

GENERATIONS INDIGEOUS: CHAIRPERSON CHALLENGE

Aaron A. Payment, MPA
Tribal Chairperson
Representing All Members
Everywhere

Ahneen, BooZo, Negee:

Earlier this year and again last month, I listed a legislative agenda that I believe the vast majority of our Members support. This agenda was drafted based on extensive Member meetings both inside and outside of the service area. While some will list reasons why we cannot move forward with a progressive agenda, I say there are no legitimate reasons, only excuses. The bolded items below are those I raised at the 5/5/15 Tribal Board Meeting. At the time this report was written, the meeting had not occurred. I will provide updates in the next edition of this paper on our progress.

Tribal Legislation:

- **Establish a Mackinac Island Elder Subcommittee;**
- **Re-Open Enrollment;**
- Tribal Referendum to include a Tribal Promise to Raise Elder Dividend to 10% of Net Revenue of all Gaming Expansion Projects;
- Negotiate to extend the State Tax Agreement to all Members in Michigan;
- Immediately commit a level of services expansion for the Western End of our Service Area.

Constitutional Amendments:

- **Establish a Unit 6 "At Large" Election Unit ~ necessary to Consolidate and Enhance;**
- **Add the Mackinac Band to our Historical Bands;**
- **Establish a Separation Powers into an Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches;**
- Set Term Limits for the Chairperson and Board of Directors

MORE DO NOTHING NEGATIVITY

I am going to do my best to not engage in a back and forth useless debate with select Board Members who have nothing to show for themselves but instead take pot shots in this paper to fabricate the appearance that they are doing something. It is time to put petty differences aside. Get over it and

get on with it. Members expect and deserve better. What have the *Negative Nellies* accomplished for the \$201,000 salary they have grossed? We have lots of work to do. Let's keep our focus and produce results you can see like testifying in Congress to increase our federal appropriations.

GIVING BACK IN APPRECIATION

I am proud to have been born in 1965 when the federal *Great Society* programs were created. I am not ashamed to say I benefitted from programs like Head Start, Upward Bound, Welfare, USDA Commodity Foods Distribution, Title IV Indian Education, and various tribal services. I feel it is my duty to give back in every way that I can. I am also a high school drop-out but when I am done with my education, I will have three masters degrees, a doctorate, a bachelors and my GED. It is with great humility that I recognize the help I received along the way. As such, I do my best to give back.

In addition to my busy administrative schedule, and duties chairing Board meetings, I take every opportunity to responsibly represent our Tribe and to strive to provide opportunities for others; especially our youth. As I reported earlier this year, I was elected unanimously as an officer with the *National Congress of American Indians*. In February, my fellow 1836 Treaty Tribal leaders voted unanimously to appoint me the Chair of the *Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority* Board. Recently, I was recruited and appointed by retired Senator Carl Levin to serve on the *Wayne State University Levin Center for Law and Policy*. None of these additional duties come with pay but all afford us the



Newberry, MI - Chairperson Payment donating \$1,000 to the ST Youth Grand Council to facilitate the production of a viral video to promote signing up for the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion while trying to bring awareness to critical issues facing our youth like suicide, drug overdose and other serious challenges to the well-being of our Sault Tribe Youth.

opportunity to network on behalf of our Tribe and identify and access additional resources to benefit our people. I am honored and perpetually happy to do so.

MIDJIM ST. IGNACE

At the time I write this, I had placed on the agenda an action item to appropriate an amount of just over a quarter of a million dollars to do capital improvements on our Midjim in St. Ignace. While there was a proposal to build a new Midjim some 500 feet from the existing facility at a costs of \$1.2 Million, after six months the proposal failed to be approved. Realizing it would never be approved, I chose to request the funds to do improvements. Stay tuned.



Using my MI Map to demonstrate our 1836 Treaty Boundaries during a presentation to MI CAPP (Michigan College Professional Access Programs & Personnel). Programs like Upward Bound and other TRIO programs participate in this association.

GENERATIONS INDIGENOUS

When I think back to when I was as a fifteen year old who dropped-out of high school, was homeless, and worked as a migrant worker picking oranges at 16 to where I am now, I realize how far I have traveled. Again, I am humbled to realize that my successes are not solely attributable to my extreme drive and determination but also, in large part,

due to those who helped me along the way. Thus, I have personally accepted the President's challenge to forge opportunities for our Native youth. President and Mrs. Obama created this challenge after visiting the reservation at Standing Rock and seeing the poverty but also the great spirit of hope and optimism. I am grateful for this awakening of the plight of our Native youth and proud at the level of commitment of the President and First Lady to this renewed purpose. One challenge the President made was for his Cabinet Members to visit Indian County. Thus, I have extended an invitation to a cabinet secretary to visit during the 20th Anniversary celebration of our Tribal Youth Council.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

I am going to take a little privilege as your Chairperson to recognize three of our Members who have contributed significantly to the health care deliver of our people. In the time I have left in my term of office, I am going to give greater recognition to those modern day warriors who selflessly make our lives better.

STACY BOHLEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NIHB

Stacy, a Sault Tribe Member, works tirelessly to advocate for our health interests at the highest level. She finds a way to be in the right place at the right time to push for additional health funding, and is committed to supporting the IHS Special Diabetes program. The National Indian Health Board serves all tribes so Stacy balances her representation, but we are the beneficiaries of her leadership.



With Stacy, just before testifying in the U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Stacey, a proud Sault Tribe Member, is the Executive Director of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB). We are proud of you Stacy!

BONNIE CULFA, ST HEALTH DIRECTOR

A ST Member from St. Ignace, I hired Bonnie as Health Director shortly after I became Chair in 2004 and challenged Bonnie to increase our "third party" revenues from insurances. I am happy to report that Bonnie far exceeded my challenge by raising our third party revenues from \$1.5 million in 2005 to over \$8 million of our \$26 million annual budget is through third party revenues. I am grateful for her leadership and our health division team.

CATHY ABRAMSON, PAST, CHAIR - NIHB

Finally, as the former NIHB Chair, Cathy tirelessly pushed to facilitate Members of Congress and the Administration to understand their trust responsibility to provide health to our people. I am proud to say I was able to quote Cathy in my dissertation for a phrase she coined called "pre-paid" treaty rights.

Please Join me in recognizing how these *Ogitchda kwe* have made our lives better.

Chi McGwitch, Negee,

Aaron



"It was awesome to have Sault Tribe Chairperson Aaron Payment at the Up North(er) weekend for MPLP at Higgins Lake to discuss tribal sovereignty, issues facing tribal governments, and the historical/legal context of government-to-government relations with the State and U.S. governments. Chairperson Payment is an alum from the inaugural MPLP class and a big supporter of the program." ~ Dave Nyberg, MPLP Fellow.