



# Pic River

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## Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

### **FIRST NATION GARNERS FUNDING FOR NEW, INNOVATIVE SCHOOL**

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, Ontario – The Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, formerly known as the Ojibways of the Pic River, have recently secured funding to build a unique and innovative school in their Community. The First Nation used a unique model to fund the 24 million dollar Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Education Complex via partnerships with both public and private sectors.

The Education Complex was designed by Bret Cardinal whose father is the acclaimed architect who designed the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa across from Parliament, Douglas Cardinal. Bret has forged his own path and designs buildings from an Indigenous point of view; the Education Complex is no exception. The distinctively designed building will be shaped like an eagle: the east wing will be the daycare and elementary school; the west wing will be the adult education and business centre; while the middle of the complex will be used as a gymnasium, cafeteria, and ceremony space.

Construction of the Complex began today with the official sod turning ceremony held at the new school site. The first shovel in the ground marked the ceremonious start of construction, while the official build will begin in August 2018.

At the sod turning ceremony the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour said “We know that education can change the outcomes for many generations to come and the Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Education Complex will be an integral part of that change. I look forward to being able to walk the halls of this innovative school one day soon. I am honoured to be a part of this sod turning ceremony to celebrate the hard work and vision of Biigtigong leaders and members to forge a strong foundation for the strength of their community.”

The Community's vision of the Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Education Complex would not have come to fruition without the crucial partnerships forged with extensive community fundraising efforts. Organizations like the Department of Indigenous Services Canada, Barrick Gold and other public and private donors have been asked to contribute to the facility and future of education in the First Nation.

To complete construction, the Education Complex will require an additional \$4 million. The already secured funding will open the door to new funding opportunities from other government agencies, private sector partnerships, and other unique fundraising initiatives being considered by the community.

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg is located 350 kilometers northeast of Thunder Bay, next to Pukaskwa National Park. The vibrant and growing First Nation Community has become an economic and community development hub which has fostered education, grown skilled workers and nurtured future leaders.



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Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Chief Duncan Michano said "Over the years, we have continually worked hard to be innovative in order to become increasingly independent. The Education Complex is simply the next step in our education footprint for the children, who are the future of our community."

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