

# Caldwell First Nation Breaks Ground to Rebuild Lost Community

*Caldwell First Nation returns to the territory of their ancestors and begins building a new homeland where the community can live together again*

LEAMINGTON, ONTARIO, CANADA, June 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It was a day of ceremony and celebration for the [Caldwell First Nation](#) after centuries of displacement from the lands they once called home, and a long battle to reclaim land to create a new community. The Nation's members invited local mayors and councillors, and project leaders to be part of a site blessing with sacred tobacco offerings and groundbreaking led by Traditional Knowledge Keeper Liz Akiwenzie.



Chief Mary Duckworth, Councillor Doug Heil and Councillor Ian Duckworth break ground for new community with the municipal leaders of Tecumseh, Amherstburg, LaSalle and area Conservation Authorities

The territory will provide long-term residences for the descendants of the band who were forcibly removed from the sustainable livelihood they had achieved for centuries in the region and on Point Pelee and Pelee island.

“

This is the first step to knowing our nation's members will have a place to live as a community. We will rebuild and experience a sense of togetherness that was lost for previous generations.”

*Councillor Ian Duckworth*

Single family homes, fourplexes and duplexes along with natural areas for ceremonial gatherings have been preserved. This homeland near Seacliff Drive in Leamington, is the first of its kind in Southwestern Ontario with the Caldwell First Nation members planning and designing the community in collaboration with Baird AE. The Caldwell First Nation is also planning for an administration/multi-use complex, and commercial

properties.

Addition to Reserve status was received by Ministerial Order in November 2020 and a Land Use

Plan regarding the community development had been undertaken by First Nation Engineering Services prior to that time. Funding for homes was obtained in November of 2021 through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative. However, the Nation had to overcome several obstacles to move forward with the new development as no funding existed for planning and building the infrastructure at that time. BairdAE developed the infrastructure design for the community based on the revised master plan starting in February 2022.

In May 2023, Caldwell First Nation secured funding to develop and fund the infrastructure for future housing on the site by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) following meetings with Regional Director General for Ontario and Chief Duckworth.

Over the last twelve months, the Chief and Council have worked closely with the project team, ISC, Essex Power, and the municipality of Leamington, to plan for roads, electricity, water, waste water, communications systems.

The contract for the infrastructure was recently awarded to J & J Lepera. Construction will begin on June 10th and is expected to be completed this Fall.

28 Passivhaus designed energy efficient residential units will be built first for single parents and senior citizens by Quantum Passivhaus. Equipment ordering and prefabrication of the housing components is underway with site construction of the homes is scheduled to commence in late-Summer 2023 and be complete by Spring 2024.

About the Caldwell First Nation and our [history](#):

We are the most Southwestern First Nation in Canada and we are a distinct and federally recognized Indian band. We call ourselves Zaaga'iganiniwag \*, meaning: "People of the Lake" and used to be referred to by such names as the "Chippewas of Pelee", "Point Pelee Indians" and "Caldwell's band of Indians"

For over two centuries, the Caldwell First Nation was one of only three First Nations in Canada without a place to live. We acquired an 80-hectare property at Bevel Line Road and Seacliff Drive in Leamington a decade ago in a land claim settlement. The territory is officially designated as our permanent home on the ancestral lands we fought to access for hundreds of years.

Caldwell First Nation served as allies of the British during the War of 1812. In consideration of this service, they were promised land at Point Pelee. We continued to occupy Point Pelee, with the support of the Canadian government, up until the late 1850s. In the 1920s, many of the band members were forced off our traditional lands by the RCMP.

In 2023, we opened two new businesses that welcome everyone: Caldwell First Nation Gas Bar &

Variety, and the Caldwell First Nation Marina and Boardwalk.

Chief Mary Duckworth Caldwell First Nation

Caldwell First Nation

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