

Conservation kits flown to remote communities

By THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

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Remote First Nation communities in Northern Ontario began receiving energy conservation kits Friday as part of an effort to reduce power consumption.

The delivery phase of “Mana-cha-toon Wash-ti-ni-gun,” or the “Conserve the Light” project, began Friday morning at Thunder Bay Airport when a Wasaya Airways plane was loaded with kits for delivery to First Nations which do not have road access.

The initiative is part of the Provincial Energy Efficiency & Conservation Measures for Aboriginal Communities (EEMAC) program launched in Thunder Bay at the Mana-cha-toon Wash-ti-ni-gun (Conserve the Light) gathering last May. The gathering was attended by over 130 representatives from 65 First Nation communities.

On hand for the inaugural flight were Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Bill Mauro, Nishnawbe-Aski Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Hydro One representative Bob Shine and EEMAC project manager Charles Fox.

Fox noted that “after these kits have landed, ECK delivery will roll-out to the 23,000 on-reserve homes in over 100 communities across Ontario.”

Each kit includes easy-to-install compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs, faucet aerators, pipe wraps, fridge and freezer thermometers, a low flow shower head, an outdoor timer for Christmas lights and other devices that will result in immediate reductions in energy use, he said, explaining that “electricity conservation is critical for many remote communities with power often provided by diesel generators that require fuel delivered by aircraft or winter roads, both expensive procedures.”

The first load of 1,400 energy conservation kits are headed to the residents of the remote communities of Kasabonika, Kingfisher Lake, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake), Weagamow (North Caribou) and Wunnumin Lake; all of which are 480 to 640 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

EEMAC is funded by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA). The kits are being transported on a regular Hydro One flight used to transport service technicians into remote locations.

In addition to the distribution of the Energy Conservation Kits, five First Nation communities are undertaking community energy retrofits and benchmarking projects. They include: Anishinaabeg of Naongashiing and Stanjikoming (both near Fort Frances), Slate Falls (near Sioux Lookout), and Sheshegwaning and Sheguiandah (both on Manitoulin Island).