

Sault Tribe chair elected United Tribes of Michigan president

LANSING, Mich. — Aaron Payment, chairperson of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, was unanimously elected Oct. 26 as the president of the United Tribes of Michigan (UTM), which represents 11 of the 12 federally recognized Indian tribes in Michigan.

He was formerly its vice president.

“In 2000, the People of the Three Fires — the Anishinaabeg — breathed new life into our Grand Assembly of Tribes through our current incarnation, called the United Tribes of Michigan. We are a non-profit that advocates for Native issues at the state, regional and national levels,” said Payment. “I was humbled when Chairman Jim Williams from the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Chippewa recognized my work at the national level on Indian issues when nominating me. I will do my best and always speak respectfully and advocate issues affecting our Michigan tribes.”

UTM meets each year with the state of Michigan governor in a tribal-state summit and works with all Michigan agency tribal liaisons. It has ties to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST). Its member tribes are Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan (Gun Lake), Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

On the federal level, Payment was appointed by President Obama to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, serves on the HHS Secretary Tribal Advisory Council, the HHS Health Research Advisory Council as co-chair, the National Institutes of Health Tribal Advisory Committee and the Tribal Interior Budget Committee. He has been elected as NCAI Executive Officer-Secretary, MAST vice president, Chippewa Ottawa Treaty Resource Authority (CORA) chairperson and Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan vice president. Payment is a Michigan Political Leadership Program Advisory Board member and presenter. He serves in his community as Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency vice chair.

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