



Moose Cree
First Nation

A BRIEF HISTORY BEHIND THE NAME OF **WETUMROAD**

There have been many inquiries about how the name of “Wetum Road” came about and its meaning. This article will provide some basic background information without going in to too much detail.

Back in 2008, through the De Beers project, the construction of additional power lines from Moosonee to Otter Rapids was constructed. Out of that project, came an access road that allowed community members to be able to drive from Moosonee to Otter Rapids and further south from that point on. Once construction of the power lines was complete, De Beers no longer had a need for the access road.

MCFN Councillors Robert Echum and Peter Wesley, upon receiving numerous inquiries on whether there would be a winter road going south again, approached the Moose Cree First Nation Chief and Council to get support in pursuing this option. With support from Chief and Council, a working group was established to begin work on this winter road. Both Robert Echum and Peter Wesley were part of this working group.

During the beginning of one of the working sessions, the former president of Moose Band Development Corporation said, we have a name for the road. He said, “Wetum Road,” and this is where the name originated.

So what does Wetum mean? It is a combination of the two names of both councillors who initiated and lead the project,

“**We**” is taken from Councillor Peter Wesley’s last name,

“**Tum**” is for Councillor Robert Echum, who was called Bobby Tum in his younger days.

“**Wetum**”

This name was provided in the funding applications and has been in use ever since.

Interestingly enough, the name also has a dual meaning. In the Cree language, wetum means to “tell them”. That was the approach taken by the working group when dealing with the various ministries. Upon receiving the mandate from the membership and the support from various communities, the approach taken was, you either work with us or against us, because either way this project would proceed. We more or less “told them” (wetum) that the project was underway.

And that’s a brief history behind the name of the winter road.

Submitted by Peter Wesley/Robert Echum