

# A new year, a time for progress and positive changes



**DJ HOFFMAN,**  
**DIRECTOR, UNIT I**

The new year has started and with it there have been some positive changes made in regards to legislative actions.

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”

## **FOIA**

I have attempted to get this ordinance passed for some time. In essence, it is merely a means to ensure that the membership's constitutional rights are upheld.

Tribal members have a right to inspect the information of the tribe. This FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) provides the tools to ensure that all requests

are processed in a timely manner and not merely dismissed because of who they are from.

I am pleased to announce that Chapter 15, Tribal Freedom of Information Ordinance was approved at the beginning of the new year. It's effective date is Feb. 6, 2015. To view the code online, please visit <http://www.saulttribe.com/images/stories/government/tribalcode/CHAPTR15.pdf>.

## **MEETING CONTRACT ISSUE**

During the board's first meeting of the new year, an issue was made regarding the approval of a legal contract. Some made a point that the contract should be made an employment position and be posted in accordance with our personnel policies and procedures.

I wholeheartedly agree that all employment positions should be posted. It should be noted that this was not an employment position.

In the 2015 annual budget, approved in December, this item was approved as a legal contractor. While I did not vote to approve the budget, the items

within it must fall within the constraints of the respective budget.

## **EMPLOYMENT RESTRUCTURING**

Several position eliminations were “placed” in the 2015 annual budgets. It is the responsibility of management to manage their respective departments in the tribe. However, I find it unacceptable that position eliminations are placed in budget documents to ensure their enactment.

Managers should be making these decisions in the open, not under the guise of an annual budget approval, which provides employees with no notice and no rights of redress.

This entire process needs to be fixed so that it does not happen in this manner in the future. The tribe needs to develop a Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance to advocate for the employees.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

I have been working on the development of a weekly newsletter, website and blog to place all of the information (excluding confidential materials such as employment and proprietary materials) that I receive online so that you may have access to it.

The process of development has been slow and a few hiccups have occurred along the way – however, the website will be ready mid-February 2015. If you would like to subscribe to this, please send an e-mail me at [djwhoffman@hotmail.com](mailto:djwhoffman@hotmail.com).

In the following months, I will be asking for board support for the following:

- Revisit the processes and procedures for the issuance of tribal license plates;
- Commence work on the provisions for a “right of recall;”
- Work towards the enactment of the adopted Tribal Corporate Charter, which can afford our tribe the ability to incorporate businesses and effectively separate governance from business operations;
- Push for legislation to ensure equality in the treatment of our respective membership in rights under tribal law;
- Amend the removal code to reflect the membership's constitutional rights, which are hindered by the current version;
- Push forward with a code of ethics; and
- Working on legislation to

allow the tribal membership to challenge the constitutionality of actions taken by the tribal board.

I will continue to push forward with members of the board who wish to be progressive. I will also continue to work with members of the board to ensure that we become innovative in our approach to economic diversification, membership services and stepping out of the non-progressive box we appear to be confined to.

We will work to ensure the protection of services for the membership of the tribe. Make no mistake when I say “WE.” No one does anything alone to make this tribe move forward – it takes a majority of the board as well as the membership. But make no mistake, one person can make a difference, whether on the board or not!

Sincerely,

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