



# Win Awenen Nisitotung

January 21, 2026  
Spirit Moon • Manidoo Giizis  
Vol. 47 • No. 1



Bahweting Bidajimowin • Official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

## Chippewa County Central Dispatch receives 2% funding

BY SCOTT BRAND

Under the 2% agreement between the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the state of Michigan for gaming revenue sharing, the tribe is required to disburse 2% of its slot revenue to local units of government.

In the latest round of funding, Chippewa County Central Dispatch was awarded \$5,000 towards a Mobile Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) pilot program.

“It allows our officers, fire-fighters, EMS, depending on who is using it, to have instant access,” said Chippewa County Central Dispatch Director Greg Postma. “And, it provides live updates as the dispatcher is typing information in. They have all this information at their fingertips.”

Currently, the system has been introduced to the Sault Tribe Law Enforcement (STLE), Chippewa County Sheriff Department, Michigan State Police, City of

Sault Ste. Marie Fire and Police Departments, as well as the Bruce Township Volunteer Fire Department and Kinross EMS.

“Each agency is testing this device,” said Postma.

“We’re looking forward to fully implementing this program,” said STLE Sgt. Josh Mayer, adding it will really benefit the two dozen or so officers currently scattered throughout the seven-county service area. “From our perspective, it will provide a lot of information on

what a lot of other agencies are doing.”

Eventually, as all of Eastern Upper Peninsula patrol units come online, dispatchers will be instantly able to visualize on their computers who the closest responders are in the event of any emergency. The ability to communicate directly through text will also eliminate much of the radio traffic, which will reduce the number of interrupted transmissions and delayed responses.

Emergency responders will also automatically be provided with directions guiding them to their destination, and Mayer pointed out the benefits even extend to locating the exact locations of snow-covered fire hydrants.

“Our plan is to move forward with the mobile CAD in everything,” said Postma of the long-term goal. “We are very appreciative to the Sault Tribe for this 2% money, it will help bring us into the 21st century.”



Photos by Scott Brand

Above, Chippewa County Central Dispatch Director Greg Postma employs the new technology at headquarters. Right, Sgt. Josh Mayer of Sault Tribe Law Enforcement is one of the first officers in the Eastern Upper Peninsula to have the Mobile CAD unit in his patrol vehicle under the pilot program.

## Black Rock Bar and Grill opens at Sault Kewadin Casino

BY SCOTT BRAND

The Black Rock Bar and Grill officially opened to the public on Dec. 4 following a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste. Marie.

“The debut of Black Rock Bar and Grill marks an exciting addition to our multi-million-dollar renovation at Kewadin Casino Sault Ste. Marie, elevating our dining offerings and expanding the variety available to our guests,” said Kewadin Casino CEO Allen Kerridge. “It’s been incredible to watch the restaurant come to life and even more rewarding to see Black Rock’s strong commitment to staff training and exceptional service. We’re proud to partner with Black Rock to bring this distinctive dining experience to our guests and the greater Sault Ste. Marie community.”

“We are known for our steak on the stone,” said General Manager Tom Myers of the 755-degree rock that is used to heat the offerings, adding there are plenty of other entrees, including lamb, pork ribs, “and a ton of great seafood options.”

The Black Rock Franchise was initially established in Hartland, Mich., and with the doors opening in the Sault it now boasts nine locations, including establishments in Florida and Maryland, as it moves toward its third decade of operation.

Myers was joined by Black Rock veterans Tory King, Kyle Lull and Tori Atwood in making the move up to Sault Ste. Marie in preparation for the Grand Opening. More than 40 other local individuals were hired to fully staff the restaurant, which has a seating capacity of 190 customers.



Photos by Scott Brand

Above: Dignitaries gather for the Dec. 4 ribbon-cutting ceremony just before the Black Rock Bar and Grill officially opened to the public. Right: Sam Laffery wheels out two steaks atop 755-degree rocks to some of the first customers who celebrated the new restaurant on opening day.

Black Rock is open from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Monday through Thursday. On Friday, the restaurant is open from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Weekend hours run from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.



# Holiday celebration brings foster families together

On Dec. 16, foster families from across the area gathered at Sault Wesleyan Church in Sault Ste. Marie for a holiday celebration.

The event was made possible through a partnership between the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Tribe Anishnaabek Community and Family Services, UP Kids, and Great Lakes Recovery.

A total of 86 foster families attended the event, along with staff who helped support the evening. The gathering provided an opportunity for families to spend time together during the holiday season.

The event included dinner, music, activities for children

and teens, and a visit from Santa Claus. Families also had the opportunity to take a keepsake photo to remember the evening.



Brandy Hamilton with daughter Amira at the Foster Family Christmas Party.

## Sault Tribe's Lodge of Bravery receives donations from Gun Lake Tribe

Gun Lake Tribe staff and representatives drove to Sault Ste. Marie to deliver a trailer load of donated items for the Lodge of Bravery and for survivors who may be starting over. Advocacy Resource Center (ARC) staff worked with them to unload the trailer, accepting hygiene items,

cleaning supplies, children's toys, men's and women's supplies, robes, and so much more!

Along with the donated items, Gun Lake Tribe provided a monetary donation of \$5,000 to the Lodge of Bravery. ARC is truly grateful for the generous donation.



Above, (L-R), Gun Lake Public Safety Director Tom Raymond, retired Gun Lake Chairman DK Sprague, ARC Advocate Supervisor Jessica McKerchie, Lodge of Bravery Shelter Supervisor Jane Cadreau, Gun Lake Community Events and Experience Educator Melissa Brown, ARC Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King, and Gun Lake Tribal Council member Virginia Sprague-Vanderband.

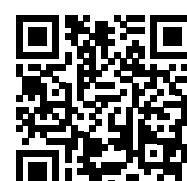
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Staff from the partnering agencies assisted throughout the event.

The annual holiday celebration continues to support foster families and recognize their commit-

ment to caring for children in the community.

Foster and adoptive parents are needed within the tribal community. Those interested can

contact Anishnaabek Community and Family Services at (906) 632-5250, toll-free at 1(800)726-0093, or by email at acfs-fosterhomes@saulttribe.net.



**JOSEPH K. LUMSDEN BAHWETING**  
**ANISHNABE PSA**

## Kindergarten Round Up for 2026-2027 School Year

Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe PSA is holding Kindergarten Round-Up for the upcoming 2026-27 school year. Only those who complete and submit an enrollment application during the open enrollment period will be considered for the lottery. The open enrollment dates are Monday, February 02, 2026 through Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at Midnight.

Applications can be found on the school website at [www.jklschool.org](http://www.jklschool.org) beginning Monday, February 02, 2026. All applications must be submitted online by midnight (EST) on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

The lottery will be held in the school administration building conference room at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2026 for those wishing to attend. Attendance at the lottery is not mandatory.

The parents of those children selected from the lottery will be notified by phone to set up the appointment for Round-Up.

Kindergarten Round-Up Dates: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 and Thursday, March 12, 2026.



**In partnership with the Sault Tribe Health Division**  
American Diabetes Association-Funded Study  
ADA CDTR-1181 PI: Dr. Tara Maudrie



**SEEKING COMMUNITY RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS**



**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

We are seeking Sault Tribe members (ages 18 and older) to join a Community Research Council that will guide a new research study on the links between food sovereignty practices such as hunting, fishing, foraging, and gardening and Type 2 Diabetes.

This project aims to deepen understanding of how cultural food practices can support community health and diabetes prevention. Together, we will ensure that research reflects community values, priorities, and strengths.

**Who We're Looking For:**  
Adult Sault Tribe members with a range of experiences, for example:

- Living with or supporting someone with Type 2 Diabetes
- Involvement in Tribal food systems, nutrition, or food sovereignty efforts
- Interest in community health and well-being

**What To Expect:**

- Monthly meetings (~1.5 hours each) to guide and provide feedback on a community-based participatory research project
- Honorarium provided for each meeting
- Meal provided for each in-person meeting
- Opportunities to share your voice and help shape future community research efforts

**Questions or Concerns? Please contact:**

Tara Maudrie (Sault Tribe Member) PhD, MSPH  
Assistant Professor, University of Michigan School of Social Work  
✉ tmaudrie@umich.edu  
☎ 906-240-4004

Jenni O'Dell (Sault Tribe Member) RN, BSN  
Community Health Program Manager  
✉ JO'Dell@saulttribe.net  
☎ 906-632-5259

This research has been approved by:  
The University of Michigan IRB #HUM00283452  
and the Sault Tribe IRB #10292025

**Interested?**  
Please fill out this form by 2/1/2026  
<https://bit.ly/CrlInterest>

# Committee vacancies — volunteers needed!

The following Sault Tribe Committees have vacant seats or upcoming vacancies.

Sault Tribe members interested in filling these vacancies should submit one letter of intent and three letters of recommendation (forms available online or contact Lona) from other members to Lona Stewart at 523 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, or call (906) 635-6050 with any questions.

**Anishinaabe Cultural Committee** - One vacancy - male

(4-year term)

**Elder Advisory Committee**  
Unit I - Sault - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)  
Unit II - Newberry - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)  
Unit III - St. Ignace - Two alternate vacancies (4-year terms)  
Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

**Elder Subcommittees**

Unit I - Sault - One alternate vacancy, term expires November 2027  
Unit II - Naubinway - One

regular vacancy - term expires

May 2027

Unit II - Newberry - One regular vacancy (4-year term)  
Unit III - St. Ignace - One regular vacancy - term expires April 2027, one alternate vacancy - term expires March 2028

Unit IV - Escanaba - One regular vacancy (4-year term)  
Unit IV - Manistique - Two regular vacancies - one term expires January 2027, one expires May 2026

Unit V - Munising - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)  
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Unit V - Munising - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

nate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)  
**Enrollment Committee** - One vacancy (4-year term)

**Food Sovereignty Committee** - Three vacancies (4-year terms)

**Health Board** - One vacancy (4-year term)

**Sault Tribe Election**

**Commission** - One current vacancy term expiring November 2030 and one upcoming vacancy term expiring November 2030 (expires January 2026).

# Membership Assistance

Membership liaisons work to assist with membership issues and concerns. The liaisons will also respond to and follow up on membership issues to ensure they are resolved. Sault Tribe members are encouraged to contact liaisons when they need help with tribal issues by emailing [membersconcerns@saulttribe.net](mailto:membersconcerns@saulttribe.net) or individually at the contacts below. Please note that although the liaisons are located at sites across the seven-county service area, they serve all tribal members.

**Michelle Moore**

Available for in-person meetings at Sault Tribe Administration.

Phone: (906) 635-6050 Ext. 26359

Cell: (906) 259-3862

[mmoore@saulttribe.net](mailto:mmoore@saulttribe.net)

**Clarence Hudak**

Lambert Center, St. Ignace, MI

(906) 643-2124

[chudak@saulttribe.net](mailto:chudak@saulttribe.net)

**Mary Jenerou**

Manistique Tribal Center, (906) 341-8469

Munising Tribal Center, (906) 450-7011

[mjenerou@saulttribe.net](mailto:mjenerou@saulttribe.net)

# Membership liaisons answer your questions

**Q:** The state of Michigan extended its deer season this year for doe harvest in some areas of southern Michigan. The date extends past Sault Tribe's legal deer hunting period, so why didn't the tribe extend its harvest ending date?

**A:** The Sault Tribe is currently bound by language in the 2007 Inland Consent Decree (ICD) that sets the tribe's ending date to the Sunday of the first full weekend in January. Consultations are being scheduled with the state regarding some issues in the 2007 ICD that the 1836 Treaty tribes would like to address, this being one of them. Tribes have relayed that in the future, if state hunting seasons are extended past what the 2007 ICD sets, it will be the intention of the tribes to extend their seasons also.

**Q:** I currently live in Wisconsin but would like to move to the seven-county service area. Will the tribe help me with buying a piece of land so I can start a homestead?

**A:** There are no programs or services that assist with the purchase of vacant land, regardless of where it's located. The Sault Tribe Housing Authority has a Down Payment Assistance Program for low-income members wishing to purchase their first home in the service area, funding is limited and members must fulfill program requirements. Visit [www.saulttribehousing.com](http://www.saulttribehousing.com).

## Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information about Missing and Murdered Sault Tribe Members:

In an effort to maintain the Sault Tribe MMIP database for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), the Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information regarding missing and murdered individuals who are members of the **Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians**. Please message or call the ARC at 906-632-1808 with information that can be entered into the database. The information provided does not have to be current information. The ARC is seeking information for ALL missing or murdered tribal members including the seven county service areas and tribal members across the world. Please ask for Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King (extension 73104) when calling the ARC. If messaging the ARC Facebook page, please leave the following information:



First/Middle/Last Name

Date of Birth

Date of Death

Murdered/When/Where

Perpetrator Name if known:

If Missing:

Nickname/Alias

Date Last Seen/Went Missing

Physical Description

Distinctive Physical Features

Vehicle Information



Any information would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this matter. Please feel free to share this information. Miigwech!

## Sault Tribe Member Newspaper Subscription Form

To receive a FREE tribal newspaper subscription in the mail, tribal members under 60 are asked to complete the form below and send it to: Win Awenen Nisitotung, 531 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783, or email it to [slucas@saulttribe.net](mailto:slucas@saulttribe.net). **Those 60 and over do not have to fill out this form.** Those who prefer to get their newspaper online do not have to complete this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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 change of address

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digital subscription  
OR  
 print subscription

City: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB : \_\_\_\_\_

State and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Red #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(red # on your card)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Win Awenen Nisitotung

The official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

January 21, 2026  
Spirit Moon  
Manidoo Giizis

Jennifer Dale-Burton.....Editor  
Sherrie Lucas.....Secretary  
Brenda Austin.....Staff Writer  
Scott Brand.....Staff Writer  
Win Awenen Nisitotung welcomes

submissions of news articles, feature stories, photographs, columns and announcements of American Indian or non-profit events. All submissions are printed at the discretion of the editor, subject to editing and are not to exceed 400 words. Unsigned submissions are not accepted.

Please note the distribution date when submitting event information for our community calendar. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. The distribution date is the earliest the newspaper can arrive in the seven-county service area.

Win Awenen Nisitotung is funded by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and is published

12 times a year. Its mission is to inform tribal members and the public about the activities of the tribal government, membership programs and services and cultural, social and spiritual activities of Sault Tribe members.

Win Awenen Nisitotung, in Anishinaabemowin, means, "One who understands," and is pronounced "Win Oh-weh-nin Nis-toh-tuhng."

See our full, online edition at [www.saulttribe.com](http://www.saulttribe.com).

**Subscriptions:** The regular rate is \$18 per year, \$11 for senior citizens and \$30 to Canada. Please call for other foreign countries.

Subscribe by sending your name and mailing address to the address below with your check or money order made out to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Or, call (906) 632-6398 to pay by credit card.

**Advertising:** \$8.50/column inch.

**Submission and Subscriptions:**

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# AG Nessel launches comprehensive criminal investigation into Native boarding schools

LANSING — On Dec. 19, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced the launch of a comprehensive criminal investigation into Native American boarding schools and other institutions that were located throughout the state of Michigan. The

Department of Attorney General is seeking to identify, document, investigate, and prosecute instances where criminal acts may have occurred at these institutions.

To support this effort, the Department is asking survivors, witnesses, and individuals with

firsthand knowledge to come forward and share information that may assist the investigation.

"This investigation seeks to bring truth and accountability to a painful chapter in our state's history," Nessel said. "My office is committed to ensuring that survivors' voices are heard and

that any criminal acts uncovered are thoroughly investigated and, when possible, prosecuted."

Individuals with information that may assist the Native Boarding Schools investigation can contact the Department of Attorney General via email or by phone at (517) 897-7391.

Tips can be left anonymously.

For more information on the investigation, please visit the Native Boarding School Investigation webpage at <https://www.michigan.gov/ag/initiatives/native-boarding-school-investigation>.

## Tribe's board meets and approves resolutions

In a grueling Jan. 6, 2026, meeting, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors eventually came to the unanimous decision to move forward with a three-branch separation of powers amendment. The main sticking points, from all indications, seemed to center around a realistic timeline to allow staff, including legal and financial to review the proposed changes to determine what potential impact this would have on policies and expenditures.

The adopted resolution sets strict timelines with Feb. 20 established for the "clear and red line version" draft from the Legal Department and provides an additional 30 days — March 20 — for the completion of a fiscal impact statement.

By April 20, the final package should be complete for technical review with a May 20 deadline for workshops and reviews to be completed.

The approved resolution does

not automatically trigger a ballot initiative, only sets timelines for the Sault Tribe to develop a workable document for federal review.

In other action, the board declined to send the 2008 Draft Constitution to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for technical review after Tribal Chairman Austin Lowes cast the tie-breaking vote to table this resolution clearing the way for the measure that would eventually pass later in the evening. Directors Kim Gravelle, Kim Hampton, Robert McRorie, Shawn Borowicz, Tyler LaPlaunt and Aaron Payment also voted to table this measure while Directors Lana Causley-Smith, Bridgett Sorenson, Larry Barbeau, Kimberly Lee, Mike McKerchie and Isaac McKechnie wanted to send the original draft for review.

The board made quick work of its remaining agenda passing the following measures:

— Approved a Fiscal Year

(FY) 2026 budget for BEMAR Projects with Federal Indian Health Services Revenue of \$1.4585 million for repairs and maintenance on facilities.

— Approved the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget for Cultural Administration with Other Revenue of \$3,000, and Third-Party Revenue of \$216,140.41.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Elder Outreach with Third Party Revenue of \$97,830.09 and utilized similar funding for Elder Outreach in the amount of \$361,210.40.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Manistique Elderly Meals with Other Revenue of \$5,700, and Third-Party Revenue of \$192,359.48.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for 2024 Tribal Set Aside with Federal DOJ Revenue of \$154,634.91.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for general assistance with BIA Revenue of \$373,250.64 and

Tribal Support of \$125,706.81.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Lodge of Hope with state of Michigan Revenue of \$285,366.42.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Staffing Operations with Federal BIA Revenue of \$137,079.93 and Tribal Support of \$61,549.52.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Subpart IV-B with Federal HHS Revenue of \$251,171.98.

— Approved FY 2026 budget for Adolescent Treatment with Federal HHS Revenue of \$180,140 and a transfer out of Adolescent In-Home of \$37,957.58.

— Extended the appointment of Mariea Mongene as interim housing director for a period not to exceed six months.

— Approved a Housing Authority request to apply for up to \$7.5 million in IHBG-C funds on behalf of the tribe for the construction of up to 26 additional

rental units for low-to moderate income tribal families in St. Ignace.

— Approved a contract with Minburn Technologies for \$1,380,949.96 from Cost Center 8520 for Microsoft Enterprise licenses for three years.

— Entered into an agreement with the BIA to compensate/reimburse the Sault Tribe for wildland fire management activities on tribal lands.

— Authorized the Health Division to provide up to \$2,500 for equipment as part of a colorectal screening collaboration with the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan to improve screening while accessing additional funds from the Michigan Public Health Institute for this effort.

— Approved budget modification necessary to get all interim appointments to the appropriate wage under the amended Interim Appointment Policy approved on

See "Board," page 8

### SATURDAYS IN FEBRUARY

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### 57<sup>TH</sup> RUNNING OF THE I-500

Sault Ste. Marie | Saturday, February 7

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### THE BIG GAME

All Sites | Sunday, February 8

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### SNOWSFEST

Hessel | February 13

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## SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS NOTICE OF ELECTION

JANUARY 14, 2026 (10.109)

The Election Commission of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians would like to inform you that a tribal election will be held for the Tribal Board of Directors this year; with a primary held in spring (if required) and the general election held this summer. Below are important dates and information pertaining to the election. Any questions or concerns please email the Election Commission at [elections@saulttribe.net](mailto:elections@saulttribe.net).

The timetable for the election process is as follows: (All deadlines are 5:00 p.m. EST).

Feb 18th ..... Last day to receive Letter of Intent for potential candidates. Roll of current registered voters prepared and posted. Nomination petitions available. (10.112(1))  
 March 4th ..... Nominating petition deadline. (10.112(8))  
 March 5th ..... List of eligible candidates available. (10.104(8)(g))  
 March 10th ..... Deadline for contests relating to nominations and initial voter registration. (10.119(2))  
 March 26th ..... Deadline to mail blank primary ballots to voters. (10.118(4))  
 March 27th ..... Deadline for non-resident tribal members to register in an Election Unit. (10.110(3))  
 April 30th ..... Primary Election Day. (10.118(4))  
 May 5th ..... Deadline for contests relating to vote count. (10.119(3))  
 May 21st ..... Deadline to mail blank ballots for general election to voters. (10.116(1))  
 June 25th ..... General Election Day. (10.107)  
 June 30th ..... Deadline for contest relating to vote count. (10.119(3))

## OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

Unit 1: -2 members-

Unit 2: -1 member-

Unit 3: -1 member-

Unit 4: -1 member-

Unit 5: -1 member-

The term of all officers will be four years.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

Tribal members who will be eighteen (18) years of age or older on the date of the general election are automatically registered to vote. The Tribal Election Ordinance states all Resident Members in an election unit shall automatically be registered within the unit they reside and Non-resident Members must designate one of the five election units in order to vote in unit Director elections. Registration is permanent unless you move in/out of an election unit. Unit Registration forms must be received by the Tribal Registrar, ninety (90) days prior to the general election, in order to vote in the upcoming elections. Voter registration is open and tribal members who need to register (all previously registered members are considered permanently registered) can contact the Tribal Registrar at the address given below or call the Tribal Registrar's Office. In order to register, you must complete and return a voter registration form to: P.O. Box 102, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783, before 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2026. Non Resident registration forms that do not designate a specific unit will be considered incomplete and that member shall only be eligible to vote for the Chairperson.

## VOTING PROCEDURE

All ballots will be mailed to registered voters by first class mail. In order to be counted, ballots must be received by the Tribal Election Commission by 4:30 p.m. at the United States Post Office-Sault Ste. Marie location on April 30, 2026 for the Primary Election and on June 25, 2026 for the General Election. A Post Office Box is provided by the United States Post Office for return of the ballots. The address of the post office box will be included on the ballot. Address Correction Requested: The election will be conducted by mail to the address shown in the Tribal Registrar's records. It is the responsibility of the tribal member to ensure that the address shown for him or her is correct. Please contact the Tribal Registrar's Office for any changes: Tribal Registrar's Office, 2076 Shunk Road, Mailing address: P.O. Box 1628, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, 49783 or by phone: (906) 635-3396 or (800) 251-6597.

## NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

Any tribal member who meets the requirements detailed in the Tribal Election Ordinance is eligible for election to office. A candidate for nomination must be eighteen (18) years of age or older by June 25, 2026, a qualified voter, and have established one year residency within the Election Unit which they seek to represent. Any person elected shall voluntarily resign employment position and/or surrender any rights under any contract with the Tribe prior to assuming office. To be nominated, a candidate must file a letter of intent, nominating petitions, campaign financing forms, etc. with the Tribal Election Commission in accordance with the Election Ordinance. A nomination petition must bear the original signatures of the proper number of registered voters from the unit to be represented. A voter may sign only as many petitions as there are offices to be filled from their unit. Petitions must be submitted on the forms provided by the Election Commission obtained at the designated offices.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Finance Reporting:** The Election Commission requires candidates and others who expend money on the election to file reports on campaign fundraising and spending. If you plan to spend money on the election, you must contact the Election Commission to obtain the proper forms before doing so. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in criminal prosecution. **Election Contests & Complaints:** Any tribal member may raise election disputes before the Election Commission. All disputes must be stated in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Election Commission, contain the original signature and be received under procedures provided in the Election Ordinance. The Election Commission will review disputes according to the Election Ordinance. **Election Ordinance:** This Notice is a narrative statement of the requirements of the Election Ordinance and the Constitution. If there are any discrepancies in the timelines contained within this Notice of Election, the Election Ordinance and Constitution are controlling and superlative. Questions regarding the election should be directed to the Tribal Election Commission.

**Designated Offices:** Designated Offices are the tribal offices as to which additional election material is available and for delivery of correspondence. Designated Tribal offices are as follows:

Unit 1: Tribal Court Office, George K. Nolan Judicial Building, 2175 Shunk Road, Sault Ste. Marie, MI  
 Unit 2: Hessel Tribal Center, 3355 Nopaming Drive, Hessel, MI  
 Unit 3: St. Ignace Health Center, 1140 N. State St. St. Ignace, MI  
 Unit 4: Manistique Tribal Center, 5698 W. Hwy. US-2, Manistique, MI  
 Unit 5: Munising Tribal Center, 622 West Superior Street, Munising, MI

## Attention tribal members! Are you registered to vote?

Unsure if you are registered to vote? You can check with Tribal Enrollment at (906) 635-3396 or (800) 251-6597.

If you need to register to vote, you can go to [www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections](http://www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections) under downloads to get a voter registration card, or you can clip the form on this page and mail it in to the Sault Tribe Elections, P.O. Box 102, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

**If you live INSIDE the tribe's seven-county service area:** When you live within the seven-county service area you are automatically registered to vote in the unit you live. If you do not know your unit, *see the unit zip code list on Page 17 of this newspaper issue.*

**If you live OUTSIDE the**

**service area:** You can choose which unit to be registered in. Select the unit where you have the closest ties.

Registration is permanent unless you move in or out of an election unit. You must be at least 18 on election day, June 25, 2026, to vote. **You must be registered by March 27, 2026, to vote in this year's tribal election.**

**You can get a voter's registration form at** [www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections](http://www.saulttribe.com/government/tribal-elections) under downloads. (Page 2 of the form lists zip codes in each unit.) Any questions about voter registration? Please contact the Enrollment Department at (906) 635-3396 or (800) 251-6597, or Latisha Willette at (906) 635-6050.

### SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS VOTER REGISTRATION FORM

Under the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors Resolution 2023-233 Equal Protections in Sault Tribe Voter Registration you are now automatically registered to vote if you are 18 years of age on the date of the election. You will be eligible to vote in Sault Tribe Chairperson elections and referendum elections. Members that do not reside within a unit, must choose which unit they would like to vote in to be eligible to vote in Unit Director elections. **If you would like to vote in Unit Director elections, you must return this card, declaring which unit you would like to vote in. This card must be received ninety (90) days before the next Tribal General Election.** Failure to return this card shall mean you are not able to vote for Unit Directors. The address to which my ballot should be sent is:

## Please Print

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

STREET (PHYSICAL) ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY &amp; STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

To verify identity, please include your Tribal File Number (**Red Numbers on your Membership Card**), if you do not know your Tribal File number then put the last four numbers of your social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that this voter registration card must be completed and received at least 90 days prior to a general election to be eligible to vote in Tribal Unit Elections. Mail completed cards to:

Sault Tribe Elections  
PO Box 102  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

I register to vote in Unit \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

(Must have signature to be Valid.)

# Anishinaabemowin 2026

Learning a new language is a path that leads you to your own adventure. It's one of the treasures you collect along the journey of your life. Enjoy!

**Bboon!** It's winter!

**Naangodnong biiyepo**

Sometimes big flakes drift down gently.

**Zoogpo!** It's snowing!

**Naangodnong nchiiwat.**

Sometimes it is stormy.

**Manidoo Giizis**  
**Spirit Moon**

by Susan Askwith

**Goon.** Snow that already fell.

**Goon-kaa.** There's a lot of snow.

**Goonensak gnaajiwag.**

The snowflakes are beautiful.

**Naangodnong goon ediming nokiiwin.**

Sometimes snow means work.

**Aabidek n'ga jiishaagonege.** I will have to shovel.

Jiishaagonege means *someone is clearing snow away – using any method they can; including shovelling.*

**Jiishaagonegan gii g'chi-kosmaan kina goonan.**

The snowplow made a big snow bank.

**Aabidek n'ga nakaaz n'doo nakiwin.**

I will have to use my machine.

*Note: nakiwin means work AND machine or engine*



**Baamaa kina waya wii yekoziwag.**

Later they will all be tired.

**Wii minikwewag chocolate-gzhaagmideg.**

They will want to drink hot chocolate.



**Mii dash aabidek wii gdaakiye-gaadewasewag.**

Then they will have to walk back up the hill.



**Making our Sounds** Most letters sound like

they do in English. Here are the exceptions.

**aa** sounds like the a in *awesome*   **a** sounds like the a in *about*

**ii** sounds like the e in *be*

**i** sounds like the i in *dip*

**oo** sounds like the o in *go*

**o** sounds like the oo's in *book*

**e** sounds like the e in *Ed*

**g** sounds only like it does in *go*

*We underlined the syllables that get the emphasis.*

Pronounce all the letters. Big deal: these combinations: **nh**, **ns**, **ny** in a word signal the previous vowel is said nasally. The n in these is *always silent* but you pronounce the second letter. It's only a sign to say the previous vowel nasally - as if you have a stuffed-up nose!

**Aambe, baapin! (Come on, laugh!)**

Which is faster: hot or cold?

Hot. You can catch a cold.

What did the icy road say to the truck?

Wanna go for a spin?

What do you call a slow skier?

A slope-poke

What's a snowman's least favorite song?

Here Comes the Sun.

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

SAULT STE. MARIE — Cody Jodoin has been hired as the new director of Sault Tribe's Language and Culture Division and officially began his role Monday, Nov. 10, according to an announcement from Sault Tribe CEO Jessica Dumback.

"There is much important work ahead within the Division, and I look forward to working with Cody as we continue strengthening and revitalizing our language and cultural initiatives," Dumback said in a statement.

As director, Jodoin will oversee division-wide programming across the seven-county service area, including supervision of Cultural Division staff and facilities. He said his goal is to expand programming while continuing seasonal events and ceremonies, and to make language and cultural opportunities more accessible to both tribal and non-tribal community members.

"It's my hope that the Cultural Division can provide enriched programming that promotes the ability for our community members to connect with our Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin, or way of life," Jodoin said. "No matter your background, upbringing, or level of knowledge, it is never too early or too late to learn."

Jodoin said he was drawn to the position because of his life-long connection to Anishinaabe culture and his professional background serving Michigan's tribal



Cody Jodoin

communities.

"My entire professional career has been spent serving Michigan's tribal communities in some way, shape or form," he said.

He previously worked for the Sault Tribe for 10 years in areas including administration, recreation, youth programming, elder services, education, culture, and community and family services. He then spent five years with the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan working with all 12 of Michigan's federally recognized tribal nations in the behavioral health field.

"I am extremely blessed to have gained such a wealth of experience in so many different areas," Jodoin said.

Culture has always been a central part of his life, including

being a traditional singer since age 7, and he also serves as a drum keeper.

"For me, this position presented an opportunity to give back to my community in a way that suits my passions," he said. "As Anishinaabe people, we have an inherent responsibility to pass knowledge on to the next generation."

Jodoin's education includes graduation from Sault Area High School in 2011, an associate degree in general science from Bay Mills Community College in 2013, a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife management from Lake Superior State University in 2017, and a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University in 2025.

The Language and Culture Division offers virtual Anishnaabemowin language classes, arts and crafts workshops, culture camps, an annual language conference, powwows, ceremonies and feasts throughout the seven-county service area. The division also houses the Repatriation and Historic Preservation Department, which represents the tribe on issues related to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and operates the Ojibwe Learning Center and Library.

Jodoin said he hopes to collaborate with other tribal departments to offer new programming and encourage broader communi-

ty participation.

"There is a large percentage of our community who have never had an opportunity to connect or learn about our language or culture," he said. "It's my hope that the programming we offer be accessible and approachable."

Jodoin encouraged members to contact him with ideas or interest in local programming. "Reach

out if you are interested in seeing certain cultural activities being offered in your communities," he said. "We will do our best to ensure activities are plentiful, meaningful and planned well in advance."

All communication regarding Language and Culture can be directed to Jodoin at [cjodoin@saulttribe.net](mailto:cjodoin@saulttribe.net) or (906) 635-6510.

### Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program

## Gerard Sagassige

### 2026 February Healer Clinic Schedule

**February 2,3,9,10,16,17**

**Sault Ste. Marie Health Center**  
(906)632-0236

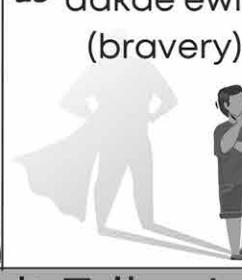
**Wednesday, February 4th**  
**St. Ignace Health Center**  
(906)643-8689 or  
(877)256-0135

**Wednesday, February 11th**  
**Munising Health Center**  
(906)387-4721 or  
(800)236-4705

**Wednesday, February 18th**  
**Hessel Community Center**  
(906)484-2727

ANY QUESTIONS, OR TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL  
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM AT  
906-632-0236 OR 906-632-5268

## MAKWA GIIZIS - BEAR MOON - FEBRUARY 2026

NIIZHWAASO GIIZHIGAT	NTAM GIIZHIGAT	NIIZHO GIIZHIGAT	NSWO GIIZHIGAT	NIIWO GIIZHIGAT	NAANO GIIZHIGAT	NGODWAASWO GIIZHIGAT
1  Mooshkaneshin Dibiki Giizis (It is a full moon.)	2  Gookijiish Giizhigat (Groundhog Day)	3  Booniikwishin! (Leave me alone!)	4  makwa shkanzh (bear claw)	5  G'gnaajwi. (You are beautiful.)	6  aadzookaanag (sacred stories)	7  ziisbaakadoonhsan (candies)
8  giniik (roses)	9  Aabtoojiishin! (Hug me!)	10  Jiimshin! (Kiss me!)	11  buzgim (boyfriend/ girlfriend)	12  G'zaagin. (I love you.)	13  tibniniibzon (ring)	14  Zaagi'idiwin Giizhigat (Valentine's Day)
15  naabishebzwinan (earrings)	16  naabkawaagan (necklace)	17  Nibaa. (S/he is sleeping.)	18  zgakii (hibernate)	19  Yekozi. (S/he is tired.)	20  Gzhiibii. (S/he is scratching him/herself.)	21  bimisek (a week)
22  makoons (bear cub)	23  makwa waanzhiim (the bear's cave/den)	24  Aaniish ezhi webag? (What's going on?)	25  aakde'ewin (bravery)	26  aanikobijigaanak (Ancestors)	27  Naadamooshin! (Help me!)	28  Ndaadziwag. (They are born.)

Calendar created by Sault Tribe Language & Culture Division

# Continuing your journey to better health in the new year

## FROM SAULT TRIBE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

A new year comes with pressure to change everything at once. We hear messages about New Year's resolutions, chants of "new year, new me," and expectations of becoming a better, brand-new version of ourselves overnight. Healing and wellness do not require perfection, and they do not begin only on Jan. 1. For many of us, recovery is about continuing the journey we are already on, one step at a time. This new year can be another chance to heal by focusing on progress, setting obtainable goals, and remembering that moving forward does not mean starting from scratch.

### Progress over perfection

Progress over perfection means recognizing that healing does not happen in a straight line. There will be days when we feel strong and hopeful, and others when simply getting through the day is an accomplishment. Those harder days do not erase the prog-

ress we have already made. Each small step such as asking for help, choosing to rest, and showing up for us matters. Progress is not linear. Recovery is not about doing everything right, but about continuing to move forward with patience, compassion, and respect for where we are today.

### Setting obtainable goals

Setting obtainable goals allows us to honor where we are instead of where we think we "should" be. When goals are realistic and manageable, they help build confidence and momentum rather than stress or disappointment. Small goals like taking a daily walk, reaching out to a trusted person, or attending one appointment can lead to meaningful change over time. Healing is not about doing everything at once but about choosing goals that support our wellness in a steady, compassionate way.

### No need to "start over" to move forward

Moving forward does not require starting over. Every

experience we've had, both the challenges and the victories, has shaped who we are and taught us something about ourselves. Even when we stumble or take a pause in our healing journey, the growth we've already made remains with us. We can continue from where we are today, carrying our lessons, strengths, and resilience forward. Healing is about continuing the path, not erasing the past.

As we move into a new year, it's important to remember that healing does not come with deadlines or rules. Progress, no matter how small, is still progressing. By setting obtainable goals, honoring our efforts, and releasing the idea that we must start over, we give ourselves permission to heal in a way that is sustainable and respectful. This year can be another chance to continue the journey one step, one choice, and one day at a time.

Sault Tribe Behavioral Health can assist you on your journey if you are looking for assistance. Call (906) 635-6075.

## Artificial Intelligence Impacts the Art and Science of Dentistry – AI Part II

### JESSICA A. RICKERT, DDS, ANISHINAABE DENTAL OUTREACH

Dentistry has always been on the cutting edge of science and technology. Now, Artificial Intelligence is transforming dentistry.

AI is used to generate and analyze digital images to assist in diagnosing conditions, predicting anomalies and planning surgeries. AI-powered diagnostic tools are achieving over 90% accuracy, resulting in early detection of dental diseases. Digital images include radiographs, magnetic resonance images (MRI) and cone-beam computed tomography (CBCT). Digital impressions result in highly accurate 3D models of a patient's teeth and oral structures.

Computer-Aided Design and Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAD-Cam) technology can fabricate restorations. 3D printing is used to fabricate dentures and dental devices.

Oral surgeons and Endodontists use image guidance for semi-automated implant surgery, removal of tumors and foreign objects, biopsies, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) surgery.

ChatBot interfaces such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek and GeminiLLM can enhance language processing, especially patient's records.

Management of individual patient's health status, medications and accommodations medications.

Electronic health records can

enhance communication with other doctors. Customized patient education systems will increase patient understanding and lead to higher case acceptance. AI models can predict treatment outcomes with up to 73% accuracy, improving treatment planning and lessening treatment timelines.

Post-care instructions can be customized for each patient. Better patient management like smart scheduling which allows for remote check-ins and fewer missed appointments. Management of the business office, including staff management and dental insurance interactions. Management of dental laboratory fabrications to enhance accuracy. Voice commands will be used for dental chairs and other equipment. In dental education, AI tutoring systems have significantly improved dental students' performance.

AI robots are being developed to assist dentists. AI technologies can speed up clinical processes, allowing more patients to be treated. Dental chairs will be able to monitor a patient's vital signs, anxiety level, weight, and warning the dental professionals if any variations are found.

AI is being used in the field of "bioprinting," which allows living tissue to be created in successive thin layers of cells and is used to reconstruct oral hard and soft tissues in the future.

AI cannot duplicate clinical intuition, dentists' experience, or

empathy, which are essential to providing optimal and individualized healthcare. AI does not possess intangible perceptions to comprehend nonverbal cues which is possible only through face-to-face human conversations.

Aesthetic results require human evaluation. Human-to-human communication is so complicated that it cannot be easily translated into computer language.

Can any artificial emotions of a robot convey kindness, compassion and competence?

Humans

The human touch itself is healing. There is healing in the human voice. Comfort and hope are powerful human-to-human interactions.

AI is unable to experience associations as the human brain does, and each patient requires unique and complicated decisions. Higher-level comprehension that depends on dentists' experience is necessary to conduct physical examinations, review medical histories, evaluate aesthetic results, and promote meaningful communication. Nonverbal assessment of the patient's hopes, anxieties, and expectations are part of every face-to-face interaction.

AI is a useful and promising tool which is welcomed by dentists. The possibilities are boundless. This will require the human brains of our students!

## Tribe's board meets, approves resolutions

### From "Board," page 4

Nov. 19, 2025.

— Amended the Overtime and Compensatory Policy as approved by the Policy Review Group on Oct. 15, 2025.

— Adopted the 2026 Tribal Prevailing Wage Schedule.

— Amended Tribal Code Chapter 21 Special

Circumstance Transfer of bear and elk permits in the event of a permit holder's death or advanced illness allowing them to be passed on to family members. Recipients were also allowed, under this revision, to transfer their permits to any tribal member diagnosed with a recognized advance illness.

— Amended the Election Commission Bylaws expanding the number of commissioners from five to seven.

— Passed a resolution officially opposing the continued operation of "Prediction markets," as a direct threat to the tribe's sports gambling revenues.

## Public Notice of Transportation Improvement Plan Public Review

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Transportation Program has prepared the Draft 2026 Tribal Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in compliance with federal requirements and planning regulations.

On Jan. 6, 2026, the Board of Directors approved the release of the Draft 2026 TIP for a 30-day public review and comment period, which concludes on Thursday Feb. 5, 2026.

The TIP is comprised of transportation projects for the seven-county service area, which includes Chippewa, Mackinac, Luce, Alger, Delta, Schoolcraft and Marquette. The Draft 2026 TIP consists of three sections: (I) Executive Summary, (II) Project Listing, and (III) Project Detail Sheets.

Notice is hereby given that the public comment period will begin on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, for the 2026 TIP. This public notice as well as the time established for public review and comments will satisfy the public involvement requirements for the program.

The Draft 2026 TIP can be accessed online at the Sault Tribe website at <http://saulttribe.com>

tribe.com, in the "About Us" tab beginning Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026.

The purpose of the public involvement is to receive input and comments regarding the Draft 2026 TIP, which may be used to facilitate changes where appropriate.

Comments, questions or suggestions can be sent to Wendy Hoffman, Transportation Department, 523 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, by email to [whoffman@saulttribe.net](mailto:whoffman@saulttribe.net), or by phone at (906) 635-6050.

Special accommodations: Reasonable accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities upon request. If making a request for an accommodation, please include a description of the accommodation you will need and tell us how to contact you if we need more information.

Make your request as early as possible by sending an e-mail to [whoffman@saulttribe.net](mailto:whoffman@saulttribe.net) or calling Wendy Hoffman at (906) 635-6050.

Last minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fill.

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# Elk and bear permits can be transferred under special circumstances such as death or illness

BY SCOTT BRAND

The Sault Tribe Board of Directors approved a lengthy amendment to Chapter 21 of the Tribal Code at its Jan. 6, 2026, session allowing for the transfer of

elk or bear permits under special circumstances.

Under the newly-adopted code, an elk or bear permit can be transferred to an eligible immediate family member in the case of the

death of the permit holder. Proof of death must be provided to Sault Tribe Law Enforcement before a new permit will be issued.

A person awarded an elk or bear permit may transfer that per-

mit to any eligible family member who has been diagnosed with an advanced illness. An advanced illness is defined by the Public Health Code and requires physician certification before being

submitted to Sault Tribe Law Enforcement for consideration.

Permit transfers under the new code must be submitted no less than five days before the applicable season.

## Sault Tribe seeking mudpuppy observations

BY SAULT TRIBE WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Did you know the mudpuppy is Michigan's largest, fully aquatic salamander? Often overlooked and misunderstood, these fascinating creatures play a vital role in the state's freshwater ecosystems.

Growing up to 19 inches long, with feathery external gills and mottled skin, mudpuppies are as striking in appearance as they are ecologically important. They are opportunistic predators, feeding on invertebrates, small fish, and invasive aquatic species like zebra mussels and round gobies. By preying on these invaders, mudpuppies help curb their spread, reducing the ecological disruption and economic damage they cause.

Once considered a common

amphibian species in Michigan, evidence suggests that populations are declining. Mudpuppies breathe through both lungs and their sensitive external gills, rendering them highly susceptible to water pollution, habitat degradation, and changes in oxygen levels. This makes them valuable bioindicators. Their presence, or absence, can tell a lot about the health of the surrounding environment.

Despite their ecological importance, mudpuppies are often misunderstood. One common myth is that they are poisonous and should not be touched; this is entirely false. Mudpuppies are harmless, shy creatures that pose no threat to humans.

Another misconception is that they can be harvested or collected. In fact, the Michigan



Photo from Herpetological Resource & Management LLC  
Anglers who encounter mudpuppies while ice fishing this winter are encouraged to report sightings.

DNR considers them a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need," so if you happen to catch a mudpuppy, it's important that you put them back unharmed.

Michigan's mudpuppy populations have not been studied extensively, and there are still many unanswered questions.

To help fill these gaps, the

Sault Tribe Natural Resources Division is seeking public help to better understand these elusive salamanders. Anglers who encounter mudpuppies while ice fishing this winter are encouraged to report sightings to [wildlifeprogram@saulttribe.net](mailto:wildlifeprogram@saulttribe.net), including:

- A photo of the mudpuppy (if possible)
- The location of the sighting (GPS coordinates or detailed location description)
- Date and time of observation

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Natural Resources Department is collaborating with federal partners to research this vital species. Your observations will provide key insights into how mudpuppies are doing and help shape future conservation efforts.

## DNR continues to clear way for U.P. winter fishing access

FROM THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is continuing a successful program to keep boating access sites plowed at more than two dozen popular Upper Peninsula ice-fishing locations.

"This program has been a big help in maintaining public access to hard water resources throughout the wintertime," said John Pepin, DNR deputy public information officer. "Those using the

access sites should keep ice safety in mind and take extra caution not to damage any boating infrastructure, like docks or boat landing surfaces, at these locations."

Various local partners have again agreed to assist the DNR with the program to ensure access to ice fishing opportunities in the U.P. are available consistently during snow conditions.

The DNR enters into agreements with partners to plow the access sites, which are primarily managed for recreational boating.

An evaluation takes place each spring to assess several things, including how often the plowed sites are used and whether damage occurs to the access ramps.

Locations to have boating access sites plowed this winter include:

Baraga County: Vermilac Lake, Silver River  
Chippewa County: Munuscong Lake  
Delta County: Little Bay de Noc (Kipling)  
Dickinson County: Lake

Louise

Iron County: Indian Lake, Swan Lake, Lake Mary, Lake Emily, Lake Ellen

Keweenaw County: Gratiot Lake, Lake Medora, Lake Bailey

Luce County: Little Lake Harbor, Kak's Lake, Big Manistique Lake

Mackinac County: South Big Manistique Lake, North Big Manistique Lake, Milakokia Lake and Millecoquins Lake

Marquette County: Lake Michigamme, Greenwood

Reservoir, Big Shag Lake, Schweitzer Creek Flowage

Schoolcraft County: McDonald Lake, Indian Lake

Anyone interested in partnering with the DNR to keep more access sites plowed for winter access, please contact Stacy Welling-Haughey at [wellings1@Michigan.gov](mailto:wellings1@Michigan.gov) or (906) 228-6561.

For more information on places to fish in Michigan, visit the DNR's webpage at [Michigan.gov/Fishing](http://Michigan.gov/Fishing).

## Request for comments: Proposed exterior firewood quarantine

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is inviting Michigan stakeholders to provide comments on a proposed firewood quarantine.

The proposed quarantine would restrict the movement of firewood originating outside the state of Michigan to help prevent the introduction and spread of over 140 plant pests and diseases that can hitch a ride on untreated firewood. These plant pests and diseases include Asian longhorned beetle, oak wilt, beech bark disease and spotted lanternfly, which are pests that pose a serious threat to Michigan's forests, agriculture and tourism industries.

Stakeholders can provide comments through an online survey. All comments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

The movement of untreated firewood is one of the leading causes of new infestations of invasive forest pests. Unlike nursery stock and other high-risk commodities, firewood is not routinely inspected, making it a significant pathway for pest

A link to the short six-question survey can be found online at: <https://www.michigan.gov>. There is also a link to a draft copy of the quarantine for your review; and another online survey you can participate in about proposed additions to the invasive plant species regulated in the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) (1994) Part 413.

introduction. Once established, these pests are difficult and costly to eradicate. Moreover, they can cause significant long-term economic and environmental damage.

Michigan's forests and natural resources are vital to the state's economy and quality of life. MDARD's proposed firewood quarantine aims to reduce the risk of pest introduction by: Restricting the movement into Michigan of firewood from other states; Requiring treatment and certification for firewood entering the state, and establishing clear compliance and enforcement measures.

Firewood entering the United States from other countries

is already regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Imported wood of any kind must meet strict treatment standards, typically heat treatment to eliminate pests, and be accompanied by proper certification at the federal level.

Similarly, interstate movement of firewood is subject to a patchwork of state and federal regulations, especially in areas with active quarantines for pests like the spotted lanternfly or spongy moth. However, there is no single federal quarantine that covers all firewood movement across the United States, which is why Michigan is taking action to address gaps and protect local resources from new pest introductions.

The proposed Exterior Firewood Quarantine would regulate the movement of firewood into Michigan to prevent the introduction of over 140 plant pests and diseases.

Here's what it includes:  
Regulated Articles: All firewood from outside Michigan, regardless of species or origin.

Exemptions: Kiln-dried dimensional lumber. Wood chips no larger than 1 inch in any two dimensions. Logs or wood destined for immediate processing at: Sawmills. Veneer mills. Pulp/paper mills. Pellet manufacturers. Power plants. Composite wood facilities.

Wood already processed into the above products before entering Michigan.

Treatment Requirements: Firewood entering Michigan must be heat-treated to a core temperature of 60°C (140°F) for 60 minutes, or treated using other methods approved by MDARD in the quarantine order (e.g., steam, microwave, dielectric heat).

Certification Requirements: All treated firewood must be accompanied by a certificate verifying treatment and origin from a state or federal official authorized to verify the treatment and origin of the firewood.

Recordkeeping: Anyone receiving firewood from out-of-state must keep shipping and treatment records for 36 months.

What's not included: This quarantine does not apply to

fuelwood, which is: Locally sourced. Downed wood. Used for personal home use. Not intended for resale.

For more on fuelwood, visit the Michigan DNR Fuelwood Page.

Please use the online survey to provide comments on the proposed quarantine by 11:59 p.m. EST Monday, February 9, 2026.

Your input is important and will help ensure that any regulatory changes are well-informed and fit for purpose.

After the public comment period, MDARD will review all feedback and decide if any changes need to be made to the proposed quarantine.

For more information about firewood movement and invasive species in Michigan, visit the Don't Move Firewood or Michigan's invasive species page respectively.

Michigan's Invasive Species Program is cooperatively implemented by the Michigan departments of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and Natural Resources.

# Walking on...

## NANCY ANN CAMPBELL

Nancy Ann Campbell, 80, of New Market, Ala., passed away on Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025, at Donalson Care Center. She was born Dec. 31, 1944, in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., the daughter of the late Alfred and Grace McKerchie Orosco.



In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband: Lane Campbell; son: Tadd Campbell; and brother: Bill Orosco. She is of the McKerchie band of Ojibwa from Sault Ste Marie, Mich. Nancy lived her life as a wonderful ikwe (a Ojibwa woman).

She is survived by her daughter: Tara (Jeff) Edwards; son: Chad (Pat) Campbell; grandchildren: Garrett Campbell, Kendall Campbell and Meredith Campbell; great grandchildren: Lucas Campbell, Colton Campbell and Grayson Campbell; sister: Anita Garr; and brothers: Alfred (Sue) Orosco and Chuck Orosco.

She traveled the world before she was married, father was in the Service and travel with him and her family to Japan and to Long Island, New York, where she met her husband, Lane.

Nancy began her employment career working in the Legal Office of Mr. Katz, in Westhampton Beach, N.Y. She moved to Alabama with her husband and enjoyed her time working for the government at the Redstone Arsenal and met many wonderful people there, she later retired.

We could focus on Nancy's kindness, which was great. Anyone who knew Nancy was aware that she was a kind and gentle soul who loved Life. Nancy lived the Niishin (Good Life)!

Nancy felt no need to be the center of attention. Instead, she liked to come into any room and blending in, settling back to observe and quietly participate in whatever was happening. She was comfortable with herself, and this quality made her very good at her work. One of the most poignant moments for us during those last days of Nancy's life, was talking and joking about Walking On.

This is a term the Ojibwa use for Passing On and going to the Great Spirit. We found ourselves sad and happy at the same time knowing that she was ready to meet her Creator. (Kitchimanidoo) But the nurses who knew her all spoke of her deep compassion.

What can we say about Nancy? We can say without any doubt that she loved her children, grandchildren, beyond measure. That she valued her family, above all

else. That she was loyal, decent and kind, smart, well informed, dedicated, and was a wonderful person. Loved being with people playing cards or board games. She loved a good joke and she loved a big hug and liked her Spam and Maraschion Cherries more than anyone else we've ever known. She also had a secret passion for sweets and loved to sneak them when she could.

Was she perfect? Far from it. Was she good? Absolutely. Will we all miss her? Without a doubt. Is she happy now? I know she is with her Creator. (Kitchimanidoo) And I can say that our lives are better for being in her presence because of her enduring love, and her legacy that she has left in the form of her three fine children, Tadd, Chad, and Tara, and she was nokomis (Grandmother) to, Garrett, Kendall and Meredith. And her great grandchildren, Lucas, Colton, Grayson. Nancy lived the Nindigidaayaan way (you are loved way) with her children, grandchildren and family.

Nancy was of the Catholic faith. She was an avid Elvis fan and she enjoyed going to yard sales and flea markets looking for antiques, watching NASCAR, spending time with family, and traveling. Nancy lived the good life by living the traits of her Seven Grandfathers. Love, humility, respect, honesty, bravery, wisdom, and truth.

She was a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Her spirit name would be zoongidewin (courage) because of her bravery over her 80 years for living on this earth.

These are all parts of the Nancy we know and love. All parts, which make up a bigger picture, that's harder to define in the Ojibwa way.

A pinch of semaa (tobacco) was placed in an abalone dish and a prayer said for her soul to the Creator. (Kitchimanidoo - the Great Spirit) I expect the rest of you feel the same way.

Miigwech.

God rest her Soul.

*I Boozhoo, Aaniin  
Gichimanidoo. Bahweting indon-  
jiiba. Gizhemando naadamaw-  
ishinaam ji-mashkawiziyaang  
miinawaa naadamaw ikwewag  
ji-ganawendaaggoziwand, gichi-  
ayaawag ji-minawaanigoziwaad  
gaye onijaanisag ji-inaabanda-  
mowaad Anishinaabemong.*

Greetings, Creator. From a Place by the Rapids. Keep our community strong. Our women safe. Our men whole. Our elders laughing. And our children dreaming in the language. Thank you very much for this good life.

## ANITA LOUISE (LYONS) CHARLES

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Anita

Louise (Lyons) Charles, who passed away peacefully on Dec. 26, 2025, at the age of 68, in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., surrounded by



her loved ones and her beloved husband, Donald Charles Sr. Anita was born Oct. 8, 1957, in Sault Ste. Marie, to the late James and Audrey (LeBlanc) Lyons of Brimley, Mich. She lived a life defined by love, compassion, and devotion to those she held close.

Anita shared a beautiful marriage with her beloved husband, Donald. Their relationship was built on deep love, mutual respect, laughter, and unwavering support. They cherished one another every day, bringing joy, comfort, and warmth into each other's lives. Their bond was steady and enduring, a true testament to a life shared in love.

Anita will be remembered for her gentle heart, her love of playing BUNKO with her extended family, and her competitive spirit during lively games of Yahtzee. She enjoyed long visits over a cup of coffee and had a natural way of making others feel welcomed and valued. Her kindness, patience, and generosity left a lasting impact on those around her.

She was a devoted wife, a loving mother, a proud grandmother, a caring sister and aunt, and a

treasured friend. Her family meant everything to her, and she gave of herself fully and selflessly.

Anita is survived by her husband, Donald Charles Sr.; her children, Steven Lyons, Jennifer (Randy) Touchtone, Anthony Hole, Heather Lyons, Melissa Lyons, Olive (Steven) Massey, and Donald Charles Jr.; sisters, Kathi Carrick, Dawn (David) Terrell, Melanie Lyons, and Michele LeBlanc; brother, Walter (Bobbi) Lyons; in-laws, Cathy Charles, Christine Farrish, Darlene Clemenshaw Farrish, Shirley (Tom) Hole, Hank (Glenda) Williams, Robert (Joyce) Farrish, William (Donna) Wesenick, and Margaret Farrish; and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many dear friends and extended family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Audrey; her siblings, Marilyn (Larry) Yon, James Lyons Jr., Denise LeBlanc, Gerri LeBlanc, and Lawrence Lyons; her brothers-in-law, Nelson Farrish, Roger Charles Sr., and Michael Carrick Sr.; and her beloved granddaughter, Skye Marie Link.

Visitation was held Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, at the Brimley Baptist Church, in Brimley, Mich., with the Funeral Service following.

Anita will be laid to rest at Mission Hill Cemetery in Brimley, Michigan.

Anita (Weezy's) legacy lives on through the love she shared,

the family she nurtured, and the countless lives she touched with her kindness, laughter, and unwavering care. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements.

## DIANE YVONNE HUNT

Diane Yvonne Hunt, 80, went to be with her Lord and Savior, Monday, Dec. 8, 2025.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert Elvis Hunt; baby son, Lee Robert Hunt; daughter, Vicki Van Velsen; parents Steve and Edna Mead; siblings Steven Larry Mead, Vicki Mead; in-laws Bruce Hallowell and Nancy Meyers.

She will be lovingly missed by her children Robert (Toni) Hunt; grandchildren Tyler Van Velsen, Austin (Alden) Van Velsen, Blaine (Lexi) Hunt, Ashlynn Hunt; siblings Denise (Chuck) Moore; son-in-law, Vince Van Velsen; sisters-in-law Barb (Rick) Martin, Donna Hallowell; special friends Jack (Jean) Klynstra, Esther Brummel; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

A celebration of Diane's

*See "Walking on," page 15*

Open To All  
Grand Prize  
Drawing

The Sault Tribe Health Division Presents:

## Heart Smart Lunch & Learn

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
12 P.M. - 1 P.M.

### Sault Tribe Health Center

1st Floor Auditorium  
2864 Ashmun Street  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

In recognition of American Heart Month, join us for a light lunch & informative session on:

- Heart-healthy nutrition strategies
- Lifestyle behaviors
- Disease prevention



Contact Us To Register

Sault Tribe Community  
Health Clinic

(906) 632-5210

Home • Auto • Life • Boat  
Motorcycle • RV • Motor Homes

Business • Snowmobile

906-253-1904

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2681 Ashmun St  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI

# Santa stops by Sault Tribe Health Center



William Taylor and Nicole Cornwell snuggle in for a visit with Santa Claus.



Tina Robinson, Sault Tribe Community Health Education supervisor, takes a break with jolly old St. Nick.



Oh baby! Kienna Krogh, 9 months, giving Santa the side eye, and Lainey Socia, 6 months, keeping an eye on her family.



Jesse Germain with Callie Odbert, 4.



Sault Tribe Unit I Board Representative Kim Gravelle shared a moment with her old friend, Santa.



Mason McLachlan, 6, and sister Leela McLachlan, 9, enjoy snack time.



Sault Tribe Assistant Health Director, Joel Lumsden, conversed with Santa Claus.

Photos by Brenda Austin



James Williams (center standing), 11, Alex Hutchings, 3, (bottom left), Logan Ross, 6, (center), and Rowan Williams, 9, (right), swarm Santa.

# New Year's Eve Powwow brings community together at Big Bear Arena for celebration and fun



New Year's Eve Powwow grand entry. Eagle staff carriers, L-R, Haley Sebastian, Richard Kangas and Head Veteran Nick Van Alstine.



Head Female Dancer Melissa Causley and Head Male Dancer Jessy Farley.



Singers on the Mukwa Giizhik drum from Hessel warm up prior to grand entry.



Head Male Dancer Jessy Farley



Women's traditional dancers L-R, Bea Jackson, Rita Boulley and Adrienne Shipman.



Randy Endicott models one of the knit caps he was selling.

**ATTENTION**

Committed to Giving You Our Very Best

**RESIDENTS OF DRUMMOND & MACKINAC ISLANDS ENROLLED IN THE PRC PROGRAM**

RESIDENTS OF DRUMMOND & MACKINAC ISLANDS ENROLLED IN THE PURCHASED REFERRED CARE (PRC) PROGRAM ARE EXEMPT FROM SEEKING URGENT MEDICAL SERVICES AT A TRIBAL HEALTH FACILITY PRIOR TO SEEKING URGENT CARE FROM ANOTHER PROVIDER LOCATED ON MACKINAC & DRUMMOND ISLANDS FOR THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY.

PURCHASED REFERRED CARE OFFICE  
3RD FLOOR OF THE SAULT TRIBE HEALTH CENTER  
2864 ASHMUN ST, SAULT STE. MARIE, MI 49783

1-800-922-0582  
906-632-5220  
FAX 906-632-5248



Tara Hetrick, owner of White Feather Gifts, converses with Melissa Causley prior to grand entry.



Above, Kathleen Whiley and Yvonne Moore wait for guests to arrive at the Dec. 31 Sobriety Powwow. Below, Ron and Sue Kylonen, vendors from KBIC, brought many unique items in to sell from their booth.



Above: Jingle dress dancer Poppy Solomon.

Photos by  
Brenda Austin  
&  
Scott Brand

**JOSEPH K. LUMSDEN BAHWETING ANISHNABE SCHOOL**

**2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR OPEN ENROLLMENT AND PUBLIC LOTTERY INFORMATION**

Joseph K. Lumsden Bahweting Anishnabe Public School Academy (JKL) announces a new online application process for Kindergarten enrollment! It's so easy that you can apply right from your phone.

JKL will start accepting enrollment applications on the school website for the 2026-27 school year on Monday, February 02, 2026 through February 17, 2026 at midnight. Applications can be found on our website at: [www.jkschool.org](http://www.jkschool.org).

All applications submitted by February 17, 2026 midnight, will be entered into the enrollment lottery for an opportunity to be randomly chosen to attend JKL. As a Michigan Public School Academy, students attend JKL free of charge; However, enrollment spots are limited. The names of all applicants are placed in a lottery and chosen randomly by computer in public.

The lottery will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. in the JKL Administration Building (across from the main school building).

Applications will be available on the school website starting February 02, 2026. Please stop by the JKL Administration Building between Monday, February 02, 2026 through February 17, 2026 if you need assistance completing the application.

Please contact Carolyn MacArthur, Enrollment Specialist, with questions at [cmacarthur@jkschool.org](mailto:cmacarthur@jkschool.org).

Enrollment Application:  
[www.jkschool.org](http://www.jkschool.org)  
Click on Enrollment Tab

# Bell makes Dean's List for fall 2025



Mackenzie Bell of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., is on the Dean's List for the 2025 fall semester at Northwood University in Midland, Mich., with a 4.0 grade point. Bell is a junior pursuing a degree in automotive marketing and management. She will do an internship in Boston, Mass., this summer. Bell is also a third-year member of the Northwood University Timberwolves women's basketball team. Owen and Amy Bell of the Sault are her parents. Grandparents are Carol and the late Max Metro and Arlen and Lovada Bell.

## Happy birthday!

Happy birthday Holly Osburn! (Dec. 28) You have an amazing year ahead of you and your family is so proud of your accomplishments and volunteer work. Keep up the great work!



# DePetro earns White Coat

Way to go, Stephanie DePetro!

Stephanie's co-workers at the Marquette Tribal Health Center would like to share the exciting news that Stephanie received her White Coat from Northern Michigan University's Nurse Practitioner Program in December 2025.

Stephanie currently works as Marquette's Community Health Nurse, and we have had the pleasure of working alongside her while witnessing her dedication, compassion, and willingness to always go the extra mile.

As a member of the Sault Tribe, Stephanie truly reflects our tribe's values. Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement! We are all so proud of you!

— *From Everyone at Marquette Tribal Health Clinic*



# Wheatley graduates from MSU

On Dec. 13, 2025, Taylor Jean Wheatley received a bachelor of science degree in biochemistry and molecular biology from Michigan State University.

Her proud parents are tribal member George Wheatley and Carmen Wheatley, who along with her Aunt Stephanie Jacob, attended her graduation ceremony.

Her grandparents are Diane Nelson, Daniel Sims, Donna Wheatley and the late John "Jay" Wheatley, all of Battle Creek Mich., and Roberta and Jeffrey Verdone, of Sault Ste. Marie Mich.

"We are very proud and excited for Taylor and commend her for hard work and dedication to her studies," her grandma Roberta said. Taylor hopes to continue her education and work in the medical field.



# FEELING OFF? FOLLOW UP.

In Michigan, 8 out of 10 maternal deaths are preventable.

If you have any of these symptoms during or after pregnancy, talk to your health care provider right away. For the safety of you and your baby.

- Overwhelming tiredness.
- Persistent headache.
- Dizziness, fainting or vision changes.
- Fever over 100.4°F.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.
- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain.
- High blood pressure.
- Fast heart rate.
- Severe nausea.
- Belly pain that won't go away.
- Baby's movement slowing or stopping during pregnancy.
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking fluid during pregnancy or heavy bleeding after pregnancy.
- Extreme swelling of your hands, face, arms or legs.
- Swelling, redness or pain in legs.



[Michigan.gov/MIH](https://Michigan.gov/MIH)

 Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

# Walking on continued...

From "Walking on," page 10  
life will be held from 1-5 p.m.  
Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026 at the  
Douglas Walker Park Pavilion,  
1195 84th Street SW, Byron  
Center, Mich., 49315.

In lieu of flowers, and in honor  
of Diane, memorial contributions  
may be made to Faith Hospice or  
American Cancer Society.

## DIANN RUTH (CADREAU) FOX

Diann Ruth (Cadreau) Fox, 81,  
of Trout Lake, Mich., died  
Jan. 7, 2026, at MyMichigan  
Medical Center in Sault Ste.  
Marie, Mich. She was born  
Sept. 28, 1944, in Saginaw,  
Mich., to Joseph and Elaine  
(Siegbart) Cadreau.



Diann worked at Phil  
DeGraff's Wegwas lodge in Trout  
Lake during the summer months,  
and for Phil at his lodge on  
Demere Key in Florida during the  
winter months for several years in  
her early twenties. After her time  
working for Phil, she returned to  
Trout Lake, where she met and  
married Elwood Fox of Hillman,  
Mich. Diann devoted her life to  
raising her family and helping her  
husband in operating his logging  
and trucking business.

Diann was an avid NASCAR  
fan who especially loved Dale  
Earnhardt and enjoyed attending  
racetracks throughout Michigan.  
She enjoyed her green Chevy  
short box pickup and washing it  
daily. Diann loved coloring and  
playing games on her Kindle.

Each year, she lovingly made  
memorial flowers for family  
gravesites.

She was very creative and  
enjoyed making a wide variety of  
crafts, including decorative photo  
albums, flower arrangements, and  
coloring projects.

Diann is survived by her  
husband, Elwood; children,  
Stacey (Chris Hoornstra) Mills  
of Strongsville, Mich., Jada (Brad  
Novak) Fox of Engadine, Mich.,  
and Gina (Mike Johnson) Fox  
of Newberry, Mich.; step chil-  
dren, Marty Fox of Hillman,  
and Shannon Wright of Hubbard  
Lake, Mich.; grandchildren, Greg  
(Sue Krupski) Mills, Heather  
(Michael Kozloski) Mills, Tyler  
(Brittany) Fox, Bryant (Alyssa  
Anderson) Fox, Kris (Aimee  
Baier) Thompson, Trey and  
Trenton Ledford; step grandchil-  
dren, Matthew Wright, and Nicole  
(Jordan) Sleeter; great-grand-  
children, Gregory and Bradley  
Mills, Damian Fox, Brody  
Maxson, Jaydin, Zayne, Jaxyn and  
Oakleigh Fox; and sister-in-law,  
Bridget Cadreau of Hessel, Mich.

Diann was preceded in death  
by her parents, Joseph and Elaine;  
sister, Gayle Beaudoin; brother,  
Joe Cadreau; brother-in-law, Joe  
Beaudoin; nephews, Quinton  
Cadreau and Jesse Beaudoin; and  
niece, Nina (Tootie) Cadreau.

Visitation was held Jan. 12,  
2026, at Family Life Funeral  
Homes, in Sault Ste. Marie,  
Mich., with the Funeral Service  
and luncheon following.

Interment will be at Trout Lake  
Lakeview Cemetery in the spring.  
Condolences may be given to the

family at [www.familylifefh.com](http://www.familylifefh.com).

## KELLIE JO (LEMASTER) SPENCER

Kellie Jo (LeMaster) Spencer,  
56, of Dafters, Mich., died Dec.  
29, 2025, at her home. She was  
born April 16, 1969, in  
Manistique, Mich., to  
James and  
Luella  
(Chase)  
LeMaster.



Kellie grew up in  
Manistique and graduated from  
Manistique High School. After  
graduation, she attended Northern  
Michigan University and later  
completed her associate's degree  
at Bay Mills Community College.  
She worked as a secretary at a law  
firm for more than twenty years  
before becoming a store manager  
at the Shell gas station, where she  
especially enjoyed talking with  
her regular customers.

Kellie loved camping, time  
spent outdoors, and listening to  
country music, and she was a  
devoted fan of the Detroit Lions.

Kellie is survived by her sons,  
James Spencer and Tyler Spencer;  
and brother, Don (Wanda)  
LeMaster of Manistique.

Kellie was preceded in death  
by her parents, James and Luella;  
and brother, James LeMaster. A  
celebration of life will be held at  
a later date. Family Life Funeral  
Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted  
the family with arrangements.  
Condolences may be given to the  
family at [www.familylifefh.com](http://www.familylifefh.com).

## GERALD "GERRY" FREDRICK LALONDE

Gerald "Gerry" Fredrick  
LaLonde, 73, of Sault Ste. Marie,  
Mich., died Dec. 21, 2025, at his  
home. He was born Jan. 5, 1952,  
in Sault Ste. Marie, to Phil and  
Helen (Rothwell) LaLonde.

Gerry grew up in Sault Ste.  
Marie where he graduated from  
Sault Area High School. After  
high school, Gerry proudly served  
in the United States Navy for four  
years. In his free time, he enjoyed  
fishing, hunting, and coin collecting.

Gerry is survived by his sib-  
lings, Tom LaLonde of Sault Ste.  
Marie, Jean (Darrell) Dettman of  
Marquette, Mich., Mary Jackman  
of Sault Ste. Marie, David, (Leanne)  
LaLonde of Parma, Ohio and Cris  
(Don Brown) Dawson of Sault  
Ste. Marie.

Gerry is preceded in death  
by his parents, Phil and Helen  
LaLonde; baby sister, Frances  
Helen; and sister, Carole Mitchell.

A celebration of life will be  
held in the summer of 2026.  
Memorial contributions may be  
left in Gerry's honor to Hospice  
of the EUP, 308 W. 12th Avenue,  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes  
– Sault Ste. Marie, assisted  
the family with arrangements.  
Condolences may be given to the  
family at [www.familylifefh.com](http://www.familylifefh.com).

## LAURA LOCKWOOD

Laura Lockwood, 74, died  
peacefully on Dec. 30, 2025,  
after a lengthy struggle with  
Alzheimer's. She was born June  
8, 1951 in Manistique, Mich.,  
the eldest of Ben and Gladys



Lockwood's five children.  
Gladys was the daughter of  
Swedish immigrants; Ben was a  
carpenter with Native-American  
ancestry. Late in life, Laura was  
proud of that ancestry and of her  
elder status in the Sault Ste. Marie  
Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Laura grew up in the Upper  
Peninsula, the big sister to her  
four rambunctious brothers. Later  
she chose a career that fit her  
abiding goal of helping others.  
While a single mom with two  
young children she managed to  
complete her studies at Northern  
Michigan (BA) and Michigan  
State (MSW) to become a social  
worker. During her career, she did  
all the hard work we ask of social  
workers, including the last few  
years as a school social worker at  
Lakewood, Mich.

Laura brought the same com-  
passion that fueled her work to  
her personal life. She was a gifted  
listener, intent on understanding  
others, not judging them.

And she had an infectious  
smile that could light up a room  
and every heart in it.

What were a few of her favor-  
ite things? A glass of wine and  
conversation after a long day.  
Long walks, taking nature pic-  
tures along the way. Listening  
and singing along to music of all  
sorts, from Irish trad to folk to  
boomer rock—Gordon Lightfoot,  
Bonnie Raitt, Mark Knopfler, Van  
Morrison, Joni Mitchell and the  
Eagles were some of her favor-  
ites. Later in life, travel with her  
husband, Norb, and close friends  
(the Oas's, the Morelands, the  
Enchanted April crew). An oppor-  
tunity to live abroad part-time  
made Canterbury England and  
new friends there special. And  
most of all, her family, to help  
them whenever she could, and to  
share in their sorrows and their  
joys.

She is survived by her loving  
husband, Norbert Kerr; her moth-  
er and step-father, Gladys and  
Don Linderoth; three children,  
Nicole Senkbeil, Ben Demers,  
and Justin Caine and their spouses,  
Brian, Judy, and Meaghan;  
three brothers, Jeff, Jim, and  
Paul Lockwood; three step-sons,  
Ben Kerr, Gabriel Kerr, and Josh  
Wald-Kerr; and six grandchil-  
dren, Dakota and Grace Senkbeil,  
Felicity and Silas Caine, and  
Judah and Birdie Kerr.

She is preceded in death by  
her father, Ben Lockwood, and by  
her brother, Adrian Lockwood.

In lieu of flowers, send memo-  
rial contributions to Hospice of  
Lansing or to the Alzheimer's  
Association.

Because most of Laura's fam-  
ily and friends are scattered across  
the country and world, there  
won't be a local funeral. There  
will be a short visitation for locals  
to pay their respects; details avail-  
able at the Gorsline Runciman  
website. A memorial celebration  
of Laura's life will be held in the  
near future.

## RUTH ANN PARR

Ruth Ann Parr, 67 of Lewiston,  
Mich., died at Munson Healthcare  
Otsego Memorial Hospital in  
Gaylord on Dec. 7, 2025. She  
was born on  
March 30, 1958  
to William  
"Bill" George  
and Margaret  
"Peggy" Ann  
(Nau) Hudson  
in Tawas City,  
Mich.



She married  
Paul Thomas Parr on Feb. 25, 1986  
in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and  
together they celebrated 39 years of  
marriage before her passing. Ruth  
worked at Kewadin Casino in the  
change department and at Midjim  
Store.

She loved flower  
gardens, reading romance novels,  
fishing, hunting, walking the shore  
of Lake Superior, Clyde's Drive  
Inn and watching the ships from  
Rotary Park.

She is survived by her lov-  
ing husband of 39 years, Paul;  
sons, Michael (Stacy) Miller,  
Wayne Switalski, James (Aimee)  
Miller; daughters, Misty (JJ)  
Rose, Christal Jozwiak, Jessy  
(David) Corry; grandchildren,  
Bryce (Emily Hall) Fritz, Alyx  
Fritz, Dylan Fritz, Haylei (Jacob  
Gardner) Fritz, Arynna Heit,  
Breann and Ethan Miller, Natalie  
Switalski, Maximillian Corry; two  
great-grandchildren, Whaylen Fritz  
and Ezra Hall; parents, William and  
Peggy Hudson; and many loving  
family members.

She was preceded in death by  
several siblings and granddaughter,  
Isabella Switalski.

As were her wishes, cremation  
has taken place. There will be a  
celebration of life held in Ruth's  
honor when the weather permits  
in the spring. Arrangements were  
entrusted to Green Funeral Home.  
Condolence messages may be sent  
via our website at [www.greenfuneralhomes.com](http://www.greenfuneralhomes.com).

## DAVID ALLEN SUMMERFIELD

David Allen Summerfield, 61,  
of Iron Mountain, Mich., passed  
away peacefully at his home with  
his loving family by his side on  
Friday, Nov. 7, 2025.

David was born Dec. 20, 1963,  
in Mackinac Island, Mich., to the  
late Albert  
"Ray" and  
Mary (Dufina)  
Summerfield.  
He graduated  
from Mackinac  
Island High  
School in  
1981. He  
married Cindy  
Kammers on



Oct. 3, 1986, in Florida. David  
worked for the State of Florida as  
a Forest Ranger. In 1992, he and  
Cindy moved to Iron Mountain.

David was a highly respected  
self-employed General Contractor  
in the community. As a local  
businessman, he blessed count-  
less people with his many talents  
in construction. Known for his  
unwavering generosity and caring  
for others, Dave was always will-  
ing to teach, mentor, and share his  
skills anytime he could. His caring  
nature extended into spending time  
with the kids at the daycare.

Outside of his work, David was  
happiest spending time with his

family. He cherished camping,  
snowmobiling, and hunting with  
his children. He found his greatest  
joy in his role as a grandfather.

David is survived by his  
beloved wife of 44 years, Cindy  
Summerfield; his children,  
Christopher Summerfield and  
his wife Stacy, and Chelsye  
Summerfield and her signifi-  
cant other Jesse; his siblings,  
Thomas Chambers of Mackinac  
Island, and his "favorite," Sheryl  
McCullough of Nashville, Tenn.

He leaves behind his six greatest  
blessings, his grandchildren,  
Lucas, Parker, Gabriella, Greyson,  
Brynnlee, and Sierra.

A celebration of life was held  
Nov. 18, at Redemption Hill in  
Kingsford, Mich.

Friends may leave condolences  
and tributes to David's family  
online at [www.jacobsfuneralhomes.com](http://www.jacobsfuneralhomes.com).

The family has chosen  
the Jacobs Funeral Home  
and Cremation Services, Iron  
Mountain, to honor David's legacy  
of life.

## WILLIAM HENRY VIEAU III (BILLY)

William Henry Vieau III  
(Billy), 61, of Sault Ste Marie,  
Mich., for-  
merly of  
Mackinaw  
City, Mich.,  
passed away  
unexpectedly  
on Dec. 12,  
2025. A ded-  
icated father,  
grandfather,  
brother, and friend, Billy will be



remembered for his love for his  
culture, love of the outdoors, and  
deep devotion to his kids and  
grandkids.

Born on Dec. 28, 1964, in  
Petoskey, Mich., to William  
and Elizabeth Vieau. Billy grew  
up racing around the streets of  
Mackinaw City. He drove semi-  
trucks for most of his working  
career, which he loved. Later on  
in life he moved with his son and  
daughter to Cheboygan then Sault  
Ste Marie. Anyone that knows  
Billy, knows that his kids and  
grandkids were his whole world.  
He would do absolutely anything  
for them and loved nothing more  
than spending time with them.

Billy found happiness in hunting,  
fishing, archery, two-tracking,  
mudding, and anything outdoors  
with his kids and grandkids. His  
native culture also brought him a  
lot of joy. He spent a lot of time  
beading and helping people out  
spiritually as he was a pipe carrier.

Billy is survived by his son,  
William (Danielle) Vieau IV, and  
his daughter Amber Vieau. Bonus  
son, Jeremey Joy. Bonus daughter,  
Ashlee Mielke. Grand kids,  
William, Raelynn, Laykelee, and  
Kaiden. Mother, Elizabeth Vieau.  
Sister, Laura (Ed) Fetke. Brothers,  
Ron (Michelle) Vieau, and Greg  
(Ann) Vieau.

Father, William Henry Vieau  
Jr., preceded Billy in death along  
with close cousins Keven Vieau  
and Tracey Griesbach.

Services were held in St.  
Ignace on Dec. 20, a casting cere-  
mony will be held this summer at  
French Farm in Mackinaw City.  
Date to be determined.

See "Walking on" page 16

# Support mental and physical health with good food

BY GEORGINA GUZMÁN, MSUE

Every day we learn more about the connections between what we eat and how it can affect us, especially when it comes to our mental well-being. Our feelings, thoughts, and behavior are affected by what we eat and drink. The brain influences what you eat, and what you eat influences your brain.

The relationship between the gut and the central nervous system is controlled by diet, the microbiome, and inflammation. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; the microbiome is the collection of all microbes. This includes bacteria, fungi, viruses and their genes, which naturally live on

our bodies and inside us. The foods you eat have a direct impact on your mood, cognitive function, and mental health.

Serotonin is a chemical messenger that helps the brain and nervous systems cells communicate. The primary function is to stabilize your mood, as well as your feelings of happiness and well-being. Too little serotonin can cause depression. Complex carbohydrates boost your serotonin levels and have a calming effect. You can find complex carbohydrates in foods like brown rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, and starchy vegetables.

There is a correlation between eating a processed, low-nutrient

diet and increased rates of depression and anxiety. On the other hand, eating a diet rich in whole foods decreases risk for these mental health issues. A nutritionally healthy diet like that can also improve your concentration and attention span. To support optimal mental health and overall health, follow these food tips from the Mental Health Foundation:

— Eat regularly. This can stop your blood sugar levels from dropping, which can make you feel tired and bad-tempered.

Stay hydrated. Even mild dehydration can affect your mood, energy level, and ability to concentrate.

— Eat the right balance of fats.

Your brain needs healthy fats to keep working well. Healthy fats include olive oil, grapeseed oil, nuts, seeds, oily fish, avocados, milk, and eggs. Avoid trans fats.

— Include more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables in your diet. These contain the vitamins and minerals your brain and body need to stay well.

— Include protein with every meal. It contains an amino acid that your brain uses to help regulate your mood.

— Take care of your gut health. Your gut can reflect how you are feeling: if you are stressed it can speed up or slow down. Healthy food for your gut includes fruit,

vegetables, beans, and probiotics such as yogurt, kombucha, and sauerkraut.

— Caffeine can affect your mood and cause sleep problems. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks, and chocolate.

— Eat mindfully. Mindfulness and mindful eating have the potential to improve health and our relationship to food.

By following these tips for improving your diet you will notice a positive impact on your mood, sleep, energy and focus in a few weeks. For more on information, visit the MSU Extension website at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/>.

## Walking on continued from page 15

### RUTH CATHERINE WARD

Ruth Catherine Ward went home to the Lord on Nov. 9, 2025, at age 92. Ruth was born in Nahma, Mich., on Aug. 9, 1933, to Rose (Moses) and Augusta Michaels.

She grew up in Manistique,



Mich. On April 5, 1958, Ruth married James Edward Ward. She was a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She proudly earned her GED in her early 70s. Until her retirement, Ruth worked at Northridge Healthcare in the Laundry Department. She was very active in AA and the Bible studies and retreats through Hope Church and later St. Peter the Fisherman.

An international traveler, she toured Jerusalem, Italy, and Brazil. Ruth loved to celebrate her Native American heritage by dancing in powwows and participating in sweats in Michigan. She was the matriarch of her family, and was happy to be a grandmother to and know three generations of her grandchildren.

Ruth is survived by her son Robert Munroe; grandchildren Robert, David, Laura, Joe, John, and Jimmy; as well as many great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren; cousins; nieces; nephews; other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband James, daughter Ruth Ann, son David, and her siblings.

Cremation has taken place at Harrigan Parkside Crematory. Relatives and friends greeted the family at Harrigan Parkside Funeral Home in Manitowoc, on Nov. 16, 2025, until the time of the Funeral Service. Following the service, a luncheon was held at Harrigan Parkside Gathering Center.

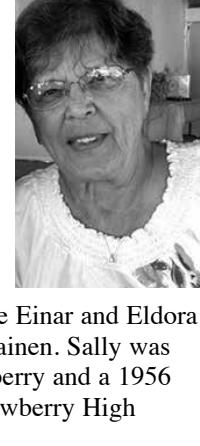
Burial of Ruth's urn took place at Holy Cross Cemetery in Two Rivers on Nov. 17.

The family extends special thanks to the staff of Heartland Hospice and Magnolia Meadows, as well as her great-grandson Kyle for his care of Ruth.

### SELENA MARGARET WEBB

Longtime Newberry resident, Selena Margaret Webb, 86, affectionately known as Sally, died Friday afternoon Oct. 31, 2025, at

Golden Leaves Living Center with her loving family at her bedside.



Born Nov. 10, 1938, in Newberry, Mich., Sally was the fourth child of the late Einar and Eldora (Leny) Haapalainen. Sally was raised in Newberry and a 1956 graduate of Newberry High School.

Sally was registered to go to nursing school when she was proposed to by William "Jack" Webb, saying yes and, on Aug. 3, 1956, were united in marriage at St. Gregory's Catholic Church.

Together they shared 20 years of traveling together with her family while Jack was enlisted in the United States Air Force, residing in Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada, Texas, Japan, Turkey and Okinawa.

Following her husband's retirement from the United States Air Force in 1976, they came back to Newberry, owning the Evening Star Motel. Sally worked at the Newberry Regional Mental Health Center until its closure and later at Tahquamenon Area Schools as a teacher's aide, retiring in 1997.

In addition to her parents, Sally is preceded in death by her husband Jack on Sept. 9, 2016, son Terrance on Jan. 15, 2015, infant grandson Christopher John Webb in 1983 and siblings Henry Haapalainen, Nancy Brumit and Elaine Huggins.

Survivors include her son Bill Webb of Grand Rapids and daughter Catherine (Kurt) Chamberlain of McMillan; eight grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Sally was a longtime member of the Annex auxiliary and loved participating in the annex bazaar. She was one of the initial members that started up Project Backpack in Newberry and volunteered for many years.

She loved traveling to visit her kids, grandkids and was a visible supporter in the stands cheering them on in high school and college sports. She loved crafting with family and was a beautiful crocheter. Sally was a longtime active member of St. Gregory's Catholic Church.

A memorial mass for Sally was held on Nov. 14, at St. Gregory's Catholic Church with

Fr. Frank Ricca officiating. Rite of committal will take place at Forest Home Cemetery in the spring/summer of 2026.

Memorials may be directed to St. Gregory's Catholic Church specified to the high school retreat fund or to Golden Leaves Living Center specified to the activities department in Sally's loving memory. Beaulieu Funeral Home in Newberry assisted the family.

### LaRAINE E. WIGGINS

Our mom LaRaine E. Wiggins (Erskine) was born on Jan. 10, 1933 and passed away quietly on Jan. 6, 2026, just four days shy of her 93rd birthday.



She was born on a dairy farm in Allenville, Mich. next to her great grandfather JD Erskine's General Store to the late Jack and Violet Erskine (Ringler) and graduated from LaSalle High School of St. Ignace.

LaRaine married Skip Wiggins of Carp River, Mich., in 1958 and they spent 67 happy years together. Mom worked as a bank teller for 35 years at the First National Bank of St. Ignace, Newberry State Bank and Tahquamenon Credit Union. Whenever we went for a visit to the bank, the line was always the longest at her window as everyone in town loved her stories of their family members, their occupations, where they grew up and lived their lives and of course her tips on banking. She had a heart of an angel! She was also employed as cashier at Treasure Island, the Indian Village, Castle Rock and the casino, as she was a lifetime member of the Chippewa Tribe.

Mom also served many years on the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Newberry.

Her first love and compassion were sewing as she had a keen sense for color, patterns and design. She was a self-taught seamstress who could put two patterns together or design her own. Mom owned eight sewing machines and especially loved her ancient commercial singer as she was able to wield leather goods on it as well as the Dacron sails for my dad's handcrafted boats Oden and the JaniDan, thick curtains, and miles of bunting for

her son's exhibit tables. She also made many lovely clothes for her daughter, grandchildren, family, friends and even helped with the Christmas bells and stars downtown.

She and my dad built many beautiful homes together, including their cherished cabin of 60 years on Brevoort Lake where they hosted both sides of the family and friends at many corn roasts, snowmobiling, skiing, swimming, speed boating and sailing. One of their favorite pastimes was square dancing and they belonged to the St. Ignace and Newberry Chapters. Mom always wore handmade beautiful, hooped gowns and western shirts for dad that they always adorned with bolo ties to dance the night away.

In addition to her parents, LaRaine is preceded in death by her husband Skip Wiggins; granddaughter Bethany King, her older brothers Jack (Geneva) Erskine, Marvin (Marion) Erskine, Vern (Vonnie) Erskine, Glen (Minnie) Erskine and Ralph (Yvonne) Erskine.

Survivors include her daughter Janice (Glen) Pittman of Newberry; her son Daniel (Dr. Cyndi) Wiggins of Marquette; grandchildren Colton Wiggins of Marquette; Chelsea Wiggins (Nick Kopylec) of Orlando, Fla.; Heather (Greg) Mannisto of Chatham; Sabrina (Clint) Tyner of Chatham; Rachel (Don) Shope of Rapid River; and Glen Pittman Jr. of Escanaba; great grandchildren Paavo Mannisto and Tuuli Mannisto of Chatham, Lucy Tyner and Stormy Tyner of Chatham; grandson-in-law Lee King and many loving nieces and nephews.

Per request, cremation services were accorded. LaRaine will be laid to rest at the Caffey Cemetery in Rexton at a later date.

Memorials may be directed to the Straits Area Senior Living Community where mom resided happily for the past six months. An exceptional caring assisted living at 255 South Airport Road, St. Ignace, MI 49781.

Condolences may be expressed at [www.beaulieufuneralhome.com](http://www.beaulieufuneralhome.com). Beaulieu Funeral Home in Newberry is assisting the family.

*"We would like to think that Dad swept Mom away on his boat of gold and they are sailing the heavens together."*

### Robert Emery Lawrence Jr.

Robert (Bob) Emery Lawrence Jr., of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., 82, passed away Friday Oct. 17, 2025, surrounded by his family at McLaren-Flint Hospital.

Robert was born in Sault Ste. Marie, on Dec. 19, 1942, the son of the late Robert Sr. and Alice (Trombley) Lawrence. He was joined in marriage to Carol



McKerchie on Aug. 26, 1961, at St. Mary's Catholic Church. He returned to the Sault Ste. Marie area from Flint, Mich., after his retirement from General Motors in 1997. Robert enjoyed the outdoors; spending his time hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, snowmobiling, and of course cutting wood. He also enjoyed playing cards, traveling, watching the Lions and Tigers play, and trips to the casinos. He was a jack of all trades and dropped everything to help anyone.

In addition to her parents, LaRaine is preceded in death by her husband Skip Wiggins; granddaughter Bethany King, her older brothers Jack (Geneva) Erskine, Marvin (Marion) Erskine, Vern (Vonnie) Erskine, Glen (Minnie) Erskine and Ralph (Yvonne) Erskine.

Survivors include her daughter Janice (Glen) Pittman of Newberry; her son Daniel (Dr. Cyndi) Wiggins of Marquette; grandchildren Colton Wiggins of Marquette; Chelsea Wiggins (Nick Kopylec) of Orlando, Fla.; Heather (Greg) Mannisto of Chatham; Sabrina (Clint) Tyner of Chatham; Rachel (Don) Shope of Rapid River; and Glen Pittman Jr. of Escanaba; great grandchildren Paavo Mannisto and Tuuli Mannisto of Chatham, Lucy Tyner and Stormy Tyner of Chatham; grandson-in-law Lee King and many loving nieces and nephews.

He leaves his wife of over 64 years, Carol, his children: Linda (Allan) Mondeau, Robert (Rebecca) Lawrence III, and Lori (John) Smith. He also leaves behind grandchildren: Amber, Crystal, Scott (Carolynn), Kaleigh (Blake), Cynthia, Kristin (Janson), Weston and great grandchildren: Emily, Sammy, Dawson, Charlotte, Audrey, Kent, Parker, Rachel, Elin, Hadley and Carter. Robert also leaves his brother Ted (Connie) Lawrence, and a host of extended family and friends. He is preceded in death by brothers Romeo and John Lawrence.

Honoring his wishes cremation has taken place.

A mass of resurrection was celebrated on Oct. 24, 2025, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Sault Ste. Marie under Fr. Allen Mott Celebrant, followed by burial at Oaklawn Chapel Gardens.

In lieu of flowers contributions in Robert's memory can be made to the Ball Hospice House in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Share your condolences at [www.hansenfuneralhome.net](http://www.hansenfuneralhome.net).

# St. Ignace Elders February Lunch Menu

Elder Services-St. Ignace Kitchen, (906) 643-6484	Dessert
Lunch served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday	Feb. 23 — Cream of Broccoli Soup, Chicken Salad Sandwich, Fruit
Menu is subject to change.	Feb. 24 — Baked Chicken, Stuffing, Gravy, Veggies, Fruit
Feb. 2 — Chicken and Broccoli Alfredo, Garlic Bread, Fruit	Feb. 25 — Spanish Rice w/ Hamburger, Veggies, Fruit
Feb. 3 — Cabbage Roll Casserole, Veggies, Cornbread, Fruit	Feb. 26 — Butternut Wild Rice Soup, Roast Beef Sandwich, Fruit, Dessert
Feb. 4 — Beef Stew, Biscuit, Fruit	
Feb. 5 — Mac and Cheese, Ham, Veggies, Fruit, Dessert	
Feb. 9 — Egg Bites, Sausage, Cinnamon Rolls, Fruit	
Feb. 10 — Goulash, Veggies, Garlic bread, Fruit	
Feb. 11 — Cook's Choice	
Feb. 12 — Chicken Cacciatore, Garlic Bread, Veggies, Fruit, Dessert	
Feb. 16 — Corn Chowder, Ham Salad Sandwich, Fruit	
Feb. 17 — Tuna Noodle Casserole, Veggies, Cornbread, Fruit	
Feb. 18 — Smothered Pork, Stuffing, Gravy, Veggies, Fruit	
Feb. 19 — Chicken Ala King, Veggies, Biscuit, Fruit,	



## New Year...New Ride!



Every hour spent repairing an old sled is an hour lost on the trails.

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www.fnbsi.com



## Tribal election unit listing by city and zip code

<b>UNIT I</b>					
Barbeau	49710	Pickford	49774	Perkins	49872
Bay Mills	49715	Rexton	49794	Princeton	49841
Brimley	49715	Rudyard	49780	Rapid River	49878
Dafter	49724	Stalwart	49736	Republic	49879
Eckerman	49728	Trout Lake	49793	Rock	49880
Hulbert	49748			Skandia	49885
Kincheloe	49788	<b>UNIT III</b>		Thompson	49889
Kincheloe	49886	Brevort	49760	Traunik	49890
Kinross	49752	Mackinac Island	49757	Trenary	49891
Neebish Island	49710	Moran	49760	Wells	49819
Paradise	49768	Pointe Aux Pins	49775		
Raco	49715	St. Ignace	49781	<b>UNIT V</b>	
Sault Ste. Marie	49783			Arnold	49819
Strongs	49790	<b>UNIT IV</b>		Autrain	49806
Sugar Island	49783	Bark River	49807	Beaver Grove	49855
		Brampton	49837	Big Bay	49808
		Champion	49814	Chatham	49816
		Cooks	49817	Christmas	49862
		Cornell	49818	Deerton	49822
Cedarville	49719	Escanaba	49829	Eben Junction	49825
Curtis	49820	Fayette	49835	Forrest Lake	49832
DeTour Village	49725	Garden	49835	Grand Marais	49839
Engadine	49827	Gladstone	49837	Harvey	49855
Epoufette	49762	Gwinn	49841	Marquette	49855
Fibre	49780	Ishpeming	49849	Michigamme	49861
Germfask	49836	KI Sawyer	49843	Munising	49862
Goetzville	49736	Limestone	49816	Palmer	49871
Gould City	49838	Little Lake	49833	Rumley	49826
Gulliver	49840	Hessel	49745	Seney	49883
McMillan	49853	McMillan	49854	Shingleton	49884
Naubinway	49762	Nahma	49864	Wetmore	49895
Newberry	49868	Negaunee	49866		
		Northland	49869		

Sault Tribe Health Division  
Presents

# Community Snowshoe Events

February 10th at 5:15 pm ~ Big Bear Arena (Sault)  
and

March 4th at 5:15 pm ~ Little Bear East (St. Ignace)

Stay after the hike for a cozy thermos of soup  
and traditional tea (courtesy of the  
Traditional Medicine Program)

Please register at Community Health: 906-632-5210.  
Limited number of snowshoes available for use

# Tribal Chairman's report for January 21, 2026



AUSTIN LOWES  
TRIBAL CHAIRMAN  
Constitutional Reform

I continue to work with proactive board members to advance long-overdue constitutional reform. In 2008, a Tribal Constitutional Committee—made up of respected elders and legal experts—recommended moving away from our current corporate board structure and establishing a modern, three-branch government with checks and balances.

In November, a constitutional survey was mailed to every registered voter in the tribe. The results were clear and overwhelming: tribal citizens strongly support a three-branch government. Notably, more citizens participated in this survey than in recent tribal elections.

## Encouraging the membership to stay involved



MICHAEL MCKERCHIE,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

First and foremost, I want to wish everyone a happy new year. As we move into the new year and the upcoming election cycle I want to encourage the

membership to stay involved, join committees if you can, watch our workshop and meetings, and always try to get both sides of a story. In this digital age of information and misinformation it's easy to get lost and misguided—be sure to discuss what's going on in our tribe with others you trust.

I'm glad the board came together at a recent Board meeting to amend and discuss the resolution to keep the constitutional amendments moving forward in a good way. It was a lengthy discussion but was needed as the resolution was not workshopped and needed several changes. We as a board need to institute better policies for how we enact laws. Tribal members deserve to see and know what the board is voting on, more than the five-

day notice we currently have. We've discussed this as a group and most have agreed, but we're seeing resolutions now that we as a group have not workshopped and with the election cycle fast approaching we may see more and more.

At a glance, that doesn't seem too problematic as lawmakers we can submit a law with only five days' notice and some claim it is their right—which I don't disagree but problem(s) can arise when not workshopped and only small groups try and push laws onto the membership that simply aren't ready. Some may even push these laws to have them fail as a campaign strategy. As lawmakers, we must ensure all the ramifications and that we can sustain and enforce new laws, plus I wholeheartedly believe that when

we give the membership more opportunity to review the laws that they can provide invaluable input.

I have and will continue to support a separation of powers. I do prefer a two-branch as it gives the membership standing in a separate court and protections from a runaway board. I do wish we had a better turn-out to help guide us as the survey had three-options and no back-up information. I also realize it was always an uphill battle as many have learned from government class that a three-branch government is "best." Of course, that's coming from the government structure that uses that and doesn't explore other forms of government, so I see why a majority of those that actually returned the survey supported the three-branch govern-

ment. With that being said, I will support the members' right to advance amendments for a BIA election. I will also continue to use my voice to make any document we put forth a better document. I encourage those to watch our discussions, as many of us have come together to make this document the best we can for the membership with no name-calling or trying to "brow-beat" others to see their way of thinking. Tactics that I believe the membership are tired of seeing, and am glad the majority of us are moving forward in a good way.

As always, I urge members to attend events when you can and get both sides of a any story you hear. Please reach out to me to discuss issues, I can be reached at (906) 440-7768. Chi Miigwech!

## Director reports on Unit IV business and events



KIMBERLY HAMPTON,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV

Aaniin kina waya. Now, with most of January behind us, I would like to remind everyone that not only are we

toward the end of winter, but that the holidays are behind us so take the time you need for self-care. The holidays can be a stressful time with busy schedules and additional financial obligations. I wish you all a safe and healthy winter.

Over the last month I have been busy with the following:

Dec. 8-Attended Conservation Committee meeting.

Dec. 9-Participated in a JKL Fiduciary Committee meeting and Board workshop.

Dec. 10-Attended Manistique Elder Meeting and the Escanaba Elder Christmas Party.

Dec. 12-Participated in the Escanaba Children's Christmas Party.

Dec. 13-Participated in the Manistique Children's Christmas

Party.

Dec. 14-Participated in the Marquette Children's Christmas Party.

Jan. 5-Participated in the Board Constitution Review Workshop.

Jan. 6-Attended the board workshop and board meeting.

### Children's Christmas Parties

I want to extend a chi miigwech to Manistique YEA Coordinator Shaun Peterson, Manistique YEA Assistant Jordan Carroll, Director Barbeau and all community members who made this year's party a success. We had 139 children attend, along with their parents, guardians, or caregivers. The party was a success and I look forward to planning next year's party.

A chi miigwech to Escanaba YEA Coordinator Sarah

Hoffmeyer, her staff, Sault Tribe staff, and community members for all of the work that was put in to put on such a great party for the 165 children who attended as well as the families who also attended.

Lastly, another chi miigwech to Vice-Chair Tyler LaPlaunt, Sault Tribe staff and community who helped with the Marquette Children's party, which served 109 children plus families. The turn out was great and it was amazing to see the sense of community.

Reminders:

**Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow**  
SAVE THE DATE for the  
2026 Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow,

which has been scheduled for

**June 6, 2026.**

I encourage everyone to "like" the Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow

Facebook page to keep updated on events.

By the time this report comes out we will have already had our first pow wow meeting for 2026, occurring on Jan. 19. The next meeting is scheduled for **Feb. 16 at 5 p.m.**, at the Manistique Tribal Health Center.

### Unit 4 Elder Meetings

I encourage our tribal elders to attend elder meetings to become involved and stay updated on what our elder committees are working on as well as socializing.

The next meeting in Manistique will be held **Feb. 11 at 11:30 a.m. EST** at the Manistique Tribal Center, followed by **March 11 at 11:30 a.m. EST**.

The next meeting in Escanaba See "Hampton," Page 19

# LaPlaunt discusses Unit 5 business and beyond



TYLER LAPLAUNT  
DIRECTOR, UNIT V

Aanii, Boozhoo,

As we enter January, winter stands fully among us, bringing with it the quiet teachings our Elders have long shared. This season reminds us that life moves in cycles, and that there is wisdom in slowing our pace. The land rests under snow, inviting us to do the same, to pause, reflect, and move with intention. Winter teaches patience, resilience, and humility, showing us that survival is not rushed, but nurtured through care, preparation, and community.

These colder months call us to gather closer, to look after one another, and to strengthen the relationships that sustain us. In winter, no one stands alone. Our wellbeing depends on shared responsibility, checking on our relatives, offering warmth and support, and making space for those who may be carrying heavy burdens. Acts of kindness, no matter how small, become powerful expressions of care during this time.

Winter is also a sacred time for learning. Stories are shared, teachings are remembered, and knowledge is carried forward to guide us into the seasons ahead. As we begin a new year, may we take this time to listen deeply, learn from one another, and reflect on how we can walk in a good way. By honoring these winter teachings, we strengthen not only ourselves, but the collective spirit that continues to carry our community forward.

## SEPARATION OF POWERS

As you are well aware, the need to clearly establish a separation of powers within our tribal government has been an active and ongoing discussion for the past year (the past 20, technically). This work is rooted in our shared commitment to strengthening governance, improving accountability, and ensuring that our governmental structure continues to serve the best interests of the tribe both now and for future generations.

My role as both your elected representative and vice chairman is not to decide or dictate what form of government you should choose. Rather, it is my responsibility to ensure that the process is grounded in truth, transparency, and open communication. My focus has been on helping guide thoughtful discussion, addressing questions and concerns as they arise, and ensuring that the proposed constitutional amendment placed before you is clear, accurate, and reflective of the work and input that has occurred throughout this process.

We are nearing completion of the review and editing phase of the proposed separation of powers amendment. Once this work is finalized, the decision regarding the future structure of our tribal

government will rest entirely with the citizenship of this tribe. At that point, the Tribe will initiate a **Secretarial election**, which is the federally required process for voting on constitutional amendments in our current structure. When this occurs, the **Secretary of the Interior** will distribute voter registration materials specifically for this purpose.

I strongly encourage all eligible citizens to register and participate in this vote. Your participation is essential, as this amendment will help shape how our government functions moving forward. To support an informed and confident decision-making process, the tribe will provide educational materials across all tribal communication platforms well in advance of the secretarial election to minimize confusion and ensure everyone understands both the process and the proposed changes before voting begins. I look forward to this long awaited vote once and for all.

## ENROLLMENT UPDATE

As of Dec. 5, 2025, there were 5,483 adult applications entered into the tracking system. A total of 217 adult applications have been denied and 3,620 new members have been enrolled, including children. The total membership in the tribe is currently 52,770. We appreciate all of your patience during this process.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

### Unit 5 Cultural Coordinator Update

Unit 5 continues to be without a dedicated cultural coordinator at this time; however, we are encouraged to share that three interviews have been scheduled. While we work toward filling this important role, we have made the decision to move forward with several planned cultural activities. Our hope is that continued programming and visible community engagement will support the transition of a new coordinator into the position and ensure cultural offerings remain available and consistent for our community.

### Black Ash Basket Weaving Classes – February

We are excited to offer Black Ash Basket Weaving classes in both Munising and Marquette this February, facilitated by Josh and Sarah Homminga. These classes provide a valuable opportunity to learn traditional basket-making techniques while engaging in hands-on cultural teachings.

### Munising Class

Feb. 21, from 12 to 6 p.m.

Munising Tribal Health Center – Community Room

### Marquette Class

Feb. 22, from 12 to 6 p.m.

Marquette Tribal Community Center

Space is limited to 20 participants per class to ensure a quality learning experience. To register, please contact **Mary Jenerou** at **(906) 387-4721, (906) 341-8469, or (906) 440-7011**.

### Cloth Diapering Classes

We are grateful to Leah Blanchard, owner of *Little Agate* in Marquette, for continuing to offer cloth diapering classes for our community. The first class will be held in Marquette at the Tribal Community Center on **Jan. 18** and is already full, reflecting strong interest in this teaching. A second class is planned for **Munising in February or March** with the exact date and time to be

announced. We will share additional details as soon as they are finalized.

## Culture Night

Marquette Culture Night continues to be held on the **2nd and 4th Thursday of each month**, from **5:30–8 p.m.**, at the **Marquette Tribal Community Center**, located at **204 Cherry Creek Road**. What began as a simple drum practice has naturally grown into a meaningful gathering space for community, learning, laughter, and cultural reconnection.

Each evening offers an opportunity to come together, share a meal, enjoy good conversation, and engage in teachings that arise organically through our time together. These gatherings are open and welcoming, creating space for both learning and relationship-building across generations.

Upcoming Culture Night dates include **Jan. 22, Feb. 12, and Feb. 26**. We look forward to continuing this time of connection and encourage all who are able to join us.

## Call for cultural instructors and teachings

We are currently seeking individuals interested in teaching a **hand drum building workshop**. Last year's session was incredibly well received, and our hope is to bring this teaching in-house, especially since many community members have now participated and may be ready to help carry this knowledge forward. Additionally, if you have other cultural teachings, skills, or workshops you would like to share with the community, please reach out. We welcome opportunities to support and uplift community-led teachings.

## ADVOCACY

Beyond the tribal board room, I continue to actively advocate on behalf of our tribe at the local, regional, and national levels. This work ensures that our voices, priorities, and lived experiences are represented in decision-making spaces where policies are shaped and resources are allocated. By maintaining a presence beyond our immediate governance structures, I am able to elevate tribal perspectives, strengthen partnerships, and help influence systems that directly impact the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Finally, as of this month, I have accepted an appointment to the **Upper Peninsula Health Systems – Marquette (UPHS-MQT) Hospital Board of Trustees**.

UPHS-MQT is the largest hospital in the Upper Peninsula, the region's only Level II Trauma Center, and home to the only Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) serving the entire Upper Peninsula. Many of our citizens

March 6, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
March 20, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

## Town Hall Meetings

Manistique Community Town Hall Meeting, located at the Manistique Tribal Health Center, is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 13 5–7 p.m. EST. Join us for conversations centered on expansion, activities, and light refreshments.

Escanaba Community Town Hall Meeting, located at the Escanaba Community Center, is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 20, 4–6 p.m. EST. Join us for conversations centered on expansion, activities, and light refreshments.

## Looking Forward

Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow planning sessions have begun; a 2026 Meeting Calendar will be published in the next month.

Some additional adventures being worked on are as follows: obtaining additional permission to access land for traditional ceremonies, building accessible lodges throughout Unit 4, growing the

rely on this health system for critical and specialized care. Through this role, I hope to strengthen partnerships, improve coordination of services, and advocate for healthcare practices that are inclusive, responsive, and beneficial to both tribal and non-tribal patients throughout the region.

Another important milestone has been reached with the official opening of the **Marquette Tribal Health Center**, which is now welcoming patients. **Family Nurse Practitioner Lorelei Johnson** is actively providing care, marking a long-awaited step forward in expanding access to quality healthcare for our citizens in Marquette and the surrounding communities.

The clinic is located at **1210 Front Street in Marquette**.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling **(906) 225-1616**. We are grateful to see this long-term vision realized and look forward to the continued growth of services that will support the health and wellbeing of our community.

## ELDERS

The next Munising Elder meeting and meal will be held on Thursday, Feb. 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Munising Tribal Health Center Community Room. If you are an Elder age 60-plus and living in Unit 5, you are welcome to show up and attend. New faces are always welcomed.

The next Marquette Elder meeting and meal will be held on Thursday, Feb. 5 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Marquette Tribal Community Center at 204 Cherry Creek Road in Harvey. If you are an Elder age 60-plus residing in Units 4 or 5 in the Marquette County area, you are welcome to show up and attend. New faces are always welcomed.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss something with me, please use my contact information below. You can also reach out to Unit 4/5 Liaison Mary Jenerou at [mjenerou@saulttribe.net](mailto:mjenerou@saulttribe.net), (906) 450-7011 or (906) 341-8469.

Chi Miigwech for all you do to strengthen our community, in every season.

Tyler Migizii Migwan LaPlaunt Unit 5 Director/Vice-Chairman [tlaplaunt@saulttribe.net](mailto:tlaplaunt@saulttribe.net) (906) 440-8294

## Hampton Unit IV report continued —

*From "Hampton," Page 18*

will be held Feb. 11 at 4 p.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center. If you plan to attend, please RSVP the week before by calling (906) 635-4971. Followed by March 11 at 4 p.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center; RSVP the week before by calling (906) 635-4971.

The next meetings in Marquette, for Units 4 and 5, are scheduled for Feb. 5 at 5 p.m. EST and March 5 at 5 p.m. EST, Community Center located at 204 Cherry Creek Rd, Harvey, Mich.

## Board Member In-Person Office Hours

Manistique Office Hours held at the Manistique Tribal Health Center:

Feb. 11, 9–11:30 a.m.

Feb. 25, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

March 11, 9–11:30 a.m.

March 25, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Escanaba Office Hours held at the Escanaba Community Center:

Feb. 20, 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Niiwin Noodin Pow Wow volunteer crew, expanding the Unit 4 elder subcommittee groups and their outings, and more. Updates to these and additional projects will be provided as able.

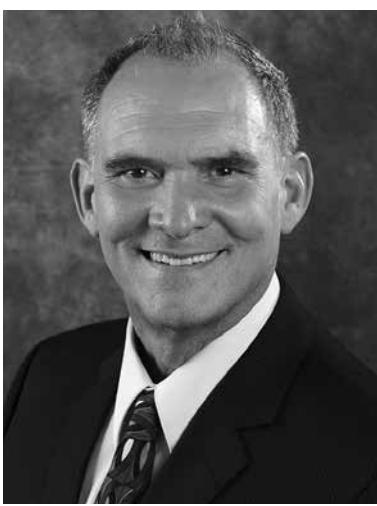
Katchup with Kim, Maamawi Craft Nights and Office Hours will be resuming this Winter since the business of spring and summer are behind us, watch for schedules.

I want to give my sincerest thanks for trusting me to represent Unit 4 members and Sault Tribe. I am always available for questions, comments, and ideas for growth. I encourage members to participate in Maamawi Craft Nights, office hours, community input sessions, Katchup with Kim, and all other activities and events occurring throughout Indian Country.

My contact information is below:

Kimberly Hampton, Unit 4 Representative. Phone (906) 440-8138. Email is [khampton@saulttribe.net](mailto:khampton@saulttribe.net).

# Issues for Unit 3 and the Sault Tribe discussed



SHAWN BOROWICZ,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT III

Boozhoo,

Well its been quite the winter so far, lots of snow. This is great for our tourism and I hope a lot are staying and playing at our establishments. Black Rock is finally open at our Sault location and from what I've seen posted online, it seems to be going well. I used to eat at Black Rock in Davison and Brighton when I lived downstate and it was always fabulous. I've seen some chatter about board of directors eating for free at our Sault location. I would like to state here that I've never been in Black Rock since it opened and when I do I will pay for my meal even if its offered as complimentary.

The Unit 3 elders took a road trip to the Riggsville Redneck Christmas Parade. Although the weather wasn't the greatest, we still had a great time. On our way back, we stopped and had prime

rib supper and a little gaming. It was a wonderful trip and everyone had a great experience.

After the three-branch system of government is sent out for review by the BIA and comes back with its recommendations, if any are needed, I'm hoping some of our departments can reorganize. When I ran for a board seat four years ago I campaigned on establishing a three-branch government and I still believe this is the best way forward. My apologies for this taking so long, but it is getting done and it should have been done years ago by previous boards. So once again, this current board is making things happen for the entire tribe.

Our casinos need to be more publicized on social media as others in the state are to gain more clientele and patrons wanting to come to our facilities more often.

Several buildings in Unit 3 are managed by different departments within the tribe and, for example, cannot be plowed by a worker that works for the government side. Or if the Housing worker is plowing, they cannot assist at the casino. There are a bunch more examples of this and I believe it's all one tribe and various departments should be able to work together for the betterment of the entire tribal organization. This is probably not an easy fix as some dollars and grants are earmarked for specific tasks and utilized for a specific department. It definitely needs to be addressed so we are spending our funds in a more

efficient manner.

One of our dedicated maintenance employees at the Shores passed away. Jerry was a great

man and a good friend to all. I will miss our conversations about the tribe, tractors, farming and life in general. RIP.

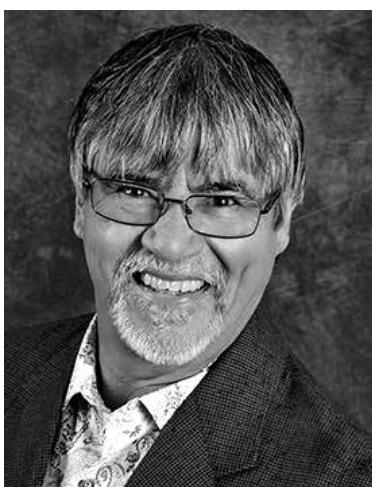
Respectfully, Shawn  
sborowicz@saulttribe.net,  
(906) 430-7612 or (906) 379-  
8511



What Happens On The Bus  
Stays On The Bus



## Bringing discounted 340B medications to all members



ISAAC MCKECHNIE  
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

### Expanding Access: 2026 initiative to bring discounted 340B medications to all members.

One of my major goals for 2026 is health policy reform to expand tribal 340B access. We can all agree that access to affordable prescription medication is a challenge many families face — especially tribal members who live outside the current Sault Tribe health service area. But under a federal program called 340B, there's a promising solution — and one that I intend to bring to all of our citizens. The 340B Drug Pricing Program allows eligible tribal health programs, like ours, to purchase medications at steeply reduced prices and provide them to our patients. However, under current rules, a person must be a "patient" of the tribe's health system — typically meaning they've had an in-person visit to one of our clinics in the service area. This excludes thousands of Sault Tribe members who live outside that

zone. That needs to change. There has been a major policy update that now strengthens our ability to serve all members.

IHS/Tribal Clinics: A mandatory exception was recently finalized, specifically for Indian Health Service and tribal clinics, allowing them to provide services outside their clinic walls — including via telehealth.

This marks a significant regulatory shift, replacing years of temporary grace periods with a permanent rule. It gives tribal nations the flexibility to serve citizens beyond the physical boundaries of their clinics — and still qualify them for 340B medications.

This change opens the door to exactly what we need: mobile care, telehealth, and remote access to discounted prescriptions — without breaking federal rules. As part of a 2026 health policy reform initiative, I will push to:

— Declare a tribal health access emergency to activate emergency 340B flexibilities.

— Launch Telehealth visits for out-of-area members to create a qualifying provider-patient relationship.

— Partner with pharmacies across Michigan and beyond to serve as pickup locations for 340B prescriptions.

— Establish a mail-order option to ensure even the most rural or distant members can receive critical medications delivered directly to their homes.

— Educate and enroll members through community outreach, simple instructions, and tribal health support.

If you are a Sault Tribe member living outside the service area

and would be interested in being part of a test group for this new approach, I invite you to reach out to me directly.

Your participation could help build the foundation for a program that benefits thousands of other members in the same situation. Every Sault Tribe member deserves access to quality, affordable healthcare — no matter their zip code. By using our sovereignty, recent federal exceptions, and innovative outreach methods like telehealth and mail delivery, we

can break down the barriers that currently leave many of our citizens without access to 340B medications. Let's use every tool we have to protect the health of our people.

Miigwech for your time and your continued support.

Isaac McKechnie  
(906) 440-6661  
iamckechnie@yahoo.com

### Important Disclaimer

While this initiative has strong legal and regulatory support, it is not without challenges. There are logistical details

to work out, including:

- Provider capacity
- Telehealth system expansion
- Pharmacy network partnerships
- Coordination between Tribal Health, Compliance, and Finance teams

There are also internal hurdles we must overcome, such as policy development, data-sharing agreements, and ensuring full HRSA compliance. This concept will require collaboration, investment, and leadership to bring to life — but it is absolutely within reach if we commit to it together.

## Which government is best for us?



KIM GRAVELLE,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

Aaniin,  
Happy New Year!

By the time you receive this unit report, the elder checks will be mailed. The amount is \$340. This year we have 9,045 Tribal Elders, an increase of 726 from 2024.

### Separation of Powers

Which form of government is the best for us? I have held fast

on supporting a two-branch separation of powers. A two-branch will keep the courts/judicial separate from the legislative branch and will give the membership the right to file suit against the legislative branch. It still has measures in place for the membership to challenge decisions that may be put in place.

With the way the draft

Constitution is written, the three-branch would be adding an executive branch and the chairman/ogema would have oversight over our governmental services and no longer sit at the Board of Directors (BOD) table. The BOD would appoint a speaker from the elected representatives to run the meetings.

In 2010, the membership voted to remove the chairman as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Putting the chairman/ogema back as CEO is a step back. No one person should have this kind of control. We have directors in these positions and they do a good job. No one elected official

should be running departments for which we have experienced directors. A two-branch separation would do the same as a three-branch and would not reverse what the membership put in place.

When the surveys were sent to the membership, the constitutional draft was not attached, therefore our membership made a decision without seeing the actual document. A copy of the draft constitution will be available in the near future on our website, please check for updates.

As always, keep the men and women in the armed forces in your prayers for a safe return to their families. I would also like to thank our team members for their hard work and continued dedication.

Please feel free to call me at (906) 259-3742 or email at kkgravelle@saulttribe.net. Please leave a message and I will return your call.

Miigwech,  
Kim Gravelle

# New year's reminders for Sault Tribe members



**BRIDGETT SORENSEN,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

With a new year, brings a reminder that if you live in the service area, you need to update your PRC application annually. After filing your taxes is a good time to do that. It is not an income-based program but it allows staff to see if member may qualify for Medicaid. If you do have private insurance, please provide that information on the application as well as every time you visit the health center. Even though you do not need insurance to be seen at our clinics, it allows the tribe to bill your insurance which in turn creates "Third Party Revenue" for the tribe.

Third Party Revenue can then be used to cover health-related costs. It helps with elder meals, fitness centers, elder outreach, health needs, medical equipment, etc. So, members can really help their tribe by providing their insurance information when using the clinics. These visits also help meet your co-pay.

If you have recently moved, please remember to change your address with Enrollment as well as the Tribal Tax Office if you live in the tax agreement area.

If you have children that will be starting their first job this year, it is important to have them also signed up through the tax office. You can call (906) 635-6050 to be transferred to any department within the tribe.

I hope everyone was able to spend some time with their family, friends, neighbors and/or co-workers at some point during the holidays. I was not able to attend our unit Christmas party as I had planned a bucket list trip many months prior to NYC. Anyone that knows me, knows how much I like decorations and lights for all the holidays so it was really awesome to visit New York in December and see the Rockefeller Tree, the Rockettes, Central Park, the 911 museum and memorial, etc. I do want to thank Tim Ryerse and the entire Shores casino staff for once again putting on great party for our community!

The annual Holiday Elder dinner for Units 1, 2, & 3 was held on Dec. 9 in the Soo. Congratulations to Phyllis Colegrove for being voted the Elder Volunteer of the Year for Unit 3. It is always nice to see elders from other units that you don't get to see or visit with often. I even had an elder from Unit 1 tell me how great of a job I am doing and to keep up the good work. I was very much appreciative of her support.

The Jan. 6 board meeting agenda had many budget modifications that occur in the normal course of business. There were some policy changes brought forward by the Government HR Director on behalf of the Policy Review Committee. The biggest change was in regards to the overtime and comp time policy. Team members can now only accumulate 20 hours of

comp time and it must be used within 30 days of the accumulation. Supervisors will work with team members to use their prior accumulation, however, going forward this will be the standard. There was also a resolution to update the tribe's prevailing wage for 2026-2028, these wages fall under the scope of the Davis-Bacon Act. We approved a resolution authorizing advocacy opposing prediction markets infringement on tribal casino operations. This resolution is necessary as there are many illegal betting markets taking place that do not have to comply to the same standards as tribes are regulated.

The big items on the agenda were the "Sending the 2008 Draft Constitution to the BIA for a Technical Review" and "Authorizing Submission of the 3-Branch Amendment as a Date Certain Schedule."

I have never been a supporter of the original 2008 draft constitution. I believe even though board and chair were not supposed to be involved, they were behind the scenes such as through appointed people or hired attorneys. I think there were many issues with the document and we were told since 2012 that it would cost millions to implement and at that time we were still paying down \$70 million debt or so. I was however, considering sending this document for a review by the BIA because of the board making changes. Austin would say, I'll go easy on the legislative because we will be reviewing mine next. So, to me it seemed like it was about what worked best for someone's own agenda.

Now the three-branch government I am not sold on for a few reasons. (1) The member-

ship voted in 2010 to separate the chair and CEO position. (That was the two constitutional amendment made to the constitution) (2) I do not support the chair having a veto power. (3) Tribal members all the time are complaining about how we as a people were treated by the federal government over decades and we are our own sovereign nation so why do we have to or want to be like the colonizing government? We all know how that is currently or previously worked out for our country. (4) Even though we are focusing on a separation of powers, we should be including the Mackinac Band in this document. I have brought this up several times as well as others. Austin said he would protect us. This again shouldn't be part of the discussion, there is no guarantee any current elected officials will be seated. The Mackinac Band is the majority of the tribe and deserve to be included in the document.

I was upset that the chair moved the Constitution items to the top of the agenda when he knew that discussion was going to take quite awhile and 90% of the people in the room were staff that have been working since 8 a.m. and had to wait to present their resolution. I was the only one that objected to the change. The discussion took an hour to one-and-a-half hours and the document wasn't even ready as we were changing it that afternoon. Austin then declared a break so staff could work on a timeline that would work. It should have then been tabled until the next meeting instead of putting staff on the spot and rushing through something that needs to be right for generations to come. So, the vote that took place was to approve a timeline of a financial

impact, implementation, and review with about a 6-month period to get all the information compiled.

The Notice of Election will be coming out soon. Some have already starting campaigning and rally people to run or who not to support. Here is what I have seen in my years of serving. Aaron did not support Fred Paquin, so he supported Pat Rickley and Pat didn't obey him, so then when I ran, he supported me, when he couldn't control me, then he supported and recruited someone to run against me. This is what he does in each unit. He grabs on to a candidate or recruits one, offers to help with their campaign. If they get elected he immediately contacts them to support whatever officers he wants, he tries mentoring his hate and blaming past or current board for everything. When that new board member sees through the BS, and jumps off Aaron's wagon, he then bashes them on Facebook and begins campaigning against them. If you do not believe me, look back at old issues of the tribal paper. This needs to end this election cycle, don't let his hate and retaliation get any space in your mind. Thirty years is enough toxicity.

Congratulations to Juanita Bye who is retiring after a 30-year career with our tribe as the ACFS director. Jami Moran is a well-qualified Sault Tribe member who has accepted that position.

Reminder that any elder (60 years and older) can have lunch at the Unit 3 elder complex lunch room Monday-Thursday from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m.

Any questions or concerns please contact me at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, bridgett91@yahoo.com or (906) 430-0536.

# About Mackinac Band and a new constitution



**KIMBERLY LEE,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

Aanii, I hope this report finds you well after a joyful holiday season filled with special moments with loved ones. As we kick off the new year, I wish for it to be safe, healthy, and full of chances for renewal and growth for all. I hope you're looking forward to what this year might bring.

Based on the survey. We continue the conversation on implementing a government with three branches. Many supported changes to our current system, with the majority supporting three branches. We still have important issues to discuss. The one question that

is glaring. What band are you affiliated with that connects you to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians? And how will those ties be protected in the future!?!? For 52% of families, 27,000-ish members are through the Mackinac Band, which has traditionally defined enrollment, membership, eligibility, political participation, recognition, and treaty rights under tribal law.

Some question whether Mackinac Band citizens are "illegally enrolled" because Mackinac isn't named in the Constitution. But this isn't supported by tribal law or federal practice. Mackinac citizens were legally enrolled through resolutions and statutes, and for nearly 50 years, they have been recognized by the federal government as Sault Tribe citizens for services, voting, representation, funding and eligibility. The real issue now isn't whether enrollment was legal, but that the Constitution doesn't explicitly seal that in. Mackinac is protected by law, not by the Constitution, which could be risky if the tribe switches to a three-branch government with judicial review. Under the current system, courts can't hear membership cases based on the Constitution. Under a new system, they could. The judicial

branch interprets the Constitution. If it says nothing about

Mackinac, judges must interpret that silence literally, rather than considering community intent, history, verbal promises, or political agreements. This could shift decision-making from politics to legal rulings. In 2024, the threat already loomed in the courtroom, with two separate cases. What protected the Mackinac Band was our one-branch government.

Some members have different views: some feel enrollment is already solid and doesn't need changing. Others agree it's legitimate but vulnerable without constitutional protection and want that fixed before any vote. A smaller group thinks the lack of specific language suggests past enrollment decisions should be reconsidered. These debates are happening even though recent drafts haven't followed earlier recommendations from the 2008 Constitutional Committee and the 2025 Elder Committee, both of which stated that the document should be turned in its entirety "as is" for BIA review. This draft clearly communicated the need to protect ALL the membership and suggested clear constitutional language. What we have extracted and modified is not at all what was asked of the board to move

forward with.

The main worry isn't whether modernization is good, but what happens to citizenship once a new court system has power. If the constitution doesn't mention the band that links families to the tribe, people wonder what will protect that link in the future. Without this language, membership could be challenged, reinterpreted, or reclassified during the transition. For more than half of the tribe's population, which is Mackinac Band members, this raises concerns not just for current citizens but also for future generations, whose eligibility, voting rights, recognition, and participation could be up in the air after this reform process.

In addition to these reflections, I also want to reiterate the concerns raised in last month's report. Many members expressed uncertainty about how the proposed constitutional changes may affect citizenship, band connection, and membership protections, particularly for those whose legal ties to the tribe are through the Mackinac Band. Questions were raised about how the three-branch system would handle membership disputes, how courts would interpret silence within the Constitution, and what safeguards exist to ensure that membership

decisions remain grounded in the community rather than litigation.

With more than 27,000 enrolled members potentially affected, we must also ask what this means for each of us personally. I am a descendant of the Mackinac Band, as are many of our board members and families. If this system places over half of our tribe at risk, then it places our relatives, our children, and our future at risk as well. At that point, the question becomes not just political, but deeply cultural and personal. What is it worth for me to stand up for every single member of this tribe? Everything that tradition and culture have taught us points to protect our people, honoring our relatives, and safeguarding the generations that will follow. I encourage you to seek out the band that solidifies your enrollment or call the Enrollment Department at (906) 632-8552. Some may call it a scare tactic, others a filibuster. I refer to it as responsible leadership and the need to link arms and remember that we are first and foremost Anishinaabe people, with a duty to protect our ancestors' greatest blessings.

Miigwech for your continued support.

Kimberly Lee  
Unit 2 Director

# A New Year, New Beginnings – Unit 4 Update



**LARRY BARBEAU,**  
**DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

Aanin,  
January marks a fresh start as

we welcome the New Year. Now is a time to focus on new beginnings. As the new year begins, I am focusing on reviewing plans for the new year, and engaging with members to set priorities for our tribe. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season surrounded by family and friends. Let's make this year a happy and healthy year for everyone.

#### Upcoming Meetings/ Important Dates

We have quite a few scheduled meetings coming up for the month of January, including board workshops and meetings, JKLFC meetings, Kewadin Gaming Authority meetings, Enterprise Authority meetings,

Conservation meetings, etc. The board continues to work on and schedule constitutional workshops as well.

Jan. 6, 2026 – Board workshop at 10 a.m. and the board meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Jan. 13, 2026 – Board workshop/JKLFC meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Jan. 19, 2026 – Conservation Committee meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Jan. 20, 2026 – Board work-

shop/Enterprise Authority meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Jan. 27, 2026 – Board workshop/KGA meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

#### Unit 4 Elder Meetings

We encourage all tribal elders to attend the elder meetings. The next meeting in Manistique will be held Jan. 14, 2026, at 12 p.m. EST at the Manistique Tribal Center. The next meeting in Escanaba will be held Jan. 14, 2026, at 5 p.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center.

#### SAVE THE DATE –

Honoring our Elders Pow Wow, April 18, 2026 from 1-7 p.m. at the Escanaba High School. Doors open at 10 a.m., Grand Entries at 1 and 6 p.m., feast at 4:30 p.m. For vendor information contact: chuckjennifer09@gmail.com.

I want to give my appreciation for believing in me to represent Unit 4 members and the Sault Tribe. I am always available for questions, comments, and ideas for growth. I encourage members to participate in any and all activities/events occurring throughout the Sault Tribe.

#### Contact information

Larry Barbeau, Unit 4 Representative. Phone (906) 259-3040. Email: lbarbeau@sault-tribe.net

## Three-branch moving forward, or stalled 'til after election?



**AARON PAYMENT**  
**DIRECTOR, UNIT I**

#### THE DECIDING VOTE

With being one vote shy of finalizing our tribal request for a Secretarial Election to establish a three-branch separation of powers, every single vote on the board is the deciding vote. At this point, I count the following votes who support a three-branch separation of powers:

1. Chairman Lowes
2. Vice Chair LaPlaunt
3. Treasurer McKechnie
4. Secretary Hampton
5. Director McRorie
6. Director Payment
7. Director Borowicz?

No one gets a free pass.

Waiting until after the election may serve to ensure we never secure the seven votes necessary. Is this by design? Similarly, to the conditions that led to my 2022 resignation (forced censure with no evidence as proven with the \$100,000 censure investigation report; threats to fine me at \$5,000 a meeting; forcing me off national advisories; six months of board harassment; and illegally appointing the vice chair as chair when the people just refused to re-elect him). I believe my continued role on the board is in jeopardy because I dare to expose corruption which justifies constitutional reform.

These conditions are exactly why we need a separation of powers, due process and standing in Tribal Court. Where is our protected free speech? Shouldn't whistle blowers be shielded for trying to protect the assets of the tribe? What I can't understand is that with the abruptness of how I left office in 2022, and with 100% of the incumbents running for re-election (all five) losing their seats just weeks later, that they not realize that the members are tired of corruption and

will vote out anyone who tries to cover up such corruption or ignores the will of the people.

We all know about the multi-million-dollar purchase of a barge that was not appropriated by the board; the \$330,000 to pay for a personal bankruptcy attorney not related to the tribe in checks cut under \$50,000 to avoid detection; and the most recent modular home purchase with Cares Act funds gifted to a non-Sault Tribe member. We have also heard of a board member who allegedly used the tribal credit card to purchase, "holiday gifts." Sure, we may have recovered what was stolen but was this person held criminally responsible? If I had done something like this, I would have been removed from office. While I do not have a copy of these reports by virtue of being a board member, I am aware of these reports that suggest violations of tribal and federal laws that the tribe was supposedly seeking to find out from the U.S. Treasury whether or not the funds at an estimated \$80,000 of Cares Act Funds had to be repaid. I requested an update over a year ago, but I find no evidence anyone ever contacted the U.S. Treasury.

**BREEDING GROUND FOR CORRUPTION**  
Each of the above allegations deal with alleged tribal board member misconduct. I recall a special needs team member being fired for mistakenly taking a candy bar from a casino deli. None of these more serious items should be covered up or board members shielded because it is a fellow board member. Further, the whistle blower (board member or not) exposing them should not be censured or censored. Reacting to exposing corruption with retribution should not be tolerated. Bottomline, those involved should be held accountable.

This is precisely why a one-branch unitary form of government must no longer be allowed to continue. With our current structure we have witnessed habitual wrongdoing. Not holding accountable those who would steal from us invites corruption to continue. Until we enact a three-branch separation of powers, you cannot only anticipate corruption, you can expect it.

#### GENUINE EFFORT OR GAME PLAYING?

Last month, I held out hope

that the current tribal board would listen to the clear will of the people (56%) and vote to move forward decisively toward a three-branch separation of powers. While this may ultimately come to fruition, I promise you it will NOT happen unless you the Sault Tribe voters put the pressure on your elected officials and make clear that you expect them to heed the direction of the tribal-wide poll we just took. Any effort other than to support a three-branch separation of powers is not what the voters asked for. Watch closely those who are desperately wrangling to hold on to their unchecked power. For some, power is like any other addiction.

#### FORKED TONGUE

Don't be fooled, while some board members are holding on to the notion to support a two-branch government, this or a wholesale rewrite will only result in the people voting down any such amendment because the vast majority of you have already said you want a three-branch. Pushing for anything other than a three-branch at this time may very well be by design to default to our existing dysfunctional and deficient unitary – dictatorship – form of government. A whopping 81% of you in the poll have said this is not what you want.

It has been 17 years since the Constitutional Convention Committee completed their work and recommended a three-branch separation of powers. Not a one-branch. Not a two-branch. It is so disrespectful that any elected official could even consider a deficient two-branch, which is not what the Sault Tribe voters have made clear by supporting a three-branch with 56% of the vote and a whopping margin of 31% over a two-branch!

At this point, there are:

#### NO GOOD REASONS: ONLY EXCUSES!

We need one more affirmative vote on the board for a three-branch. Every single vote on the board that is vacillating or held in abeyance, ends up being a "no" vote. Don't fall for the empty headed or worse – manipulative

– "I'm not sure what the people want" or "I am listening to the elders" as if the elders are not competent and failed to participate in the poll. Could it be that some board members are masking their indecision to cover up their fear of losing unchecked authori-

ty and unitary power?

Right now, you have no due process, nor standing in Tribal Court to protect your rights or challenge the board's actions. In 2022, your right to select your chairperson was violated with the censure, threats to fine at \$5,000 a meeting, and circumstances that led to my resignation. Neither I, nor you, had any recourse or due process to challenge such actions to undermined your democratically elected vote for chair (with the largest margin in over two decades). Had we had a real separation of powers and standing in Tribal Court, I would never have had to resign from office.

Once we do have real due process rights, voters will know the whole sad story.

Some on the board are clearly aware of their unchecked power, and enjoy the spoils of not having modern checks and balances on their power. Whether you have been on the board for 1-and-one-half years or 21 years, how many years on this board does it take to understand the members demand a real government with a three-branch separation of powers?

#### 11th HOUR TACTICS??

Please recognize that not once has the board raised the issue of supporting the 2008 final wholesale re-write of Constitution in their unit reports or during the last year-and-a-half of review at the board table. Look for yourself in the online versions of the Sault Tribe News.

Surprise, surprise – it now appears that some board members want to revisit issues long set aside in order to focus on a separation of powers. Not once over the last 1-and-one-half years have these board members raised the older issues like, "at large" representation, "right of initiative," "Unit 6," "apportionment," or adding the Mackinac Band to our Constitution. Not once! In fact, just the opposite, some board members have stipulated they would not even consider the 2008 wholesale re-write, but would only participate if it were to review individual amendments related to a separation of powers.

Based on this ultimatum, those of us who genuinely support other constitutional reforms had to set aside our support for these other items at this time just to agree to meet to consider a three-branch separation of powers. Those who refused to consid-

er a wholesale rewrite in favor of individual amendments are now lofting up the original draft as if they supported it all along when they outright rejected to even consider it. Don't be fooled by this tactic.

I anticipate retribution for exercising my constitutionally protected right to free speech here. Watch for it. Again, this is why we need constitutional protections and the right to sue to uphold our constitutional rights.

#### FRUITS OF MY LABOR

Before I left office in 2022, recall that I served as first vice president of the National Congress of American Indians and sat at the table with both the Trump and Biden Administrations and key US Senate and congressmembers to establish formula funding for all tribes to secure federal relief funds. I even coined the term, "unrealized third-party revenue," that secured \$8 million in contract health funds for our tribe alone while we could not collect funds from insurance because we were not operating our clinics. I am proud that I secured over \$500 million in Cares Act, Rescue Act, Jobs and Infrastructure Act, and Broadband funding. This is more than 20 years of net casino and enterprise revenues and more than any of my haters on the board have ever contributed. I am proud of this effort and trust this is why the Sault Tribe voters returned me to office as chair time after time. These funds kept our casino and governmental team members paid and allowed us to build health centers, recreation facilities, housing complexes, tiny homes, and extensive renovations to our casinos and hotels. As politicians often do, I suspect several will campaign on these accomplishments in the 2026 Tribal Board elections and beyond. Please understand that 100% of these projects came to fruition from funds I secured just before the circumstances that led to my resignation in 2022. Still, I am grateful to have been elected by the people (if not my haters on the Board) to make these projects come to fruition.

Tribal Members, please take care and love yourself, your family and your tribe!

Chi Miigwech, ~ Aaron  
Phone: (906) 440-8946  
AAPayment@saulttribe.net

# The next steps for constitutional amendment



**LANA CAUSLEY-SMITH,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

I would like to start this report by saying that I hope everyone had a healthy and blessed holiday season. I'm looking forward to a year of accomplishments and some solidarity within our tribe, the people of our tribal nation and all across the county have serious issues that are affecting all of us one way or another. The latest devastating death in Minnesota tells a real and concerning story of how bad things can become. I have had many members across our tribe reach out to me that have the concerns as well about the fact that we are minority and tribal. I will be advocating for us to pay attention and act upon (with other tribal nations) to be a voice and also put measures in place that make us feel safe to belong to a federally-recognized tribe. We have a lot of work that needs to

be done and I wanted you all to know that this does not go unnoticed by me or some of our other representatives on the board or staff. I would rather use our forces and energy to be a good cause at the national level than to be a very bad cause battling each other in our own tribe. I plan to be mindful of that and state that at the table very often. I will report any headway we make on this item in my next report.

One very important topic that is being worked upon with our own government is the constitutional amendment changes that we asked you to survey on. Here's the latest update — Jan. 6, 2026, there was a resolution on the agenda at business board meeting, after a very long debatable day and evening of discussion, the board of directors unanimously voted to secure a reasonable (with staff asked for input just at that meeting per that resolution) a solid timeline needed to implement a three-branch separation of powers.

The item we were asked to vote on was identified to be flawed and incomplete at time of the business meeting and the fact we didn't have a final document, financial impact completed or a completed implementation plan identified, (this was NOT the fault of any staff and can be verified by watching the meeting online). We had been working on the new revised document before

the holidays and on that following week we picked back up, we returned the morning of the business meeting — we used the time allotted on the agenda to try to finish but did not complete the document to attach to the resolution for that evening and send off to the BIA.

After compromise and a very long day, in the end, we did have a unanimous vote to adopt a realistic timeline with dates specific to complete the review (as there are many that the board has changed) to secure a timeline to prepare the cost analysis, to complete a timeline to identify code changes that will be needed, and most important, invite membership to attend the workshops for ongoing input (these dates will be posted online and be made available for you to see on real time online).

The secure realistic deadline voted on Jan. 6 was for the final document again including an implementation and a transition plan is due to be completed is March 6, 2026. The actual vote to send the completed PACKAGE out to the BIA for review is May 6, 2026.

So, it's not perfect, but it could not be decided up or down as we didn't have the NEW document complete and members had not even seen it...BUT, we are finally making real progress to move forward for a change of government and a separa-

tion — how that will look is to be determined once we get the final document package with all the above information attached. That's professional and responsible at least in my position and many other members who I speak with.

This report is meant for information purposes as to what we did vote on and can be verified by watching the meeting online (although it's very chaotic) or by contacting our Legal Department to verify the intent and dates provided as to what we voted on.

I hope this helps people who were not able to be at the meeting or watch — that you know it was a hard path to get to, but a UNANIMOUS vote at the board level does state we are moving forward for a change that is long overdue. This is a clear example of where our energy can be used to make an extreme positive difference in our government — the old us against us is not working, people are tired and burnt out of the constant conflict and in fighting. I'm prepared and able to remind we absolutely need a change in our structure of government and again, how that looks will be determined by the changes the board makes. (I did agree to the initial rewrite of the 2008 draft amendments on the separation and had voted to send that out in the past, but here we are — I cannot just sit idle either, so I'm having input

as to the current standing on the direction we are going, there was a resolution to send out the original 2008 draft to the BIA for review but the majority of the board tabled that and I did not support to table, I would have supporting to send out for a review, we did not get that opportunity at the table.)

I say all this as there are so many smoke and mirrors being led — it's frustrating and concerning for me; I cannot even imagine what you are feeling to try to decipher what is accurate and what is politics. The above comments I have made about the business board meeting actions can be verified by our Legal Department. I make no opinion on that and my actions at the table I stand behind. I will do all I can to assist in a fair and safe change to our government structure.

In closing, our projects in Unit 2 (elder homes and recreation facility) are all on target for this year's openings. I'm very excited and looking forward to these added services to our unit.

As always, please contact me if you would like to meet or talk. I'm willing to meet with you and also please contact me if you have any direction you would like to see us go. I appreciate all those that do reach out.

Baamaapii,  
Lana Causley-Smith, Unit 2  
Board Representative

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