

### **A bed and breakfast opens in Chisasibi**

Chisasibi, James Bay: Chisasibi has long been a destination for visitors to Eeyou Istchee. This bustling Cree village on the south shore of the La Grande River offers an array of outdoor activities—from fishing and hunting to canoeing and nature observation. It also hosts cultural events like the annual summer gathering, or Mamoweedow, on Fort George Island, a short ferry ride from the mainland.

But accommodations in Chisasibi have often fallen short of demand. A young Cree entrepreneur, Louie-Rene Kanatewat, and his family have helped to rectify the situation. They recently opened a bed and breakfast called Auberge Maanitaaukimikw. (Maanitaaukimikw means "guest home" in Cree.)

"We got the idea in 2010," Kanatewat recalled in an interview on the day of the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Then two years ago, we really decided ... to start putting some money down towards the project and demonstrate to financiers that we were very serious about it."

Kanatewat, a University of Ottawa commerce graduate, had a solid background in management: he had served as director general of operations for the Cree Nation of Chisasibi for more than three years and the coordinator of administrative services for the Waskaganish Community Health Centre for more than three years. He received enthusiastic support for his new venture from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and other local organizations as well as from the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, Eeyou Istchee Tourism, and Tourisme Québec.

The newly constructed Auberge Maanitaaukimikw is situated on Saataayaa Road on the outskirts of Chisasibi. It offers sweeping views of the La Grande River—the second largest river in the province. The guest facilities include nine bedrooms, each named after a Cree nation in Eeyou Istchee; three common washrooms; and a spacious dining room and lounge.

"Our rates," Kanatewat explained, "range from \$119 to \$149 and include a hot breakfast: scrambled eggs, hash browns, sausages, and ham, with juice and unlimited coffee. It's buffet-style, so people can help themselves to whatever they want. If the need is there, we may consider adding lunch and supper service.

"We want to create a 'home away from home' atmosphere, and hopefully that will get clients to return to us."