

Wasaya unveils professional Board of Directors; Includes community business leaders and former WestJet CEO.

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Thunder Bay, Ontario – As the final step in Wasaya’s corporate restructuring, the company announces the appointment of a new Board of Directors at the Annual Neebin Gitche Mawajehedowin (NGM) being held today.

The new Directors replace the interim Board of Directors which was comprised of the Chiefs of Wasaya’s twelve ownership communities.

“We are pleased to introduce eight new Directors bringing a wealth of experience and ability to our airline,” said Chief Bart Meekis, outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors. “Wasaya has made great progress over the past 22 months. We are confident our leadership together with the new Directors will continue to build Wasaya. To my fellow Chiefs, and all the people in the communities we represent, “meegwetch” for your patience and hard work. We have achieved what we set out to do, recover our airline business and permanently set it on a profitable course for success.”

Michael Rodyniuk, President and Chief Executive Officer of Wasaya said, “Wasaya remains in business today thanks to the swift actions taken by the Chiefs of our ownership communities. The Chiefs initiated a successful restructuring of the airline. Their wisdom, knowledge and commitment to improving the quality of social and economic life for First Nation people has inspired us all at Wasaya. Now, as they planned, our Chiefs are stepping down as Directors. They have selected a professional, skills-based Board of Directors to continue moving the company forward consistent with our corporate mission, vision and values. This action marks the final step of our corporate restructuring.”

One of the incoming Directors is Stephen Smith, former President and Chief Executive of Air Ontario, WestJet, and Air Canada’s ZIP. Smith said, “I’ve seen a lot of aviation business models. Wasaya is on the right path for success. I am impressed with Wasaya’s focus on safety, profitability and support for the First Nations culture and communities as emphasized by the previous Board of Chiefs. I am delighted to be a part of the new Wasaya.”



300 Anemki Place
Suite B RR#4
Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1H9
807-473-1200

Here is the complete roster of the new Directors of Wasaya:

Adam Fiddler - past Chief & Councilor of Sandy Lake First Nation; Juris Doctorate graduate of Lakehead University

Amanda Sainnawap – Current Indigenous Learning (Honours) student at Lakehead University and member of Pikangikum First Nation

Eric Long – Chartered Accountant, Owner/Operator of TeamBuild Innovations and community leader

Geordi Kakepetum – Executive Director of Keewaytinook Okimakanak

Ian McCormack – Business Leader and Certified Executive Coach, past Chair of the Thunder Bay International Airport

Micheal Hardy – Executive Director of Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Health Centre

Sean Davies – Co-owner Maintair Aviation Services

Stephen Smith – 30 years' experience in the airline industry including previous President and CEO of WestJet

For more information please contact Sharon Smith-Baxter, Public Relations and Communications Specialist, at (807) 474-2351 or ssmithbaxter@wasaya.com

With 26 years' experience, Wasaya Airways LP is 100% First Nations owned by 12 First Nations: Bearskin Lake; Fort Severn; Kasabonika Lake; Keewaywin; Kingfisher Lake; Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug; Muskrat Dam; Nibinamik; Pikangikum; Sandy Lake; Wapekeka; and Wunnumin Lake. Wasaya serves 25 destinations in Northwestern Ontario with 60 daily flights and employs 315 employees, of which over 35% of which are First Nation.