

Speaking Notes – Gathering at the Rapids

Saturday March 5th, 2016: 1:00 P.M. George Leach Centre

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good afternoon. It's my pleasure to bring greetings to you today on behalf of the office of Mayor and Sault Ste. Marie City Council for the opening of the eleventh annual Gathering at the Rapids Pow-Wow.

I'd like to thank Algoma University, the Shingwauk Anishinabe Students' Association and the Anishinabe Initiatives Division at Algoma U for their work to organize and host all of the events this weekend. I'd also like to thank all of the dancers, drummers, vendors and sponsors whose support has made this year's gathering such a success.

We know that this part of the world has been a gathering place for a long time—far before European contact. Our area has been a meeting place of the Three Fires Confederacy for hundreds of years.

So it is certainly heartening today in modern times that we have events like "Gathering At the Rapids" that bring people of all backgrounds together to celebrate Anishinabe culture and traditions.

The theme of this year's pow-wow is "Celebrating Life Long Learning." Which I think is highly appropriate. We're on the site of a place of higher learning right now. We're also on the site of a former residential school. A big part of learning is coming to terms with the lessons of the past.

It has been a few months now since the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation commission has come out. At our next City Council meeting, I plan to have a resolution that will recognize the release of the report and will commit the City of Sault Ste. Marie to taking steps to help make reconciliation a reality—in our city and in our area.

But with that digression aside, I'd just like to conclude by offering my congratulations again to everyone for coming together to make the 11th annual Gathering at the Rapids a success.

I know it will be a tremendous event, just as it has been for the past ten years. I'm very glad to have had the opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you, miigwetch, and best wishes for a great celebration this weekend.