

Tribe can flourish even with meager resources



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In this beautiful Waatebagaa-giizis (Leaves Turning Moon), we can see change all about us. The leaves change from green to

beautiful reds and golds; animals scurry about, building up fat stores before winter; birds begin to gather and prepare for the long journey south. All of creation is preparing for the fast approaching season (winter) that is not so easy to get through, but results in cleansing, purity and new life in the Spring. In many ways, our tribe is also preparing for a time that will not be so easy to get through, but will result in cleansing, purity and new life.

We know our tribe is not defined by our “enterprises.” We are Anishnaabe and always will be. But the reality of the modern times we live in forces us to look at other truths as well. We remember a time, not too long ago, when our tribal enterprises did well, and we thought we were

prepared for hard times ahead. Services to our membership were at all-time highs, as were the yearly payments to our elders. However, the truth of “economic hard times” is with us, as it is across the entire United States. We have to find a way economically, to not only survive, but flourish as a people. To that end, our board of directors has been putting in numerous 12-hour days, reviewing, analyzing and searching for solutions. The challenge is great, but we are committed to finding ways to bring new life back to our enterprises.

This past month, in addition to the numerous budget reviews, audit reports, departmental presentations, workshops and board meetings, I have spent time with tribal members, listening, learn-

ing and helping where I can. I have met the vice president of the United States, the governor of the State of Michigan, a state congressman and the mayor of the City of Lansing. I was proud to speak to them about our tribe, and to stress how we need to work together to serve the people we represent. As an educator, the education of our children will always be a priority for me, and I am pleased to report to you that I have been elected chairperson of the JKL Fiduciary Committee, and will continue to serve as the Indian education administrator at Rudyard area schools. In each of these activities, and on a daily basis as well, I am consistently asking myself, “How will this help our people?”

I apologize that my website

is not ready yet, but I am now on Twitter! My first downstate meeting with tribal members is being planned for the first week in October, and will be posted on the tribal website as soon as details are firm. As we move forward, I want to encourage all of you to continue to share your thoughts, concerns and ideas with me. I firmly believe that among us all, we will find the answers we need. Our future lies in our resilience, our strength and our creativity. Even with meager resources, Anishnaabe people can do remarkable things, take frybread, for instance! Meager ingredients, amazing outcome!

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