

One vote really does count



**JENNIFER MCLEOD, DIRECTOR,
UNIT I**

Aaniin Anishnabek!

This article will be one of my shortest, and for good reason... our elections. Candidates, and special interest groups will be publishing lots of ads and information in our newspaper, and to help make room, I will be brief. For the next two months, there is going to be a lot of talk about voting. You may ask yourself, "Why vote at all? Does my vote really mean anything?"

Fellow tribal citizens, I say to you that our children and grandchildren are good reasons to vote (of course, there are other good reasons, too). As for your vote

meaning anything, well, it means everything! Voting is a way to speak your mind, and have your voice heard. One vote really does count. Our tribe has had elections decided by the power of just one vote! Your one vote can truly make the difference.

Voting one's conscience is a way of honoring our history. Our tribal citizens have always had a voice in their government, long before the Europeans landed. Each generation of our people looked to the future... seven generations into the future, to help decide the best path. Our children and grandchildren are depending on us now, as in the past, to be their voice.

As you all know, our tribe has been struggling under program and budget cuts, sequestration, and a weak economy. The year 2015 is shaping up to be a difficult one as well. We are still a few years out from having the tribe's debt paid, and when that happens, it is expected that there will be some easing of finances. But that is a few years away. I am not intending to sound bleak, but hard decisions that will affect the future of our tribe, will have to be made soon. Who do you want helping to make

those decisions? Perhaps it will be someone new, perhaps it will be someone with experience...you decide.

For those of you who are registered to vote, I urge you to sound your voice by returning your election ballot. Think about our children, and their children. Look at the candidates, and vote your conscience as to who you believe will be best suited to help our tribe through the difficult times we are currently in, and expect to be in for the foreseeable future. We all have dreams for our people, but these dreams could be shattered if voters elect the wrong candidates. It is an important decision.

For those of you who are not currently registered to vote, unfortunately you will not be able to vote in the 2014 election, but GET REGISTERED TODAY! The 2016 election will be here before you know it. Don't miss the opportunity to sound your voice! Don't miss the opportunity to speak for the children, and all the children yet unborn...Miigwech. Anishnaabe Gagige (Anishnaa-be for always),

Jen, (906) 440-9151, jennifer.mcleod.2012@gmail.com; <http://jmcleodsaulttribe.com>