

More essentials in place; water code needed



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Spring is here! I see the “little paperwhites” poking out of the snow. Can’t wait to get that “square foot garden” in the ground.

We are starting to build capacity for community gardening throughout our seven-county

service area. Expect to hear more soon.

I want to thank everyone for the outpouring of prayers and support during my husband Richard’s recent medical crisis. There are just too many people to thank, from our local EMT service, Mackinac Straits hospital, the top notch medical staff at Petoskey, our children and far flung family and friends and our tribal community. So much love and support. Chi Miigwech.

However, our personal crisis was not unique. It seems like every day someone is facing personal crisis. As a board member, you experience it up close and personal and sometimes it’s just heartbreaking. For the most part, our communities keep close tabs on our homebound elders, but I do have much concern for

those who live alone in the most rural areas. To that end, we have resumed elder home visits, having recently filled that vacant position. This program has so much value. In many cases, the home health visit is the only socialization that elders receive in a week! Programs like this should remain very high on our priority list and we should commit to funding regardless of whether there is outside grant funding or not.

After almost two years, we have a new Human Resource Director. Brenda Johnson is a veteran professional with years of executive experience in large workforce organizations. Brenda will play a pivotal role in our strategic plan to improve employee benefits, resources and development. Already, Brenda is

making a difference as she gets to know employees personally right on the work floor. We are excited to have this final position filled and I am very proud and excited about the top notch executive professionals we finally have in place.

I continue to serve on the EPA Tribal Operation Committee, representing Region 5 serving 35 Great Lakes Tribal Nations. Besides ongoing budget allocations for 2016, we continue to work on strengthening regulatory protections under the Great Lakes initiatives. I would like to share the comments of one of my committee colleagues, tribal leader Wes Martel of the Eastern Shashone Nation. I find his words inspiring and demonstrates how important strong regulations build strong sovereign

nations:

“The wise exercise of tribal sovereignty takes motivation, dedication and action by tribal leaders and tribal program directors/managers working together to carry out governmental authority effectively.

“The development of ‘tribal codes’ in my mind is the most important form of wise exercise of sovereignty and developing the technical and administrative capabilities of implementing and enforcing of codes is critical to the survival of tribal governments! I always say that the most important piece of tribal legislation a tribe could ever adopt is a tribal water code.

“Water is the most sacred of gifts from the Creator and it is connected to everything we will ever do!”