



DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DFN REMOVES NORWEGIAN; ACTING GRAND CHIEF TO BE APPOINTED

FORT SIMPSON, NT -- January 31, 2008 – Herb Norwegian, Grand Chief of the Dehcho First Nations, was removed from office with immediate effect on Wednesday by an almost unanimous decision of voting delegates to a Special Assembly meeting here.

Of the 73 voting delegates from 11 Dehcho communities, 59 supported a resolution to remove Norwegian who was convicted of assault Dec. 11, 2007. None of the chiefs, elders, Metis leaders or delegates voted against the resolution, while two people abstained.

The decision was made after almost two full days of in camera sessions chaired by Bill Erasmus of Yellowknife and Joanne Barnaby of Hay River.

The DFN Leadership will appoint an acting grand chief by Feb. 8 to hold office until the annual assembly in June when a new grand chief will be elected.

Norwegian, 55, of Fort Simpson, was sentenced to one day in jail by the territorial court as well as being ordered to do community service and six months of probation for an incident involving domestic violence which occurred Nov. 11, 2007.

The Special Assembly, called by the DFN Leadership, noted the conviction leaves Norwegian with a criminal record “inappropriate for a person holding the position of grand chief.”

The Dehcho Leadership initiated the decision to hold a Special Assembly during a teleconference Dec. 17, based on a 1994 DFN Assembly resolution allowing for the recall of a grand chief and replacement by an acting grand chief.

Norwegian, who was elected grand chief by an Assembly in 2003 and acclaimed to the position in 2006, addressed the in camera sessions twice and has publicly apologized for the assault to which he pleaded guilty.

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