

# Through the Ice

*By: Drake Ratt and Family*

An interesting and dangerous event in Ile-a-la-Crosse's history took place on January 6, 1981. It had been a cold winter and my mooshum, Louis Dubrule, had been asked to clear the ice road with a plow.

It was -40°C on January 6, 1981 when Louis Dubrule headed out on the ice. Robbie Gardiner, the resource officer, followed him. They were moving along clearing the snow. Robbie looked down to adjust the radio in his truck and when he looked up again the plow and Louis had disappeared. The current from the Canoe River didn't let the ice get thick and Louis and the grader had broken through.

Robbie stopped and jumped out of his truck. At first he didn't see Louis in the water so he began yelling for him. When Robbie saw Louis in the water he took off his parka and threw part of it to him so he could grab it. Robbie pulled Louis out of the ice-cold water and rushed him to the Hospital.

At the hospital Louis' body temperature was so cold they couldn't get a thermometer to read it. He had hypothermia. It took the hospital staff between 6-8 hours to warm Louis up.

The grader stayed in the water until March 15, 1981. It was under about 25 feet of ice-cold water. When the town wanted it out of the lake they had to use blocks of wood, a 1 tonne tow truck and a cherry picker to get it out. Divers

had to go down in the cold water and attach chains to the huge machine. The temperature was  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  that day. Their first attempt was unsuccessful. The chains broke. The second time they tried they attached gold chains to the grader. It took them three days to get it out of the lake. Once out of the lake and the damages repaired the continued to use the grader for 15 years, then they sold it to Goodsoil, Sk.



