

# Revenue, budgets and employment top priorities



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DIRECTOR, UNIT II

We've had a full agenda of government and enterprise activities this month with revenue, budgets and employment being the top priorities. We have also had substantive discussions about how best to move forward in order to achieve economic, social and environmental prosperity for our people.

The big picture view is our obligation to:

- Protect and enhance the quality of the lives of members through a combination of economic opportunities and a safety net of social services;
- Protect the culture and traditional practices of our anishi-

naabe people;

- Respect and protect the spirit of the ancestors that have gone before and the future generations to come;

- Exercise the powers of self-government secured by the 1836 treaty;

- Protect and preserve the tribe's homeland;

- Protect the tribe's treaty rights both on and off reservation; and

- Provide a safe and healthy environment for everyone living within our homelands.

With respect to that discussion, it is becoming increasingly clear that governance through an institutional "committee process" will be a more productive method for accomplishing our objectives than our current method of governance through board workshops. For instance, the establishment of an Internal Audit Committee in 2010 has proven to be very effective.

So, with that in mind, I am bringing forward a recommendation to dust off the Economic Development Commission and redesign it to better serve as a vehicle for evaluating and driving economic initiatives under consideration. As well, there are

plans under way to reestablish an active Land Use Committee to better manage our tribal assets.

Finally, we are primarily a grant economy supplemented by tribal support dollars. Given the hardship it poses to our tribal operations when funding sources are continually in flux and uncertain, I will be advocating for a standing Budget Formulation Committee in order to effectively utilize the time and resources of our budget, accounting and departmental staff.

These are the foundational building blocks necessary to proactively accomplish tribal obligations to our people and communities.

A quick note about the Affordable Care Act (ACA): Although it has been a very partisan issue across the land and people have strong feelings about whether it is a good direction for the U.S., clearly it is here to stay. ACA has profound implications and opportunities for our tribal health system. We urge all tribal members who do not currently have private health insurance to investigate what is available through the health exchanges and/or eligibility for expanded

Medicaid. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Tribal Health at [info@saulttribe.net](mailto:info@saulttribe.net) or (906) 632-5200. We expect to get more information to all tribal members in January.

I would like to announce my recent appointment to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC) for Region V, which covers the Great Lakes area. I am deeply honored to serve in this capacity and to be a voice at the table for regional tribal nations and the dedicated staff who stand on the frontlines protecting the quality of our resources for generations to come.

The end of January begins another election season for our tribe. I sincerely hope everyone takes the time to share your thoughts and get answers to issues that are important to you. This is also a good time to make sure your address information is current and that you are registered to vote.

**TRIBAL ENROLLMENT:**  
Please call whenever you change your address: (800) 251-6597.

**VOTER REGISTRATION:**  
The voter registration form can

be downloaded at our website at [www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections](http://www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections). Complete and sign (no photo copies) and mail to Tribal Election Committee, PO BOX 102, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

**TRIBAL NEWSPAPER:** *Win Awenen Nisitotung (One Who Understands)*. You can arrange to have the tribal newspaper sent via electronic mail by calling (906) 632-6398 or send email to [jdburton@saulttribe.net](mailto:jdburton@saulttribe.net). The benefit — especially to out of area tribal members — is the edition will be emailed to you on the day of publication.

I want to end by wishing a blessed Christmas season to you and your families; our workforce who so often go above and beyond the call of duty; to all our community volunteers and traditional helpers; and a special holiday wish for our active duty veterans who might be far from home keeping us safe. This is the season to pray and celebrate good tidings. Let's remember to show our love to one another.

Merry Christmas, everyone!  
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