

“Get 'er done!”

By Margaret Wanlin
Thunder Bay Ventures

Sally Ledger's “Get 'er done!” philosophy is her trademark. Throughout her career she has tackled many projects and brought in results that go from good to great. When necessary she steps it up to “Keep going till you get 'er done”, perseverance being another of her notable leadership qualities.

A community development perspective is evident in all that Sally does. She sees her work as the betterment of the community and particularly to help people to help themselves. As the Executive Director of the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), Sally has lots of opportunity to put that perspective into practice. She strives for inclusion and wants to see more Aboriginal women more aware, more informed, more active and with a higher quality of life.

ONWA's work has a provincial scope. It delivers programs and services throughout Ontario to the tune of \$3.7 million, from its head office in Thunder Bay. From a local economic development perspective, many of the jobs and economic spin-offs stay in Thunder Bay, illustrating why an initiative of two young leaders to attract head offices of not-for-profit organizations to the city is a good idea.

As well as providing programming and training for Aboriginal women, ONWA also brings the Aboriginal women's perspective to a variety of provincial tables. Sally also chairs the Ontario Aboriginal Property Management Corporation and is treasurer of the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Service Corporation.

Sally grew up in Jellicoe and has always lived and worked in Northwestern Ontario. When she sets aside her missions of promoting empowerment, capacity building and self sufficiency, Sally heads for the open road on her Harley Davidson “Fat Boy” complete with custom paint job. A devoted biker, Sally makes an annual trek to Bike Week at Daytona Beach, Florida, participates in charity runs and rides her bike at every available opportunity.

A few years ago, in her Partnership Development Advisor role at Matawa First Nations Management Inc., Sally was part of a group headed by Thunder Bay Ventures looking into an arts centre on the Pool 6 site at the waterfront. She realized that a vehicle was needed to bring together Aboriginal artists. So she set about creating one; Sally was instrumental in the formation of an up and coming group, Thunder Bay Regional



Sally Ledger

EVERYDAY HEROES

- Here to Stay -

Aboriginal Arts and Heritage (TBRAAH). TBRAAH is a focal point for Aboriginal artists. Their website (tbaahd.com) provides access to a variety of Aboriginal artists involved in arts and crafts, performing arts, heritage and education. The group hosts pow wows, provides cultural awareness sessions in public venues and schools, participates in National Aboriginal Day, and supports community initiatives such as Action for Neighbourhood Change and United Sisters of Ogden. The forum also assists members to develop the business side and sell their work and services.

Sally continues to believe in the importance of the waterfront. It is Thunder Bay's original meeting place; where Aboriginal people and Europeans did their first trading. It was a gateway at a time when transportation was by water. Sally sees those themes of gateway and gathering place as important and envisions a place with a feeling of community, open to the public and not restricted only to people with money.

For the city overall, Sally works toward the time when the richness of the Aboriginal community and its culture is understood and appreciated and when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders work together to move the city forward. Sally will be one of those leaders.

Everyday Heroes is a community initiative by Thunder Bay Ventures. Everywhere there are people living, working, playing and contributing to the fabric of our city. Nominate a hero - heroes@thunderbayventures.com. Read about past heroes at www.thunderbayventures.com