



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2021

Pauingassi First Nation Wildfire Evacuations Update

Pauingassi First Nation, Treaty Five Territory – In the last week, Pauingassi First Nation has experienced extremely heavy smoke in the community due to numerous nearby wildfires. The First Nation has been working diligently with various partners to ensure the safety and evacuation of community members.

Partial evacuation (Elders, infants/parents and people with health issues) took place last week on Monday July 12, 2021. On Sunday, July 18, 2021, the remaining members were evacuated as conditions deteriorated.

More than 400 Pauingassi members were evacuated by float plane and helicopter with support from the Canadian Red Cross. Some members were transported to Little Grand Rapids airport where they were evacuated by plane from there.

“We are working with our partners to keep our citizens safe from the wildfires and as they wait here in Winnipeg to return home. This current situation also outlines the bigger issue and the rising safety concern that our community has no airport and with increasing wildfires, our community members’ safety is at risk. We have been lobbying for this critical infrastructure for a number of years now. This crisis has once again exposed the fact that Pauingassi is one of two First Nation communities in Manitoba without an airport and is served by a seasonal winter road. **We are one of the most remote, remote First Nations communities in Manitoba,**” said Pauingassi Chief Roddy Owens.

The Canadian Red Cross, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Southeast Resource Development Corporation (SERDC) have supported the community during the evacuation. There are also supporting agencies in Winnipeg who are helping with youth activities and various urban supports. There is no known date of return at this time.

“The AMC supports Chief Owens, his Council and Pauingassi citizens during this difficult time. We have also reached out with volunteers to support in various ways. It is important for us all to do our best to support Pauingassi and neighbouring Nations who are also being evacuated at this time,” stated Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

At this time, Pauingassi First Nation respectfully asks that media do not contact Chief and Council, but instead contact the AMC (listed below) for any media requests. Grand Chief Arlen Dumas has been asked to respond to any questions pertaining to this evacuation thereby allowing Pauingassi First Nation Chief and Council to focus on their roles to protect their citizens.

Chief and Council would like to thank everyone for their support and assistance.

For more information, please contact:

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishininiwe (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.