

Recent election guides us in a new direction



**CATHY ABRAMSON, DIRECTOR,
UNIT I**

Congratulations to our newly elected Chairperson Aaron Payment! Also, congratulations to Bridget Sorenson, Darcy Chase Morrow, Denny McKelvie, Jennifer McLeod and Lana Causley for winning their bids to be seated on our board. I will work tirelessly with our tribal chairperson and board to continue to strengthen our orga-

nization, our businesses, our community and our people.

I would like to take this time to say Chi Miigwech to Joe Eitrem, who served out the term as our chairman. Chairman Joe, you are a statesman and a real class act! Chi Miigwech to Bernard Bouschor, Tom Miller and Pat Rickley. I am proud to have served with you all. Your institutional knowledge of our tribal organization and history is invaluable to our people and I do hope that you continue to remain actively involved in our community.

One of my elders just recently reminded me that I am now the senior member of the tribal board and that others will be looking to me for leadership. That is a responsibility that I take very seriously. I will do my best in helping to guide and mentor our newly elected leadership. Actually, I would like to take that a step further and commit to mentoring more of our

younger people and help prepare them for leadership roles in our tribe. Whenever possible, for the next four years, I would like to bring tribal members around with me and “show them the ropes.” There is so much work that needs to be done in order to protect our tribe’s best interests. We need to continue to develop our people for the future of our tribe.

When it comes to elections, there is both excitement and disappointment. As long as we know that we have done the best job that we can, that is all that we can do. The rest is up to our membership to decide. However, I truly believe and know that Creator has plans for us all. If we listen to Him, He will lead us on the path He has chosen for us. He is with us all the way. With the recent election, we are all now on a new journey, a new chapter in our lives. Please keep us in your prayers as we unite and move forward.

On a wonderful, positive note, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act by upholding the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”). From the perspective of the tribes, the Affordable Care Act, which includes the IHCIA, is an important advancement in federal health policy for our people.

It includes:

- Authorities for new and expanded programs for mental and behavioral health treatment and prevention;

- Expanded authorities for long-term care services, including home health care, assisted living and community-based care;

- New authorities for development of health professional shortage demonstration programs;

- Expanded authorities for funding of patient travel costs;

- New authorities for demonstration projects for innovative

health care facility construction;

- New authorities for the provision of dialysis services;

- Improvements in the Contract Health Services program, which pays for referrals;

- New authorities for facilitation of care for Indian veterans; and

- New authorities for urban Indian health programs.

Speaking as its board chairperson, the National Indian Health Board will continue to work with tribes and tribal organizations to ensure that the IHCIA and the ACA are implemented, protected and strengthened so tribal communities can address the health challenges that affect American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Thank you all for your continued support and I look forward to hearing from you. My cell is (906) 322-3823. My e-mail address is cabramson@saulttribe.net. I am on facebook under Cathy Abramson.