

Economic development position to be posted



DJ HOFFMAN
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

The tribe has many obstacles facing it in the near future and we need to make sure that we address our deficiencies and ignore our personal disagreements to move our tribe forward.

CASINOS

We are at a crossroads with our casinos. I have been clear from the very beginning that we need to post the chief executive officer position for our casinos and bring in a competent leader who develops a detailed written

plan and roadmap for current and future operations.

Currently, we have a temporary CEO, selected to aid the tribe in its transition from the former COO and help to facilitate the selection of a permanent chief executive officer. Our policies dictate that temporary positions shall not be for more than six months. We are closing in upon that time frame.

In addition to the position, it is no secret that the casinos are currently headed in a direction; unfortunately, that direction is not UP. We need to address this immediately. I would provide more detail as to our casinos' financial performance; however, we have not received any financials in nearly a month.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Most of the Fortune 500's top 20 companies now do business in Indian Country, including Wal-Mart, Exxon, GM, Ford, Verizon, AT&T, Home Depot, Target and

Bank of America."

The above quote, derived from *Business Weekly*, illustrates the economic potential that lies out there for tribes. These potential opportunities have been overlooked, unfortunately, by our tribe. However, we have finally taken a step towards economic development and diversification by funding an economic development director position that will be posted in the near future. I am extremely pleased we have finally taken positive steps to do something to move forward, instead of the talking about what could be done.

Part of the position summary is that: "The economic development director performs advanced professional work leading and promoting the business and economic development interest for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. This will include supervision of all enterprises with the exception of the casino operations. This position

will be responsible to develop strategies to enhance, create and build the tribe's economic development and revenue diversification activities, including the complex analysis of data related to planning, financing, tax incentive packaging, marketing and business assistance programming. This position would be responsible to develop long and short term economic and community development goals."

It is my hope that the economic development director will be able to move our businesses in a more profitable manner, as well as lead the charge toward new business development and diversification.

I am also hopeful that our Corporate Charter, approved by the BIA, will one day be utilized. This would afford our tribe with the opportunity to develop, and maintain businesses free from the meddling of politics, thus ensuring that they have a chance to be successful and provide revenues

to tribal services.

A tribe may incorporate under Section 17 of the IRA, 25 U.S.C. § 477, by which the Secretary of Interior issues the tribe a federal charter.

Through Section 17 incorporation, the tribe creates a separate legal entity to divide its governmental and business activities. The Section 17 Corporation has articles of incorporation and bylaws that identify its purpose, much like a state-chartered corporation. However, a federal charter assures the corporation the same benefits as the tribe, including enjoying the tax exemptions and sovereign immunity. The Sault Tribe has an approved corporate charter.

The most successful tribes in America run their businesses through their corporate charters. Examples include Seminoles Inc., Ho Chunk Inc., and hopefully one day Sault Tribe will share in this success.

See "Hoffman," Page 27