

## **Geographic and Historical Overview**

The community of Kashechewan is located in the district of Kenora 81 degrees west longitude and 52 degrees north latitude. It is a First Nation of the Albany Reserve #67. The community is located on the northern shore of the Albany River, 10 Km upstream from James Bay. An isolated community, the nearest urban centre is Timmins and it is located approximately 300 miles south. The nearest community is Fort Albany and it is also a First Nation of the Albany Reserve #67. The distance between the two communities is approximately 12 Km. The distance by air is 5 minutes and one hour by boat.

The topography of Kashechewan is generally flat. During the spring the water level rises 1 or 2 meters up the riverbank and sometimes raising over the riverbank and flooding the community.

The climate of the Hudson's Bay Lowlands is of long cold winters and short warm summers. James Bay has the effect of retarding the warmer temperatures of the spring and prolonging slightly warmer temperatures in the fall. Rainfall averages about 28 inches per year and most of this covers the river thus providing an alternate means of transportation. Permanent ice may appear between late November and will provide cover until the end of April or early May.

The Hudson's Bay Lowlands has been described as having a sub-arctic appearance because of the predominance of open cover of stunted black spruce and tamarack in the swamps and peat land. The banks of the Albany River, river in lands and tributary streams however, are forested with heavy cover of white spruce.

The wildlife of the reserve consists of geese, duck, caribou, moose, beaver, bear, wolves, martin, wolverine, rabbit, muskrat, and otter. There are others but these are the most common.

White fish, trout, northern pike, pickerel, sturgeon are types of fish are abundant with the reserve boundaries and these are relied upon for food.

The community is situated in an area that is susceptible to flooding during the spring. At times in the danger of flooding, community members would be flown down south or to camps until the danger of flooding subsides. With this in mind, funding for the Flood Control Project (Dyke) was secured. The Dyke is a mixture of clay and gravel. It reaches 10 feet high around the community and it is 5.3 Km in length.

## **Form of Government**

The Kashechewan First Nation governs Kashechewan. The First Nation members elect a Chief and Council every three years. The Chief and Council include one Chief and one Deputy Chief and 11 Councillors.

The First Nation is funded through the Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada. The First Nation does pass its own by-laws and local regulations.

The Hiskoonikun Education Authority (HEA) is mandated to carry out all the educational need of the community. Elementary, Secondary, and Post-secondary programs are administered through the authority. Administration operates under the direction of the HEA board of directors. It is interesting to note that the education authority stresses the improved education of its staff and as a result, eight teachers in the elementary division are qualified teachers.

In July 1995, the Kashechewan First Nation designated the Health Services Board (HSB) as an organization but it wasn't until July 1996 that it was incorporated as a separate entity with its own by-laws and policies. The mandate of the board is to provide the highest quality of services possible in accordance to the spirit of the treaties. The services it provides are community based and responsive to the community needs. Currently, the HSB is in Phase 11 of the Integrated Agreement with Medical Services Branch.

## **Local Economy**

The local economy is primarily based upon government services (First Nation) and to a lesser extent small business.

The Northern Store provides the banking machine for CIBC, also cash cheques and charges \$1.50 for each cheque. Sometimes the Post Office cashes them at no charge, but this is rarely done.

Like many other First Nations in the area, there is still some dependence on the land. Some families go out spring and fall camping for a month. Before the winter some elders go fur trapping, and they come back when it is safe to go on the river. During the spring some people smoke geese and fish, and sometimes moose meat or caribou. When they come back from camp they sell their meat. Sometimes they sell their crafts, like beadwork, slippers, moccasins, and carving.

## Labour Force

The total labour force (between the ages of 19 and 65) is 200 people. The unemployment rate is 87%, but those under the age of 25 years of age are in school. Their goals are to finish grade 12. During the summer all the high school students work for about 5 weeks.

## Population<sup>1</sup>

Population	Total	Male	Female
Total			
Aboriginal	1561	796	765
Age 0-4	176	93	83
Age 5-16	567	280	287
Age 17-20	129	70	59
Age 21-24	105	51	54
Age 25-52	480	239	241
Age 53-64	55	32	23
Age 65-77	32	18	14
Age 78 and over	17	13	4

Education	Total
Elementary	377
High School	108
Post Secondary	29

## Language

The community members fluently speak Cree with the "L" dialect. The written language used mostly by older members is Syllabics developed by Rev. Tom Hordon. English is used as a second language.

## Transportation

Kashechewan is an isolated community accessible by air year round. The air service is provided by Air Creebec and by Keeshig Air. The current rate on a one-way fare on Air Creebec from Kashechewan to Timmins is \$350.00. Air Creebec offers two incoming flights to the community each day of the workweek. Keeshig Air, a patient passenger service for the coastal communities charges \$300.00 to Timmins return

<sup>1</sup> community profile statistics provided by Kashechewan from April, 1999

Providing seats are available. During the winter months, the community is also accessible via the winter road from Moosonee. In the summer months, the adventuresome can travel by boat to the other communities.

There are 192 homes in the community and about 8 trailers. The homes are First Nation owned. The nursing station owns 6 unit apartment complex for staff.

## **Employers**

### **Kashechewan First Nation**

21 employees

**Address:** P.O. Box 240  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4440/4413/1054

### **Hishkoonikun Education Authority**

94 employees

**Address:** P.O. Box 235  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4538

### **Kashechewan Health Services**

19 employees

**Address:** P.O. Box 228  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4466

### **Power Plant Authority**

6 employees

**Address:** P.O. Box 229  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4128

### **Nimisuk Women's Center**

1 employee

**Address:** P.O. Box 208  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4167

**Northern Store**

22 employees

**Address:** P.O. Box 239  
Kashechewan, ON  
P0L 1S0

**Phone #:** 705-275-4574

**Bell Canada**

1 employee

**Goodwin Video**

Owned and operated by Sidney Goodwin

**Jacob's Variety**

Owned and operated by Jacob Williams

**J & M Pop & Video Shop**

Owned and operated by Joseph Sackaney

**G & C Shop**

Owned and operated by George Koosees Jr.

**L & M Meechisokamik**

A restaurant owned by Maureen Metatawabin

**Angie's Takeout**

Owned and operated by Angela Wynne

**Sutherland Nepee**

Water supply store owned by William Sutherland

**Wesley's Taxi**

Operated by Lileena Wesley

**Hughie's Taxi**

Owned and operated by Alex Hughie

**Kapiskau Wesley Goose Camp**

Owned and operated by Silas Wesley

**Wynne's Goose Camp**

Owned and operated by Charlie Wynne

**Rectory Lodging**

Owned and operated by St. Paul's Anglican Church

**Sutherland Fuel**

Owned and operated by Alice Sutherland

This year they will be building forty houses, that following year forty more will be built. The First Nation received 11 million for the project (housing). More jobs will be created, for the people on the reserve. The project will start in 1999.

**Utilities/Communications**

The community is 60% hooked up to water and sewage systems. Due to the deterioration of the old water treatment plant, a new one was constructed and it has been operational since March 1998. The plant supplies clean chlorinated water to the community.

The HSB currently operates a Domestic Program in which waste pails are picked-up from residences and taken to approved dump sites. It operates during the workweek. This will go on until all sewer lines are connected to all residences.

A First Nation employee collects garbage three times a week. The First Nation also supplies a dump truck for this job.

The postal services contracted out to the First Nation by Canada Post. Opens 5 days a week during working hours. The post office is housed besides the Police Station, and provides individual post office boxes for the customers.

Ontario Hydro no longer provide electrical power for the community. Generators were located in Fort Albany. Winter months frequently see blackouts, because the capacity of the three generators did not meet the needs of both communities. The generators were linked to the two communities by transmission lines approximately 7 kilometers in length.

Due to these problems, the First Nation lobbied for and received funding to establish their own generating station. In October 1997, a new diesel power plant was built and it is community owned by the Kashechewan Power Authority. As of December 16, 1997, three generators service the population. The administration (billing, meter reading, and maintenance) is under the direction of the Power Authority.

Five Nation's Energy, made up of five Mushkegowuk communities, will be developing a transmission line linking the three coastal communities. The object is to provide electricity at the more environmentally and cost effective means possible. Work is expected to begin this year (1999).

Bell Canada is the telephone provider for the community since 1976. 85% of the residents are provided with the usual services and additional services can be accessed when required. Approximately 5% of the households have internet access.

The local radio station (CKAS 100.5 FM) had been operating since August 1991. The radio station provides important services in the community. Its own board of directors controls the station. Wawatay (a telecommunication network operating of Moose Factory) provides daily radio programming.

Approximately 98% of the community members own one or more television sets. The microwave receivers are located on the reserve with additional microwave towers located along the James Bay coast with Moosonee relaying from Timmins. In addition, the Keeshichiwano Development Corporation provides cable. Even in this isolated community, the advent of technology can be seen, as satellite systems are available in some homes.

## **Community Services**

### **Social Services**

Payukotayno Family Services is a satellite office for an organization that is situated in Moosonee. It provides family and prevention social programs for community members. A child service worker makes frequent trips to the community. The mandate is to provide quality social services so that children are not removed from the community and development, implementation of prevention programs for on reserve members. The two employees work closely with other social services agencies in the community plus the members they serve

### **Churches**

There are three churches in the community an Anglican Church, Pentecostal Church, and a Traditional Sweat Lodge. The Anglican faith is the most predominant in the community. The Pentecostal faith is a growing faith in the community with its members rising. Now, the Traditional Sweat Lodge brings traditional teachings and activities that are associated with this knowledge to the community. This practice is relatively new but it is also increasing.

### **Medical and Treatment Centres**

The nursing station has three apartments, a guestroom, and a duplex available for the nursing staff plus visiting medical personnel. The health centre offers regular medical services with nurses always on call and weekly clinics for babies, prenatal care, preschoolers, women's clinic