



The following is distributed by Abegweit First Nation.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2024

Abegweit First Nation Celebrates Grand Opening of Passive Solar Homes

Scotchfort, Epekwitk (PE) — Abegweit First Nation is proud to announce the grand opening of three new Passive Solar Homes designed to accommodate young, inspiring women who have made significant contributions to the First Nation community.

Located in Scotchfort, the new infrastructure marks a significant milestone in Abegweit First Nation's commitment to implementing innovative housing solutions and creating meaningful employment opportunities for its members, developing greater capacity within the community.

"This initiative is a testament to the success of projects that are driven by community for community, fostering real and tangible benefits for our people," said Chief Junior Gould of Abegweit First Nation. "Today, as these homes become havens for three remarkable women and their families, we witness the immeasurable impact of collective action, providing not just a roof over their heads, but hope and empowerment for our community's future."

Among the recipients of the Passive Solar Homes is Bethany Knockwood, a dedicated member of Abegweit First Nation and her 2-year-old son Elias. As the Manager of Housing and Infrastructure, Bethany carries a passion for improving her community through housing initiatives.

"I am deeply honored to have been involved in the Passive Solar Housing Project from its inception to now living in one of these beautiful homes," said Bethany Knockwood of Abegweit First Nation. "I am particularly grateful for having a healthy environment to raise my son. Knowing that this home was built by my fellow community members and co-workers, who have a personal connection to the project, gives me great confidence in its quality and craftsmanship."

The project is supported by the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative (IHII), a five-year federal program funded by Indigenous Services Canada and delivered in partnership with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO). A total of 24 projects were selected among 342 applications to participate in the Accelerator phase.

"Everyone deserves a safe place to call home and today, Abegweit First Nation is taking the next step to make this a reality," said The Honourable Patty Jajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services of Canada. "The community took the lead and is delivering innovative solutions that meet their members' needs. Congratulations to the hard working women in community whose families will be living in these new homes."

"Congratulations on the Grand Opening of Abegweit First Nation's housing project – a multi-unit, passive solar housing complex to accommodate young, single adults and three or four families. The build aims to support energy independence and incorporate energy efficiencies to minimize energy costs," said Ray Wanuch, Executive Director, CANDO. "This project is another Indigenous housing project supported through

the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative that provides support for the development, design and financing for innovative Indigenous housing projects throughout Canada. CANDO is proud to be a partner in this initiative that recognizes the urgent need for safe and healthy housing for Indigenous people.”

“I want to thank Chief and Council for welcoming me to the groundbreaking a couple years ago. Our IHII Steering Committee is excited to see the completion of the Abegweit passive solar homes and the hard work of the project celebrated with the Grand Opening, said Will Goodon, IHII Steering Committee. “The work and dedication to the project has not gone unnoticed and we see the three homes as major benefit to the community’s future.”

Abegweit First Nation acknowledges the invaluable contributions of its professional consulting team, including SableARC, coSolved Consulting, and Bay Winds Engineering Consultants.

To learn more about Abegweit First Nation’s innovative housing solutions and economic development initiatives, please visit www.abegweit.ca.

Media Links:

- [Photos](#)

-30-

About Abegweit First Nation:

Abegweit First Nation is a proud Mi’kmaq Band that traces its roots to Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), dating back 10,000 years according to oral tradition and archaeological evidence. The official creation of the Abegweit First Nation occurred on March 7th, 1972. Originally, all Mi’kmaq on Epekwitk were a part of one band, the Lennox Island First Nation. The formation of a new Band was proposed as a means of better serving the needs of community members in Eastern PEI, a fair distance from the Lennox Island reserve in Western PEI. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of forming a new Band and Abegweit First Nation was formed. It is comprised of the Morell, Rocky Point, and Scotchfort reserves.

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Media Contacts:

Tyler Gould
Director of Economic Development
Abegweit First Nation
tgould@abegweit.ca

Backgrounder

Quick Facts

- The Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative is a partnership between Indigenous Services Canada, Infrastructure Canada, and the Privy Council Office's Impact and Innovation Unit.

- In April 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative to support innovative Indigenous-led housing ideas. Of 342 applicants, 24 were selected by the Initiative's Indigenous Steering Committee to enter the Accelerator period of the Innovation Initiative.
- Abegweit First Nation was approved by the Initiative's Steering Committee to move forward into the construction phase.
- The Initiative is led, from start to finish, by an Indigenous Steering Committee. The Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Initiative, with advice and support from ISC.
- Indigenous Services Canada provided \$1.48 million for the Passive Solar Homes initiative.

Project Highlights

- During the construction of the Passive Solar Homes, Abegweit First Nation utilized the community's construction crew to work towards their accreditation in the construction trade. The project allows for the development of new homes in the community, while supporting and employing community members to build capacity and skills they will continue to utilize in the future.
- Abegweit First Nation recognizes that while this initiative cannot address all housing needs, it can generate valuable new ideas about new ways to raise capital, and to design, build and maintain homes that meet the specific needs of Indigenous communities.
- Abegweit First Nation was pleased to work with a professional team of consultants including community member, Amber Jadis, Owner of coSolved Consulting, who was the lead solar engineer.