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## Caledonia residents organizing 'militia'

Land-Claim Feud

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A group of Caledonia residents is trying to organize an unarmed citizens' "militia" to enforce laws they say the Ontario Provincial Police have failed to uphold since their community turned into ground zero of a land-claim battle between an Iroquois community and the federal government.

Some residents feel abandoned by the OPP since Six Nations' 200-year-old land-claim battle with the federal government came to a head in 2006 with images of burning tires and blockades. Now, some locals are planning to take matters into their own hands, beginning with a citizens' group that would intervene when called in situations where it appears the OPP have no plans to act.

"Enough is enough," said Doug Fleming, a local entrepreneur, who is organizing the Caledonia Militia. "[The OPP] have failed miserably to protect law-abiding citizens."

In the winter of 2006, a small group from Six Nations staked their claim to Douglas Creek Estates, a Caledonia residential development, in an attempt to kick-start negotiations on a land claim that dates back to Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. A botched OPP raid to clear the protesters triggered blockades, tire fires and clashes with nonnative residents. The provincial government eventually bought out the land's developer, and negotiations are continuing to this day, while tensions remain.

The idea of the Caledonia Militia is not new, but the recent erection of a cigarette shack on the property of a local resident gave it life, Mr. Fleming said. He said an information meeting on the fledgling organization is planned for next Tuesday.

He said he could think of no other term besides "militia" to dub the group, but he plans to screen out troublemakers.

"There are times when diplomacy and appeasement don't work, and we have a situation right now in Caledonia where appeasement doesn't work," said Mr. Fleming in a telephone interview from the house of Dave Brown and Dana Chatwell, who live next to the reclaimed land.

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