



Building *Aboriginal* Economies

Morgan Green — OASIS

Greening First Nations Homes

by Karen Flanagan McCarthy

Morgan Green has made a business of advising First Nations on healthy and environment-friendly community development.

The Six Nations member, who has a degree in environmental studies and is trained in architectural drafting and design, started Onkwehonwene Anishinabek Sustainable Integrated Systems (OASIS) in 2000. The company works with First Nations to develop sustainable environmental management systems and build affordable, healthy housing.

“There are three problems common to many remote communities: the high cost of heating and electricity, poor indoor air quality and unplanned community development. I look for ways to provide solutions to these problems.”

He completed his first major project a year ago in Eagle Lake, Ont., an Ojibway community. “As a pilot project, we built a highly energy-efficient 3-bedroom bungalow, complete with its own



Morgan Green of OASIS works with First Nations to build affordable, healthy housing.

Photo Credit: Grant Morrison

micro-utility unit,” Morgan explains. Morgan describes the Eco-Nomad unit, created by Architectural and Community Planning Inc., as key to his healthy house design. “The unit stores and purifies rain-water or lake water for use in the house,” he

says. “Sewage treatment and management takes place inside the container and cleaned non-potable recycled water is used to flush toilets. It’s fantastic.” The size of a shipping container, the unit includes a solar panel, a small wind generator and a solar, hot-water heating panel.

OASIS has environmental management projects underway in two other Ontario First Nations: Pikangikum and Sheshegwaning.

Part of what OASIS does is provide training for people in the communities in which he

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Construction

Aboriginal entrepreneurs are building strong companies in the construction sector. As these companies grow, surrounding communities are seeing greater opportunities for job creation and training, better housing and infrastructure, and improved quality of life.

Visit our Aboriginal success stories database at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca (Click on “News Room”).

Mohawk Rock Manufacturing 'Native Stone' Stacks Up

by Richard Landis

Perseverance and innovation is paying off for Six Nations of the Grand River member **David Smith Sr.** and his Mohawk Rock Manufacturing company. It's a business David brought much experience to.

Originally the owner of a construction company, David noticed companies producing man-made stone in the U.S. and believed there was a Canadian market for a home-grown product.

David conducted his own feasibility studies and, in 1991, he and his wife **Wilma** founded Mohawk Rock Manufacturing. The *Native Stone* the company produces looks and feels like the real thing, and has become a hit with contractors, builders and installers across North America.

To manufacture *Native Stone*, David takes samples from a variety of Canada's breathtaking rock formations. A mixture of cement, slag and iron oxide pigment is then poured into moulds cast from the stone samples. The result is an exact, lightweight replica of nature's beauty.

The Smiths are optimistic about *Native Stone's* future. Mohawk Rock now has distributors and dealers throughout central and southern Ontario. Its products are available in the U.S. and Japan.

Nine First Nation members are on the company's payroll. And revenue continues to grow — sales tripled in 2001.

But success hasn't been quick or easy. "It isn't like we stumbled on a goldmine. Canadian trades are often reluctant to accept new products and techniques. Man-made rock was not an easy sell. We've had to go out and make people aware that it's a sound, durable material," he says.

There's a note of pride in David's voice as he says, "We'd like to be an example of the economic growth that's



Above is an example of a Native Stone facade.



possible with on-reserve businesses. And, like all things that matter, you have to put all your effort into making it a success."

For more information, call 519-445-4766, or visit www.mohawkrock.com *

"Morgan Green — OASIS"

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works. "My primary focus is to get First Nations people doing things on their own.

"We have the talent, capability and indigenous knowledge to become self-sufficient. Sustainable development is not a foreign concept for us. A big part of my job is explaining how we can do this, in terms everyone understands."

It's a job he does well, according to **Clarence Panamick**, of the Sheshegwaning First Nation. "He's helped us develop

our community's economy, in an environmentally-responsible and sustainable way," says Clarence.

"I love travelling to all these different communities, helping protect the environment, and helping First Nations. This isn't a job. It's a dream come true," muses Morgan.

For more information on OASIS, call 519-752-3836. *