



# RECOGNITION AWARDS DINNER

**TUESDAY 5:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Scandia Room - Valhalla Inn**

The Housing Recognition Awards are an opportunity to recognize innovations and achievements in housing initiatives at a community level. Listening to those recognized as part of this popular awards program is one of the most motivational and inspiring parts of the conference. This year we have one recipient: Garden River First Nation. CONGRATULATIONS!

## GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION

### 2016 HOUSING RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENT

On the shores of the St. Mary's River, East of Sault Ste. Marie is Garden River First Nation. With over 1000 members living on reserve (about half of the membership), Garden River is a growing community that recognized that adequate housing can aid in a Community's economic, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Providing adequate housing for 1000 residents can be a challenging task without an effective policy in place, and so, in 2015, the forward-thinking Chief and Council in Garden River implemented a new, comprehensive housing policy.

The new policy, designed to increase collection rates, improve construction and maintenance and build trust between tenants and the housing department, would require a dedicated staff to implement it. Garden River had a strong core to begin with and added two more positions: a Housing Tenant Relations Officer and a Construction Maintenance Worker.

Having the Housing Tenant Relations Officer on staff has offered the tenants, management and Chief and Council a liaison. Acting as an advocate and providing budgeting



education for tenants, the Housing Tenant Relations Officer also facilitates rent collection and arrears management for the First Nation.

Through the dedication of the Housing Department staff and with the increasing support of tenants, Garden River has been able to achieve a 97% rent collection rate as well as reducing arrears significantly.

With the addition of the Construction Maintenance Worker to the Housing Department staff, the First Nation has been able to increase efficiencies in the building and maintenance processes. Through the use of a custom designed information system, the Construction Maintenance Worker is able to coordinate the costing and ordering of materials and the usage of subcontractors in order to build and maintain houses better and faster.



It is clear that the new policy and the dedicated staff implementing it have been successful. The innovation and commitment of Garden River in providing adequate housing for all of its members is to be admired, commended and held up as an example of how effective a housing policy can be.



**The First Nations Northern Housing Conference would like to recognize Garden River First Nation for its hard work and dedication by presenting it with the 2016 Housing Recognition Award. Congratulations Garden River First Nation!**

