

Press Release

Date: April 2, 2007

Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority (MWCEA) and Dr. Earle Waugh, Director of the Centre for the Cross-Cultural Study of Health and Healing, Department of Family Medicine, **University of Alberta (U of A)** are partnering to develop a web-based interactive First Nations language portal with dictionary and curriculum-based resources to further the development for Cree language in Canada.

The **Cree Language Resource Project (CLRP)** dictionary will have the ability to translate words from English to Cree in Syllabics and Roman Orthography (Cree written in English) with both grammatical explanations and contextual indication of its use in sentences. In addition, the translated word will be linked to picture, sound and a video clips. The goal of the project is to promote the **learning and preservation** of the Cree language. The online dictionary will have the ability to accommodate different regional Cree dialects.

In addition to the translation function, the system will allow the creation of flash cards and storyboards using both the pictures and the words (in either syllabics or in English) from the database. Others features will be managed educational games such as word matching and puzzles. These games will have a testing component to assess student learning. The system will include a database of Cree language lesson plans that will guide teachers in integrating First Nation Languages in the curriculum.

The University of Alberta Press, and Duval Publishing will provide the entire files of the Alberta Elders' Cree Dictionary. Dr. Waugh will utilize his expertise in developing this work from the print version to a web-based tool. **MWCEA** will bring an educational perspective and a user-friendly concern to the creation of this language portal, with the goal to have the website as a tool to enhance and support Cree language program.

Dr. Waugh will commit the resources for the dictionary royalty system currently held in the Native Studies Department at the U of A to the project. MWCEA will support the development of the portal and will assemble an advisory committee from the Cree community to guide the project. The two partners agree to seek applications for funding for future of the project.

The goal of the web-site is to be expandable as required by the communities. Eventually it is hoped to bring in partners from other national Cree jurisdictions, and to provide a mechanism for Cree-speakers to provide us with words not found in the system to date, as well as new words as they become accepted within the communities. In this way the site

will remain current and growing. The potential is to develop a nationally-significant Cree language resource.

The Alberta Elders' Cree Dictionary has Hobbema roots and was initially supported by a grant from Hobbema to Sister Nancy LeClaire. She requested the participation of Dr. Waugh and worked on this project for 27 years. After her death, George Cardinal took up the challenge of shaping Cree knowledge into a Dictionary form. Dr. Waugh also incorporated the Cree vocabulary of Rev. Roger Vandersteene who worked among the Northern Cree speaker of Alberta as well as data from early Cree pioneer Ann Anderson. Over 100 elders and Cree-speakers in Alberta contributed in several ways to the original Dictionary, and their work was essential for the printed version. With the web-based version their work will have even greater reach.

Intellinet Technologies Inc. (www.intellinet.ca) is the technical partner of the project.

The project address is www.creedictionary.com.

About Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority:

Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority operates Ermineskin Kindergarten, Ermineskin Primary, Ermineskin Junior Senior High and Ermineskin Ehpewapahk (Alternative) schools. These schools serve 850 students, drawn mainly from the Ermineskin Cree First Nation at Hobbema, located 90 kilometres south of Edmonton.

About The University of Alberta:

Located in Edmonton, Alberta, with external research funding of more than \$400 million, more than 36,000 students in more than 200 undergraduate programs and 170 graduate programs and a growing body of international students from more than 100 countries, the University of Alberta is one of Canada's foremost research-intensive universities.

For Further information on the Cree Language Resource Project, Please contact:

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