceptual drawing of the proposed "Welcome Center." Figure II is the conceptual drawing she prepared. In preparing the drawing, Charlotte worked to incorporate cultural themes and ideas from the Team.

The conceptual drawing provides an excellent starting point but a more detailed design will have to be contracted. The Welcome Center would be housed at a location to be determined within the community of Akwesasne. A strong potential location would be the General Motors property adjacent to the western boundary of the reservation. It is strategically located for all traffic entering the United States from Canada across the Seaway International Bridge. In particular, there is a parcel located on the south side of Rt. 37 that would be ideal for a location. It would require getting General Motors to deed the parcel over to the Tribe.



## *B. Design and Construction of new Akwesasne Museum and Archive Facility*

The construction of the Welcome Center should incorporate green building design and should seek LEED certification.

Benefits to the community will include an increase in traffic to existing venues in Akwesasne, a more informed public, and reinforcement of our cultural strengths within the community. Advertising displays within the Welcome Center would promote existing organizations, businesses, and events, i.e., the Akwesasne Museum, Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre, the Akwesasne International Powwow, sporting events, artistic events, and other public cultural events, the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino, the Mohawk Bingo Palace, Restaurants, Hotels, Marinas, etc.

It is proposed to hire two staff for the Welcome Center, a Cultural Tourism Coordinator and a Tourism Clerk. The staff will answer visitor questions and direct tourists to Akwesasne attractions. The Coordinator will work with existing tourist attractions to develop schedules for special events and activities geared towards the general public. Seasonal staff could also be hired to take advantage of increased traffic in summer months.

### *Budget*

The Budget for acquisition of land and construction of the Welcome Center is to be determined. It should be noted that Welcome Centers are considered U.S. highway enhancements and federal (and often state) money is available for the design, creation or construction of them.

#### **Welcome Center**

Salary of Coordinator:	\$50,000
Assistant	\$20,447
Fringe:	\$13,200
Travel:	\$ 1,000
Advertising:	\$ 5,000
Rental of Space:	\$ 4,800
Phone:	\$ 1,200
Equipment:	\$ 1,200
Supplies:	\$ 1,000
Total:	\$97,847

The Akwesasne Cultural Center, Inc. began with the founding of a community library in 1971. In 1972, cultural classes started and donations to the center began to start its museum collections. The board of directors and the staff of the library and museum are Akwesasne Mohawk Community members.

The public library provides access to printed materials and on-line computers. It is used by the people of Akwesasne and also visitors to the community. An active inter-library loan system keeps printed materials available to community members and allows the Akwesasne Library to share its resources across the region. Museum services are used by a wide range of people also. Traditional arts classes are geared towards increasing the use and knowledge of traditions within



the community of Akwesasne. Guided tours and exhibits are developed to reach a dual audience of native and non-native; including basic information for those who are not familiar with our culture, while still having components of interest to the well-informed. Audio components, gallery guides, and other interactives continue to be developed and renewed in an effort to increase the success of drop-in, self-guided tours. The museum giftshop is the community's prime source for a wide range of Mohawk basketry and other native-made items. A 40% mark-up means that the majority of the money spent in the shop has actually benefitted the artisans who made the items.

The collection of the museum has grown over the years and includes over 2,000 photographic objects and over 700 ethnographic objects of various kinds, related to the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. The photo collection ranges from glass plate negatives produced in the early 1900's to reproduction of recent images from the year 2000 and up. Over 300 of the ethnographic objects are baskets, making it the second largest category within the overall collection.

The Library building was never properly designed to house a library. As a result, the layout for bookcases is affected by the placement of windows along the front of the library. In addition, the age of the building is creating difficulties for the library to continue to grow.

The museum is located in the basement of the Library building. As such, access to the museum is through a staircase from the library. There is an entrance to the museum at the rear of the building that is at grade.

That said, there is a need for upgrades in the museum. Visibility is a major concern for the museum. It is not visible from State Rt. 37 as it is below grade. The rear entrance is not visible from the highway and does not present a sense of entry into the museum. Signage is limited at the front of the building and is used primarily to identify the library. The museum collection does not presently represent the full spectrum of contemporary art that has been created in recent decades by Akwesasne Mohawk artists. The collection would benefit from more acquisitions across a range of topics. Budgetary restrictions and lack of space are hindrances.

Space is a major concern within the museum. The present museum is small and places restrictions on the size of the group that can visit the museum due to occupancy concerns. The current location does not provide for future growth of the museum. A recent water pipe break in the basement also exposed on-

going problems in the facility's structure. The structural concerns of the building also warrant the relocation of the library. One of the many limitations of the present building is in relation to the escalating need for electrical upgrades due to the increased use of public access computers.

There are climate control concerns with the present location. Temperature is controlled in the museum and humidity can be reduced, but not added at this time. Controlling humidity and temperature are important requirements in preservation of objects and artifacts and need further adjustment in the present museum.

In addition, the documented history of Akwesasne spans three centuries. Many of the documents are held in external repositories and unsafe storage areas. The



process of repatriating original documents rests on the ability to care for them once they are returned. There is a great need to give community

*There is a great need to give community members and researchers better access to the documented history of Akwesasne.*

members and researchers better access to the documented history of Akwesasne. There is also a need to prolong the life of documents, magnetic records, moving images and digital information pertaining to the community.

The picture shows Akwesasne leadership accepting the return of the Akwesasne Wolf Belt

from the New York State Museum. Museum records indicate that a Mrs. Converse purchased the wampum belt "from a St. Regis Indian" on July 24, 1898.

It is proposed that a new Akwesasne Museum/Archival Facility be designed and constructed to preserve and present the history and culture of the Mohawk People. It is proposed that the new facility be located within the 609-acre tract of land that the Tribe purchased and that the facility specifically be sited on State Route 37 to take advantage of the 4.4 million vehicles that travel by every year.

It is proposed that the new facility be state of the art and built consistent with a LEED certified “green” facility. It will address many of the inadequacies inherent with the existing facility, including lighting, climate control, security, and space.

Four distinct audiences have been identified to be served by the Library/Museum/Archive Facility. The first audience will be the Akwesasne community. The second audience is local and surrounding communities. The third audience is students from high schools/colleges in the area. The fourth audience is the international and overseas tourists. There is a broad base of themes that can be addressed by exhibits in the new museum. Many have already been touched upon by exhibits in the current museum, such as the relation to other Haudenosaunee nations, basketry, ironwork, lacrosse, wampum, the Thanksgiving Address, environmental issues, and community history. An expanded museum would allow for more in depth treatment of these and other themes. Increased staffing would be geared towards specialization in the various areas of study within the museum field.

Currently there are four people within the staff of the Akwesasne Cultural Center who carry out the duties related to: director, curator, collections care manager, educator, shop manager, shop sales people, tour guides, grant writers, public relations, and marketing. The director is the director for both the library and the museum. Librarians often assist as salespeople in the museum and occasionally assist in other areas as well. During the recent flooding due to the burst water pipe, they assisted in heavy lifting alongside museum staff.

Storage space is an on-going concern for museums and is the top priority for archival facilities. Climate

controlled storage space is a necessity and is at a premium. A library/archive/museum complex that was built with sufficient space and proper temperature and humidity controls would allow for rare books, museum objects, and archives to be protected for future generations. Who will care for our history and culture if not us? Exhibit space can be one of the foundations of the new museum, but this too can be utilized in cooperation with the library and archives. Pre-contact and post-contact documentation that is integral to the understanding of our history, our rights, and our responsibilities can be organized and presented in order to engage Akwesasne Mohawks and others in positive discourse.

Potential partnerships can also be forged with outside agencies such as the New York State Library, Museum and Archives; the National Museum of the American Indian; and the Canadian Museum of Civilization for

loans of documents, artifacts and exhibits that could be borrowed consistent with Mohawk and Haudenosaunee history and culture.

It is proposed that an authentic historical Mohawk longhouse Village be designed and constructed on the museum grounds. The Village will serve as an open-air museum and interpretation center to depict Mohawk life over the centuries. A trail through the village will lead from one time period to another, starting with the earlier style of dwelling and ending with a log cabin that shows the European

influence. Each dwelling could have artisans working outside of the building on a traditional art their work could then be sold in a gift shop in the Museum. Accurate clothing could be developed for each time period as well as traditional arts associated with that time period. Mohawk historical and cultural experts will be retained to assist in the development of a historically and culturally accurate recreation. The Ronathahonni

*Who will care for our history and culture if not us?*



Cultural Centre in Akwesasne and the Tsiionhakwtha board of directors at the Drouler's site, approximately 30 miles outside of Akwesasne, are enthusiastic supporters of the Akwesasne cultural tourism strategy and are open to finding ways that we can enhance visitors' experiences through a diversity of time periods and activities, rather than competitive duplication at our respective sites.

It is also proposed that the equinox stone formation that is located at Fort Drum be recreated and placed on the museum grounds.

*Tentative Budget:*

Design	\$100,000
Construction	\$15 million
Endowment:	\$ 4 million
Furnishings:	\$ 2 million

education and combat stereotyping by the larger society. The staff provides cultural educational services in all local area schools as well as neighboring non-native communities. The museum hosts various size tours and can provide dance presentations. Summer activities include numerous festivals, new museum exhibits, swimming and picnic areas as well as workshops, kids' activities, and a resource library.

Ronathahon:ni is planning to continue developing its grounds to include a village theme with historic settings. Ronathahon:ni is also proposing to expand its services and would like to establish a Youth Theatre/Drama Production at the Cultural Centre. It will provide an opportunity for youth to learn theater skills and develop their communication skills through the arts.

The youth have been exposed to too many negative images of themselves through out history and the border situation of today hasn't changed the current image of Mohawks or how the community is portrayed to the outside the community. Theater production provides the opportunity to tell the community's own story in drama/theater plays which could be supervised and guided to create entertaining plays that could be offered to the community and public at large.

The project will draw from the expertise of Native Artists who have theater experience and are prepared to assist in this effort. The overall objective is to enhance the artistic environment in the community through theater productions. This could have a dynamic positive effect on public relations and tourism.

The Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre is seeking funding for the salaries of six university and high school students, an instructor, capital costs for stage construction, administrative costs, and travel. It is estimated that yearly production would occur from May 1 to September 1, with the show being provided in late summer. Partnerships with established theater schools in Urban Centres and elsewhere will be developed.

Ronathahon:ni is working to establish a five-year traditional medicine preservation community strategy. Aside from the traditional medicine/healing project, the overall objective of focusing their efforts on an



*C. Enhancement of Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre*

The Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre opened its doors July of 1974. The Cultural Centre, formerly known as the Native North American Travelling College, has been and continues today to be instrumental in preserving and maintaining the Mohawk culture, history, and language. The name Ronathahon:ni means "They who paved the path," and the name change was put into effect in 2000.

Ronathahon:ni's mission is to provide cultural

indigenous learning and gathering center targeted for location at Tsiionkwanatiao that aids in sharing cultural history and environmental knowledge. The project foresees the involvement of non-native participants as complimentary to natural healing, holistic medicine and eco-tourists.

The objective is to preserve natural healing and doctoring while collaborating with the community's own traditional medicine initiatives already underway by the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. They hope that through a collaborative effort, advancement for all can be achieved. Both community governments have already expressed a willingness to combine their efforts and experiences to serve the total community and establish connections to other Iroquois/Haudenosaunee Nations. It may become an International Haudenosaunee healing center.

### *Budget*

Budget is to be determined.

## *D. Design and Construction of an Eco-Resort*

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is presently working with Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada to resolve a longstanding claim relating to lands in the Tsikaristisere/Dundee area in the Province of Quebec. The land in question involves approximately 20,000 acres in the most westerly portion of the Province of Quebec.

The lands in question may be part of or adjacent to the Lac Saint-Francois Ramsar Site. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are 158 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1743 wetland sites, totaling 161 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The Lac Saint-Francois site was designated by Canada on May 27, 1987 as a Ramsar site. It is identified as one of the largest remaining areas in Canada of shoreline marsh not directly modified. Sharing the border with the United States, the site includes a shallow freshwater lake, rivers, streams, ponds and flooded woodland, with mature forest on elevated land. The vegetation of the area

includes 40 species rare in Quebec and Canada. There is a rich fauna of mammals, reptiles and amphibians, while over 75 species of fish inhabit the waters.

It is proposed that as part of its negotiations with Canada, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne consider the development of an Eco-lodge to be placed within the land claim area immediately adjacent to the Ramsar site. The Eco-lodge would serve as the focal point of an eco-tourism strategy.



The development of the site would have the following considerations:

- » Selection of Site and Site Planning. A multi-disciplinary team be created to conduct an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment when a tentative site has been selected.
- » Facility Design. The Design should be based on meeting the requirements for LEED certification. It should consider biophysical and cultural impacts, architectural design and construction issues in harmony with the environment.
- » Trails. It should be designed for viewing wildlife and plant life in natural settings.
- » Landscaping. Native species for land generation should be selected.
- » Energy Systems. Use of renewables should be promoted.
- » Waste Management Systems. It should plan for minimizing waste and nothing brought to the site that is not durable, biodegradable or recyclable.

### *Budget*

Budget is to be determined.

## *E. Design and Construction of an Art Park*

Art Parks are cultural attractions that provide a public setting for artisans and craftspeople. They can offer a multitude of venues to promote the arts. They can provide a spectrum of entertainment through theaters and outdoor amphitheaters. Specific family programs can be developed for week-ends.

It is proposed to establish an Akwesasne Art Park to present, promote, enrich, and develop the arts and artists of Akwesasne. This will be accomplished through the establishment of art galleries, working studios, shops and a café. The Art Park will provide a forum for local artists to create their works in an environment conducive to supporting their trade.

It is proposed that the Akwesasne Art Park be created within the village of Hogansburg-Akwesasne at the location of the dam across the St. Regis River. The license for the operation of the dam expires in 2015. There is an effort underway to decommission it at that time due to its age and negative environmental impacts. The power house for the dam could serve as a focal point for the Art Park. Shops and working studios could be developed between State Highway Rt. 37 and the power house. There is also an old Cheese Factory that is adjacent to the dam. This building could possibly be renovated or replaced and serve as the theater for the Art Park.

Historic buildings located within the village of Hogansburg-Akwesasne could become focal points for the Art Park. TSIONWANATIO, the Lost Daulphin Cottage, the old Cheese Factory, the White School, and other buildings could have signs placed near them so that the story for each building can be told.

Walking paths could be created to connect the various focal points in the Art Park. Sculptures could be placed along the walking path. Summer art festivals and a farmer's market could also become key elements of the Art Park.

### *Budget*

Budget is to be determined.



*“The Art Park will provide a forum for local artists to create their works in an environment conducive to supporting their trade.”*

## 7. Promote Artists and Artisans

The black ash industry is at an extreme high risk of being lost. It is imperative that there is a more pro-active approach into ensuring that this does not happen. We recommend that groups such as the Environment Divisions, museum and cultural centers, summer school programs and all interested parties get together to discuss ways to ensure we do not lose this vital skill. Several suggestions would be to host more log-pounding workshops through the museum or the Ronathahonni Cultural Centre. In addition the Environmental Divisions could collaborate to hold workshops or a summer log-pounding program. The museum and cultural centre would need to become more diligent in expanding their sources of funding to sponsor opportunities for log pounding workshops and summer program.

artistic perspectives.

Under the Akwesasne Arts Council a coordinated promotional effort could be made to increase marketing of their art or craft as well as increased networks of the individual artists. In addition a community artisan website with links to artists' personal website could be housed through this initiative, along with developing a community artisan and craft people directory.

The Akwesasne Arts Council would be developed, managed and overseen by the member artisans and craftspeople. Overhead costs could be shared by all who wish to make use of the space.

An Artist Revolving Fund to support the advancement of our artists and craftspeople which will honor, support, nurture and allow them to sustain themselves. This fund would aid in covering booth fees, to purchase supplies and material either at wholesale or in bulk, to advertise, etc.



*A coordinated promotional effort could be made to increase marketing of their art or craft as well as increased networks of the individual artists.*

Another key recommendation is to form an Akwesasne Arts Council within a centralized arts and small shop neighborhood (61.5% respondents) with building or space. The building would need space for a gallery, gift shop and an all purpose room for artists gatherings. Akwesasne Arts Council would connect artists to one another to learn from one another, collaborate on solutions to common problems and to expand their

The final recommendation is to provide workshops or training, by experienced native artisans for various art or craft techniques. Also, qualified Native organizations to provide training tailored to artisan needs as well as business practices such as pricing or placing value on art or craft, trademark & copyright, marketing, website development, basic business planning, and accounting.



point in the community. It is proposed that the Tribe retain a local artist to repaint the tower with the design of a basket. Such a project will take, what is viewed by some in the community as an eyesore, and turn it into a work of art and showcase basket-making in Akwesasne, which is one of the cultural strengths of the community.

*“The project will showcase basket-making in Akwesasne, which is one of the cultural strengths of the community.”*

### *G. Beautification & Revitalization of Rt. 37*

The attractiveness of the community to tourists can be a key factor to encourage greater tourism visits. To address this challenge, it is proposed that standards for signage in the community be developed to foster a professional and exemplary appearance for businesses in the community. This effort should include the establishment of a business fund by the Tribal government to help businesses, when required, upgrade the quality of their signage to meet the new standards.

Street lights help ensure safety for motorists and pedestrians. Currently, there are streetlights within

the hamlet of Hogansburg-Akwesasne. It is proposed that these streetlights be expanded from the east side of Hogansburg to the Speedway gas station on Rt. 37. A second expansion can include from the east side of

Hogansburg/Akwesasne to the Community building on Rt.37 and eventually to the Mohawk Bingo Palace.

The Tribe’s Water Tower was identified as a key focal

Finally, the Tribe should consider commissioning sculptures to be placed at points of cultural interest within the community as a way to encourage tourists to stop and take pictures. The sculptures could be similar to what has been placed along the entrance to the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino as a way of celebrating Mohawk culture.

#### *Budget*

The budget is to be determined.



*“The attractiveness of the community to tourists can be a key factor to encourage greater tourism visits.”*

## H. Development of Promotional Materials for Cultural Tourism

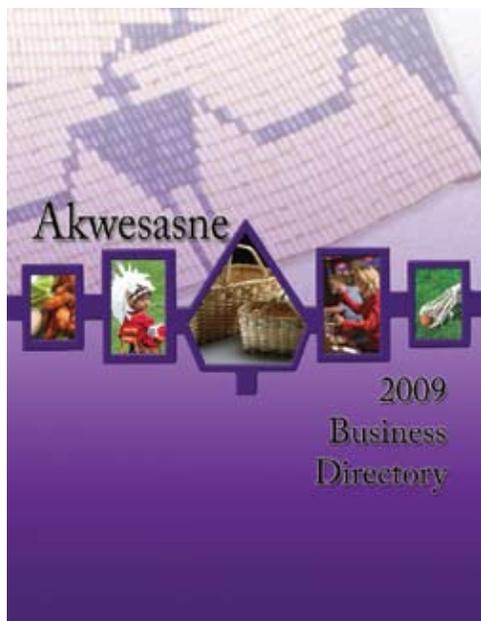
Research indicates that tourism activities are evolving. Tourists are moving away from the use of Tour companies to schedule their travel and instead are increasingly relying on the Internet as their source of information to schedule their travel. To take advantage of this trend, it is proposed that a website be developed to promote Cultural Tourism within Akwesasne.

A need has also been identified to develop and enhance existing brochures, maps, and pamphlets describing Akwesasne and its cultural tourism destinations and events. These can serve as excellent visitor guides for tourists coming to the community.

Appendix I is a listing of cultural events in the community that are scheduled to occur annually that could be showcased through these handouts.

### *Budget*

The budget is to be determined.





## Appendix I

# Chronological Listing of Akwesasne Events

### *Tsiothorko:wa / January*

**New Years Eve Rock & Skate** - The Anowara'kowa Arena hosts this annual event for youth and their families to ring in the New Year. Activities include all night skate, karaoke and a talent show.

### *Enniska / February*

**Akwesasne Winter Carnival** - The three northern districts of Akwesasne: Kanatakon, TsiSnaihne and Kawehnohkowanen:ne take turns hosting this three day event filled with winter sporting competitions.

### *Ennisko:wa / March*

**The Bears Point Drawing** - Customers of the Bear's Den locations earn and redeem points to win fabulous gift packages, shopping sprees and cash.

**Craft Classes** - Workshops offered to students during their March break including learning to make traditional dress, moccasins, drums and rattles.

### *Onerahtohka/April*

**Sacrament of First Communion** - Held at the St. Regis Mission Church. A person's first Holy Communion. A festive occasion.

**Sacrament of Confirmation** - Held at the St. Regis Mission Church. It is the sacrament of spiritual maturity.

**Kateri Tekakwitha Mass** - Honoring past loved ones. Held at the St. Regis Mission Church. Traditional dress encouraged. Feast follows at Kateri Tekakwitha Hall.

### *Onerahtohko:wa / May*

**Seed & Tree Giveaway** - The Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment and the SRMT Environment Division distribute seeds and trees to promote Earth Day.

**Mohawk International Raceway** - The Mohawk International Raceway attracts racers from Eastern Ontario, Quebec, Northern New York and Vermont. This 3/8 Mile dirt oval track features 4 classes of DIRT racing. May through September.

**Memorial Day Parade** - The Hogansburg American Legion Post 1475 holds an annual Memorial Day Parade. The Hogansburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Dept. prepares their famous "Fireman's BBQ Chicken". Many children's activities.

### *Obiari:ha / June*

**Smoke Dance Competition** - Ronathahon:ni Cultural Centre hosts annual event at the Akwesasne Mohawk School. Smoke dancing is unique to the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and is noted for its fast pace and freestyle movements. All Nations invited.

**Strawberry Music Festival/Aboriginal Day** - Native arts and crafts, great food, great people, pow-wow style dancing as well as traditional Iroquois social dancing and dancing to the beat of Traditional Native music, World Beat, Grassroots, Blues, Rock, R & B and Country Music.

### *Obiarihko:wa / July*

**4th of July Fireworks** - Sponsored by the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino, Mohawk Bingo Palace & St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.

**Ironworkers Festival** - The Akwesasne Mohawk Casino is the site for the annual Ironworkers Festival. Ironworkers from across the east coast are invited to participate in skills of their trade. Activities include the "fastest column climb", the 2-man rivet toss. Over \$10,000 in prizes are awarded.

**Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Golf Tournament** - The annual golf tournament is held at area golf and country clubs.

*Akwesasne appeals to every taste and style. From Festivals and Art activities to sporting events and theatrical performances. Visitors will always find something exciting to experience in Akwesasne. The list below highlights a few of the activities taking place throughout the year in Akwesasne.*

**Wellness Day** - Learn about ways to stay healthy at informational tables, along with craft tables and food vendors. Organized by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Health Promotions, Disease and Injury Prevention Committee.

**All Nations Cultural Friendship Days** - Akwesasne, other Nations and neighboring communities enjoy two days of sharing cultures, good food, fine arts and crafts, and great entertainment. Event hosted by Ronathahonni Cultural Centre.

### *Seskeha / August*

**Akwesasne Freedom School Quilt Auction** - The annual fundraiser features hand-made quilts, a silent auction, steak and cornbread meal, chicken barbeque, music and crafts from local artists and many children's activities.

**Native Theatre Presentation Day** - Native performers present three scripts: *Jake Fire* (English), *Seven Dancers* (Mohawk) and *Kawiraksa* (Mohawk).

### *Seskehko:wa / September*

**Akwesasne International Pow Wow** - On the shores of the beautiful St. Lawrence River, visitors enjoy a two day event with good music, good food and good company. The Akwesasne Pow-Wow brings together the best Native artisans, drummers and dancers from First Nations across Canada and the United States. Competitions include dance, drum and smoke dances.

### *Kentenhko:wa / November*

**Falling Leaves Mass** - A memorial mass honoring all past loved ones held at the St. Regis Mission Church on the first Saturday of November. There is a feast to follow that is open to the public at the Kateri Tekakwitha Hall in Akwesasne.

**Kateri Craft Fair** - Local and area craft vendors display their wares at the Kateri Hall in this annual event.

### *Tsiothohrha / December*

**Akwesasne Christmas Basket Fund Drive & Mountain of Toys** - Held at the Hogansburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department, volunteers collect non-perishable food items, toys and gift items to distribute to needy families in the community during the holiday season.

**Christmas Tree Enchantment** - The annual event features decorated Christmas trees donated by local businesses and families. Over 20 trees are available for auction or raffle. The TsiSnaihne Recreation Committee organizes the event.

**Christmas Poinsettia Sale** - Held at Tsiionkwanonsote Adult Care Facility on Kawehno:ke, sponsors purchase poinsettia plants which raises funds to provide Christmas activities for elders.

**Christmas Wreath Sale** - The Kawehno:ke Recreation Center offers decorated wreaths for auction.

**Treasures of Christmas** - The St. Regis Recreation Committee hosts this event which has themed baskets filled with items for auction.

## *Seasonal Activities*

Boot Hockey and Hockey Games & Tournaments  
Box and Field Lacrosse Games & Tournaments  
Golf Tournaments  
Boating & Fishing Events  
Snowmobile Races and Runs  
Concerts





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