



Win Awenen Nisitotung

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Ziisbaakdoke Giizis
Sugar-Making Moon



Bahweting Bidajimowin • Official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Gaming revenue sharing funds backpack project

By Scott Brand

Under the 2% agreement between the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the state of Michigan for gaming revenue sharing, the tribe is required to disburse 2% of its slot revenue to local units of government.

In the latest round of funding, nearly \$3,000 was awarded to the Alger County Sheriff's Office as Deputy David Dyer, school resource officer for three districts — Au Train-Onota, Superior Central and Burt Township — requested funds for emergency supply backpacks.

"I started to realize my three schools did not have properly-equipped backpacks," said Dyer reflecting on what other districts have incorporated as standard issue both for the classroom and when students are on the road for field trips and extra-curricular activities.

"This is a plan for the worst and hope for the best scenario," said Burt Township School Superintendent Kathleen Gould as she prepared to accept 16 backpacks for her district in Grand Marais. "To have that safety and security that is portable, it's important for schools in the Upper Peninsula because we tend to do things outside."

Superior Central, the largest



Above, one of the 66 backpacks purchased with 2% monies from the Sault Tribe to equip three school districts in Alger County.

of the three schools had already received 40 backpacks, while Au Train-Onota took possession of 10 in an earlier delivery.

The contents of each backpack include food, water, various first aid products such as gloves, gauze, bandages, tape, ointments and alcohol wipes as well as an emergency blanket, utility knife and duct tape. Flashlights, glow sticks, batteries and a radio are also among the items carried in each issued backpack.

Gould indicated that a critical part of the backpack project will be training staff to retrieve them whenever they leave the school, even for fire drills. In addition to the standard emergency provi-

sions, teachers and coaches will also be able to store customized information for their students including a roster of names and parental contact information.

In the case of Burt Township School, some of their sporting events lead to bus travel after dark and even flights to island communities where unanticipated weather conditions can wreak havoc on the day's original plan.

"Anytime you leave the school, you take a backpack with you," said Gould of the habits she is looking to promote with her staff and this new safety feature funded by the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians 2% program.



Burt Township School Superintendent Kathleen Gould accepted 16 backpacks for her district from Deputy David Dyer of the Alger County Sheriff's Office on March 6.

Commission issues certified primary election candidate list

The Sault Tribe Election Commission announced the candidate list for the 2026 Primary Election for the board of directors. Incumbents are italicized below. The unofficial list was announced March 5 and the contest period ended March 10, with certified results released March 12.

There will be no primary in Units 2 and 5

Read the Primary election candidates forum on Page 8.

Unit 1: *Isaac McKechnie*, *Robert McRorie*, Suzanne Caskey, Betty Freiheit, Ashley Gravelle, Lori Jump, and Jennifer McLeod-Tyson

Unit 2: *Kimberly Lee*, Sara Archer, Dean Hyslop Sr., and Jaqe lyn Minton

Unit 3: *Shawn Borowicz*, Geraldine Brow, Fred Paq in,

John Rickley, and Sue St. Onge
Unit 4: *Kimberly Hampton*, Cole Goudreau, and Abbielle Hoholik

Unit 5: *Tyler LaPlaunt* and Rita Glyptis

Following the contest period, Kimberly Lee and Sara Archer were added.

Ballots will be mailed out to voters March 26 and the primary election will take place April 8.

Attention voters: Ballots

will look different.

The Election Commission recently announced the 2026 Primary and General Election ballots will look different than past election ballots. In the past, each unit received a ballot on different colored paper based on the registered unit. The 2026 Election will not have color paper representing the five voting units; they instead will be white with certain sections of the ballot a different color distinguishing the different

units.

The Election Commission understands this is a big change from the past elections, however, with upgrading the election software and hardware this was a necessary change. We would like to assure the voters that there are multiple security measures that are placed on the ballots to hinder duplicating ballots.

Any questions or concerns, please email elections@saulttribe.net.

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Sault Tribe and Indian Energy strengthen partnership

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians today announced the finalization of updated language in Indian Energy's operating agreement, strengthening the long-standing partnership between the tribe and the company. The updated agreement, completed March 10, 2026, reflects a shared commitment to economic self-determination and provides meaningful benefits to both parties.

Indian Energy is owned entirely by the Sault Tribe, along with individual owners who are also Sault Tribe members, making this partnership a cornerstone of the tribe's broader strategy to build sustainable, tribally controlled economic assets. With the upcoming full activation of the Viejas

Enterprise Microgrid — the largest microgrid project in Indian Country — the tribe's investment in Indian Energy is now positioned to generate its first financial returns.

Upon activation, Indian Energy will distribute funds to the tribe that include full repayment of the tribe's original \$2.5 million investment, along with a preferred distribution above and beyond that initial amount. This milestone represents a significant step forward in the tribe's efforts to leverage strategic investments for the direct benefit of its members.

"This milestone with the Viejas Enterprise Microgrid reflects the value of the Tribe's partnership with Indian Energy and the progress being made on

this project. We are proud to see this work moving forward and beginning to generate a return on the Tribe's original investment. In the coming months, this project is expected to generate millions of dollars that will help support Tribal operations and services," said Chairman Austin Lowes.

Tribal leadership views the revised operating agreement and the imminent microgrid activation as important milestones in a long-term investment strategy designed to generate sustained economic returns for current and future generations. Leadership remains committed to transparency and will continue to inform tribal members about future projects and distributions as information becomes available for public release.

Sault elders celebrate March birthdays



At a recent Unit I meeting, the Elder Sub-Committee provided cake and ice cream to all in attendance to celebrate this month's birthdays. Enjoying another year are (L-R) Judy Schwiderson, Lois Payment and Brenda Cook. Happy Birthday, ladies!

Friends spear sturgeon on opening day



Sault Tribe elder Ed "Solid Maple Tree" Binsfeld (R) and his friend and neighbor, Dave Carnot (L), both hit pay-dirt on the opening day of sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin. Submitted by Beth Jasiak

Avery Square Spring Craft Show

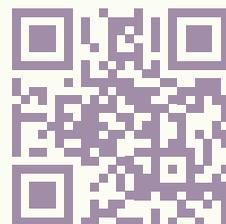
May 1&2 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
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 Items can be left overnight
 Call Sharon to register at: (906) 253-1399
 510 Ashmun St. in the Sault

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In Michigan, 8 out of 10 maternal deaths are preventable.

If you have any of these symptoms during or after pregnancy, talk to your health care provider right away. For the safety of you and your baby.

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- Dizziness, fainting or vision changes.
- Fever over 100.4°F.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.
- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain.
- High blood pressure.
- Fast heart rate.
- Severe nausea.
- Belly pain that won't go away.
- Baby's movement slowing or stopping during pregnancy.
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking fluid during pregnancy or heavy bleeding after pregnancy.
- Extreme swelling of your hands, face, arms or legs.
- Swelling, redness or pain in legs.



Michigan.gov/MIH



Committee vacancies — Sault Tribe volunteers needed!

The following Sault Tribe Committees have vacant seats or upcoming vacancies.

Sault Tribe members interested in filling these vacancies should submit one letter of intent and three letters of recommendation (forms available online or contact Lona) from other members to Lona Stewart at lstewart2@saulttribe.net, 523 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, or call (906) 635-6050 with any questions.

Anishinaabe Cultural Committee

One vacancy - male (4-year term)

Child Welfare Committee

Two vacancies - one term expires November 2026, one expires May 2029

Conservation Committee

Commercial Fishers - Two vacancies (4-year term)
Non-Commercial Fishers - Two vacancies (4-year term)

Elder Advisory Committee

Unit I - Sault - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit II - Newberry - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit III - St. Ignace - One regular vacancy - term expires October 2029, two alternate vacancies (4-year terms)

Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Elder Subcommittees

Unit I - Sault - One regular vacancy - term expires September 2029

Unit II - Naubinway - One regular vacancy - term expires May 2027

Unit II - Newberry - One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit III - St. Ignace - One regular vacancy - term expires March 2028, one alternate vacancy - term expires March 2028

Unit IV - Escanaba - One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit IV - Manistique - One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit V - Munising - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Food Sovereignty Committee

Three vacancies (4-year terms)

Health Board

One vacancy (4-year term)

Election Commission

Two vacancies terms expiring November 2030

Tribal gas, cigarette discount locations

The following gas stations are offering discounts to Sault Tribe members.

Tribal owned gas stations offering gas and cigarette discounts:

- MidJim Convenience Store, 2205 Shunk Road, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

- MidJim Convenience Store, 3045 Mackinac Trail, St. Ignace, MI 49781

- White Pine Lodge and Convenience Store, 7889 E. W. M-28, Christmas, MI 49862

Tribal owned gas stations offering gas discount only:

- University BP, 301 W. Fair Ave., Marquette, MI 49855

Not tribal owned stations offering gas discounts only:

- Kinross BP, 4440 Tone Road, Kincheloe, MI 49788

- Cedar Pantry, 159 W. M-134, Cedarville, MI 49719

- Sunoco, 13975 M-28, Newberry, MI 49868

- Manistique Oil Company, 216 Deer Street, Manistique, MI 49854

- Carnes Eco Fuels, 2300 Ludington St., Escanaba, MI 49837

Membership liaisons work to assist membership

Membership liaisons work to assist with membership issues and concerns. The liaisons will also respond to and follow up on membership issues to ensure they are resolved.

Sault Tribe members are encouraged to contact liaisons when they need help with tribal

issues by emailing membersconcerns@saulttribe.net or individually at the contacts below. Please note that although the liaisons are located at sites across the seven-county service area, they serve all tribal members.

Michelle Moore
Available for in-person

meetings at Sault Tribe Administration.

Phone: (906) 635-6050 Ext. 26359

Cell: (906) 259-3862
mmoore@saulttribe.net

Clarence Hudak
Lambert Center, St. Ignace,
(906) 643-2124

chudak@saulttribe.net

Mary Jenerou
Manistique Tribal Center,
(906) 341-8469

Munising Tribal Center, (906) 450-7011

mjenerou@saulttribe.net

Membership liaisons answer your questions

Q: Does the Sault Tribe assist members with obtaining Eagle feathers?

A: The tribe does not have a repository of Eagle parts available to the membership. Obtaining an Eagle feather is a special gift and most times it is done between individuals privately, or on occasion in ceremony.

Members can apply for feathers or Eagle parts from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department's National Eagle Parts Repository. Their website includes general information, FAQ's, wait times, and the application form. The application includes a section that requires verification of enrollment in a federally recognized tribe. Members can fill in all their personal information on the application and contact the Tribal Registrar to have verification of enrollment completed.

Q: Is there a way to become a member if you were put up for adoption at birth and did not know that one of your parents was enrolled in the Sault Tribe.

A: Yes, there is language in the Membership Ordinance that covers circumstances like this.

Those who initially had sealed child custody records, unrecognized paternity, or out-of-home placements can apply for membership as long as they can trace their ancestry pursuant to Section 11.106 of the Membership Ordinance. Applications are subject to a non-refundable application fee and can be obtained by visiting saulttribe.com and navigating to Enrollment under Membership Services at the top of the homepage.

The Enrollment Department can also be contacted by phone at (906) 635-3396 or 1-800-251-6597.

Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information about Missing and Murdered Sault Tribe Members:

In an effort to maintain the Sault Tribe MMIP database for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), the Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information regarding missing and murdered individuals who are members of the **Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians**. Please message or call the ARC at 906-632-1808 with information that can be entered into the database. The information provided does not have to be current information. The ARC is seeking information for ALL missing or murdered tribal members including the seven county service areas and tribal members across the world. Please ask for Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King (extension 73104) when calling the ARC. If messaging the ARC Facebook page, please leave the following information:



- First/Middle/Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Date of Death
- Murdered/When/Where
- Perpetrator Name if known:
- If Missing:**
- Nickname/Alias
- Date Last Seen/Went Missing
- Physical Description
- Distinctive Physical Features
- Vehicle Information



Any information would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this matter. Please feel free to share this information. Miigwech!

Sault Tribe Member Newspaper Subscription Form

To receive a FREE tribal newspaper subscription in the mail, tribal members under 60 are asked to complete the form below and send it to: Win Awenen Nisitotung, 531 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783, or email it to slucas@saulttribe.net. **Those 60 and over do not have to fill out this form.** Those who prefer to get their newspaper online do not have to complete this form.

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Win Awenen Nisitotung

The official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

March 18, 2026
Sugar-Making Moon
Ziisbaakdoke Giizis

Jennifer Dale-Burton.....Editor
Sherrie Lucas.....Secretary
Brenda Austin.....Staff Writer
Scott Brand.....Staff Writer
Win Awenen Nisitotung welcomes

submissions of news articles, feature stories, photographs, columns and announcements of American Indian or non-profit events. All submissions are printed at the discretion of the editor, subject to editing and are not to exceed 400 words. Unsigned submissions are not accepted.

Please note the distribution date when submitting event information for our community calendar. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. The distribution date is the earliest the newspaper can arrive in the seven-county service area.

Win Awenen Nisitotung is funded by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and is published

12 times a year. Its mission is to inform tribal members and the public about the activities of the tribal government, membership programs and services and cultural, social and spiritual activities of Sault Tribe members.

Win Awenen Nisitotung, in Anishinaabemowin, means, "One who understands," and is pronounced "Win Oh-weh-nin Nis-toe-tuhng."

See our full, online edition at www.saulttribe.com.

Subscriptions: The regular rate is \$18 per year, \$11 for senior citizens and \$30 to Canada. Please call for other foreign countries.

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E-mail: slucas@saulttribe.net or jdale-burton@saulttribe.net.



Longtime employee Mariea Mongene named director of Sault Tribe Housing Authority

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

Mariea Mongene has been selected as the new director of the Sault Tribe Housing Authority, bringing more than 30 years of experience with the department and a long history of service to tribal housing programs.

Mongene previously served as assistant housing director for 15 years and stepped into the role of interim housing director in July 2025. Her extensive experience with the Housing Authority, leadership within the department and long-standing commitment to housing advocacy for tribal members made her a strong fit for the position.

Her connection to the tribe began early. At age 14, she started as a student worker, first in the Enrollment Department and later with the Sault Tribe Newspaper. In 1994, she accepted her first position with the Sault Tribe Housing Authority.



Over the years, she has held several positions within the department. In 2011, she accepted the role of assistant housing director, a position she held for more than a decade before becoming director. In total, she has worked with STHA for 32 years.

As director, she plans to continue leading the department's

team in expanding housing opportunities for tribal members.

"Our approach will include not only constructing new housing units, but also developing innovative and alternative housing programs that help members secure safe and stable homes beyond traditional construction efforts," she said.

Increasing homeownership opportunities—especially for first-time buyers—is a key priority. The department plans to support members through home-buyer education, construction assistance, financing guidance and post-purchase support to help ensure long-term housing stability.

Several housing projects are currently underway. This summer, STHA plans to break ground on a 20-unit apartment building at the Odenaang housing site designed to house single individuals. Plans are also underway for additional

housing for elders at the same location, which could include either a quadplex or two duplex units.

The project will explore using manufactured housing units, which may help speed construction and reduce costs. Additional land development planning is underway for vacant properties in Escanaba, Manistique and Wetmore.

Construction is also continuing on projects funded through an interagency agreement with the tribe using American Rescue Plan Act funding. These include an elderly quadplex in Newberry, an elderly duplex in Hessel and land development with infrastructure improvements at the Savard property in St. Ignace—an Indian Housing Block Grant application has been submitted to support the potential development of 26 rental units there.

The Housing Authority has also submitted a low-income housing tax credit application to support development of a 36-unit permanent supportive housing complex designed to serve as the next step for individuals transitioning from homeless shelter services using a housing-first model.

Her connection to tribal housing programs is not only professional but also personal. Her family moved into one of the first housing units on Shunk Road in 1983.

"There I developed many wonderful memories of swimming in the ditches, walking the beaver dam, playing kickball with all the neighborhood kids, making lifelong friends and really developing a sense of pride in being an Anishinaabe," she said.

She is married and has three children and six grandchildren.

StrongHearts Native Helpline marks nine years of serving survivors

Throughout the past nine years, the organization has achieved significant milestones, including:

- Received over 85,000+ contacts via calls, chats and texts.

- Upon survivor request, provided over 26,000+ referrals to direct service providers.

- Developed partnerships

with Tribal, State, and National organizations to improve response to the violence impacting Native individuals, families and communities.

This past year, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced a projected \$15 million, five-

year grant to fund StrongHearts Native Helpline as the First-Ever Standalone National Indigenous Domestic Violence Hotline for American Indians and Alaska Natives. With the five-year funding commitment, StrongHearts will continue to serve as the trusted resource for survivors seeking anonymous and confidential crisis support.

"This anniversary is not just a reflection of where we've been—it's a testament to our team, to our commitment to ensure that the thousands of survivors who have reached out receive culturally honoring support," said Lori Jump, Chief Executive Officer of StrongHearts Native Helpline. "We are honored to have served

our communities for nine years and look forward to expanding our impact."

StrongHearts Native Helpline is a 24/7/365 culturally-appropriate domestic, dating and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans, available by calling or texting 1-844-762-8483 or clicking on the chat icon at strongheartshelpline.org.

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MARCH MONEY MARATHON

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AAA Soo Indians Hockey Club under new management

By **BRENDA AUSTIN**

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — Dennis Eby, owner of Fairview Construction, has taken on a new role in the region's hockey community as the licensed manager of the AAA Soo Indians Hockey Club.

Eby is stepping into the position after longtime manager Zeke Kaunisto oversaw the team for more than two decades following the end of the Soo Indians junior team.

The AAA Soo Indians Hockey Club competes at the 18U AAA, or "midget major," level and is the only team of its kind north of Detroit. The club plays in the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) Tier 1 league, which includes teams from the Detroit and Grand Rapids areas, and is considered one of the top youth hockey leagues in the country.

Because there are no nearby teams at that level, the Soo Indians travel extensively for league play. Eby said, "We'll take a bus, go down and play a 4 o'clock Saturday game and a 10 o'clock Sunday morning game, then come home. They come up here for a series as well."

In addition to league play, the team participates in tournaments and Tier 1 showcases in cities such as Chicago and Detroit.

This year's roster will primarily include players born in 2008 and 2009, typically ages 17 and 18, although younger players can participate if they are ready for the level of competition.

Eby said joining the team



requires tryouts and the level of play is highly competitive. "It's the highest-level youth hockey around," he said. "For a local kid to make it, it's kind of tough."

Despite the challenge, several local players have found success through the program, including Ashton Calder, who went on to play Division I hockey and later professional hockey.

Eby said the program's primary mission is to give local players the opportunity to pursue high-level hockey without leaving the region.

"Hockey is a tough path, and it's very expensive," he said. "We are a nonprofit, and no one's making any money off this. It all goes back into the kids. Hopefully it benefits a local kid every year or every couple years, because that's the main reason for this team being here."

Eby said running the organization requires a collaborative effort. "It's definitely a group effort," he said.

Eby will serve as general manager while working with a coaching and management team that includes Assistant Coach Josh Payment, Assistant Coach Joe Esson, Head Coach Doug Laprade and Assistant Coach John Ferroni.

Laprade brings extensive experience, having been part of Lake Superior State University's national championship team and later coaching Division I hockey at LSSU as well as Junior A with the Indians. Ferroni has also coached for many years and is known for his teaching ability. The team will hold an exhibition series at the end of August before beginning its regular season during the first or second week of September at a showcase in Detroit.

Eby said his passion for the program comes from a lifelong connection to hockey. He began playing when he was young and



Culture Division Director Cody Jodoin smudged the team's new locker room at the request of team manager, Dennis Eby.

continued through high school.

His two sons, Haydon and Casen, also play the sport and currently compete in AAA hockey in Ontario because similar opportunities are limited locally for their age group.

"It's more of a lifestyle than an actual sport," he said.

Eby said the program also aims to strengthen community ties. Plans are underway for a community event during the season, potentially including a ceremony organized with Sault Tribe Chairman Austin Lowes to recognize Native American heritage connected to the team's identity.

The team previously played for many years at Lake Superior State University and returned to the local rink last year. Eby said staff at Big Bear Arena have been supportive. "The management at the Big Bear has been phenomenal to work with," he said.

A new website for the team, SooIndiansHockey.com, is currently being developed and will provide team information and updates.

Those interested in contacting the organization can reach Eby at SooIndians18UAAA@gmail.com or by phone at (906) 440-4054.

Project LEAP offers \$500 awards to support Native youth in agriculture

By **Brenda Austin**

The Intertribal Agriculture Council is encouraging Native youth and young professionals to pursue opportunities in agriculture through 2026 Project LEAP.

Project LEAP — short for Leadership in Education for Agriculture Program — is an application-based program designed to support Native youth ages 14 to 26 as they develop projects related to agriculture, natural resources and food systems. The program is hosted by the Intertribal Agriculture Council and supported by Newman's Own Foundation, the Native American Agriculture Fund and a network of partners.

Selected applicants receive a \$500 award to help offset costs associated with agricultural projects, training or existing youth loans. There is no cost to apply. According to the council, the initiative aims to strengthen Indian agriculture by supporting the next generation of producers and leaders. Sustaining Indian agriculture, organizers say, is directly tied to tribal food sovereignty and economic sustainability.

Project LEAP provides financial assistance to ease hardships that may prevent Native youth from advancing personally and professionally in agriculture. Awards are granted on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted. Applications for 2026 opened in early February. Eligible applicants must be enrolled members or citizens of a federally recognized tribe, or direct descen-

dants of an enrolled member or citizen, and be between the ages of 14 and 26. Applicants may receive support through the program once per calendar year.

Required documentation includes a tribal ID, enrollment card or a letter from a tribal enrollment office on tribal letterhead. Alternative verification options are available upon request.

The application also requires a 500- to 800-word essay. Applicants are asked to describe their project, explain why they are applying for LEAP and detail how their project contributes to sustainable agricul-

ture, food security or community development.

Funds may be used for a variety of agricultural-related expenses. Examples include livestock feed, processing and show fees, general upkeep costs, payments on existing youth loans and agricultural supplies such as small machinery, garden tools, seeds and soil. Awards may also support attendance at conferences, workshops or other training opportunities.

Information and applications are available at indianag.org/youth. Questions can be directed to youth@indianag.org.

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Anishinaabemowin 2026

“When I spoke my first word in my language, I felt reborn. That’s not an overstatement. The word rolled off my tongue, expanded into the air around me, and I was Ojibwe. I was a First Nations man.”

Richard Wagamese in his book One Story, One Song.

Aaniish ezhi-bimaadiziiyin? How is life going for you? Here are some medicines **Shkakamigkwe** (Mother Earth) and **Gzhe-manidoo** (Creator) gave us to stay healthy (**N’da mina-zhiyaa.**) and in balance (**N’da miinkiige.**)

Gwejii’iwin mashkikiwan. Exercise is medicine
Bimigtaan endso-giizhigak. Move your body every day.
Baamasen mishkooziiyin. Walk around so you will be strong.
Aapiji gwa g’chi-konaaman. Take really deep breaths.

Gojiing mashkikiwan. Outdoors is medicine.

Honor all the animals (**wesiinhak**), all the plants (**zaakiichiganan**) and all the little-est beings (**manidooshensak**). Also the sun (**giizis**), the wind (**noodin**) and the rain (**gimiwan**).

Baapiwin mashkikiwan. Laughter is medicine.

Minwanigozin. Be cheerful and in good spirits.

Nbaawin mashkikiwan. Sleep is medicine.

Debigwaaman. Have enough sleep.

Minangwaaman. Sleep well.

Miigwechwendamwin mashkikiwan

Gratitude is medicine.

G’zhawendaagozimi.

We are blessed.

G’minaabamewizimi.

We are lucky.

Kidan “Miigwech”

endso giizhigak.

Say thank you every day.



Naagidowendizan. Take care of yourself.

Wi mashkiki daapinaan gaa gamiingoyin.

Take that medicine that was given to you.

Mkwendan: Shkenaa menaa.

Remember: Take it easy; don’t go too crazy

Mamaandonigen giishpin g’ndawendaman.

Ask for help if you need it.

Making our Sounds Most letters sound like they do in English. Here are the exceptions.

aa sounds like the a in *awesome* **a** sounds like the a in *about*

ii sounds like the e in *be* **i** sounds like the i in *dip*

oo sounds like the o in *go* **o** sounds like the oo’s in *book*

e sounds like the e in *Ed* **g** sounds only like it does in *go*

We underlined the syllables that get the emphasis.

Pronounce all the letters. Big deal: these combinations: **nh**, **ns**, **ny** in a word signal the previous vowel is said nasally. The n in these is *always silent* but you pronounce the second letter.

It’s only a sign to say the previous vowel nasally - as if you have a stuffed-up nose!

Ziisbaakdoke Giizis Sugar Making Moon

by Susan Askwith

G’ziiwaagmide-ke-mi. *We are making syrup.*

Early spring when the temperatures swing between above and below freezing, sap begins flowing up trees.

Our special interest is maple trees (**ninaatig-ook**) that are healthy and grow in a good environment. Sugar maples give the sweetest sap with about 1/2 cup of sugar per gallon of sap. So about 40 gallons of sap can boil down to 1 gallon of maple syrup.

Minopogwad! *It tastes good!*

Most of us don’t gather and boil down maple sap anymore. But it was as delicious a part of our ancestors’ diet as it is for us. However as a liquid, it didn’t travel very well and we moved around! Going a step further with the syrup turned it into sugar (**ziisbaakwad**).

That was easier to keep and to sell.



G’ziisbaakwad-o-ke-mi. *We are making sugar.*

Making maple sugar from syrup is quite do-able for any of us. One cup of syrup makes one cup of sugar. Use a thick bottom pot and bring your syrup to a boil at about 260 degrees F. Stir often with a wooden spoon so it won’t stick or boil over. **Aangwaamizin!** (*Be careful*) **Ggwaansagaagimide.** (*It’s extremely hot*) Take it off the heat and stir constantly with a mixer (use just one beater) while it turns beige colored, granulating. When it’s crumbly you can sift it. Bigger chunks can be broken up with a blender. Store at room temperature in an air-tight container.

Clean off your equipment: add a cup of water to the pan, tip your spoon and beater in it, and bring to a boil. Take out the clean(er) beater and spoon. Cover the pot. The crystals on the sides will melt in the steam. Enjoy it as syrup again!

Aambe, baapin! (Come on, laugh!)

Why did the bicycle fall over?

It was two-tired from all the exercise.

Why did the runner always carry a pencil?

In case he needed to draw a quick breath

What’s the best vitamin for friendship?

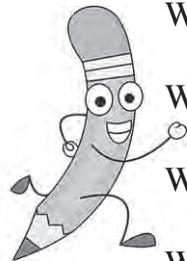
B1

Why do keyboards never sleep?

They have two shifts.

I told Bill Withers ‘Aint’t no sunshine’is bad grammar.

He said, “I know I know I know, I know I know...”



Cultural activities coordinators hired in western units

By Scott Brand

With a pair of relatively recent hires, cultural activities on the west end of the seven-county service area appear to be blossoming in Units IV and V.

Unit IV Cultural Activities Coordinator Kelly Tovar brought a wealth of event planning experience to her new post as she stepped into this position in Sept. of 2025. A member of the Hannahville Indian Community, Tovar had a half-decade's worth of experience as the convention center manager and her background in event coordination

extending into her own small business, a brick-and-mortar shop, that hosted birthday parties and other gatherings.

"We kicked things off with a meet the coordinator brunch," said Tovar, "where we found out what people wanted to see."

Those initial discussions resulted in ribbon-skirt and mocasin workshops, with a black ash basket workshop on tap for April.

"We also have traditional medicine teachings coming up in April," she added.

Tovar said she is also pre-

paring for the upcoming June 6 Manistique Powwow with other events planned for later in the summer.

In Unit V, Cultural Activities Coordinator Stacie Chambers was hired to return to her former post.

"I'm very happy to be back," said Chambers. "It's a crucial time for us (as a tribe). A lot of us didn't get a chance to learn about our culture growing up."

A Sault Tribe member, Chambers worked with Elders' Services for about five years and came away with this mes-

sage: "I learned the importance. They are the knowledge-holders and we need to embrace that and learn from them."

Chambers said she is looking forward to bringing more teachings to tribal members in her area and ran down a list of upcoming events including a dreamcatchers workshop on March 18, a drum ceremony in late March led by Maribeth Leveque, and sewing workshops in both Munising and Marquette in April.

She also said the first meeting to plan the Munising

Powwow — scheduled for Aug. 8 — has already been held with the next session slated for 5:30 p.m. on March 30 at the Munising Tribal Center, located at 622 W. Superior Street in Munising.

Chambers encouraged anyone with questions or ideas to contact her at (906) 379-8061 or by email using schambers1@saulttribe.net.

For more information on upcoming activities see the Sault Tribe's Language and Culture Facebook Page.

Sault Tribe Health Division
WOMEN'S FAST FOR MOTHER EARTH

FASTING BEGINS AT SUNRISE AND ENDS AT SUNSET, FOLLOWED BY A SWEAT LODGE AND FEAST.

MAY 2ND 2026
 @ MARY MURRAY CULTURE CAMP, 266 HOMESTEAD RD. SUGAR ISLAND, MI

- MUST BE 18 YEARS OR OLDER, ANYONE UNDER 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.
- PLEASE REMEMBER MOONTIME TEACHINGS.

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 906-632-0236

SAULT TRIBE HEALTH DIVISION

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM
SPRING FASTING CAMP 2026

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29TH - SUNDAY, MAY 3RD
 @ Mary Murray Culture Camp, 266 Homestead Rd. Sugar Island, MI

MUST BE 18 YEARS OR OLDER, ANYONE UNDER 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 906-632-0236

Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program
Gerard Sagassige
2026 April Healer Clinic Schedule

April 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28
 Sault Ste. Marie Health Center (906)632-0236

Wednesday, April 1st
 St. Ignace Health Center (906)643-8689 or (877)256-0135

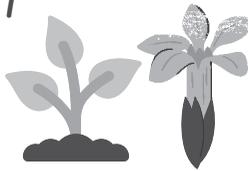
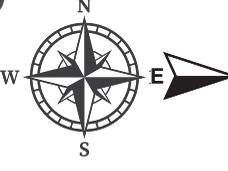
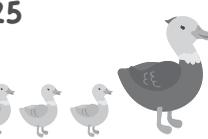
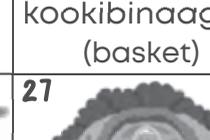
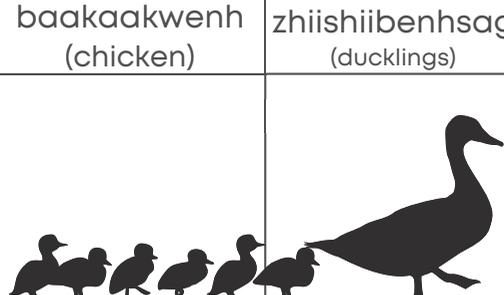
Wednesday, April 8th
 Munising Health Center (906)387-4721 or (800)236-4705

Wednesday, April 15th
 Manistique Health Center (906)341-8469 or (866) 401-0043

Wednesday, April 22nd
 Escanaba Community Center (906)632-0236

ANY QUESTIONS, OR TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM AT 906-632-0236 OR 906-632-5266

NAMEBINI GIIZIS - SUCKERFISH MOON - APRIL 2026

NIIZHWAASO GIIZHIGAT	NTAM GIIZHIGAT	NIIZHO GIIZHIGAT	NSWO GIIZHIGAT	NIIWO GIIZHIGAT	NAANO GIIZHIGAT	NGODWAASWO GIIZHIGAT
		 Mooshkaneshin Dibiki Giizis (It is a full moon.)	1  Maadagiza. (It is the beginning of the month.)	2  Nimkiikaa. (There are lots of thunders.)	3  Goon igizi. (The snow is melting.)	4  Giigoonhke. (S/he is fishing.)
5  Gimjwan. (It is raining.)	6  pichi (robin)	7  Minookimik. (It is Spring.)	8  Giibaastaagazin! (Say something silly!)	9  waabanang (in the East)	10  shki bimaadiziwin (new life)	11  namebini (suckerfish)
12  aki (land/earth.)	13  Gchi noodin. (It is very windy.)	14  Biikaa. (There are mud puddles.)	15  name (sturgeon)	16  waawaanoon (eggs)	17  Tisige. (S/he is coloring/dyeing.)	18  Shkaakamakwe (mother earth)
19  waaboozoonh (rabbit)	20  kookibinaagan (basket)	21  waawaaskone (flower)	22  Shkaakamakwe Giizhigad	23  bgoji zhigaangwizhiik (wild leek)	24  baakaakwenh (chicken)	25  zhiishiibenhsag (ducklings)
26  ozisigobimizh or ziisgomizh (pussywillow)	27  t'kibi (spring water)	28  Biidaaban. (It is the light before sunrise.)	29  kwe maanzinan (lady slippers)	30  gokolii mkizan (the lady slipper flower)		

Tribal primary election candidates speak out in forum

Unit I Candidate



SUZANNE CASKEY

Aaniin! My name is Suzanne Caskey. I am running for the Sault Tribe Board of Directors, Unit 1.

A little information about myself: I have lived in the area for the majority of my life. My mother was Veronica Caskey (nee Pavlat), my grandmother was Katherine Pavlat (nee Santigo), and my great-grandfather was Frank Santigo.

I am a retired State of Michigan Employee. With my work at DSS, I gained the knowledge of support systems that are available for our people to go to for help. I also worked at MDOC as an Account Technician for 15 facilities, which gave me a wealth of knowledge in accounting and capital assets.

I was a single mother to three children, Michelle Veit, Christopher Caskey and Kaitlin Farmer. I am the grandmother of eight and great-grandmother to two children.

I believe that I possess the abilities, knowledge and experience needed to help get the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians on a better track.

These are the issues that I believe are important to helping our Tribe to step into the future on a positive note:

- Helping the tribe to come into a healthy financial status. If we don't fix this, we won't have a tribe to hand down to our children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren.
- Taking care of our most

vulnerable groups; our children and our elderly. Help to introduce better programs for these groups of people. To make sure our most vulnerable tribal members are getting the best care that we can offer.

- Valuing our Sault Tribe employees. Happy and healthy workers make for a better working and customer service environment, which makes for a better Sault Tribe.

- Making sure that there is no self-serving going on. If we can't do what is best for the tribe, then we shouldn't be doing more for individuals. Not everyone is going to be happy, but we must address the needs of the majority, not the minority.

Starting out life on 10th Avenue, off of Shunk Road, I was exposed to a lot of native traditions. I remember sitting and watching Carrie Payment weave sweet grass baskets. I remember other elders making homemade bread and meals with items found on the land. That was when tradition meant you used what you took from the land and did not waste anything, as times were tough for a number of households.

We need to be focused on tradition along with other cultural values. I would like to help make sure that these traditions stay alive to carry on to our future generations. Tribal Members need to know that they are important and that each one has a voice in how this tribe is conducted.

Your support and vote are appreciated. Chi Migwetch!

Unit I Candidate BETTY FREIHEIT

Hello, as you know by now, my name is Betty Freiheit. I am an elder running to serve you once again as your Unit 1 board member. When I first ran for office, I shared that I was running to bring back a sense of tribal community that led to our federal recognition and the services that came with it.

Growing up with 13 brothers and sisters, we were poor and did not have indoor plumbing. What we did have was community in



the Shunk and Marquette, West End, Algonquin, Barbeau, Dafter, Brimley, Paradise, Sugar Island and other Indian neighborhoods that now includes our Kincheloe reservation community. We took care of each other. We were and are all important and deserve an equal shake at the tribal dream.

We must never forget where we came from in order to effectively advocate for our people.

If you elect me, I will continue to fight for all of our tribal employees in gaming, enterprises and those who offer services to our people. They are the engines that generate our funding and operate services to help our people. I always have our families, children, elders and grandchildren at the forefront of my mind to ensure all benefit from our membership. Tribal and gaming employment has brought amazing changes to our tribe, including providing jobs. I recognize the value of our frontline workers who drive revenues.

I retired from the state of Michigan as a corrections officer, but I also worked for several years in our Kewadin Casinos. I have long fought to protect our

tribal employees' rights and was the first lay advocate in tribal court.

I have fought for your rights for over 30 years and improved tribal members' lives. In just one term I fought to overturn a corrupt appointment of chair and won the lawsuit in tribal court. I did this because no political faction on our board should decide who gets to be chair. That is your decision as the voters of this tribe. I supported Austin Lowes for the board when we ran together for the board in 2020 and I openly supported him as chair in the Special Advisory Election in 2022 and General Election in 2024.

I have been the loudest voice in pushing for a separation of powers and standing in tribal court. In the last edition of this

See "Candidates," page 10

VOTE ✓

SUE ST. ONGE

**SAULT TRIBE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
UNIT 3**

For The People

Ad Endorsed by Sue St. Onge

Priorities I support:

Three-Branch Government

A three-branch system strengthens accountability and protects from corruption. Each branch must serve as a checks and balance on the other. Each branch must truly be independent with clear terms and protections from political pressure.

Land Claim/Elder Fund repayments and expansion

I support a 2% revenue share with the Elders Fund, as well as, a path forward to repay and honor our loan and commitment to our Elders.

Transparent and Inclusive 2% and Cultural funds allocation process

We should utilize our elder committee and Tribal Youth Council to help guide allocation of 2% and Cultural Funds in our perspective Units.

Protecting our Tribal Sovereignty and Treaty rights

Tribal Sovereignty is not something the government gave us but what we retained. Hunting and gathering is one right we retained. There were also agreements made in Education, Health and Protections of our Homelands. None of which have been truly honored.

Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability

Our resources are limited and must be protected. No more pet projects, and no-bid contracts. We need to trust our experts and listen more to our team members in direct services. They have the skills, knowledge and commitment needed to advise sound financial decisions.



Turn your weekends into Adventures!



With a Recreational Loan from Soo Co-op Credit Union.

**Sault Ste. Marie - Brimley
Kinross - Cedarville**

www.soocoop.com



Phone:
906-298-0299

Email:
Suestonge@yahoo.com



VOTE **BIG DEAN HYSLOP** FOR UNIT 2

Commercial Fisherman FED UP WITH TRIBAL CORRUPTION!

My Commitment to Fairness & Tribal Equity:

Ahniin, Bigassige Ndzhnakoꝝ. My 'Nish name means a clearing in the clouds. Both of my parents are tribal from the Moses and Payment family trees. Our Indian ways tell us we are all equal and no one is better than anyone else. Over the years, our Unit 2 communities like Newberry, Naubinway, Epoufette, Detour, Drummond, Engadine, Pickford, Rudyard, Gulliver, McMillan, and Curtis have been left out.

Two years ago, I addressed the "Unit 2 Trailer give away" to a non-Sault Tribe person. During the 2022 election, the Board voted [Resolution #: 2024-33 [1-16-24]] to pay back Cares Act funds over \$76,468.75! Was this a cover-up for an embezzlement, or to help my opponent get re-elected in 2024?!

How do you pick a non-Sault Tribe person to get a home while we have a 2 year waiting list for own people to get into tribal housing? Enough of the nepotism and cronyism. Enough with the golf courses that lose hundreds of thousands a year. They don't feed people or provide housing. Enough of the sweetheart backroom deals.

*** I promise to listen to your needs and represent ALL of Unit 2 & At Large Members ***

Newberry * Naubinway * Drummond * Detour * Engadine * Pickford * Rudyard * Cedarville * Hessel * Gulliver * McMillan * Curtis



What We Will Work to Accomplish Together:

- 3 Branch Separation of Powers Now
- Protect Sacred Treaty Rights
- Access to Cultural Teachings
- Constitutional Amendments
- Address Tribal Health Care Crisis
- Eliminate Nepotism & Cronyism
- Solicitor to Investigate Corruption
- Expand Tax Agreement Area
- Proper & Timely Employee Training
- Food Sovereignty & Security
- Support Higher Ed / Trade Schools
- Establish Employee Living Wage

Unit 2 Values We Share and Will Fight for:

Paid for & Endorsed by Dean Hyslop, Sr.

Responsibility Accountability Reliability Fairness Strong Advocacy Transparency

Much More We can Achieve if We Believe:

BRING BACK OUR CEREMONIAL PIPE TO MAKE OUR TRIBE WHOLE

I was at the board meeting in Hessel when it was taken away from us. I will work to have it returned. Lets treat all with respect.

SUPPORT ADDING MACKINAC BAND TO OUR SAULT TRIBE CONSTITUTION ONCE AND FOR ALL

How ever Mackinac Band Members got enrolled, over 52% are currently Members. I support Unity and retaining them on the Rolls.

EXPAND ELDER SERVICES TO PROVIDE NEEDED FOOD & SHELTER REGARDLESS OF INCOME

There are many Elders who make a little over income but still need our help. No Elder should want for food, or shelter.

EXPAND SERVICES TO PROVIDE COMMODS REGARDLESS INCOME

There are also many younger members and young families who are just over income who are also suffering. Let's get them help too.

INCREASE ANNUAL ELDER CHECKS AMOUNTS

The amount Elders receive is an embarrassment. Let's raise it to an amount we can be proud of. We all benefit when our Elders do.

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO TRIBAL MEMBERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE OF JUST ONE COMMUNITY

Many members outside of one community face the same issues as those inside. We need to remove this barrier & provide services to ALL. I respect all of our former villages. All deserve our attention.

CREATE COMMERCIAL FISHER RETIREMENT FUND

Since tribal commercial fishers do not receive social security, they need support through retirement. I have a plan on how to pay for it.

GROW SELF-SUFFICIENT TRIBAL BUSINESSES TO DRIVE REVENUES

This will provide financial support back to Tribal services. Our Tribal businesses should contribute not forever take from the tribe.

PROTECT OUR MOTHER EARTH & WATERS

This is to protect our way of life and treaty rights. It is also a matter of self-preservation. Our Fisheries and way of live are endangered.

STOP OPPOSITIONAL POLITICAL INFIGHTING

No More Political Coups ~ Forcing the Tribal Chair to resign and appointing a Chair was not what they people wanted. Enough!

To Volunteer: Call: 906-322-8470 ~ OR ~ JOIN ME ON FACEBOOK @BIG.DEAN.HYSLOP.FOR.UNIT.2

VOTE BIG DEAN HYSLOP FOR UNIT 2 - SAULT TRIBE ELECTION

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From "Candidates," page 8 paper and my full-page ad this month, I have laid out our accomplishments and what we will achieve together if you elect me to one of your two Unit 1 seats. I need and would appreciate your vote in the Primary and in the General Election. When you cast your vote, look past a nice smile and vague promises. Vote based on knowing with certainty who will fight for you and fight against corruption.

Please vote for me so we can build even greater momentum in bringing back community and improving all tribal members' lives.

With love and respect, Betty Freiheit, Unit I board candidate
Unit I Candidate



ASHLEY GRAVELLE

Aanii. My name is Ashley Gravelle. I am a life-long member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and I am running for the Sault Tribe Board of Directors to help restore respect, accountability, transparency, and a common-sense form of leadership guided by active involvement from our membership.

I have lived and worked throughout the tribe's seven-county service area and have called Sault Ste. Marie home for more than a decade, where I am raising my family. As a life-long tribal member, I am aware of the issues our tribe faces, and I believe I have the character, compassion, and real-world, hands-on experience necessary to provide the quality of leadership our tribe needs. Transparency is not just a word used during election time—it must be a consistent practice of open communication, honest decision-making, and accountability to the membership we serve.

I am running for the board because I believe that our tribe is strongest when members and employees feel heard, informed, and valued. Our tribe is strongest when its leadership conducts itself in a professional manner and actually practices the Seven Grandfather Teachings—respect, humility, honesty, bravery, wisdom, truth, and love. I believe we need to bring back a common-sense approach to leadership: decisions that are practical, transparent, and grounded in what actually works for our members and communities—not politics, division, or closed-door decision-making. I am an advocate at heart, and if elected, I am prepared to step away from the work I love, to advocate for all tribal members at the governing level. My priorities center on membership active involvement,

transparency, and common-sense leadership:

- Ensuring members are actively involved and heard through open town halls and direct engagement
- Increasing transparency and accountability in board decisions, communication, and processes
- Ensuring closed sessions are used only when required by tribal code
- Restoring respect, professionalism, and ethical conduct in leadership
- Advocating for employees, elders, survivors, and families who rely on tribal services
- Supporting culturally grounded programs that promote healing, prevention, and community wellness
- Making practical, community-informed decisions that reflect real member needs across all service areas

To me, common-sense leadership means listening before deciding, explaining decisions clearly, and remaining account-

able to the people we serve.

I want members to feel confident that their leadership listens, communicates openly, and makes decisions with integrity. Our board should reflect the voices of our membership and should always remain accountable to the people it serves. Active membership involvement must be part of how our tribe governs, not something that happens only during elections.

I am now asking for the opportunity to advocate for our tribe as a whole and to help strengthen trust between leadership and membership through transparency, participation, and common-sense leadership.

Megwitch,
Ashley Gravelle
(906) 203-0171
Frazier28@gmail.com
Unit I Candidate
LORI JUMP

Aanii! My name is Lori (Lorrie) Jump and I am a candidate for Unit One representative.

My parents are Cecil and Edna



(Gurnoe) Pavlat. My father, Cecil, received the very first honorary tribal membership for his work with the Sault Ste. Marie Elders Committee. Many of my siblings have worked for the tribe at various places including ACFS, tribal health, administration, Cultural Department, tribal newspaper and tribal court.

My life has been spent working for our relatives in Indian Country, primarily in Sault Ste. Marie, but more recently at the

state and national levels. I've been a victim advocate, program manager, executive director and now CEO of a national nonprofit serving American Indians and Alaska Natives. I served as an appellate court judge for 16 years. Today, I manage a team of 45 and an annual budget of \$5M. I have a deep understanding of sovereignty, finance, budgeting, tribal and federal laws impacting Indian Country.

If elected, I promise to support a true separation of powers, increase transparency and promote fiscal responsibility. I will retire from my current position and be a full time board member. My platform is simple:
CHANGE. CONSTITUTION.

We must establish a true separation of powers by adopting a new constitution. This is critical, and to be honest, I'm not sure that the current board will get the job done. Each time we appear to be making progress, one or another board member will raise

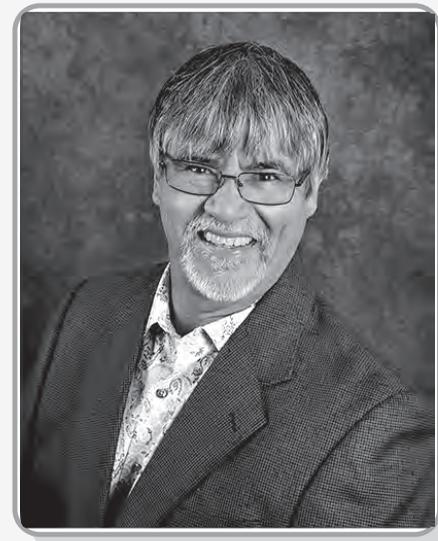
See "Candidates," page 21

RE-ELECT ISAAC MCKECHNIE

Accountability • Results • A Stronger Future

DELIVERING RESULTS

- ✓ Opened Enrollment
- ✓ Constitutional Reform
- ✓ Opened the first Native American Homeless Shelter in Michigan
- ✓ Opened a Medical Assisted Therapy Center
- ✓ Eliminated Board Retirement Program
- ✓ Reduced \$88M JLLJ Award down to \$35M
- ✓ Allocated \$40M in Funding for the Kewadin Renovations
- ✓ Approved 2025 Employee Compensation Study
- ✓ Approved 2026 JKL Bahweting Compensation Plan
- ✓ Purchased Hundreds of Acres of Vacant Property for Cultural Purposes
- ✓ Approved Lease Agreement with BlackRock to operate our Kewadin Sault Restaurant Space
- ✓ Purchased 24 Single-wide Homes for the Home Replacement Program
- ✓ Purchased 20 Modulares for the Home Ownership Program
- ✓ Renovated 42 Home Units at KI Sawyer
- ✓ Purchased Two Apartment Complexes
- ✓ Purchased Sugar Island Powwow
- ✓ Acquired the WilWalk Cemetery
- ✓ Created a Elder Community Garden



PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

OPEN ENROLLMENT

- ✓ Protect and improve open enrollment so eligible descendants aren't locked out
- ✓ Streamline the process with clear timelines, better communication, and consistent standards
- ✓ Invest in enrollment staffing/technology so applications move faster and stay transparent

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- ✓ Restore checks & balances so no single branch controls everything
- ✓ Strengthen accountability with clear rules, deadlines, and enforceable procedures
- ✓ Keep reform member-driven-based on what the people vote for

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

- ✓ Fix wage compression so long-time employees aren't stuck near starting wages
- ✓ Improve retention with competitive pay, step scales, and fair progression
- ✓ Increase transparency so compensation decisions are consistent and earned

4-DAY WORK WEEK FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

- ✓ Use a 4-day schedule as a recruitment and retention tool to keep good employees
- ✓ Implement responsibly with coverage plans so services stay strong
- ✓ Ensure fairness so it works for frontline and office staff not just a few departments

Tribal License and Registration Program

- ✓ Complete the Tribal Licensing Program with the State of Michigan

LAND CLAIM / ELDER FUND LOAN REPAYMENT

- ✓ Prioritize a repayment plan using 3% of the annual Hotel tax fund which protects the Elder Fund and honors commitments to our elders
- ✓ Provide full transparency on balances, timelines, and payments

HEALTHCARE EXPANSION

- ✓ Expand access with faster appointments, improved referrals, and more specialty care
- ✓ Strengthen quality and continuity through stable staffing and service standards
- ✓ Improve access for members outside the service area through partnerships and smarter systems

SELF SUFFICIENCY

- ✓ To be more self-sufficient, the Tribe must generate its own revenue, govern transparently, expand tribal-run services, grow its land base, strengthen its culture, and create long-term financial systems that protect our future generations.

ENTERPRISE EXPANSION

- ✓ Grow revenue outside gaming to reduce reliance on one income source
- ✓ Require ROI-based spending: measurable outcomes, sustainability, and reporting
- ✓ Build workforce development to keep tribal dollars circulating in tribal jobs and contracts

Paid for by the Committee to Re-Elect
Isaac Mckechnie

906.440.6661 • iamckechnie@yahoo.com

Please Cast 1 of your 2 Unit 1 Ballots for...

Paid for and Endorsed by Betty Freiheit



BETTY FREIHEIT

~ Unit 1, Sault Tribe Board of Directors ~

Sault ~ Kincheloe/ Kinross ~ Brimley ~ Sugar Island ~ Dafter ~ Barbeau ~ Paradise

Dear Unit 1 Voters Everywhere:

I have and will continue to fight for you. I am a strong advocate who will tell you like it is and push for a Tribal government that respects your rights as Citizens. Please vote for accomplishments and not empty promises. Below is just some of what we achieved on your behalf when I was in office and what we will accomplish together again. **Our work is not done; let's roll up our sleeves and get back to work!**

~ Betty

What We Have Already Accomplished Together....

- ◆ Sponsored Resolution to Discontinue BOD Pension going forward
- ◆ I filed & WON Election Complaint on Corrupt Election Committee Member
- ◆ Sponsored Resolution to Give All Tribal Members a Pandemic Check
- ◆ Sponsored Resolution of No Confidence Against Hoffman
- ◆ Sponsored Resolution to Vacate Illegal Appointment of Hoffman as Chair
- ◆ Sponsored Resolution to Hold Special Advisory Election for Tribal Chair
- ◆ Exposed Unit 2 ~ \$76,468 Cares Act Give-A-Way to Non-Tribal Individual
- ◆ Exposed 2022 Political Coup that undid 2020 Election for Tribal Chair
- ◆ Fought and WON frivolous court complaints filed against me by Hoffman
- ◆ Testified in DC to Protect Victims of Crime; Especially our Children
- ◆ Served as 1st Tribal Court Lay Advocate (for free)
- ◆ I Fearlessly Confront Tribal Corruption No Matter who is involved

What We WILL Accomplish Together....

- ◆ Constitutional Amendment for a 3-Branch Separation of Powers
- ◆ Grant Immediate Tribal Citizen Standing & Due Process in Tribal Court
- ◆ Repay Elder Fund to Increase Elder Checks. \$340 is not enough!
- ◆ Establish Indian Preference Goals in Hiring
- ◆ Set Tribal Contractor Preference at 10%
- ◆ Protect our Treaty Rights and Tribal Sovereignty
- ◆ Establish Better Inter-Tribal Relations & Treaty Rights Cooperation
- ◆ State & Federal Bi-Partisan Advocacy | Congress & the US President
- ◆ Tribal Citizen Amendment to Set Board of Directors Term Limits
- ◆ Code of Ethics to Expose Board Member Back Door Developer Deals
- ◆ Tribal Labor Law to Protect ALL Tribal Employees' Due Process Rights
- ◆ MI Indian Tuition Waiver based on Tribal Membership not 1/4 Quantum
- ◆ Referenda Votes & Polls to Help Guide Key Decision Making
- ◆ Resolution to Add Emmet & Cheboygan to Health Service Area NOW!
- ◆ Free Tribal Enhanced IDs & Sault Tribe Citizen License Plates
- ◆ Open a Sault Tribe Health Center in a Central Area in Lower MI
- ◆ Fund Tribal Elder Medicare Supplemental Insurance
- ◆ Work with Chairman Lowes to Represent All Members Everywhere

"Let's Appoint Jennifer McLeod for all the Dirty Work she did for us!"

A political faction on the Board should not be able to undo your vote. Two years after being defeated for Chair in the 2020 election, Jennifer McLeod refused to accept the outcome. In January 2022, she colluded with Hoffman, Sorenson and incumbent Board members to coordinate a removal petition identical to the Censure document. On June 20, 2022, (when 100% of the Board who lost their election) a secret meeting was held to appoint a Chair rather than elect one. Sorenson actually said, "Let's Appoint Jennifer McLeod for all the Dirty Work she did for us?" Soon Sorenson and McLeod will be under oath to explain what they meant. **Soon, you will know the truth.**

~ Direct Quote: Bridgett Sorenson, June 2022

- Sorenson Proposes to Appoint McLeod as Chair in '22;
- Jennifer McLeod Main Removal Petitioner;
- Censure Document Identical Match to Removal Petition;
- Censure Investigation Cost estimate = \$100,000;
- No Criminal or Civil Violations Found in Investigation;
- McLeod Illegally Records Conversation (in disguise);
- Request to lower required Removal Signature #;
- Sorenson & McLeod Sworn Testimony under oath...

PRICELESS!



Tradition of Tribal Giving



When the 3 of served together, we donated well over \$20K for Tribal charities. We make an great team. Return me to office to finish what we started.

Following the 2022 Political Coup, 100% of the incumbents lost their seats including Hoffman. The "Losing 6" then voted to appoint Hoffman who you rejected in the 2022 primary. I stood up for your right to elect your Chairman and won in Tribal Court. I wrote and sponsored the tribal resolutions that ensured you got to choose your Chairperson. A political Board faction do not have that right!

This kind of leadership takes courage and strength of character. I will always stand up and fight for you when necessary!

I have and will always fight for your rights! ~ Betty

If you would like to Volunteer to Help Elect Betty to the Unit 1 Sault Tribe Board, Please contact her at:

PHONE: 906-322-0976

EMAIL: Sootribe@gmail.com

ADDRESS: 820 W. 28th Ave., A-1, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Welcoming new leaders and team members

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is proud to welcome seven dedicated professionals into new roles across our organization. Each brings unique experience, deep commitment and a shared passion for serving the tribe and its people.

Strengthening Technology and Innovation

Robert Hollowell — At the end of 2025, Robert Hollowell accepted the position of IT director at Kewadin Casinos.

With more than a decade of information technology experience—including the last four years within the organization—Robert brings both expertise and continuity to the position.

He holds a bachelor's degree in computer networking from Lake Superior State University and a master's degree in information systems from Central Michigan University.

"I'm fortunate to be surrounded by an exceptional IT team at Kewadin, and along with the support of our executive and management leaders, the transition has been seamless," he says.

A proud member of the Sault Tribe, Robert is passionate about advancing innovation in the fast-paced, 24/7 gaming and hospitality environment.

Outside of work, he enjoys spending time on the Great Lakes with his long-time partner, Amy, listening to music, grilling and cheering on his favorite sports teams.

Nick Eitrem — Working closely in IT leadership is Nick Eitrem, whose career reflects steady growth and service to the organization.

Nick began working for the Sault Tribe while attending college, starting as a janitor—an experience, he said, that shaped his appreciation for every role contributing to organizational success.

In 2012, he joined the IT department as a PC technician and was promoted later that year to network technician. By 2014, he became systems administrator for Kewadin Gaming systems and servers. In 2016, he became telecommunications manager, overseeing phone systems and WAN infrastructure across all locations.

In 2023, Nick stepped into the role of IT director and helped build what is now the Kewadin IT Department. During a leadership transition in 2025, he served as interim CIO. In 2026, he accepted the title of IT director, working directly with the CIO, and continuing to strengthen technology operations while supporting the organization's broader mission.

Having grown from an entry-level role into IT leadership, Nick remains grounded in the belief that steady progress, strong relationships and a service-first mindset drive lasting success.

Leading with Service and Cultural Commitment

Jami R. Moran — serves as director of Anishnaabek

Community and Family Services (ACFS). A Sault Tribe member, Jami brings more than 25 years of progressive leadership experience within ACFS and a lifelong commitment to protecting the welfare, prosperity and cultural continuity of the tribe for the next seven generations.

Beginning her service in 1999, Jami has led across multiple service components, including outpatient substance abuse counseling, residential adolescent treatment, child and family services and victim services programming. Most recently, she served as Advocacy Resource Program director, overseeing federal and state grant programs, ensuring regulatory compliance and managing complex budgets.

Her leadership is grounded in direct service experience as a Child Placement Services supervisor and caseworker, including work in Indian Child Welfare Act implementation, protective services and foster care systems. Jami is a Michigan Licensed Bachelor Level Social Worker and a cum laude graduate of Lake Superior State University with a bachelor of science degree in human services and sociology.

Throughout her career, she has contributed to tribal, state and national initiatives addressing child welfare and victim services. Her leadership reflects Anishinaabe values, trauma-informed practice, accountability, collaboration and culturally grounded service delivery. As director of ACFS, Jami leads with deep institutional knowledge and an unwavering dedication to tribal sovereignty.

Supporting Governance and Organizational Excellence

Samuel Derusha — On Jan. 12, 2026, Samuel Derusha began serving as assistant board administrator. Born and raised in Newberry, Samuel earned a bachelor's degree in aviation management and operations from Western Michigan University. His professional background includes full-cycle recruitment and HR work for a private security company in Seattle, as well as more than a decade of experience in water safety and swim instruction.

After living in the Seattle area for over four years, Samuel recently returned to the Upper Peninsula.

"Glad to be back in the Yoop, and with my people again," he said. His return brings valuable HR, operational and organizational experience to the tribe's governance team.

Strengthening Tribal Self-Governance

Jeff Holt — recently accepted the position of Self-Governance specialist. Holt brings more than two decades of experience with

the Sault Tribe, beginning his career in the Economic Development Department before moving into Planning and Development.

During his 22 years with the tribe, Holt contributed to a wide range of initiatives, including business development, grant and financial management, housing development, tribal energy initiatives and construction projects such as the Manistique and Munising community centers.

After a brief hiatus from tribal employment, Holt returned in September 2024 as a project management specialist with Kewadin Casinos. Working under the direction of the CEO, he oversaw infrastructure improvements, facility upgrades and special projects.

In his current role, Holt manages financial activities within the Tribal Self-Governance Program, develops systems to ensure compliance with federal guidelines and negotiates annual funding agreements with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services. He also oversees program documentation, correspondence and reporting.

The Office of Self-Governance supports the tribe's authority over federal funding under the Federal Trust Responsibility — a legal obligation through which the United States, through treaties, acts

of Congress and court decisions, is committed to protecting tribal treaty rights, lands, assets and resources while ensuring continued access to essential services.

Advancing Planning, Grants and Community Impact

Barb (Gravelle) Smutek — has joined the Planning and Development Department as grants compliance manager.

Though several years have passed since she last worked for the tribe, she said returning feels like a warm welcome home.

Smutek brings more than a decade of experience supporting tribal education and services. She provided direct services through the Youth Education and Activities program and later managed the Sault Tribe Alive Youth Project grant, delivering suicide prevention support across communities.

One of her proudest accomplishments has been watching youth from the Bahweting Anishinabek Tribal Youth Council grow into accomplished adults.

Her career also includes food sovereignty work with Michigan State University Extension and federal contracting providing training and technical assistance to tribal grantees nationwide.

In her new role, Smutek helps ensure grant funding is managed responsibly and effectively.

Outside of work, she enjoys time with family, community involvement and lifelong learning.

Stewardship of Wildlife and Natural Resources

Katie Schultz — has been serving as Wildlife Program manager for three months.

As a Sault Tribe member, the role is especially meaningful as she contributes to stewardship efforts that respect and honor wildlife and plant communities.

Katie began her career with the tribe as an assistant biologist and later worked as an assessment biologist. After spending several years with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, she returned to serve the tribe in this leadership role.

She holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in fisheries and wildlife resources. Outside of work, she enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and camping.

A Shared Commitment to the Future

Across technology, family services, governance, self-governance, grants management and natural resources, these seven leaders represent dedication, experience and a deep connection to community. Their work strengthens the tribe's mission today and supports a vibrant future. Please join us in welcoming them to their new roles.



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Celebrating the power of nutrition for 2026 National Nutrition Month during March

FROM THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

March 1 marked the first day of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' annual National Nutrition Month campaign. Celebrated every March since 1980, the Academy shares resources to help empower consumers to make informed food choices and develop healthful eating and physical activity habits. The theme of this year's campaign is Discover the Power of Nutrition.

"Food and nutrients power everything we do! Whether you're using brain power to learn a new skill or lesson, physical power to run, jump, play, compete, heal or spend time in nature, or powering up for a new day with a good night's sleep, optimal nutrition is key," said registered dietitian nutritionist Jen Bruning, an Academy spokesperson from Chicago, Ill. "This National Nutrition Month, think about all the ways you can add enjoyable nourishment to your meals, snacks, and tasty bites. Try a new recipe, fruit or vegetable, or cuisine from a new-to-you culture to expand your options at mealtime!"

POWER YOUR DAY WITH

NUTRITION

"Balanced, varied, and realistic food choices can support energy, performance, resilience, and overall well-being at every age," said registered dietitian nutritionist Angel Planells, an Academy spokesperson from Seattle, Wash. "Everyone can benefit from consuming a variety of foods from all food groups — doing so helps kids and teens power their school day so they can grow and learn; by choosing balanced meals and rotating food choices throughout the week, adults power their day with energy and focus; varying flavors and textures to ensure a wide range of nutrients older adults powers healthy aging. At every stage of life, good nutrition helps power our busy days."

FIND ADVICE BACKED BY SCIENCE

"The Academy's National Nutrition Month hub is one of my favorite tools to share with clients," said registered dietitian nutritionist Caroline Susie, an Academy spokesperson from Dallas, Texas. "This year's theme, Discover the Power of Nutrition, offers practical, science-backed tips, from powering your day with balanced food choices to

building healthy habits on any budget. It's a trusted, one-stop resource that empowers people to take charge of their health with confidence, and it reminds them that a registered dietitian nutritionist is here to guide them every step of the way. The Academy has more resources backed by science available in the Nutrition Fact Check series — current hot nutrition topics include seed oils, food dyes, ultra-processed foods and more, with additional topics added throughout the year."

STAY NOURISHED ON ANY BUDGET

"The power of nutrition isn't just about what's on your plate. It's about having the skills to prepare meals with what you have, knowing where to turn for support in your community, and advocating for systems that make healthy food accessible to all," said registered dietitian nutritionist Theresa Gentile, an Academy spokesperson from Brooklyn, N.Y. "When we build those skills and support systems, we help individuals and communities truly thrive and enjoy a healthy life."

FEEL GOOD WITH HEALTHY HABITS

"Feeling good with healthy

habits isn't about perfection — it's about making small changes throughout your day that add up and can help improve your overall health," said registered dietitian nutritionist Lena Beal, an Academy spokesperson from Atlanta, Ga. "From practicing simple home food safety habits such as washing hands and surfaces, and taking time to plan ahead and reduce mealtime stress, to including physical activity you enjoy, like dancing to your favorite music or a walk with friends, there are so many healthy habits you can start adding to your day. Start small and see where your new healthy habits can take you!"

As part of National Nutrition Month® celebrations, the Academy is proud to shine a spotlight on the critical work of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NTDR), with Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day on the second Wednesday of March and Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered Day on the second Thursday of March. This year, RDN Day will be celebrated on March 11 and NDTR Day will be celebrated

on March 12.

To find an RDN near you, visit the Academy's Find a Nutrition Expert directory.

FINDING A SAULT TRIBE REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

- DeTour Tribal Health Center**
(906) 442-0111
- Gladstone Tribal Health Center**
(906) 341-1836
- Grand Island (Munising) Chippewa Community Center**
(906) 387-4721
- Hessel Community Health Center**
(906) 484-2727
- Manistique Tribal Health Clinic**
(906) 341-8469
- Marquette Community Health Center**
(906) 225-1616
- Newberry Community Health Center**
(906) 293-8181
- Sault Tribal Health Clinic Sault Ste. Marie**
(906) 632-5210
- Sault Tribe Health & Human Service Center in St. Ignace**
(906) 643-8689

IHEART Spring 2026 Virtual Summit to be held March 24

SUBMITTED BY JESSICA A. RICKERT, DDS, ANISHINAABE DENTAL OUTREACH

The Indigenous Health, Education, and Resources Taskforce, IHEART is a national collaborative which addresses the scarcity of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) in the health professions.

IHEART includes about 650 AI/AN health professions educators, learners, organizational leaders, and community members.

This Indigenous led, culturally responsive network has supported the engagement, matriculation, retention, and graduation of AI/AN individuals interested in the health professions.

IHEART supports Native students in the health sciences, from K-12 to residency and beyond!

The IHEART Spring 2026 Virtual Summit is a two-day conference focused on strengthening the Native health workforce through connection, shared learning, and collaboration.

Programming will include discipline-specific discussions across healthcare fields, student panels highlighting education and workforce pathways, and

updates from the National Indian Health Board (NIHB).

Jessica A. Rickert, DDS, will present at 3:30 p.m. EST. on March 24.

This virtual workshop on Zoom is designed for students, healthcare professionals, educators, and partners engaged in advancing Native health workforce development.

IHEART Website: <https://www.iheartnativeworkforce.org/>

IHEART Virtual Summit: <https://www.iheartnativeworkforce.org/event/spring-2026-virtual-workshop/>

Summit Registration: <https://aamc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/puDetrn-TwyRcDt1oULd-TA#/registration>

Tribal member addresses sought, is your name on this list?

Sault Tribe members whose addresses are not up to date have "bad addresses" with the tribe's Enrollment Department.

Check the names on the list and if you see a friend or relative on the list, let them know.

Go to saulttribe.com and scroll down Membership Services to Tribal Enrollment. Then go to the Information column on the left side of the Enrollment page and select "Up-to-date addresses sought." Call (800) 251-6597 or email [Stacey Synett at ssynett@saulttribe.net](mailto:Stacey.Synett@saulttribe.net).

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Is it time to right-size your home for comfort?

The Sault Tribe Housing Authority (STHA) regularly evaluates the most effective ways to provide housing opportunities for members of the Sault Tribe. As part of this effort, STHA must periodically reassess the number of individuals residing in each housing unit, as there is a significant need for rental housing in our local communities.

In order to better match families with housing that meets their needs, some households may be reassigned from larger units to smaller, appropriately sized homes. This will allow larger units to be available for families who need additional space.

STHA tenants will begin receiving notices if their current unit is larger than what is required for their household size. Relocation to a smaller unit will not occur immediately; however, tenants who receive a notice may be relocated at a future date. STHA will first ask for volunteers willing to move and will prioritize relocating those tenants.

This is not a new practice. For example, when the St. Ignace Elder Complex was being built

most recently, the Housing staff reviewed the current tenant households and were able to relocate nine elders to apartments in the complex. This freed up those family units on the housing site and added to housing availability in that area. There was substantial movement on the waiting list in the St. Ignace area because of that.

Although downsizing from a larger unit to a smaller one may require considerable effort and adjustment, the long-term financial benefits frequently outweigh the initial inconvenience.

Right-Sizing Our Homes for Comfort, Efficiency, and the Next Chapter of Life

At one time, a larger home made perfect sense. It held growing families, busy schedules, and full lives. But as children move out and priorities shift, many members find themselves caring for more house than they truly need.

Across the Upper Peninsula, members are beginning to ask an important question: Does my home still fit my life?

For many, the answer is lead-

Signs It Might Be Time to Right-Size

You may want to consider a smaller home if:

- Several bedrooms or living spaces go unused or become a storage area.
- Heating and utility costs feel higher than they should be
- You are planning for retirement or aging in place
- You want to reduce expenses and simplify daily living
- Your home no longer matches your current household size

ing them toward right-sizing—relocating to a smaller, more manageable home that better supports today's needs while planning responsibly for the future.

Living in the U.P. offers unmatched beauty and a strong sense of community, but it also comes with long winters and higher energy demands. Larger homes require more time, labor, and expense to maintain—snow removal, heating unused rooms, and keeping up with lawn care/yard work. As these responsibilities grow, they can become burdensome rather than beneficial. Right-sizing is not about giving something up. It is about gaining flexibility and peace of mind. Smaller homes are easier to heat,

easier to maintain, and easier to live in year-round. Many are designed with efficient layouts, modern features, and accessibility in mind—making them well suited for aging in place while preserving independence and comfort. Members who have made the transition often find they spend less time managing a home and more time enjoying family, hobbies, and community life. Right-sizing also strengthens the community as a whole. When members relocate into homes that better match their current household size, larger homes become available for growing families who need them. This creates a healthier housing cycle—one that supports elders, families, and

future generations alike.

As one housing leader notes, income based rental housing in our tribal communities is a huge need. Moving families from larger units to smaller units meets the needs for all generations of tribal members and makes sense.

Housing should serve people, not the other way around. Exploring right-sizing options is a forward-thinking choice that reflects changing needs, practical planning, and a commitment to long-term comfort—right here in the Upper Peninsula.

Thinking About Your Next Step?

STHA tenants interested in volunteering to relocate or inquiring about right-sizing options are encouraged to contact STHA Resident Services at 906-495-1450 to explore available housing opportunities and support services. Staff are available to answer questions and help members determine what options may be the best fit.

Right-sizing is not about rushing change—it is about choosing a home that supports your life today and into the future.

STHA maintains waiting list for each housing site

The Sault Tribe Housing Authority (STHA) continues to experience a high demand for safe, affordable housing. With a well-documented housing shortage across the service area, the number of applicants seeking housing significantly exceeds the number of available units. As a result, STHA maintains waiting lists for each housing site, and applications are received on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Selection from the waiting list is not first-come, first-served. Under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA), tribal housing

programs are required to serve low- to moderate-income Native American households in accordance with adopted eligibility and preference policies.

When a unit becomes available, STHA evaluates applicants based on documented housing need, including but not limited to factors such as homelessness or risk of homelessness, unsafe or overcrowded living conditions, health and safety concerns, income eligibility, and other program-specific preferences outlined in policy.

Once an application is complete and determined eligible, it is placed on the appropriate housing site waiting list, and

logged with date and time received. At this time, applications are processed and preference points are awarded according to the applicant's need and circumstance. In order to receive preference points, all claims must be verified with appropriate supporting documentation. Because new applicants are continually added and household circumstances can change, the waiting list often changes and is constantly evolving. Again, this is due to the selection process being based on need and circumstance, and not the date the application is deemed complete and eligible. All selection decisions are doc-

umented to ensure compliance with federal, tribal and program requirements and regulations.

To remain active, applicants must update their application at least every three months.

This requirement ensures that income, household composition, and level of need remain current and accurately documented.

Failure to complete required updates result in removal from the waiting list.

In addition to long-term housing programs, STHA works in partnership with Anishnaabek Community & Family Services (ACFS) to administer an Emergency Housing Assistance Program. This program provides

short-term financial assistance to qualified tribal members who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of losing their housing by providing security deposits, rent arrear payments and temporary hotel shelter payments. The purpose of this assistance is to provide a temporary safety net and prevent homelessness whenever possible.

Through waiting list procedures and assistance programs, STHA remains committed to administering housing resources responsibly, fairly, and in a manner that prioritizes the health, safety, and stability of tribal households.

Attention Sault Tribe members, Housing Authority needs your input!

The Sault Tribe Housing Authority's FY 2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) for the NAHASDA Indian Housing Block Grant – Indian Housing Plan and the NAHASDA Indian Housing Block Competitive Grant will be available for review at the Housing Authority Office, 154 Parkside Drive, Kincheloe, Mich., from March 13 to 27, 2026.

We ask that all Sault Tribe members assist us in the review by commenting on the outcome for each goal reported in this report.

You can comment by calling Housing Director Mariea Mongene, at Sault Tribe Housing Authority (906) 495-1450, or by sending a fax to

(906) 495-5891 or by email at Housing@saulttribe.net.

You may also send your comments in writing to: Sault Tribe Housing Authority Mariea Mongene APR/IHP FY 2025 Comments 154 Parkside Drive Kincheloe, MI 49788

Comments must be submitted no later than March 27, 2026.

All comments will be included in the APRs under Section 13: Public Availability (4).

The completed APRs are forwarded to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

JKL students visit tribal admin



Photos by Scott Brand

Above, Mr. Litzner's 8th Grade Career Readiness Class from JKL Bahweting School concludes its tour of the Sault Tribe's Administration Building on March 2. Below left, Sault Tribe Video Producer Joseph Street shares his expertise with the students, while at right Larry Jacques of the Planning and Development Department offers a warm welcome before sharing his insights with the class.



G'tchi Miigwech THANK YOU!

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians would like to thank our generous sponsors who helped make the 2025 Children's Christmas Parties a tremendous success!



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EUP Reads — Circus-themed family literacy night held March 9 at LSSU's Cisler Center



Jessica Shade with kids Olivia Shade, 6, and Hunter Shade, 3.



Win Awenen Nisitotung writer/photographer Scott Brand intercepts the penguin for a photo op while a little one looks on.



Stephanie Choponis with daughters Natalie, 6, and Madison, 4.



Michaela and Dwayne Thompson with Selah, 3, and Noa, 1.



Ashley Shawanda, Susan Solomon and Paige Couturier representing JKL School.



James McLeod, 7, has fun putting together a marble tower.



Jessie, Abby and Katie working on their pine marten art.



Sault Tribe Education professionals Lisa Burnside and Diane McLeod-Maleport serve snacks.



JKL Bahweting's Kristin Beaulieu, Erin Heyboer and Cara Tazelaar hand out free books.



Ariella and Arthur McCoy-Hudecek hold up the free books they selected at the event.

Photos by Brenda Austin & Scott Brand



Astrid Blissett, 8, dared to climb into the lion's cage.



Carley Wilton and Grace Galer collecting candy.



Kelsey and Jimmy McLeod with two of their three children, Henry, 5, and Lena, 3.



Caroline Strahan draws a pine marten for the Win Awenen Nisitotung contest, while her friend Quinn Allford waits for her.



Maren, 9, and mom Danielle Russo.



Lauren, 7, Lindsey, 5, and mom Heather with their goodies.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE OR CAREER TRAINING STARTS WITH FAFSA

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Walking on...

BARBARA JEAN WILSON

It is with broken hearts that we share that Barbara "Punkin" Wilson (nee Nichols) passed away peacefully Feb. 10, 2026, at ARCH after a courageous battle with her health.



She was a proud member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Barbara is reunited with her parents, the late Floyd and Shirley (nee Germain) Nichols; her parents-in-law, Wesley and Doris Wilson; and her infant brother, Charles Nichols.

Barbara was the loving wife of Gerald "Jerry" Wilson for nearly 44 years, a caring and selfless mother to Shannon (Eric) DaCosta and Brianna Wilson, and a proud grandma to Cameron, Maia, and Lily. Her children and grandchildren were the light of her life.

She will be deeply missed by her siblings Ronnie (Nancy) Nichols, Juanita (Al) Bye, who was also her best friend, Rebecca (Terry) Gould, Daniel Nichols (Crystal Eusepi), and Jolene (Robert) Smart.

Barbara was also a dear sister-in-law to Bill (Isabelle) Wilson, Robert Wilson, Kathy Wilson, Ronald (Livia) Wilson, Karen Tomljanovich (late Greg), and Brenda (Billy) Wilson.

She leaves behind many beloved nieces and nephews, each of whom held a special place in her heart. She also shared a very special bond with Raelyn Hojem, whom she loved like her own.

We will forever admire and be grateful for the strength and compassion she showed to everyone she loved throughout her final journey. Even in her last days, her selfless kindness remained a gift to us all. The courage she showed was truly a blessing.

Our family is deeply grateful to everyone who came to visit, sat with her, called, or reached

out while she was in hospice. Your presence brought comfort and happiness and meant more than words can say. We would like to thank Walter and Tammy Zalewski for their friendship and love, especially during the last couple of months. We also wish to express heartfelt thanks to Dr. Febbraro, Dr. Thibodeau, Dr. Gu, Dr. Apostle, and the staff and volunteers at ARCH for their care and compassion.

As per her wishes, cremation has taken place. Family and friends were invited to gather and celebrate Barbara's life on Feb. 17, 2026, at O'Sullivan Funeral Home in Sault Ste. Marie.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to ARCH (payable online or by cheque) or cheques payable to ARCH with Children's Grief and Bereavement Program in the memo section.

A celebration of life will also take place at the Cultural Center in Sault, Mich., at a later date.

You fought so hard. Now rest peacefully. You will forever be loved and never forgotten.

CATHY MARY (BAIER) CHAPLIN

Cathy Mary (Baier) Chaplin, 64, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., passed away Feb. 24, 2026, at home, where she wished to be, surrounded by her family and the care and comfort that supported her in her final days. She was born May 8, 1961, in Sault Ste. Marie, to Dale Baier and Rita (Myotte Baier) McPhail.

A lifelong resident of Sault Ste. Marie, Cathy was a proud member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She dedicated most of her career to cosmetology education, teaching and mentoring generations of local hairstylists. Her influence reached far beyond the classroom, and many in the community remember her not only as a teach-

er but as someone who helped shape their careers and confidence.

Cathy was known for her wit, generosity, and unmistakable stubborn streak, traits that made her both memorable and deeply loved. She enjoyed cheering on the Detroit Red Wings, playing cards with family and friends, reading, and traveling whenever she could. She was a proud member of a local cribbage league and cherished the time spent laughing and competing with friends. Cathy also loved getting in the car and heading out for a drive, confidently insisting she was never lost, just going "this way." Above all, Cathy treasured her family and the time spent together. Her warmth, humor, and strong spirit will be remembered by all who knew her.

Cathy is lovingly survived by her partner, Brent Benson; her children, Dale Chaplin, Derek Chaplin, and Barbara (Chris) Goetz; and her cherished grandchildren, Arionna (Ethan), Reese, Kaedence, Rylan, and Blake. She was especially smitten with her great granddaughter, Elsie, who brought her immense joy. She is also survived by her siblings, Gary (Chris) Baier, Patti (Terry) Adams, Leann Baier, and Carol (Walter) Plitz; along with former sisters-in-law, Sherrie Steele and Frances Baier Brown; and many nieces and nephews, too many to name individually, with whom she shared many close relation-

ships, along with many extended family members and friends.

Cathy was preceded in death by her parents, Dale and Rita; and brother, Paul Baier.

The family wishes to express their sincere gratitude to the caregivers, especially Mary Sawyers, who went above and beyond to support Cathy and honor her wish to remain in her family home through the final moments of her life.

In accordance with Cathy's wishes, no formal services will be held at this time. A Celebration of Life will be planned for the spring or summer, with details to be shared at a later date.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements.

CHARLES BELONGA

Charles Belonga, 88, of Grand Rapids, Mich., passed away peacefully March 2, 2026. He was born on Jan. 12, 1938, in St. Ignace, Mich., to Earl and Ruth (Mckenzie). Charles lived a life marked by devotion to his family, faith, and country.

Charles was a proud veteran of the United States Air Force, and served his nation with honor and dedication. His commitment to the Armed Forces was a source of

pride throughout his life. Beyond his military service, Charles found joy in hunting and cheering on the Detroit Red Wings. He was also a man who loved the Lord Jesus Christ and lived as an example of unwavering belief.

Charles was a devoted husband to Janyce (Poll), the love of his life. Charles' family brought him immense pride and joy.

He is survived by his children: Scott (Melody), Kimberly Hunt (Philip), Gregory, and Pamela Sly (Mark). His legacy continues through his grandchildren: Crystal, Charlie (Bianca), Jacob (Chelsea), Paul (Dani), Rori (Martin), Chance, Andrew, Hannah, James, Reagan, and Alex; as well as his great-grandchildren: Kyli, Lance, Amari, Avery, Ryder, Charlotte, Castillo, Emmett, Addison, Tristan, Easton, Everett, Walker, Camdin, Miles, Meka, Lincoln, Alaia and Maverick. Stepsons: Mark Kerkstra (Cheri), Brett Kerkstra, Todd Kerkstra (Janice), Step granddaughters: Andrea Bohez (Paul), Dr. Steffany Straight (Ryan) and step great grandchildren: Owen, Issac and Abigail Straight. Charles is also survived by his sisters: Ardeen and Theresa and his brothers: Kenneth and Gary.

Charles was predeceased by his parents, brothers: Earl, Frank, Gerald, and Harold; as well as his sisters: Sally and Mary. Their memories remained close to his

See "Walking on," page 19



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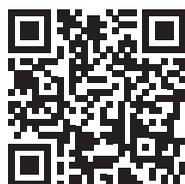
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Walking on continued...

From "Walking on," page 18
heart throughout his life.

Known for being an amazing husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Charles cherished time spent with family above all else. Whether sharing stories during hunting trips or gathering together to watch the Red Wings play their hearts out on the ice rink, family was always at the center of his world.

In lieu of flowers and in honor of Charles' service to both God and country—donations may be made to Talons Out Honor Flight at PO Box 280 Portage, MI 49081 ensuring future veterans receive recognition they deserve while preserving their legacies too!

May Charles' memory bring comfort and inspiration unto those fortunate enough knowing him! A visitation and memorial service were held March 14, 2026, at Woodward Baptist Church in Byron Center, Mich.

MELVIN "MICK" FELIX FRECHETTE

Melvin "Mick" Felix

Frechette, 88, of Sugar Island, Mich., died Feb. 28, 2026, at Ball Hospice House of the EUP in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

He was born Feb. 24, 1938, in Sault Ste. Marie to Michael Frechette and Anna Oller.

Mick grew up on Sugar Island and attended Sault Area Schools. He joined the United States Army and served for three years, and later in life he ended up being on 100% disability from the Army due to an injury. He returned home briefly before moving to the Durand, Mich., area where he began working in the automotive industry and met Judy Ann Pudil through mutual family. They married on March 16, 1964, in Detroit, Mich., and were married for 58 years. In 1969, Melvin and Judy returned to Sault Ste. Marie, working small jobs before starting at the Soo Locks. He worked his way up from a security guard to lineman before he retired in 2000 as a lock master operator. Melvin was also an officer for the Equal Employment Opportunities at the Soo Locks.

Mick was a member of the St. Isaacs Jockes Catholic Church in Sault Ste. Marie for many years. He served as an altar boy for Father Lawless and Rev. Paul M. Prudhomme at the Sacred Heart Church on Sugar Island. He was the caretaker for Wilwalk Cemetery and Gem Island Cemetery.

Mick was a traditional pipe carrier for many years and a proud member of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. He was very traditional and loved sharing his knowledge with anyone. He also was a big part of the Sugar Island Powwow and will be greatly missed.

Mick loved playing the guitar, singing, telling stories, and socializing with family and friends. He enjoyed going to the sugar bush to make syrup and teaching the

Ojibwa language. Most of all he loved his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Mick is survived by his children, Lori (Russell) Tyner of Neebish Island, Mich., Dan (Erika) Frechette of Naples, Fla., Jackie Frechette of Sault Ste. Marie, Darren (Diane) Frechette of Traverse City, Mich.; grandchildren, Courtney Tyner, Hunter (Emilee) Tyner, Daniel Frechette, Michaela (Austin) Clow, Autumn Kinnear, Jacob Frechette, Mel Frechette, Tyler Frechette, Emilie Frechette; great-grandchildren, Colton and Bella; and many nieces and nephews.

Mick was preceded in death by his wife, Judy Frechette; parents, Anna & Michael; siblings, Leo Mendoskin, Agnus Frechette, Rose (Joseph) Ruditis, Marie (Jack) Hoagarth, Dave Mendoskin; granddaughter, Theresa Ann Frechette; nephews, Donald Silva and Leslie Ruditis, whom he was extremely close to and who played a big part in the ceremonies and teaching he participated in through the years; and many other nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held on March 6, followed by a Traditional Ceremony on March 7, at the Niigaanagizhik Ceremonial Building, 11 Ice Circle Chi Mukwa, Sault Ste. Marie, complete with military services.

Memorial contributions in Melvin's honor may be made to Ball Hospice House, 308 W. 12th Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

JAMES ARNOLD McCORD

James Arnold McCord, 70, of Rudyard, Mich., died Feb. 10, 2026, at the McLaren Northern Michigan in Petoskey, Mich. He was born Dec. 23, 1955, in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to Harold and Mabel (Bickham) McCord.

James grew up in Pickford, Mich., and attended Pickford Area Schools until the ninth grade, when he left school to begin his lifelong career in construction. He dedicated his life to his trade, working in construction for many years, including nearly 30 years working on Mackinac Island. He was known for his strong work ethic and the pride he took in his craft.

James loved the outdoors and enjoyed camping, hunting, and fishing. He cherished time spent with family and friends, and he especially loved watching football games with his grandchildren, creating many treasured memories.

James is survived by his daughters, Jessica (Justin) Shuttleworth of Wingo, Ky., and Laura (James Kibble) McCord of Pickford; grandchildren, Alyssa (Kyle Fennessy) McCord, Kayden (Kenzie T.J.) Kiefer, Kaleb Kiefer, Colton O'Brien, Rylee (Sadie Teeple) Seabrook,

Aiden Jeffreys, Adelynn Jeffreys, Aidrick Jeffreys, Aiken Jeffreys, and Asher Jeffreys; siblings, Donna Grogan of Rudyard, and Kelvin "Cub" McCord of Pickford; and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

James was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Mabel; and brother, Ronald McCord. A celebration of life was held on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at Well Diggers in Kinross Township, Mich.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Pickford assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

PATRICK ANTHONY McCOY

Patrick Anthony McCoy, 62, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., entered the spirit world on March 8, 2026, at home, after battling a lengthy illness with his loving wife at his side. He was born on March 12, 1963, in Sault Ste. Marie, to Kenneth Joseph and Helen (Gurnoe) McCoy.

Patrick's childhood was filled with fishing and hunting on Sugar Island with his dad and family. In his early adolescence, Patrick began a journey of addiction and tragedy. Patrick is an amazing example of overcoming and transcending pain and creating healing. Patrick has been proudly sober since April 2, 1988. He went from a sixth-grade education to holding a master's degree. While attending Northern Michigan University, Patrick met the love of his life Betsy, and they were married on Dec. 9, 2005.

Throughout their 22 years together they traveled, camped, and adventured together. Patrick loved his culture and was a spiritual leader, sundancer, pipe-carrier, and teacher. He brought sobriety and the light of recovery everywhere he went. Patrick was passionate about his people and helped anyone in need. He was a strong advocate of culture and developed presentations and recovery modules for his community! His family, especially his wife and children, were the center of his universe. He loved with a fire that never went out. Aazhidegaabaw is his native name which means "standing across the sky." He will forever be in the sky; should we miss him, we only need to look up.

Patrick is survived by his wife, Betsy McCoy; children, Noah McCoy of Sault Ste. Marie, Patrick John (Sam) McCoy of Ishpeming, Mich., Elijah McCoy of Gwinn, Mich., Jesse Dayen Saint Pierre of WaWa Ontario, Autumn (Derek) Reign of Menominee, Mich., Austin Ischirhart of Sault Ste. Marie; grandchildren, Koveur, Archer, Messiah, Harland, Leeland Maisie, and Alan; siblings, Michael (Kim) McCoy, Paul "Chip" (Ruth) McCoy, Lauri Henry; brothers-in-law, Tony Abramson and Greg Spring.

Patrick was preceded in death by his parents, Kenneth and Helen; granddaughter, Alina; siblings, Bonnie, Sharon, Daniel, Carol, Jan, Cathy; and sister-in-law, Barbara.

Visitation was held on March 10, starting at the Niigaanagizhik Ceremonial Building, 11 Ice Circle Chi Mukwa, Sault Ste. Marie with a traditional ceremony following on March 11.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

NANCY RHOME

Nancy Rhome, 76 of Cheboygan, Mich., died Feb. 1, 2026, in Cheboygan, Mich. She was born March 5, 1949, in Saint Ignace, Mich., to Alan and Ardith (White) Pope.

Nancy lived her younger years in Saint Ignace. Then her family moved to Racine, Wisc., where she graduated from high school.

While in her senior year, she met the love of her life, Robert Rhome. They married each other on March 11, 1967. They started their marriage in Panama and then lived in North Carolina, Racine, and St. Ignace. After 28 years, they decided to settle in Cheboygan near their family.

Nancy loved being with her granddaughters, Izzy and Madison. She also enjoyed crocheting, coloring, gardening, bird watching, Christmas, television, yard sales, and word searches. She loved music, especially Elvis Presley, whom she named her cat after.

Nancy is survived by her children, Tony (Michele) Rhome of Cheboygan, and Shannon (Don) Portman of Cheboygan; grandchildren, Isabella Portman, Madison Rhome, Donald Portman II, Nathan Case, Landon Page, and Connor Page; great-granddaughter, Aspyn Page, Betty Page, and Ayva Joy Geraci; bonus granddaughter from Thailand, Pinny Dangchumroon; sister-in-law, Mary Pope of St. Ignace; and brothers Wayne (Sherry) Pope of Burlington, Wisc., and Jeff (Mary) Pope of St. Ignace, Mich.

Nancy is preceded in death by her husband Robert Rhome; father, Alan Pope; mother, Ardith (White) Pope; brothers, Dan Pope and John Pope; sisters-in-law, Gayle Pope and Judy Delbridge; and brothers-in-law, William Rhome (Butch) and Charles Delbridge (Ray).

A celebration of life was held Saturday, Feb. 7, at Life Worship Center of Cheboygan with a luncheon afterwards.

A graveside service will be held in the spring at Lakeside Cemetery in St. Ignace.

Nordman-Christian Funeral Home is serving the family.

PATRICIA LYNN LAWES

Patricia Lynn Lawes of Gaylord, Mich., beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on Feb.

7, 2026, at the age of 63 after lifelong battles with cancer. Born in Ishpeming, Mich., on Jan. 10, 1963, to Gene and Patricia McLeod (Taylor). Her childhood was joyfully spent in Rogers City, Mich., with her siblings, Ricky, Buddy, and Billy. She then graduated high school in 1981. On Aug. 22, 1982, she married William Lawes whom together they had four boys.

Patricia's greatest pride was her four sons and their families - Nathan and Kristan of Johannesburg, Mich., with Neela, Emery, GraceLynn, Ryker, and TingleighJo. Aaron and Mandi of Gaylord with Brantley and Greyson. Brandon and Liza of Gaylord with Ella (Ashton), Danica, Payton, Braelynn and Trenton. Tyler and Sarah of Gaylord with Alaina, Kinsee, MaKenna, and Theia. Great Grandchild Torco (Ella) and her adopted daughter Jocelyn (Jozzy) - whom she raised with love and devotion. Patricia survived by her mother Patricia Taylor, siblings Ricky Paquin of Elk Rapids, Mich., Alfred (Buddy) McLeod of Posen, Mich., William Alexander (Oscoda) and her second husband Jerry Cross. She was preceded in death by her father Gene McLeod and her first husband William Lawes.

Her legacy lives on through them and their families. Nothing brought her more joy than spending time with her grandchildren, creating cherished memories through camping trips, "big ass" barbecues, and bonfires at her home. She was an avid crafter. Patricia enjoyed crocheting blankets and cross-stitching, often creating special gifts for her loved ones. An animal lover at heart, Patricia opened her home and her heart to many pets, from cats and dogs to various farm animals.

She was also a dedicated participant in the organizations of March of Dimes and Relay for Life fundraising and memorial walks. Passionately raising money for cancer research, a cause close to her heart. She dedicated over a decade to running a daycare and spent several years driving buses for Gaylord Community Schools, all while ensuring her children were raised with values of kindness, generosity, and family work. Patricia most recently dedicated her life to caring for others, finding great fulfillment as a Hospice Aide with Hospice of Michigan. Her compassionate spirit and unwavering commitment to those in their final days truly made a difference in countless lives.

Patricia's spirit of love, warmth, and generosity will continue to inspire all who knew her. She will be honored at a celebration of life for a "Big Ass Barbecue" service at her home on Saturday, July 25, 2026, at 5 p.m. We will gather to celebrate her life, share stories, and remember the incredible impact she had on so many. She will be deeply

See "Walking on," page 20



Parenting Awareness Month recognized in March

FROM ACFS

Parenting Awareness Month is recognized each March across Michigan. During this time, Anishnaabek Community and Family Services (ACFS) highlights the importance of supporting parents and connecting families with helpful resources. ACFS remains committed to supporting Native families and helping ensure children grow up in safe, healthy, and supportive homes.

During the month of March, community members are encouraged to stop by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribal Health Center and the Manistique Tribal Health Center to explore the Parenting Awareness Month bulletin boards, where you can find informative materials, complimentary promotional items, and valuable parenting resources.

Parenting comes with both joys and challenges. Parents play a major role in guiding and supporting their children as they grow. The love and support parents provide helps shape a child's emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Recognizing the challenges of parenting, ACFS offers a comprehensive parenting program to support families in its seven-county service area. This program covers essential topics such as child development, family routines, effective communication, discipline strategies, empathy, and fostering self-worth, especially for those parenting teens. Staff provide hands-on guidance, demonstrating techniques and offer coaching to help parents manage their children's behaviors. Spanning approximately 14 sessions, the program accommodates both voluntary participants and those mandated by court orders. ACFS also offers

parenting support and services for teen parents, helping young parents build confidence, strengthen parenting skills, and connect with resources that support both their growth and the well-being of their children.

ACFS also offers a range of other vital family support programs within the seven-county service area, all aimed at ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of Native children. These programs are designed to assist parents by providing an array of resources and support.

- **Child Protective Services (CPS):** Dedicated to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and their families. ACFS delivers child protective services to children and their families residing on trust land who are either eligible or enrolled with a federally recognized tribe. CPS works to ensure the well-being of children by preventing abuse and neglect, promoting family stability, and upholding the integrity of the family structure.

- **Prevention Programs:** A voluntary program that supports families in addressing needs identified by the client and family such as school issues, legal issues, housing issues, medical issues, or other challenges identified by the family. Clients have the ability to refer themselves.

- **In-Home Care Services:** In cases following the substantiated investigation of child abuse or neglect where it is determined that children can be safely maintained in the home, ACFS provides In-Home Care services that focus on the safety and risk issues identified during the CPS investigation. Services are targeted to the individual needs of the child and family.

- **Family Continuity:** A vol-

untary intensive home-based program designed to prevent the removal of children from the parental home or to help facilitate reunification. Referrals come from DHHS or ACFS CPS. The program assists families with various issues including employment, housing, housekeeping, budgeting, transportation, and other needs.

- **Adolescent In-Home Assistance:** The AIHA program is designed to identify and provide services to adolescents who are engaging in at-risk behaviors. The program may be voluntary or court ordered and provides culturally appropriate advocacy, support, and connections with community-based services that enable families to remain together or help reunite families when an adolescent has been placed outside the home due to delinquency issues. Clients also have the ability to refer themselves.

- **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Monitoring:** ACFS provides monitoring of child welfare cases throughout the United States involving children either enrolled in or eligible for membership in the tribe to ensure that the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is followed.

For more information or assistance, call ACFS at 1-800-726-0093 or (906) 632-5250. To learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, contact us by phone or email at acfs-foster-homes@saulttribe.net.

By recognizing Parenting Awareness Month, we highlight the importance of strong families and the lasting impact they have on future generations. This month is a reminder to appreciate those who provide love, stability, and encouragement to children every day.



Stop by the Sault Ste. Marie (above) or Manistique (below) Tribal Health Center during the month of March to view the Parenting Awareness Month bulletin boards and learn more about parenting resources available through ACFS.



Kids learn winter survival skills at Culture Camp



Left: Winter Survival Camp participants gather at the tribe's Sugar Island Culture Camp. Right: Participants learn how to make a fire outdoors with limited materials.

Photos by Ashley Reffruschinni



Walking on continued...

From "Walking on," page 19 missed but never forgotten.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Lawes Family, checks payable to: Nathan Lawes, 850 N. Center Avenue, Gaylord, MI 49735. Patricia would end by saying "Love yous all!"

FREDERICK JAMES "JIM" SYLVESTER

Frederick James "Jim" Sylvester, 85, of Rineyville, Ky., passed away on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at Baptist Health Hardin in Elizabethtown, Ky.

Jim was born on Nov. 24, 1940 in Sault Ste. Marie Mich., to his parents Alfred I. Sylvester

& Merle J. Wonnacott Sylvester. Jim was a Senior Chief Aviation Warfare Technician, AWCS (SW/NAC), in the U.S. Navy for 21 years. Jim

proudly served his country on the USS Saratoga and in various squadrons including VQ-2 working on the Lockheed EC-121. Jim retired from the Navy in 1978 and began his civilian career as a Logistics Engineer, eventually owning his own business, System Engineering and Logistics



Support, LLC. (SEALS). His military service was a defining chapter in his life, and he carried that sense of honor and duty throughout his life.

After his service and successful career as a Logistics Engineer, Jim dedicated himself to supporting fellow veterans through local organizations and outreach programs.

Jim was a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Jim is survived by his wife of 49 years, Lou Frances Sylvester, his brother Danny B. (Carole) Sylvester & sister Ellen G. "Ellynn" Wilson. He is survived by his sons, James G. "Greg"

(Gigi) Sylvester, Samuel C. "Sam" (Silvia) Love, Michael A. (John "JB") Love, William R. "Bill" (Jody) Love; his daughters, Kristen A. (Brent) Davidson, Dorothy M. (Noah) Balawender; his grandsons, Ryan G. (Gracie) Sylvester, Beau M. (Ileah) Sylvester, Samuel C. "Sammy" Love Jr., Raymond (Casandra) Love, Ethan P. (Brittany) Martell, Christopher M. Spangler, Nicholas J. Spangler; his granddaughters, Chelsea S. "Suzanne" Sylvester, Stephanie M. Stanton, Natasha (Kleison) Davidson-Reales, Teresa C. "Chrisi" Weeks, and Maxine Brown; and many great-grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his brother Terrance F. "Terry" Sylvester, daughter Frances L. Brown, cousin Joseph "Joe" Sylvester, and great-granddaughter, Magnolia Belle Sylvester.

A veteran cemetery burial with full military honors was held at Oaklawn Park Cemetery & Funeral Home in Sanford, Fla., on Monday, March 16.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to a Veteran's organization, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Anishnaabek Community & Family Services (ACFS), or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From "Candidates," page 10
an issue to stall the process. If elected, I will 100% support the adoption of a new constitution that protects the rights of all tribal citizens.

TRIBAL COURT. We must protect the integrity of the court system by removing ANY oversight by the board or legal department. There is rumor that the board recently changed tribal code to limit the authority of the court. I did see a resolution on the agenda in February, however the resolutions are not yet available on the tribal website. Further, the resolution does not state what changes were being made. This is not reflective of an independent court system and must be changed.

TRANSPARENCY. As tribal citizens, we have a right to know what our tribal government is doing. Yet, resolutions are passed based on attachments that tribal citizens never get to see. Workshop meetings are closed. Freedom of Information requests are denied. Tribal citizens have been forced to use the court to get FOIA requests approved. There is no good reason to limit information that is not proprietary. We must change this practice.

AUDITS. There have been many questions swirling around budgets. Our tribe received more than \$230M from Cares and ARPA funds. Questions on how these funds were spent have gone unanswered. Contracts have been entered into with vendors with friends of the board (Blue Stone, Kauffman) without the use of competitive bidding processes.

Each of these areas needs to have independent audits completed to ensure that funds were spent within authorized purposes and without undue influence or kick-backs to/from board members.

Unit I Candidate



ISAAC McKECHNIE

Boozhoo. My name is Isaac McKechnie, and it has been an honor to serve the citizens of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians as your Unit I representative on the board of directors. I first ran for office because I believed our tribe needed strong leadership focused on accountability, transparency, and real results. Over the past several years, we have worked hard to move our tribe forward, and together we have made meaningful progress.

One of the most important steps we took was opening enrollment so eligible descendants of our tribe could once again become members. For many families, this decision reconnected future generations to their tribe,

culture, and community. At the same time, we began the work of constitutional reform to strengthen checks and balances within our government and ensure accountability in the decisions that affect our citizens.

We also made significant investments in our communities and services. During this term, our tribe helped open the first Native American homeless shelter in Michigan and established a Medical Assisted Therapy Center to expand access to treatment and recovery services. These initiatives reflect our responsibility to support the health and well-being of our people.

Housing has also been a major priority. The tribe purchased 24 homes for the Home Replacement Program, acquired 20 modular homes for the Home Ownership Program, renovated 42 housing units at KI Sawyer, and purchased two apartment complexes to expand housing opportunities.

These investments help provide stable housing for families while strengthening our communities.

We have also worked to strengthen our economic future. The board allocated \$40 million for renovations at Kewadin Casinos and approved new enterprise partnerships, including a lease agreement allowing Black Rock to operate the restaurant space at Kewadin Sault. These projects are designed to protect jobs, improve our enterprises, and generate revenue that supports tribal programs.

Fiscal responsibility has remained a key focus as well. During this term, the board eliminated the Board Retirement Program, approved employee compensation studies to address wage compression, and worked to reduce the \$88 million JLLJ award to approximately \$35 million. These actions protect the tribe's financial stability while ensuring responsible management

of tribal resources.

We have also taken steps to preserve our culture and heritage by acquiring hundreds of acres of land for cultural purposes, purchasing the Sugar Island Powwow grounds, and securing the WilWalk Cemetery. Protecting these spaces ensures that future generations will continue to gather, celebrate, and honor our traditions.

Looking forward, my priorities remain focused on strengthening tribal self-sufficiency, expanding health care access, improving employee retention, and developing tribally owned enterprises that create jobs and long-term revenue for our people.

Serving this tribe has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I remain committed to working hard, listening to our members, and continuing to deliver results that strengthen our communities and protect the future of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa

Indians.

Miigwech for the opportunity to speak with you today and for your continued engagement in the future of our tribe.

Unit I Candidate



JEN MCLEOD

Aaniin! I'm Jen McLeod, and I'm asking for your Vote in this upcoming election.

See "Candidates," page 22



Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians 2026 Bear Application

The 2026 bear application period will run from May 1, 2026 to June 1, 2026. **All applications must be received by Sault Tribe Law Enforcement before 5:00 pm on June 1, 2026.** Applications received after 5:00 pm on June 1, 2026 **will NOT be accepted.** A lottery will be held at the June Conservation Committee Meeting. Tribal members **MUST** possess an Inland Hunting Harvest license and be at least 10 years of age to hunt bear.

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Male Tribal File #: _____ STS #: _____

Female Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Please select only **ONE** of the following Bear Management Units (BMU). Please note that all Sault Tribe bear permits are only valid within the 1836 Ceded Territory. Please see the map below for generalized boundaries of each BMU.

Upper Peninsula

- Drummond
- Baraga
- Gwinn
- Newberry

Lower Peninsula

- Baldwin
- Gladwin
- Red Oak



There is a \$4 application fee for each application. Each application must be accompanied by a check or money order (you may write one check for multiple applications). Checks and money orders can be made out to "Sault Tribe". Sault Tribe Elders (60 & older) and youth (10-16) are not required to pay application fees.

Please send all bear and elk applications to:
Sault Tribe Law Enforcement
Bear & Elk Applications P.O. Box 925 Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

For any questions, please contact Sault Tribe Law Enforcement at (906) 635-6065.

STLE Office Use ONLY

- Elder
- Youth

Pymt Method: _____ Date: _____

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From "Candidates," page 21
Our tribal ancestors left us a gift—a map for our survival and success. They did not leave our future to chance; they defined our path with the four pillars in our tribal constitution. With your vote and support, I can help lead us back to that foundation.

1. Perpetuation of Our Way of Life

Our culture, language, and our hunting, fishing, and gathering rights are the very basis of who we are. They are our birthright. Having taught these traditions from kindergarten through the college level, I have seen their power first hand. I will work tirelessly to ensure this knowledge is accessible to every member, regardless of where you live. Geography must never be a barrier to our identity.

2. Welfare and Prosperity of Our People

As long as one of us is in need, our work is unfinished. We cannot rely solely on federal programs that often leave our people behind due to restrictive, "one-size-fits-all" guidelines. We must look to our own resources and innovation:

— Housing: We must build our own homes and apartments on our own land.

— Food Security: We must blend ancient agricultural wisdom with modern efficiency to feed our community.

— Education: Our children deserve every tool available—trade schools, apprenticeships, and paid internships—alongside traditional college paths.

Self-sufficiency is the heartbeat of a thriving nation. I have the experience to help us achieve it.

3. The Right of Self-Government

The threat to our existence is no longer just "noise." Recently, legislation has been drafted with the clear intent to make tribes like ours disappear. Termination is a real threat. I am not intimidated. I have stood in Washington, D.C. and testified before Congress to defend our sovereignty. I will return to those rooms with the strength and knowledge required to ensure the United States honors its nation-to-nation responsibility as the supreme law of the land.

4. Protecting Our Property and Resources

The board of directors holds a sacred trust to act in the best interest of our people—not themselves. Like many of you, I have witnessed actions that raise serious questions. I am appalled that wage compression still exists, devaluing the hard work of our staff.

As a private citizen, information is often shielded from view. However, once I am at that board table, I will demand transparency. I will seek the truth and call for independent, outside investigations into any action that violates the trust of our citizens. I pledge to be open, forthcoming, and accountable to you.

There is a better way forward. We must set aside the boardroom bickering that stalls our progress. Our ancestors survived and thrived through much harder times by remaining true to these four pillars. We must be wise enough to listen to them now.

With your vote, I will serve with honor as we build a bright, hopeful future together.

Miigwech,
Jen McLeod
Jennifer.mcleod.2012@gmail.com
(906) 440-9151
Unit I Candidate



ROB MCRORIE
Continued Membership First Leadership ~ To my fellow Sault Tribe members, I would like to first start out by saying,

chi miigwech (thank you) for the honor of a lifetime and entrusting me to serve as your Sault Tribe Unit 1 representative. We are, however, not done and we have some serious work to do, so I ask for your continued support and vote.

I work hard to give each of you a voice at the board table. From the beginning, I have stated that I do not view this as my seat; this seat belongs to you, the membership. My job is to be your voice and to protect your rights and interests. Together as a tribal nation "we" have laid the foundation of a stronger sovereign nation for many generations to come.

Over the last four years, we have made great progress in many areas. At the board table, I am your voice and have pushed several items to and across the finish line. One of these is the long-standing push for a three-branch separation of powers. Even when it looked like all hope

was lost, I pushed to poll you, the members on your preference, which turned out to be overwhelmingly for a three-branch. We are on the precipice of success, but we cannot afford to lose even one vote on the board in favor of a constitutional amendment for a three-branch government. I may just be the deciding vote.

As many of you are aware, I have been dealing with a serious health condition including needing a kidney transplant. During this difficult time, I still made representing you, my top priority and have remained fully engaged in all legislation at the tribal level, as well as, at the local, state, and federal level. I am typically very private with my health; but I am very happy to announce that by the time you read this, I will have undergone my kidney transplant operation (March 11).

One of my life's biggest heroes, my stepmom, is donating one of her kidneys. Words cannot explain

how thankful I am for her, my entire family, and all of you for supporting me through this. I love and appreciate each one of you! During my recovery (8-12 weeks) I will need to limit my public exposure until the anti-rejection regiment is complete. So, I will be doing much of my membership outreach virtually. I will be available for one-on-ones via phone or zoom and attend to all of my responsibilities virtually. Regardless of what life throws at me, it is my job to represent you and I am resolved to do so. I am excited to get through recovery and am looking forward to being able to visit with you all and enjoy being at all our events with you once again.

I would be honored to continue serving as your Sault Tribe Unit 1 representative.

Chi miigwech to every one of you. —Rob
TOGETHER, WE RISE!
See "Candidates," Page 23



Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians 2026 Elk Application

The 2026 elk application period will run from May 1, 2026 to June 1, 2026. **All applications must be received by Sault Tribe Law Enforcement before 5:00 pm on June 1, 2026.** Applications received after 5:00 pm on June 1, 2026 **will NOT be accepted.** A lottery will be conducted at the June Conservation Committee Meeting. Tribal members **MUST** possess an Inland Hunting Harvest license and be at least 10 years of age to hunt bear and elk.

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Mailing Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Male Tribal File #: _____ STS #: _____
 Female Date of Birth: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

There is a \$4 application fee for each application. Each application must be accompanied by a check or money order (you may write one check for multiple applications). Checks and money orders can be made out to "Sault Tribe". Sault Tribe Elders (60 & older) and youth (10-16) are not required to pay application fees.

Please send all bear and elk applications to:

**Sault Tribe Law Enforcement
Bear & Elk Applications
P.O. Box 925
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783**

For any questions, please contact Sault Tribe Law Enforcement at (906) 635-6065.

STLE Office Use ONLY

Elder Pymt Method: _____
 Youth Date _____

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From "Candidates," page 22
Unit II Candidate



DEAN HYSLOP

Ahniin, Bigassige Ndzhnakoz. My Anishinaabe name means "Clearing in the Clouds." I am running for Unit 2 Board of Directors. I am a commercial fisherman by trade and by heart. I also worked for Sault Tribe Construction, plowing tribal enterprises in St. Ignace and Mackinaw City, and plowing and cutting firewood for tribal Elders and disabled in St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie.

I am not a politician, but like many tribal members, I had enough nepotism, cronyism, lack of openness and lack of accountability, so I decided to run for the board of directors. If elected, I will be your advocate to bring back accountability, reliability, fairness, and transparency.

I will help move the three-branch separation of powers to completion so board members can be held accountable for their actions. In addition, I will author a resolution to hire a solicitor, independent of the board, to investigate and prosecute corruption. I want to see an end to board members who think the tribal coffers is a personal bank account. I want as much funding as possible to go to the members' services.

Except for illness, board members should show up to meetings and workshops. No Zoom and no phones for board members during meetings. Meeting dates are set months in advance, so there should be no conflicts. Active engagement in meetings is necessary to make a solid decision. Backdoor deals, texting among board members during meetings and closed sessions need to be reduced. It is obvious to me that discussions by some board members are staged. There are apparently discussions before the meeting about who is going to say what or bring up tabling a topic. There also seems to be text discussions between board members and/or text discussions with board members and an outside entity during the meetings. This must stop!

Nepotism and cronyism are rampant in the tribe from hiring less than qualified friends and family, to providing large amounts of cultural funds to besties. I want to eliminate such favoritism through resolutions and accountability. We need to recruit and retain qualified employees by providing equal opportunity for all, competitive and living wages, proper and timely training and career advancement opportunities, and eliminating hostile work environ-

ment.

Food, shelter and water are the necessities of life, yet so many members struggle to maintain these essentials. I will support food security and sovereignty by establishing a tribal cannery, tribal farm and community gardens and orchards. Our sacred waters are being threatened with invasive species, pollution, and man-made structures. Protecting our treaty rights is of utmost importance.

Many of our members live outside of the service area. Location doesn't make them a lesser tribal member. I will actively reach out to tribal members no matter where they live to include them where possible. I also support unit representation and tribal services to members outside of the service area.

Please feel free to contact me on Facebook: @Big.Dean.Hyslop.for.Unit.2, messenger, or by phone (906) 322-8470. Miigwech.

Unit II Candidate



JACKIE MINTON

Boozhoo! Maang N'doodem Biidaasinokwe N'digoo Jackie Minton N'dizhnkaaz.

My name is Jackie Minton, and I am running for the tribal board of directors, Unit 2.

A top priority for leadership should be to maintain our members' trust and faith. It is leadership's responsibility to act with integrity, conducting themselves in a manner consistent with our Anishinaabe value system. Our path must be clear we must walk consciously with integrity and respect for those we serve and represent. Our tribe has a need for balance on our governing board with respect to sovereignty, and perpetuation of our traditional Anishinaabe way of life. We need to actively be aware of how our decisions affect our sovereignty today and for future generations.

My entire life I have been active in the building of our tribal community from the clearing of land for the reserve in Sault Ste. Marie on the original YCC crew in the early '80s, to working at the casino from 1985 ultimately in a managerial position. For over 30 years I have succeeded in educating, mentoring, and seeking opportunities for our youth and membership through teaching them to take pride in who they are as young Anishinaabe people, and the responsibilities that go along with those teachings. I am contracted by tribes in the Great Lakes area to come in to teach traditional life skills and bring our people together.

Through my work in community building (working with children, families, and Elders), I

have travelled extensively within and outside our service areas, as well as into other tribal nations. The issues that I continue to hear discussed are treaty rights, infringement on our sovereignty, and the need to always stand fast on protecting them.

Our constitution states, "to preserve and protect our way of life." In order to accomplish this, we need a strong diversified economy (independent of politics) that generates more money than it spends and creates employment opportunities for our members. This will help us to preserve and protect our Bimaadiziwin – Way of Life.

How do we get to that place?

— By electing leaders focused on the short and long term goals of our tribe. We must budget and allocate resources based upon tribal priorities — set by the membership. We must develop detailed short- and long-term plans with specific goals and objectives.

— By amending our Constitution to ensure a true separation of powers (three-branch).

— By electing leaders that conduct themselves in a professional manner out of respect for the tribe and for those they can agree to disagree with.

— By empowering our employees and tribal members.

I will be a fierce advocate for our membership that will push for us to accomplish this with effort, transparency and integrity. I pledge to run a respectful campaign and encourage all candidates and their supporters to do the same.

Let's Move Forward and Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Please consider me when casting your vote.

Miigwech,
Jackie

Unit III Candidate



SHAWN BOROWICZ

Fellow Tribal Citizens, Four years ago, with your support, I was honored to be elected to the tribal board of directors. During that time, I ran on a commitment to increase transparency in tribal operations, encourage more member input, improve treatment of our employees and guests, and bring integrity to the board. I also promised to represent Unit Three while remembering that we are all one family across every unit and at-large. I believe we have made meaningful progress. Transparency has improved, though there is always more work to be done. Member participation has grown significantly compared to past board meetings, and I remain available to speak with any tribal member

at any time about concerns, ideas or questions.

Since being elected, I have made it a priority to stay connected and be available for our employees and our continued operations. I regularly visit our facilities to speak with staff and management, and I let employees know they can reach me by phone, in person or by stopping by my home at any time with any issues they may have. Our employees are essential to our success, and their voices matter. Our guests are equally important. I often introduce myself to visitors at the Shores Casino and ask how we can improve their experience. I've had the opportunity to meet guests from across Michigan and throughout the country, and many have shared how much they enjoy visiting our community and our casino.

Integrity has always guided me in my decisions and my daily life. It's a value that my parents instilled in me at a young age, and it continues to guide and how I serve our tribe today. I treat people with respect and dignity and never look down on anybody. Since being elected I am the same down to Earth person I was back then and will continue to be that same person.

Eight years ago, after retiring from a 35-year career in public safety with the City of Flint, I moved to St. Ignace. Since then, I have been proud to become part of this community. In addition to my public safety career, I worked in construction, home building, excavation and nursing. For the past two years I have been a volunteer member of the St. Ignace Fire Department as a firefighter/paramedic.

Family remains the most important part of my life. I am proud of my four grown children who contribute positively to their communities and their respected work professions. Since joining the board our family has grown to include two wonderful daughters-in-law and two amazing grandchildren.

My life experiences have shaped my commitment to making thoughtful, balanced decisions that benefit all tribal citizens-not made for personal gain or election year promises. My goal has always been to act and vote in the best interests of the membership and our tribe for future generations.

I respectfully ask for your continued support and your vote in the upcoming election so I may continue the work we have started together.

Remembering the past, preparing for the future!

Respectfully,
Shawn Joseph Borowicz
(906) 430-7612

Unit III Candidate SUE ST. ONGE

Aniin, my name is Sue St. Onge. Many of you in Unit 3 already know me, but for those who may not, I would like to introduce myself. My Anishinaabe name is White Cloud Woman. I was born and raised in St. Ignace and grew up deeply connected to this community. After attending the University of Michigan, I returned home to raise my children and serve the community



that helped shape who I am today.

As a proud member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, I am committed to honoring our traditions while working to strengthen our community. For the past 23 years, I have served as a Youth Services Coordinator with the Sault Tribe Education Department, working directly with our students and families. I have helped students succeed academically, connected them with scholarships and educational opportunities, and worked closely with families to ensure young people have the support they need to stay engaged. I have supported students through challenges, celebrated their successes, and helped create safe and welcoming spaces where youth grew with confidence in their identity as Anishinaabe.

In addition, I have served on the Indian Education Parent Committee, developed and facilitated a Building Inclusive Schools program, and served as a Drama Advisor. Through these roles, I worked to expand opportunities for student participation, creativity, and leadership while strengthening students' sense of belonging and cultural pride. In recognition of my work supporting youth and families, I was honored to be named Child Advocate of the Year by the St. Ignace Kiwanis Club in 2025.

My service to the community has also extended beyond the classroom. I have volunteered with the Rendezvous at the Straits Powwow, and developed literature for the Clan Park display at the Ojibwa Culture Museum. I also helped bring several community murals to life, including the Chief Wawatam mural, the Turtle and Wolf behind Ace Hardware, the Horn's store mural, and the Whitefish mural on the Mackinac Straits Fish Company. These projects celebrate our culture and history and build community pride.

Now that my children are grown, I believe it is time for me to serve our community in a new way by advocating for all members in Unit 3. I understand the challenges our children, families, team members, and Elders face. I want to use my experience, education and leadership skills to help bring resources, opportunities, and equity to our community. I hold a Master's Degree in Public Administration, which strengthens my understanding of leadership, governance, and responsible public service.

Our elders taught us the importance of integrity, respect, and our responsibility to the next seven generations. I believe

See "Candidates," page 24

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From “Candidates,” page 23
 leadership begins with listening; wisdom comes from our Elders, strength from unity, and progress happens when we work together in a good way. I am committed to thoughtful leadership, transparency, and accountability. Our citizens deserve clear communication and leadership that respects every voice. I will serve Unit 3 with integrity, humility, honesty, and dedication. I respectfully ask for your support.

Unit III Candidate



FRED PAQUIN

I am a lifelong member of the St. Ignace community and proud member of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. I've spent decades serving our community through public safety, tribal leadership, business ownership, and volunteer work. As a former Unit 3 Director, I understand the needs of tribal members and the importance of strong, steady leadership.

Throughout my life, I've owned and operated several local businesses, worked closely with community organizations, and supported countless efforts to strengthen families and neighborhoods. I'm a devoted father and grandfather who believes in leaving a better future for the next generation.

Experience & Community Service

- Former Unit 3 Director for the Sault Tribe
- Career in law enforcement and public service
- Longtime small-business owner in St. Ignace
- Active supporter of local organizations and community initiatives
- Lifelong commitment to helping individuals and families in need

I've spent my holidays giving back—often quietly, supporting youth programs, local sports, community causes, and families facing hardship. Our community is what drives me.

Vision for Unit 3

I believe Unit 3 deserves strong representation, transparency, and leadership focused on the well-being of tribal members. My top priorities include:

- Addressing and focusing on the elderly fund, funeral fund and the student fund
- Being a strong, accessible voice for Unit 3 members
- Supporting elders, youth, and families in need
- Strengthening education, wellness, and opportunity
- Promoting responsible leadership and accountability
- Encouraging unity and

community involvement

I believe leadership is about service. I want to facilitate positive change, strengthen support systems, and ensure every member feels heard and valued. We're only as strong as our weakest link.

Personal Commitment

I believe leadership should give back to the people it serves. I've always stepped in to help when needed—whether supporting an elder, a child, or a family working toward education and stability. That's why I have decided to disperse all my board stipend back to Unit 3 members in times of need and when help is needed most.

I openly acknowledge that, like anyone, I've faced challenges in life, but those experiences have strengthened my commitment to growth, accountability, and service to my community.

My focus remains simple: do what's best for the people of Unit 3 and the Sault Tribe community.

I honorably ask for your support,

Fred Paquin

Unit IV Candidate



COLE GOUDREAU

Unit 4 Members, my name is Cole Goudreau, and I am honored to announce my candidacy for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors – Unit 4.

I live in Manistique with my wife, Danielle Goudreau, and our children. Danielle is the eldest granddaughter of the late tribal fisherman Bob Jensen and serves as Chief Pharmacist for the tribe's Health Division. As lifelong Unit 4 residents, the prosperity and well-being of our community mean everything to our family.

For the past 18 years, I have built my career in the electrical infrastructure industry, starting as an entry-level groundman and working my way up to project director at Aldridge Electric. In my current position, I manage large-scale commercial construction projects, overseeing budgets, contracts, risk management, and personnel development. Aldridge Electric has become a major employer in the Manistique area, now employing about 50 local individuals—many of whom are tribal members—and more than 2,000 people nationwide. I take great pride in helping create opportunities for our community and hope to continue that mission through service on the board of directors.

I also take great pride in my heritage. I value learning from our Elders about exercising our rights to harvest, hunt, and gather

so that these traditions can continue with our youth. The leadership experience I have developed through my career will help me support our tribe with strong, responsible, and transparent decision-making. My goal is simple—to help others succeed and ensure our unit and tribe continue to flourish.

My Priorities for Unit 4

If elected, I will focus on priorities that reflect our shared values and the future we want to build together:

- Supporting a three-branch government that ensures accountability and balance.

- Maintaining balanced budgets without reducing essential programs for Elders and youth.

- Providing smart oversight of construction development, permitting, bonding, and budgeting.

- Applying executive-level leadership to strengthen tribal policy and operational processes.

- Expanding legal resources to defend members' rights and uphold the validity of our tribal IDs.

- Ensuring the Health Division has the infrastructure, technology, and staff needed to deliver expanded care, shorter wait times, and improved telehealth and transportation options.

- Providing more higher education support through unmet needs grants.

- Protecting and exercising treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather.

- Developing sustainable resource management plans to protect our lands for future generations.

- Strengthening our tribal workforce through retention and training programs.

- Focusing on WIOA initiatives to offer on-the-job training and career opportunities for tribal members.

A Commitment to Integrity, Heritage, and Progress

I am running because I believe in the strength, resilience, and potential of our people. I will bring integrity, transparency, and dedication to my role, drawing on both my professional experience and my deep roots in our tribe. Together, we can build a stronger future—one that honors our traditions while creating new opportunities for generations to come.

Miigwech for your consideration and support. I humbly ask for your vote.

A Voice for Unit 4: Integrity, Heritage, and Progress

Unit IV Candidate



KIMBERLY HAMPTON

Serving our tribe has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

After four years of service, I am proud to announce that I am seeking re-election to continue serving the citizens of Unit 4 on the Sault Tribe Board of Directors.

Throughout my time in office, I have worked to lead with values that reflect our teachings and guide how I represent our people. My commitment has always been to serve with integrity while protecting our sovereignty, strengthening our communities, and ensuring that future generations inherit a strong Nation.

During my current term, I have had the privilege of serving as **Officer-Secretary for the Sault Tribe**, representing our Tribe nationally as **Vice Chair of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Tribal Advisory Council**, and serving as an **Alternate Delegate on the National Institutes of Health Tribal Advisory Council for the Bemidji Area**. I am also proud to be a member of the **National Congress of American Indians**, working alongside other tribal leaders to advocate for Native nations across the country. But the work of leadership is not only done in national meetings. It happens here at home, in our communities and with our families.

Over the past four years I have worked to strengthen Unit 4 by organizing the **Niivin Noodin Powwow**, creating opportunities for cultural connection. I established the **Russell Jensen Native Leadership Traditions Award**, a scholarship supporting local students entering the skilled trades workforce. I also introduced **in-person office hours and Town Hall meetings** to ensure Tribal members have direct access to their elected leadership.

I firmly stand to **protect our treaty rights** and ensure that our traditions continue to live on through future generations. I encourage our youth to exercise their rights on our treaty lands and to remain connected to the cultural practices that define who we are as Anishinaabe people. As your Board member, I have supported using **in-house legal counsel to defend our treaty rights** and standing firm in protecting those rights when challenged. Our sovereignty is not negotiable, and our future depends on leaders who are willing to defend it.

However, there is still important work to do.

If re-elected, I will continue advocating for:

- **Three-Branch Government Enactment** to strengthen the structure and accountability of our Tribal government

- **Protection of Unit 4 Cultural Enhancement and 2% Funds** so they remain dedicated to the needs of our communities

- **Expanded access to Traditional Healing**

- **Opportunities for youth**, including cultural events and leadership programs

- **Housing and land expansion** to support future generations
- **Preservation of our cemeteries and traditional funeral services**

- **Stronger partnerships**

with local schools, community organizations, and emergency services

Leadership is about listening, showing up, and doing the work. I remain committed to advocating for our citizens, protecting our sovereignty, and building a future where our culture, communities, and families continue to thrive. I would be honored to continue serving you.

“Planning for Future Generations”

Re-Elect **Kimberly Hampton**
 Unit 4 Sault Tribe Board of Directors

Unit IV Candidate



ABBIELLE HOHOLIK

Aanii! My name is Abbielle Hoholik. I am honored to respectfully ask for your support in my running for the Unit IV board of directors. If elected, I promise to be a full-time director, stepping down from my current employment at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School.

I am the first-born daughter to John and Beatrice Smith, and first-born granddaughter to the late Marguerite “Muggs” Johnson (Smith). I reside in Manistique, Mich., with my husband, Lucas, and our four children. My college background contains studies in Forensic Science, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, and Native American studies. I don't just study our culture, I live it. I make it a priority to keep my children actively involved in the tribe to ensure they grow up with a strong sense of identity and belonging—something I wish I would have had the privilege of doing as a child. By grounding our youth, we are fulfilling our promise to the generations that come after us.

If elected, I stand for advocacy and transparency. I support the following issues within our tribe today: Zoom cameras being on, tribal motor pool vehicles, three-branch government, more elder mentoring youth, monthly cultural teachings, and expanding to ensure long-term financial stability—non-gaming revenues. I want to ensure our tribe remains transparent, ethical, and accountable. I want to use my background in schools and sports to advocate for better opportunities and cultural immersion for our children. I strive to ensure that our elders have the resources, health care, and respect they deserve to live with dignity— as they are our knowledge keepers of the tribe.

My background includes working within our local Kewadin casino right out of high school. I am excited to continue serving our community and our people. See “Candidates,” page 25

Tribal primary candidates speak out in forum

From "Candidates," page 24
 school, supervising at our local grocery store, assistant teaching at St. Francis de Sales Schools, and volunteer coaching youth basketball. These roles taught me the value of hard work and the importance of every individual's contribution to our local economy. My focus has always been on the people and will continue to stay that way.

I am not a career politician. I am a mother, a coach, a student, and a proud Sault Tribe member. I believe Unit 4 deserves a voice that honors the wisdom of the Elders while being actively prepared for our future. I look forward to meeting with you, listening to your concerns, and earning your vote.

Feel free to reach out to me, by email or text/call.
 abbrielleforunit4@gmail.com
 (906) 450-3929

Unit V Candidate



RITA GLYPTIS

Hello, my name is Rita Glyptis. My spirit name is Blue Turtle Woman and I am Turtle Clan. I am a lifelong Unit 5 member from Au Train, Mich., where I raised my children and now help nurture and teach my five grandchildren — a true blessing in my life. Our ancestors taught us to think seven generations ahead. Every decision we make today shapes the future our children will inherit, and I am running to help ensure that future is strong, sovereign, and full of opportunity.

Now an elder and recently retired after more than 20 years as a small business owner, I have the time, energy and dedication to fully represent our people.

My experience in business management, accounting, budgeting, employee relations, and public service has prepared me to bring dedication, hard work, and common-sense decision making to the board table.

For many years I have supported and worked alongside our tribe and our members on the front lines and beyond. Through this work I have come to understand both the challenges we face and the strengths that make our communities resilient.

My previous experience with the Sault Tribe includes positions in Health, Housing, casino administration, membership services, and serving on the board. I have also served on the Health Board, the Tribal Action Plan Committee, and multiple powwow committees. This background has prepared me

to serve effectively and responsibly for all members of Unit 5 and the entire tribe.

If elected, I will be a full time, in person board member. I promise to represent all members of the Sault Tribe, as well as work to preserve and protect the needs and services in all of Unit 5. I will do the work required to make informed decisions that put the needs of our members first.

I will advocate for:

- Strong sovereign tribal governance
- Balanced three-branch government
- Repayment of loan from Land Claims Fund
- Responsible stewardship of tribal resources
- Support for Health, Housing and member services
- Increased awareness of and improvement to Veterans and Elderly Services
- Review of current BOD Strategic Plan dated March 1, 2025
- Financial review of Cultural Enhancement Funds
- Increased youth cultural events and activities

I will research and recommend potential next steps for:

- Unit 4/5 boundary changes
- Unit 5's unused and underutilized existing assets (old Munising health center, White Pine MidJim, etc.)

I will provide:

- Independent leadership and decision making
- Full-time, in person repre-

sentation

— Increased communication to outlying areas and at large membership

— Increased communication and collaboration between elders throughout Unit 5

These priorities are based on issues that have been shared with me by members of our Sault Tribe community. I look forward to further discussions with all of you regarding these and additional concerns.

I have no family ties to anyone on the board or in management. My only commitment is to you — the members. I will be your voice, and I respectfully ask for your vote.

Your voice, our path forward.
 Miigwech,
 Rita Glyptis
Unit V Candidate



TYLER LAPLAUNT

Boozhoo, chi miigwech to everyone who has taken the time to speak with me, share your

thoughts, and welcome me into your homes to talk about the future of our tribe. Those conversations are the foundation of good leadership. They remind me that leadership is not about one person's voice, but about listening to the many voices that make up our nation. From our youth who carry the promise of tomorrow, to our elders who hold the teachings and wisdom of yesterday, our people remain the greatest strength of our tribe.

When I first ran for office, I made a commitment to accountability, transparency, and leadership grounded in our Anishinaabe values. Those commitments have not changed. Over the past four years, I have worked to ask the hard questions, stand firm when it mattered most, and remain present within the communities I serve. Leadership means showing up, doing the work, and making decisions that strengthen our tribe not just for today, but for the generations who will follow.

Together, we have made real progress. Our tribe has begun moving away from the mindset of "this is how it has always been done" and toward a future built on responsibility, transparency, and progress. We helped bring closure to lawsuits that burdened our tribe for over a generation. We brought cameras into our board room and committee meetings so members can see their government at work. We stood up for integrity in leadership, removed a false chair, ended

See "Forum," Page 31



VOTE JACKIE MINTON UNIT 2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



"Jackie Minton has made a profound impact by cultivating pride in and understanding of the rich cultural heritage of our Native American students. Her work has revitalized cultural awareness, strengthened acceptance, and deepened appreciation, while preserving and passing down traditions that will continue to benefit our student population for generations to come."

Thomas McKee, Ph.D.
 Rudyard Area Schools
 Superintendent

VOTE TRIBAL ELDER JACKIE MINTON, UNIT 2 I WILL BE A FULL TIME BOARD REPRESENTATIVE FOR YOU!

Historical Knowledge

I have held an active role in participating in our tribal board meetings and governance for over 30 years:

- Constitution Committee 2006-2008
- Special Needs and Enrollment Committee 2007-2008
- Secretarial Election Board 2007
- Chairwoman Culture Committee 2010-2014
- LSSU Native American Center Advisory Committee 2025-present



Many of you know me, I have had an active role in our communities with our children, families, and elders for over 30 years. Together we have worked at giving our children traditional Anishinaabe teachings. We have celebrated through our successes and have sat at fires lending a comforting hand during our losses. As a tribal elder I am asking for your support during this election so that I am able to represent you moving forward with integrity and letting your voice be heard.

DEFEND OUR TRIBAL NATION • PROTECT OUR TRIBAL NATION ENHANCE OUR TRIBAL NATION AND ITS PEOPLE

CONTACT JACKIE MINTON • (906) 322-6423 • EMAIL: JACKIEMINTONUNIT2@GMAIL.COM

This ad is endorsed by Jackie Minton

RX kids expands to entire Upper Peninsula



AUSTIN LOWES
TRIBAL CHAIRMAN
RX KIDS

On March 2, the RX Kids program expanded to serve the entire Upper Peninsula. Last year, the Sault Tribe made a significant donation to RX Kids to help expand this important program into five Upper Peninsula counties. Since then, 526 families have enrolled, with 24 percent of participating families identifying as Native American.

families at the halfway point of pregnancy, followed by \$500 per month during the first six months of a baby's life. In total, each participating family receives \$4,500 in direct support. This program is not income based. Most applicants complete the process on their phones in about 30 minutes. Payments can be received through direct deposit or on a debit card mailed to participants.

We have already seen how this program strengthens food security, improves housing stability, and helps families purchase essential items needed to care for their newborns. Supporting mothers and babies during this critical time is one of the strongest investments we can make in our communities.

In addition to the Upper Peninsula, RX Kids is also available in Flint, Kalamazoo, Pontiac, Clare County, Royal Oak Township, Hazel Park, Dearborn, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Melvindale, River Rouge, Ypsilanti, Roscommon County, Saginaw, Buena Vista Township,

Bridgeport Township, Benton Harbor, Niles, Buchanan, Benton Charter Township, Lake County, and Detroit.

Families interested in applying can do so on the RX Kids website.

INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL

I was recently elected Vice President of the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ITC). ITC is an intertribal organization that pursues grant opportunities for the 12 federally recognized tribes in Michigan. The chairpersons of each Michigan tribe serve on the ITC board.

In addition to this role, I serve as the Vice Chair of the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, President of the United Tribes of Michigan, the primary Tribal delegate for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Tribal Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a commissioner on the Michigan Community Service Commission, and the coordinator for the local Feeding America distribution at Big Bear each month.

SNOWMOBILE EASEMENT

On March 3, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors passed a resolution granting an easement to a local snowmobile club that will allow the club to complete a new snowmobile trail through Barbeau, Michigan. This project has strong support from local community stakeholders, and it will allow snowmobilers to access several local businesses in the Barbeau area.

FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS PROGRAM

The First-Time Home Buyers Housing Program has recently opened. This program provides up to \$9,500 toward a down payment for qualified tribal families purchasing a home. For more information or to apply, please contact the Sault Tribe Housing



Authority at (906) 495-1450.

ADVOCACY

I continue to advocate for the Sault Tribe at the local, state, and federal levels. Later this month, I will testify in Lansing in support of a \$2 million appropriation request made by our state legislators for a permanent supportive housing project. I will also attend oral arguments at the Michigan Supreme Court regarding the Line 5 tunnel project. Additionally, on March 17, I will testify in Washington, D.C. before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee in support of increasing federal funding for Indian Country.

I take representation very seriously and will continue to advocate for the tribe to the best of my

ability.

WALKING ON

Patrick McCoy walked on this month after a long battle with cancer.

Pat was a passionate advocate for the recovery community. He served as the Tribe's TAP Coordinator, a role focused on addressing substance abuse and supporting recovery efforts within our community. Pat also worked at Shedawin Haven, a building used by the tribe to host AA, NA, and Wellbriety meetings.

Pat provided tremendous support to those who needed it most, and he will be deeply missed by our Tribal community. We thank him for his service and for the positive impact he made in Indian Country throughout his life.



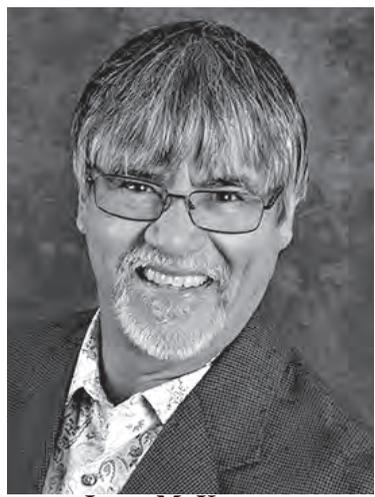
Board of directors travel report for 2025 fourth quarter

Pursuant to Sault Tribe Board of Directors Resolution 2025-280: Quarterly Board Travel Reports, in the chart below is the financial detail related to the fourth quarter of 2025 (Oct 1 - Dec 31). Please see resolution for additional information.

Board Member	Board of Directors Workshops / Meetings	Government-to-Government	Tribal Conferences	Lobbying Efforts	Miscellaneous (Elder meetings, ground breakings, office hours, meetings, etc.)	Total by Board Member
Austin Lowes, Chairman	\$0.00	\$765.76	\$0.00	\$575.22	\$506.80	\$1,847.78
Kimberle Gravelle, Unit 1	\$284.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$284.80
Isaac McKechnie, Unit 1	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Michael McKerchie, Unit 1	\$144.20	\$339.61	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$483.81
Robert McRorie, Unit 1	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Aaron Payment, Unit 1	\$0.00	\$1,357.49	\$4,068.53	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,426.02
Lana Causley-Smith, Unit 2	\$212.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$727.10	\$939.90
Kimberly Lee, Unit 2	\$425.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$196.00	\$621.60
Shawn Borowicz, Unit 3	\$68.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$68.60
Bridgett Sorenson, Unit 3	\$403.20	\$0.00	\$10,040.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,443.20
Larry Barbeau, Unit 4	\$1,610.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,610.00
Kimberly Hampton, Unit 4	\$660.80	\$0.00	\$4,759.42	\$0.00	\$154.00	\$5,574.22
Tyler LaPlaunt, Unit 5	\$705.60	\$0.00	\$4,353.39	\$0.00	\$261.80	\$5,320.79

The expenses above include Motorpool expenses, mileage expenses, hotel expenses, per diem, airfare, train fare, parking expenses and any other miscellaneous travel-related expenses.

Discussing board actions and Unit 1 initiatives



ISAAC MCKECHNIE
DIRECTOR, UNIT 1

Dear Citizens,
The Sault Tribe Board of Directors has continued working through a number of important resolutions that impact our government operations, economic development, and member services. I want to take a moment to update Unit 1 members on several recent

board actions and some initiatives I have been working on.

One of the board's core responsibilities is ensuring our tribal government operates efficiently and responsibly. Recently, the board approved several budget adjustments for Fiscal Year 2026 to better align departmental funding with current needs, allowing programs to continue delivering members' services while ensuring effective use of tribal resources. Maintaining fiscal accountability remains a priority to protect programs our citizens rely on.

The board also approved continuing funding authority for several tribal programs while the annual budget review process is finalized. This ensures departments continue operating without interruption while financial reviews and planning are completed.

Another resolution supported regional recreation and tourism by authorizing staff to work with the

Les Cheneaux Snowmobile Club and the BIA to establish snowmobile trail easements crossing tribal land. Partnerships like this can help support local economic activity while maintaining tribal oversight of our lands.

The board approved participation in an amicus brief in the Michigan v. Caswell case, which involves broader legal issues connected to treaty rights. Participating in these efforts ensures our voice is represented in matters affecting tribal sovereignty, protecting our treaty rights.

Black Rock Bar & Grill Opening

Another exciting development for our tribe has been the opening of Black Rock Bar & Grill inside Sault Kewadin Casino. The restaurant replaced the long-standing DreamCatchers restaurant as part of broader improvements at the property. Since opening, the restaurant has been extremely busy and

has brought renewed energy and traffic to the property.

The goal of this partnership was to elevate the dining experience at Kewadin and attract both local residents and visitors to the casino and hotel. Early feedback has been very positive.

KI Sawyer Housing Development

Housing remains one of the greatest needs across our tribe. The continued progress of tribal housing at KI Sawyer in Marquette County will provide tribal members additional housing opportunities.

Expanding housing availability in different areas of our service region is an important step toward addressing long waiting lists.

Initiatives I have introduced

I introduced a resolution to allow employees who are unable to leave the island due to ferry disruptions to utilize the tribe's remote work policy when their job

duties allow it.

I also introduced a resolution to establish clearer Cultural Enhancement Fund reporting requirements and allocate funding portions to the Culture Department and the Elders/Land Claims Fund to ensure these resources are used to benefit our culture and membership.

Over the past three years, we have made meaningful progress on a number of initiatives, but there is still work ahead. I will continue advocating for transparency, accountability, and responsible investment in the programs and services our members depend on.

As always, I encourage members to reach out with questions or concerns.

Miigwech for the opportunity to serve.

Isaac Mckechnie
Unit 1 Director
(906) 440-6661
imckechnie@saulttribe.net

NRD seeks bat conservation funding for WNS



KIM GRAVELLE,
DIRECTOR, UNIT 1
Aaniin,
Our Natural Resources
Division (NRD) is seeking

funding from the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) to enhance the wildlife conservation through safe and effective bat monitoring and conservation activities. If granted, this would enable our NRD to receive training, purchase equipment and monitoring supplies to implement a bat conservation initiative for the White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in the the 1836 Ceded Territory.

Bats play a critical ecological and cultural roll by contributing to **insect control**, pollination and seed dispersal. Sadly many bat species are experiencing severe population declines due to habitat loss, climate change and the spread of disease, including

White Nose Syndrome. An average bat can eat up to 1,000 mosquitoes in one hour.

If awarded, the tribe would enhance its capacity for wildlife conservation through safe and legal handling, research and monitoring efforts that will support the at-risk and threatened bat species. For more information on this subject you can contact Katie Schultz at (906) 632-5040 or kschultz1@saulttribe.net.

Just a reminder, volunteers are needed to help guide our NRD regarding lake whitefish. The Sault Tribe Fisheries Program is looking for tribal members 18 years and older to participate in a series of workshops in 2026.

These workshops will be used

to guide stewardship of whitefish in northern Lake Huron. The goal is to get 10 to 20 volunteers from our elders, commercial gill net and trap net fishers, subsistence fishers and tribal members. This program is important to ensure the management of whitefish in our traditional fishing grounds. If you would like more information, you can contact Shane Flinn, Biologist II, Sault Tribe Fisheries at (906) 632-0072, ext. 73163, (906) 203-5125, or by email at sflinn@saulttribe.net.

Also, to tribal members, if you are not an elder (over the age of 60) you won't receive Win Awenen Nisitotung (Sault Tribe paper) automatically. Good news: tribal members and subscrib-

ers can now chose to receive a digital subscription to the paper which would arrive at least six days early. For more details contact Sherrie Lucas at slucas@saulttribe.net or call (906) 632-6398.

As always, keep the men and women in the armed forces in your prayers for a safe return to their families. I would also like to thank our team members for their hard work and continued dedication.

Please feel free to call me at (906) 259-3742 or email at kkgravelle@saulttribe.net. Please leave a message and I will return your call.

Miigwech,
Kim Gravelle

More candidate forum

Editor's Note: The primary election nomination petition contest period yielded two additional Unit 2 candidates whose forum pieces are below, as well as one late submission who was accepted in the interest of having as many candidate profiles as possible.

Unit 2 Candidate



Kimberly Lee

Aanii, it has been an honor to serve as your Unit 2 Representative. I have worked to represent all members with fairness, respect, and a commitment to listening.

Unit 2 covers a large area, and I believe leadership means staying connected with the people we serve. Through community events, and meaningful conversations, I continue working to ensure members feel heard and represented.

Our Tribe's future depends on thoughtful leadership that balances tradition, opportunity, and responsible decision making. I believe our government works best when leaders remain grounded in the Seven Grandfather

Teachings.

- My focus remains simple~
- Listening to members
- Strengthening communication
- Supporting opportunities for youth and elders
- Protecting the strength of our Tribe for generations to come
- Leadership should never be about politics or personalities. It should always be about the people.

I would be honored to continue serving Unit 2 with a strong, steady, and unwavering commitment to all members, not just during election season, and not just for the loudest voices.

Let's continue to stay strong, steady, and member focused.

Chi Miigwech for your support.

Respectfully
Kimberly Lee

Unit 2 Candidate

My name is SaraLynn Archer and I live in Hessel, Mich. I am the mother of three grown children and a nokomis (grandmother) to seven grandkids who are the loves of my life. I carry the jingle dress to honor a life-long responsibility to support healing for our people. I walk the red road: abstaining from drugs and alcohol. I practice the teachings of wellbriety: not to judge



SaraLynn Archer

but to more clearly hear the ancestors. I earned four college degrees to better serve.

Top priorities are elders, youth, health, education, culture, treaty rights and integrity.

I am ready to serve Unit 2 tribal members with clean hands and straight eyes. I will represent you with honesty and integrity it's time for a positive change. I would appreciate your support and vote.

Chi Miigwech.
— SaraLynn
(906) 440-3205
SaraLynnArcher@gmail.com

Unit 3 Candidate

My name is Geraldine Brow, and my Anishinaabe name is Shingwakikwe, meaning Pine Woman. I have been married to my husband, Darrin, for 33 years, and together we have built a fam-



Geraldine Brow

ily that includes two sons, their wives, and five beautiful grandchildren. I am also the proud daughter of the late Viola M. Paquin and Bernard E. Paquin of St. Ignace, Michigan, and one of 12 children raised with strong values, deep faith, and the teaching to always "pay it forward."

I spent my childhood between the Third Ward of St. Ignace (Vide Poch/"Empty Pockets") and Manistique. The lessons my parents passed down of kindness, service, humility, and compassion, have stayed with me throughout my life and work.

In 1994, after my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, I returned to St. Ignace to be closer to my parents and support them. That same year, I began my employment with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the Human Resources

Department, back when the office was still located in the casino. Over the next 20 years, I served in several roles, including supervision, payroll, FMLA administration, and HR representation.

For the past decade, I have had the honor of working with the Sault Tribe Housing Authority, continuing my commitment to tribal members, families, and our community. Throughout my career, I have valued the relationships built with co-workers, managers, tribal members, Elders, and the many individuals I've had the privilege to assist.

In addition to my professional experience, I have dedicated more than 40 years to volunteering with Special Olympics, work that has brought tremendous joy and strengthened my belief in inclusion, advocacy, and respect.

I strive every day to live by the Seven Grandfather Teachings, not just in words but through action, compassion, and accountability. My life has been shaped deeply by service, community relationships, and belief that every voice matters.

This message is shared in loving memory of my mother, Viola M. Paquin, and my sister, Phyllis A. Huffman, both of whom I lost in 2025. Their spirits continue to guide me.

Standing firm on the truth; because it matters



**LANA CAUSLEY-SMITH,
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

I feel I have to comment to clear some things up. I did not want to have to write this but I feel no other option at this point. Once again the “trailer” was brought up and now “some selective” internal information is online. There is much more entire history and details.

Back in 2020, we provided a tribal member family services during the pandemic (I’m refraining from members’ details as

much as I can about the tragedy that occurred, but sadly the family is seeing and reading about it once again and being publicly humiliated in the actions).

As a representative, I acted in the nature of helping in a crisis to deliver a service in a time of need. The tribe assisted as again we were in the dark times of the pandemic, we assisted to remedy a family that was in fact homeless due to no fault of their own. It was a dire time.

The things that are once again occurring are (accusations and mistrusts) are purely for political retribution, and deflection. It’s recently crossed another line as certain intimate details have been thrown on Facebook for the entire world to comment and attack — placing the family right in the crossfire. It’s simply unacceptable to place a family in this situation, it’s harmful to this family.

A few on the board have used this at whim to strike when other items should be on the forefront (yes it’s a pattern). It’s simply nothing but smoke and mirrors to

accomplish division and uncertainty on representation and some past and current staff.

We acted as a vessel to assist with the dollars we were provided to accomplish safe measures for a tribal family in extreme need. We did nothing wrong; there was no intent to defraud, embezzle and there is not a family relationship as it’s been asserted and no political gain in the outcome of helping this family. These are all words we have had to hear or read at meetings and on social media for years — it causes hurt, distrust and resentment for us and the people and families we try to help.

Again, I didn’t want to respond, as the family should have privacy for services just like any other family that we help, but here it has definitely not been the case. It is extremely sad.

I will finally say, I would advocate the same today as I did 5 years ago when this occurred. I do not believe any staff or the tribe did anything wrong and I stand behind the truths of the

matter. We had millions and millions of dollars to assist during the pandemic — this simple, single trailer was a means to assist in an extreme circumstance. I know the picture is painted as something very different but truth matters. Please call me if you would like to discuss this with me. You could also call the tribe’s Legal Department as there are internal legal opinions about the matter and we have auditors looking over our dollars used. I sincerely apologize to the tribal family it impacts and has caused heartache.

As you all know, I stay clear of the muck as much as I possibly can. I have practiced this discipline for two decades not taking part in the social media machine and not stooping to levels that we see and many are disgusted with. Our projects in Unit 2 are moving forward and once again all preparing to be complete this spring and early summer. I’m thankful for that and we will be welcoming new homes for fair market rental, Elder units and new youth/fitness center open-

ings. We plan to gather and hold a welcoming for our unit to take part in.

Our tribe is so robust and packed with members and non members that work extremely hard every single day to make us better. It seems some leadership have lost some sight along the way to just divide and hurt — it’s truly obvious to many and truly some just take part blindly and some do it to deflect. I will stand firm on truth because that does matter. Our history and story matter.

As always, please reach out to me if you would like to meet, need my assistance or have ideas and input. Keep the calls coming on the opinions and thoughts on the constitutional amendments and the structure of our government for the future. That’s what matters.

(906) 322-3818; lcausley@saulttribe.net

Baamaa pii and enjoy the spring and new beginnings.

Lana Causley-Smith, Unit 2 Director

Community prepares for the season of renewal



**KIMBERLY HAMPTON,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

Aanii kina waya. We are now near the middle of March and we are now feeling the quiet transition from the long winter months toward the promise of spring. The days slowly grow longer, the sun begins to warm the air a little more each afternoon, and our communities start preparing for

the season of renewal. Spring has always been a time of reflection and new beginnings, an opportunity to reconnect with family, community, and the land around us.

This time of year reminds us of the resilience of our people. Just as the earth renews itself each spring, our communities continue to grow stronger through cooperation, shared values, and dedication to future generations. I encourage everyone to take time to enjoy this season, check in with relatives and neighbors, and continue strengthening the connections that make our communities so vibrant and supportive. Miigwech.

Reminders:

Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow SAVE THE DATE for the **2026 Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow**, which has been scheduled for **June 6**.

I encourage everyone to “like”

the Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow Facebook page. For general information you can always contact myself.

The next meeting is scheduled for **April 13, 2026 at 5 p.m., followed by April 27, 2026**, Manistique Tribal Health Center. Zoom option is available with Group ID: 906 440 8138, Password: KimHampton. There is a full meeting schedule published.

Unit 4 Elder Meetings

The next meeting in Manistique will be held **April 8 at 11:30 a.m. EST**.

The next meeting in Escanaba will be held **April 8, 2026 at 4 p.m. EST**. If you plan to attend, please RSVP the week before by calling (906) 635-4971.

The next meetings in Marquette, for Units 4 and 5, are scheduled for **April 2, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST** at the Community Center located at 204 Cherry

Creek Rd, Harvey, Mich.

Board Member In-Person Office Hours

Manistique Office Hours held at the Manistique Tribal Health Center:

March 25, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
April 8, 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
April 22, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Escanaba Office Hours held at the Escanaba Community Center:

March 20, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
April 3, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
April 17, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Town Hall Meetings Manistique Community Town Hall Meetings located at the Manistique Tribal Health Center are scheduled as follows:

Friday, April 10, 5-7 p.m. EST.

Friday, May 8, 5-7 p.m. EST
Escanaba Community Town Hall Meetings located at the Escanaba Community Center

are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, March 19, 4-6 p.m. EST.

Friday, April 17, 4-6 p.m. EST.

Escanaba Spring Ceremony

Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center

I want to give my sincerest thanks for trusting me to represent Unit 4 members and Sault Tribe. I am always available for questions, comments, and ideas for growth. I encourage members to participate in Maamawi Craft Nights, office hours, community input sessions, Katchup with Kim, and all other activities and events occurring throughout Indian Country.

My contact information is below:

Kimberly Hampton, Unit 4 Representative. Phone (906) 440-8138. Email is KHampton@saulttribe.net.

Hotel tax fund supports meaningful Unit 2 projects



**KIMBERLY LEE,
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

Miigwech to the members who continue to stay engaged, ask questions, and participate in conversations about the future of our tribe. Your input, ideas, and concerns are truly valued and help guide the work being done. Serving as your representative

means listening carefully, communicating openly, and ensuring that decisions reflect the best interests of all members. Not only the loudest voices.

Over the past month, I have been fortunate to connect with many members across Unit 2 through phone calls, messages, and in-person conversations. Because our unit covers such a large area, I am committed to being with members wherever they are, whenever possible. Whether it’s a quick chat, sharing coffee, or sitting together at a kitchen table, these moments let me hear directly about your concerns, priorities, and hopes for the future of our tribe.

Many important subjects have been discussed that affect the direction and priorities of our tribe. As always, my focus is on considerate decision making that contemplates the long term well being of every member.

Alongside changes to our government structure, discussions

are ongoing about how hotel tax dollars are used. They are divided equally among all units. Yes, unit directors are responsible for managing these funds.

Some see this fund as a source of funding for political gain. I want to assure you that over the past three years, it has supported numerous meaningful projects in Unit 2 communities. Projects that wouldn’t be possible through departmental budgets alone. For example, elders in Naubinway now have shadow boxes sharing Native American family histories, and beautiful artwork by a master artist has been displayed at the Hessel fire lodge. The YEA program needed a shed in Newberry. Procedures require unit directors to submit requests, which are then approved by co-directors and documented with receipts, ensuring accountability. Recently, I was saddened to learn that a FOIA request for this information was denied, and I strongly oppose this decision. Members have the right

to know how their funds are used. Starting soon, I plan to share, month by month, as much information as I can about these funds for Unit 2, because transparency is essential. Many of us can agree that the corporate world wasn’t built to honor cultures, it was about control. I believe in honest reporting so members can see how funds are spent, and I support periodic reviews to ensure responsible stewardship. Our culture is sacred, and any investment should serve to unite us, strengthen connections, and pass our knowledge to future generations.

Election Registration Deadline: March 27 is the last day for members to register for the upcoming tribal elections. If you’ve recently moved or are unsure about your unit status, please check and update your information before the deadline. Staying registered ensures your voice is heard in shaping our tribe’s future.

If you wish to share ideas, ask questions, or discuss tribal mat-

ters. Whether it’s over coffee, at a kitchen table, or meeting up, your voice matters, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue listening and serving you.

Miigwech.
Kimberly Lee
Unit 2 Director
Klee@saulttribe.net
(906) 379-8965

MOVING ?



When you move, let us know where you are headed! That way you won’t miss one issue of your tribal paper. Call (906) 632-6398 or email slucas@saulttribe.net.

Responsible leadership needed during elections



**BRIDGETT SORENSON,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

At the Feb. 17 board meeting we voted on a budget modification for the new Natural Resources Building, a grant application, an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) to provide GED services to tribal students, a compensation plan for JKL, state and federal lobbyist contracts, rescinded and granted land leases, authorized a limited partnership for LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) for a supportive housing development, a resolution to have Housing manage the new housing units and properties that were ARPA projects, authorized Health to purchase property for a health annex, accepted opioid settlement funds for the Health Division and a resolution for online gaming to be put in Kewadin's name instead of the tribe.

The resolution to amend Chapter 82 on appeals for the court was tabled to a workshop. There was a resolution for citizen due process and constitutional rights sponsored by Director Payment. I definitely support members having standing in court and team members, as well, but I had to call it for what it was, a conflict of interest as Director Payment as he mentioned in his past unit report is in a lawsuit with the tribe. So, he wants protections for himself as the scheduling hearing was two days after the meeting. This resolution was not written or

reviewed by Legal. This resolution was referred to Legal for a 90-day review. There were also two transfers of commercial fishing licenses to a grandson and a son.

On Sunday, Feb. 22, myself and two community members hosted a community potluck. We had about 40 people attend and some very good food. I called Bingo and we had many laughs and good prizes. On Sunday, March 15, we will be hosting Dean Sayers for some food and storytelling. We are going to try and do some monthly gatherings.

We were not able to hold our February elder meeting as the lunch room at the elder complex was having heating issues, so meals were served to go only. The bison was brought down by the Elder Director and was distributed to many elders. Thank you to all that helped with this distribution, I was unable to attend.

The March 3 meeting, I attended via Zoom as a family member had surgery that day. I understand some don't like us attending via Zoom or maybe it is some of us that attend via Zoom but I am grateful for that opportunity when there are life situations that some of us don't advertise.

Items that were voted on were some budget modifications for Health, the USDA budget, our schedule B budgets (almost \$12 million (42 budgets), .5 million coming from tribal support), schedule C budgets (over \$98 million (142 budgets) almost \$20 million from tribal support), governmental capital expenditures (\$2 million with \$1 million from tribal support), a Natural Resource funding proposal for up to \$1 million to enhance tribal stewardship across the 1836 ceded territory, some residential land leases, to file an amicus brief in a treaty fishing case (People of the State of MI vs Walter Joseph Caswell), rescinding a resolution on wagering, protecting tribal artisans from artificial

intelligence and providing snowmobile access to the Cozy in Barbeau.

The last resolution was to allocate hotel tax revenue to the Land Claims Fund and to cultural education and enhancement purposes. This was sponsored by Director McKechnie to clearly campaign on elder's hoping to get larger checks. I believe in 2019 the board voted to take the 5% hotel room tax and divide it up with 1% going to each unit for cultural enhancement. Until then, most of the cultural activities only occurred in the Soo or at the Cultural Camp on Sugar Island. This gave units opportunities to have people in their communities teach workshops and also participants to not have to travel to attend. The expenditures need to be approved by both directors in our unit or a majority of Unit 1.

I have, for the last few years, scheduled these workshops and then would send the invoices to the board administrator for payment. In our unit, we have also used the funds to purchase a shed at the Wequayoc Cemetery for wood and sweat lodge supplies, tables and chairs at the Grime's house for feasts, ghost feast, MMIP event, Orange Shirt Day event, Native American Indian event, tables, chairs and racks for the McCann School (community building), art supplies for youth art classes, and soon to be a new fire lodge at McCann School for community events and wellbriety use. These funds have been instrumental to our unit to gather, learn and educate. If we do not have language or culture, we cease to exist as a tribe.

I also understand the money that was spent out of the land Claims Fund for economic development. Most, if not all, was spent prior to me getting elected in 2012. We had over \$70 million in debt that we were paying back, some from Greektown and some other bad decisions from the chair in 2004-2008 as he at that time was the CEO and had authority. So

there has not be a lot of opportunities to pay back the funds and for so many years staff hadn't had raises and buildings had not been maintained. These are not excuses, just reality that tough decisions always need to be made, such as services and jobs.

Putting this type of legislation out during the election cycle is plain irresponsible. Over the year's others have tried things for votes which definitely led to the tribe's debt. Now if he wanted to have a discussion with all parties involved and come up with a long-term sustainable plan, then that would be different than slapping something on the agenda to make you look good or does it really when you are the treasurer?

I would like to thank the Kewadin Shores team for hosting the Pond Hockey Meet and Greet event with my office as the event organizer and Labatt as one of the sponsors. We were able to host 124 teams from all over Michigan and many surrounding states for our 19th year. The casino provided shuttles for the event for three days of pub crawls.

The board voted on March 3 to appoint Carol Colegrove to the Unit 3 elder committee.

The official election list was just posted. Primary ballots will be mailed out by March 26 with April 30 being the primary count. There are five people running in Unit 3 for one seat. The same person that always recruits people to run against the people that do not share his opinions is trying to influence the election. He really comes out against the strong kwe that he cannot manipulate.

Also pay attention to the people or things that were ok that are now being called out because those people no longer support their agendas. It is a shame that they think people should be their minions and even resort to extorting people.

It also bothers me for those that always want sympathy by playing a victim. On the other

hand, they are running all over traveling, in store recruiting candidates, running over to Black Rock 5 minutes after the meeting is over but couldn't attend a meeting in person. I have lost many family members to cancer and it is a horrible to experience for the patient and caregiver. What I don't understand is that when you face those life-threatening circumstances that you don't become humble and keep to yourself and loved ones. Why would you still belittle, harass, cause divides when you are so sick? Doesn't make a lick of sense to me.

We have been working during workshops on the three-branch Constitution. I recommend you go to saulttribe.com to view the documents that are being considered. You may also provide feedback via email to constitution@saulttribe.net. This will be an important vote for our tribe's future. I really can't imagine what this will do if certain people have more power or authority than they already have. When some are making this entire election about supporting the US system of government when we are our own sovereign nation. I think many people have good intentions but do not see the evil we do.

I am very sorry that we are losing another well-loved physician in St. Ignace. Things need to change because our number one priority should be the health and well being of our people and team members.

Congratulations to Mariea Mongene on being promoted to the Housing Director. Mariea is a Sault Tribe member who has dedicated her career to our tribe and its members.

I would like to wish our team members, members and service members a Happy Easter! I hope that you all get to share a meal with friends and/or family. The world is a crazy place so enjoy the day!

Any questions or concerns, please email me at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, bridgett91@yahoo.com or (906) 430-0536.

Spring news: Unit 4 updates, meetings, dates



**LARRY BARBEAU,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

Aaniin,

Spring is beginning to arrive across the UP, and with that comes maple syrup season. As temperatures begin to warm during the day and freeze again at night, the sap begins to run in the maple trees. For generations, Anishinaabe families have gathered during this season to

tap trees, collect sap, and boil it down into syrup and sugar. It's more than just food—it's a reminder of our connection to the land, our teachings, and the responsibilities we carry to care for the forests that provide for us.

Many families and community members are beginning their sugarbush work now, and it's always encouraging to see our traditions continuing to be practiced and passed down to the next generation. My daughter and I love this time of season in our sugarbush.

As we begin to move out of winter and look toward spring, I want to share a short update on what's happening across our communities and within the tribe.

Upcoming Tribal Elections

As many of you know, this year is an election year for our tribe. The primary election will take place on April 30, 2026. The general election is scheduled for June 25, 2026. Ballots are mailed to registered tribal mem-

bers, so it is important to ensure your mailing address is current with the Tribal Registrar's office (Enrollment Department). Every vote matters, and participation from our membership helps shape the future direction of our tribe.

Upcoming Meetings and Important Dates

We have a few scheduled meetings coming up for the month of March; including board workshops and meetings, JKLFC meetings, Kewadin Gaming Authority meetings, Enterprise Authority meetings, Conservation Committee meetings, etc.

March 3 – Board workshop at 10 a.m. and the board meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

March 10 – Board workshop/JKLFC meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

March 23 - Conservation Committee meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

March 24 – Board workshop/KGA/Enterprise Authority meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Unit 4 Elder Meetings

We encourage all tribal elders to attend the elder meetings. The next meeting in Manistique will be held March 11 at 12 p.m. EST at the Manistique Tribal Center. The next meeting in Escanaba will be held March 11 at 5 p.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center. The Elder Advisory Meetings will be starting back up in March, with the first one of the year taking place on March 20 at 1 p.m. EST at the Newberry Tribal Center.

SAVE THE DATE – COMING UP NEXT MONTH – Honoring our Elders Powwow

– April 18 from 1 to 7 p.m. at the Escanaba High School. Doors open at 10 a.m., Grand Entries at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., feast at 4:30 p.m. For vendor information contact chuckjennifer09@gmail.com.

Contact information:

Larry Barbeau, Unit 4 Representative.
Phone (906) 259-3040.

Email: lbarbeau@sauttribe.net

As always, I encourage Unit 4 members to stay engaged with tribal government and attend meetings when possible. The Sault Tribe Board of Directors holds regular meetings twice each month, and community input is important as decisions are made that affect our members and programs. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas, please reach out. Hearing directly from our members helps guide the work we do on the board. Miigwech to all of you, and I hope everyone has a safe and productive spring season.

Honor, duty and sacred trust in representing you with honesty



AARON PAYMENT
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

HEALTH UPDATE

First, I would like to share a promising health update. I am well on my path to defeating cancer. I have had several procedures so far including surgery and await my radiation regime as I write this. Prayers are welcome as I believe in God — Gitchi Manidou — and have a strong faith. Thank you for your expressions of support.

Some of my haters, including some on the board, have posted that they believe I am feigning illness with one board member in particular posting, *hopefully we will rid ourselves of the cancer Aaron represents* (paraphrased). On the day I missed a meeting due to a consult with my doctor over a potential cancerous spot detected in an MRI, Chair Lowes explained that I was out for a serious medical reason and asked to excuse me without objection. **Both Directors Sorenson and Borowicz objected to excusing me.**

VIOLATING OUR CONSTITUTION IS REMOVABLE!

There is a rumor circulating by my haters and a few board members that I was legally prohibited from running for office in 2024. If this were true, then why was I cleared (to run for the tribal board seat) by the Tribal Election Commission in 2024? I did not clear myself to run, tribal law allowed me to. In the lead up filing to run in 2024, apparently in a closed and secret board session, select board members like Sorenson insisted that I not be allowed to run and pressed tribal legal counsel to tell them what they wanted to hear. After returning to office, board members informed me of the strident attempts of select board members to get tribal Legal to agree

that I would not be allowed to run. Tribal Legal refused. I am advised that the last two general legal counsels advised the board that any effort to deny me to run for office would be unenforceable.

DUE PROCESS NEEDED NOW

Board retribution and subsequent collusion and conspiring to undue your duly elected 2020 chairperson is exactly why we need a three-branch separation of powers and why we need to establish due process of rights and standing in Tribal Court immediately. There is no reason to wait until the people vote to amend the Constitution to establish due process and standing in Tribal Court. The 2020, 20-year record vote for chairperson still stands. Recall that I won with 3,892 votes (a 15% margin over Jennifer McLeod). Chairman Lowes's victory over Hoffman in 2024 was 3,800 votes with a record 20% margin of victory at nearly 60% of the votes!

VOTE TO PAY BACK CARES ACT

Since returning to office, I have been working diligently to get to the bottom of how federal Cares Act funds were used to purchase a modular home for a non-Sault Tribe person, on property owned by a non-Sault Tribe person with no regard to any known or established eligibility criteria. While criteria did exist to qualify including the requirement to being a Sault Tribe member, this was ignored for this special case. An investigation was presented to the board in December 2023. I have read a version posted on social media which I believe shows a board member's involvement requesting/directing the use of Cares Act funds despite staff advising this was not legal and the individual was not eligible. I will push to make the report public so you can see for yourself.

It is now obvious that with the board voting per **Resolution 2024-33 (see above)** to reimburse the Cares Act that the original expenditure was suspect. This vote occurred just days before the 2024 tribal election commenced. Clearly the expenditures of these funds for a free home for a non-Sault Tribe individual in a non-Emergency situation was **NOT justified**. The facts appear to show that one Board Member in particular ~ incessantly harassed staff to use Cares Act

RESOLUTION NO: 2024-33

REIMBURSE CARES ACT FUNDS

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Board of Directors of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby approves the FY 2023 expenditure of \$76,468.75 from Tribal Operations (Cost Center #1160) to reimburse CARES Act Funds that were originally utilized for Emergency Housing.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, as Chairman and Secretary of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, hereby certify that the Board of Directors is composed of 13 members, of whom 11 members constituting a quorum were present at a meeting thereof duly called, noticed, convened, and held on the 16 day of January, 2024; that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at said meeting by an affirmative vote of 8 members for, 0 members against, 2 members abstaining, and that said resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.


Austin Lowes, Chairman
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians


Kimberly Hampton, Secretary
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians

funds to gift a trailer to a non-Sault Tribe person even though the trailer was "not deemed uninhabitable" (from the media post). A board member (who oversees key staff) repeatedly suggested the use of the Cares Act despite tribal Legal and the tribal CEO repeatedly clarifying the funds could not be used. This is the same as giving direction to use the funds anyway.

It is disturbing that where an investigation appeared warranted (and was submitted to the tribal board Dec. 16, 2023) with the results appearing to suggest this be reported to the federal government and the funds reimbursed, it does not appear as though the federal government was ever informed. Was this out of fear of opening up a federal audit of all of the tribe's Cares Act funds?

EVEN MORE DISTURBING

Recognizing legitimate concerns like the above and the need for an independent solicitor general to investigate legitimate issues like this, what is even more disturbing has been the inordinate focus on me, censoring me, investigating me, and threatening to fine me as the whistle blower or for exercising my US Constitutional right to free speech. It is especially troubling given I am on the side of protecting our assets. Acting to cover up or shield those who would steal from you is in the same category as having committed a crime in the first place. While it appears as though an embezzlement scheme (at worst) or misappropriations (at best) may have occurred after

all, the same board members who voted to censure me in 2022 and threatened to fine me \$5,000 a meeting for exposing corruption, have no qualms about a \$76,468.75 expenditure such as that above that benefitted a non-Sault Tribe member who did not have any established need per our eligibility criteria. The fact remains that a non-Sault Tribe individual was gifted \$76,468.75 value not comporting with any known program or service of the tribe.

During a recent board meeting where I shared my concerned in open session, Director Causley seemed to suggest that public discussion of this issue violated membership confidentiality. This is apparently the subject of a new removal petition orchestrated and circulating to remove me from office. Let me be clear, the tribe holds no expectation for confidentiality for individuals who are not our clients and not even our members. Thus, in no way is this protected information. Chairman Lowes concurred. Why would anyone threatened to withhold such information? Think of it, this non-Sault Tribe individual received a \$76,468.75 gift while we have at least a 2-year waiting list for tribal housing. It seems clear to me that instead of killing the messenger...

...The focus should be on holding accountable those responsible rather than punishing a whistleblower for exposing a misappropriation and or embezzlement.

Choosing my words carefully, it sure seems like a cover up to

punish those who would expose corruption rather than those who steal. This is why we need a separation of powers!

PERSONAL INTEREST?!

Recently, I brought a resolution to immediately grant standing in Tribal Court to uphold our US and Sault Tribe Constitutional rights. Why wait for a constitutional amendment? I did this so the board cannot waste another \$100,000-plus on a trumped-up censure investigation or force another resignation. It's interesting that a few board members argued I had a conflict for bringing forward this issue; presumably, to hold them accountable in the event they force another resignation. The irony is the very board members who censured me in 2022 and threatened to fine me \$5,000 a meeting would NOT want to be held to account for their actions.

Therein lies the true conflict of interest. It appears a little more than coincidental that those who have opposed a three-branch separation of powers for so long, just voted to deny you standing in Tribal Court and due process now.

MY LIFE'S COMMITMENT IS TO PROTECT OUR TRIBE

Having cancer sure forces you to focus on what's important. I don't enjoy bringing you bad news. Without a separation of powers, we don't have a First Amendment guarantee in the tribe nor any legal staff who don't report directly to the board and can be summarily fired. Recall, my reporting on the tribal prosecutor who refused to prosecute me despite board pressure to do so and was fired? In the past, we have had a chairperson spend over \$300,000 on a personal bankruptcy attorney. As reported by Chair Lowes, we have a former board member who may have peddled tribal influence in a paid consulting position with developers who then sued us for \$88 million. Until we have a separation of powers, you can continue to expect such corruption.

I long for and envision the day when we have amended our Constitution to establish three co-equal branches of tribal government.

Tribal Members, please take care and love yourself, your family and your tribe!

Chi Miigwech, ~ Aaron
Phone: (906) 440-8946
aapayment@saulttribe.net

Borowicz—reviewing Unit 3 and three-branch government



SHAWN BOROWICZ,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III

Boozhoo,

Happy Springtime to all tribal members. It was a long winter but also a good one with the ice bridge to the island, pond hockey actually on the bay and the incredible snowmobiling season. Our Shores casino has been busy due to all the events listed above and when talking to our out-of-town guests, they were very happy to be spending time in the area.

Our Unit 3 housing project is still moving forward, not as fast as we would like due to the weather as well as having a few

issues with the terrain and the possible removal of some dirt. We will work through these obstacles with Housing and the Environmental Department to keep the progress moving.

Our elections are in full swing and once again there seems to be a lot of controversy about the process fueled by social media and rumors by word of mouth. I have said it before that the entire process needs to be handled by an outside agency with no ties to the Sault Tribe.

Our review of the three-branch government is moving

along and will be sent out for BIA review soon. I did put a resolution in place which was voted on almost unanimously to add the Mackinac Band members to the Constitution with the other six bands before this is sent out. There was much discussion on this issue in workshops. Over 52% of the Sault Tribe is comprised of Mackinac Band members and why this was never done in the past is degrading to all citizens of Mack band descent.

Have been trying to add Cheboygan and Emmet Counties

as a service area for some time, but when other issues arise like missed payments, lawsuits, termination of key employees, and contracts not being upheld, some issues get sidelined. There is a resolution in to add these counties for health care as we speak; it was voted on and passed and is now in the hands of the Health Division.

Continued good health and prosperity to all!

Shawn Borowicz
(906)430-7612
(906)379-8511
sborowicz@saulttribe.net

Strong advocacy strengthens tribal sovereignty



TYLER LAPLAUNT
DIRECTOR, UNIT V

Aanii, Boozhoo,

As we enter March and the time of the Spring Equinox, we are reminded of balance, the moment when day and night stand near equal, teaching us the importance of harmony in our lives and in our community. After the long winter, the land begins to slowly awaken, showing us that renewal comes through steady movement and shared care.

This season calls us to realign our intentions and step forward together. Spring invites us to release what weighs us down and to focus on growth, connection, and possibility. Just as the Earth renews itself, we too have an opportunity to strengthen our relationships, support one another, and move with renewed purpose.

As leaders and community members, this is a time to lift one

another up, extend kindness, and recommit to walking in a good way for the generations ahead. By embracing the teachings of balance and renewal, we help create a stronger, healthier future for our whole community.

**UPCOMING ADVOCACY
Midwest Alliance of
Sovereign Tribes (MAST)
Impact Week**

During MAST Impact Week in Washington, D.C., we will be meeting directly with members of Congress and Senate offices to advocate on issues that matter most to our Tribe and Tribal Nations across the country. These meetings provide an opportunity to speak directly with federal policymakers about priorities such as sovereignty, funding equity, infrastructure, and programs that support the well-being of our citizens. Engaging on Capitol Hill ensures that Tribal perspectives remain visible and that federal partners understand the real impacts of their decisions on our

Anishinaabe monument community input

Join us for a special gathering of community, culture, and collaboration as Anishinaabe stone carver Jason Quigno visits the Marquette Sault Tribe Community Center, 204 Cherry Creek Rd. in Harvey, Mich., on March 23 at 6 p.m. to share designs for *Ishkode*, a new sculpture honoring the Three Fires Confederacy.

Tribal members from all five

communities.

**Indian Health Service (IHS)
Budget Formulation & Meeting
with Secretary Kennedy**

In April, I will participate in the Indian Health Service Budget Formulation process, along with a scheduled meeting with Secretary Kennedy, to advocate for stronger investments in healthcare throughout Indian Country. This work focuses on advancing resources needed to improve access to care, strengthen Tribal health systems, and address long-standing disparities affecting Native communities. Tribal input during budget formulation is critical, as it helps shape federal funding priorities before they are finalized.

**National Institutes of
Health (NIH) Tribal Advisory
Committee (TAC)**

I will also take part in a meeting of the NIH TAC, where Tribal leaders review federal research initiatives and provide guidance to ensure research involving

Upper Peninsula tribes are invited to gather, share a meal, meet relatives from across the region, and offer guidance on the design, language, symbolism, and cultural elements that should be reflected in the monument.

The project builds on Jason Quigno's seven grandfather teachings sculpture in Marquette, which has expanded into a living monument project.

Tribal communities is conducted respectfully, ethically, and in ways that benefit our peoples. Participation in this work helps protect Tribal interests while promoting research that supports culturally informed health outcomes and community well-being.

Through these advocacy effort, I will continue to carry forward the responsibility of representing our citizens, strengthening Tribal sovereignty, and ensuring our needs and priorities are heard at the highest levels of government.

Candidates Forum from p. 25

From "Forum," Page 25
the lifelong pension for board members, and restructured Sault Tribe Inc. so that it works for the tribe, not apart from it.

We have also focused on strengthening our economic future. Through expansion within our EDC and reinvestment in our casinos and businesses, we are protecting and growing the assets that support our people. At the same time, we are maintaining and improving our infrastructure so the foundation we build today can sustain our tribe for the next seven generations.

But we all know the work is not finished.

Our tribe stands at an important moment in our history. The opportunities before us are unmatched if we move forward with unity, vision, and purpose. We must continue strengthening our economy, investing in housing, expanding

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss something with me, please use my contact information below.

You can also reach out to Unit 4/5 Liaison Mary Jenerou at MJenerou@saulttribe.net or (906) 450-7011 or (906) 341-8469.

Chi Miigwech for all you do to strengthen our community,

Tyler Migizii Migwan LaPlaut, Unit 5 Director / Vice-Chairman, tlaplaunt@saulttribe.net, (906) 440-8294

healthcare services, and ensuring our elders receive the care and dignity they deserve. We must protect our treaty rights, support our commercial fishing heritage, and ensure our language and culture remain at the center of everything we do.

Most importantly, we must invest in our youth, so the next generation sees a future here at home, one filled with opportunity, leadership, and pride in being Anishinaabe.

Our ancestors fought to protect this tribe so that we could stand here today. Now it is our responsibility to carry that work forward and leave our nation stronger for those who come after us.

Miigwech for your trust and support. I humbly ask for your vote so we can continue building a stronger future for the Sault Tribe together.

Tyler Migizii Migwan LaPlaut



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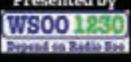

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