

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nipissing-Miller Partnership Announces Completion of Duchesnay Creek Bridge

DUCHESNAY, ON – The Nipissing-Miller Partnership project team is pleased to announce that the replacement of the Duchesnay Creek Bridge is now complete. A small ceremony was held this morning with representatives from Nipissing First Nation (NFN) and Miller Paving Limited (Miller) to mark this significant milestone prior to the bridge reopening to traffic.

This \$12 million project was fully funded by the provincial government and awarded to the Nipissing-Miller Partnership, a joint venture in which Nipissing has a majority stake. NFN and Miller began preparing for this opportunity in 2018 by launching an initiative that provided valuable on-the-job training and experience for NFN members, as well as future employment and training opportunities.

“Following the sudden closure of the bridge at the end of January 2019 over structural concerns, we successfully lobbied the province to sole source this project to the Nipissing-Miller Partnership,” explains Chief Scott McLeod. He added that Ontario’s support of the proposal marked “a significant change in the way of doing business and a step forward towards reconciliation.”

The project not only had historical significance in terms of being the last timber bridge remaining in Ontario (built in 1937 and designated under the Ontario Heritage Act); it was also groundbreaking in terms of creating *real* economic opportunities for Nipissing First Nation, which already had a strong business relationship with Miller spanning over 15 years.

First Nations have historically been shut out of current processes and opportunities to participate in infrastructure projects of this scale, so this new approach to creating opportunities for skills development, job creation and procurement while building critical infrastructure was historic as well.

“The General Partnership has been a great success,” says Chris O’Reilly, Manager of Heavy Civil for Miller Paving. “This project was challenging to say the least, and as a team we had numerous hurdles to overcome prior to even breaking ground. Our team never put the brakes on. We tackled the demolition in frigid winter weather, and our first summer construction season was riddled with manpower shortages, COVID delays and implementing new measures to protect everyone on our team.”

Mr. O’Reilly adds that “although our team experienced multiple delays, great perseverance by all led to the project finishing only a few days later than the anticipated contract completion date. It has been a pleasure working with our First Nation partners, and we look forward to many endeavours in the future.”

With the bridge now completed, the Nipissing-Miller crew is undertaking the second phase of the project between highway 17 and Couchie Memorial Drive. The scope of work includes creating a new entrance to Duchesnay Village, removing the abandoned CN Rail overpass, shaving the hill to improve sightlines, and one kilometre of paving between highway 17 and the new Duchesnay Creek bridge.

The successful completion of this first project solidifies our partnership and paves the way for future growth and opportunities for the mutual benefit of both partners and the community.

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