

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**DATE: July 13, 2009**

**SUBJECT: Cornwall Border Crossing**

**SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen**

A temporary port of entry in the eastern Ontario city of Cornwall, to be staffed by armed guards, will once again open up the border to traffic Monday morning, according to the Canadian Border Services Agency.

The temporary facility — a makeshift post of tents and trailers — was scheduled to open at 6 a.m. local time at the base of the north span of the Seaway International Bridge, which links Cornwall to New York state.

“The temporary solution will assist in the resumption of normal traffic flow for local communities,” CBSA spokeswoman Patrizia Giolti said in an e-mailed response to questions.

All border guards who have successfully completed “arming training” will carry guns while on duty in Cornwall, she added.

The existing facility on Cornwall Island, in the middle of Akwesasne Mohawk territory, has been closed for six weeks. Just before midnight on May 31, border guards walked off the job over fears of a violent confrontation with Mohawk Warriors. A plan to arm border officers at all crossings in the country caused tension and protest among Akwesasne Mohawks, who denounced the notion of guards carrying guns on the reserve.

In Cornwall, the 42-day standoff has been hard on many businesses, which collectively reported about \$100,000 in lost revenue, according to the city’s Chamber of Commerce.

“It certainly is being felt in our community,” said local Tory MP Guy Lauzon. He said the announcement will be a big relief to a city that depends so much on cross-border commerce.

“Obviously, it’s not a permanent solution; they’ll just be setting up some trailers. But the important part is it’s going to get the free flow of traffic between both countries resuming.”

Lauzon encouraged both sides to keep talking. Recent discussions between the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) and the CBSA seem to have resulted in some progress and much confusion. Last week, the MCA said a tentative deal had been reached to open a temporary facility for four months, after which border guards would return to the post on native land unarmed. Security would be provided by armed Mohawk police and, possibly, the RCMP, Grand Chief Michael Mitchell said in a statement.

The CBSA, however, said reports of the deal were inaccurate and, in a release on Sunday, dismissed the notion of ever posting unarmed border guards on the reserve.

“The CBSA will only reopen its facility when border-services officers can work there safely with all of the tools they need to do their job, including their duty firearm.”

Mitchell said he would reserve support of the temporary border post.

“The CBSA seems to have a difficult time understanding what we have agreed to in face-to-face talks,” Mitchell said in another statement. “Not to jeopardize the temporary reopening of the bridge, MCA will make every reasonable effort to ensure that there is clarity of our understanding.”

When pressed for details, the CBSA would not speculate on the prospects of an eventual return of border guards to the reserve.

“We continue to explore options for long-term solutions, and we remain committed to ongoing talks with the Mohawk Council and other stakeholders to arrive at a viable solution,” Giolti said.