



# the Daily Graphic



November 23, 2007

Top Stories  
 Sports  
 Archives

Obituaries  
 Classifieds  
 Career Ads  
 Cybersaver  
 Place An Ad  
 Contact Us  
 Privacy Policy

**Featured Links**  
 THE NEW CENTRAL PLAINS HERALD-LEADER  
 School Division  
 Fort la Reine Museum  
 Regional Health Authority  
 Central Plains Inc.  
 Southport Aerospace  
 Portage Learning Centre  
 Bowes Publishers  
 Sun Media  
 Quebecor Media  
 Winnipeg Sun  
 CANOE  
 Canadian Press  
 Portage and District Chamber of Commerce  
 Rural Municipality

## The eagle has landed and offers hope A special statue is unveiled for survivors of residential schools

By John Cairns  
 The Daily Graphic  
 Friday November 23, 2007

Three generations of residential school survivors were on hand for the unveiling of a special statue yesterday at Long Plain First Nation's urban reserve. Long Plain Chief Dennis Meeches was joined by Edna Merrick, her daughter Liz Merrick and granddaughter Adrienne Merrick. All three attended residential schools.

The ceremony featured the unveiling of an eagle statue created by artist Jake Goertzen. The eagle is significant to aboriginal people as a symbol of healing and strength; it is considered a spirit guide for many.

A smudging ceremony was performed before the unveiling, involving a short prayer and pipe smoking to honour the ancestors who attended residential schools.

Meeches said the residential schools era was "one of the darkest chapters in our history. "Our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents were forced to attend residential schools, and they suffered a lot of horrific abuse in the schools," he said, adding the schools stripped native people of a great deal of their identity.



Long Plains First Nation Chief Dennis Meeches, centre, bangs the drums next to the newly-unveiled eagle statue, which will soon have a permanent home at the proposed Indian Residential School Museum site.

Staff photo by John Cairns

Meeches said on Dec. 19, the eagle statue will be mounted outside the Rufus Prince Building on Crescent Road, which is the site of the proposed Indian Residential School Museum of Canada. The museum will be located in the former Portage Indian Residential School. For now, the statue will be located just across from the conference and gaming centre.

The unveiling of the eagle statue formally kicked off the annual Fall Gala of the Indian Residential School Museum of Canada.

The entire event was emceed by Lisa Meeches and featured several speakers: Meeches, Assembly of First Nations legal analyst Ken Young, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Ron Evens, and Grand Chief Morris Shannacappo of the Southern Chiefs Organization representing First Nations from federal, provincial, regional and local levels.

Meeches said the museum is needed because it is important to preserve the history of residential schools for future generations so that people fully understand what went on. "A lot of people -- First Nations people included -- they wonder what's wrong with First Nations, such as the social issues we have," said Meeches.

"Why is everything so dysfunctional? Well, the answer, one of the biggest things that affected our people, was the residential schools experience. That's where we'll find the answers." Meeches said the building where the museum is to be located has already received provincial heritage status, and Meeches hopes to see it achieve federal status through the National Monument Board. The property, as Meeches pointed out, is already federal government land.

The residential school system has been criticized for attempting to assimilate aboriginals and take away their culture. There were also reports of physical and sexual abuse and of students being separated from their parents.

"We have to remember all this and know our history," said residential school survivor Liz Merrick about the museum project. "It's very important, especially for younger generations to understand what happened."

The federal government has agreed to compensate aboriginals who went through the residential school system with compensation. Common experience payouts have been sent out and will be followed by compensation for specific offences.

Adrienne Merrick said she did not have quite as bad an experience in residential schools as

CLASSIFIEDS  
**classifiedextra.ca**  
 NEW!  
 20M of potential buyers!

I'm looking for  
 **GO**

See the classified ads from all Quebecor newspapers

**SEVENTH CIRCUIT**

NEED A WEBSITE?

**The Glesby**  
 Great music...good times!  
 SHOWS • EVENTS • TICKETS

www.auctionpig.ca

**CAREERAD**  
 Find a job.

CENTRAL PLAINS **Herald-Leader**  
 Check out what's new this week!

the Daily Graphic  
 GARAGE SALES

**PDF**  
 Subscribe Now!

Portage la Prairie, MB

-2°C  
 feels: -2°C

The Weather Network [click for forecast](#)

**Newspaper Advertisements**

the Daily Graphic  
 SUBSCRIBER REWARDS CARD  
 BIG SAVINGS ON LOCAL PURCHASING NEEDS

**CLICK HERE**  
 for answers regarding the proposed **SPORTS COMPLEX**

older generations, but said it was a good thing to have the eagle statue ceremony take place.

"It's very memorable for everybody and closure for a lot of people," Adrienne said.

---

Cybersaver Newspaper Advertising  
Click The Image For Full Size Display



Category: [Automotive Sales and Service](#)



Proprietor and published  
by Bowes Publishers  
Limited at P.O. Box 130 —  
1941 Saskatchewan Ave.  
West, Portage la Prairie,  
Manitoba, Canada R1N 3B4

© 2007 Portage Daily Graphic