Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday April 15, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

RALPH ROWE ON TRIAL ON NEW CHARGES

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, together with members of the NAN Men's Healing Initiative, welcomed the start of the trial of convicted pedophile Ralph Rowe on new charges of sexual assault in Kenora court this week.

"We are pleased that this predator has finally been brought before the courts to face these new charges," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who attended the Rowe trial in Kenora in 2007 that resulted in Rowe's conviction of 20 counts of sexual offences involving First Nations boys in northern Ontario between 1977 and 1987. "These claimants displayed remarkable courage by breaking the silence and coming forward with these allegations, and we have focused our efforts at supporting the survivors and preparing them for this trial."

Rowe was committed to stand trial on new charges of sexual assault following preliminary hearings in Kenora in August 2008. He is now facing 11 charges of sexual abuse involving seven individuals.

Rowe, a former Anglican minister and Boy Scout master, worked in at least 18 NAN First Nation communities between 1971 and 1986. He served four and a half years of a six-year sentence in 1994 for indecent and sexual assaults involving boys aged 6 to 16. He is currently serving a three-year sentence in a federal penitentiary in British Columbia as a result of his conviction in 2007.

"Countless lives and entire communities were devastated by his years of abuse, and while many of his victims may never fully recover we hope the healing process can finally begin for survivors and their families," said Fiddler, noting that high rates of suicide and jail time have been connected to Rowe's years of abuse.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario.

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For more information please contact *Michael Heintzman, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906 or (807) 621 2790 mobile.*