

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE
STORY
AS IT'S
TOLD

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELANIE
BENJAMIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Hello to everyone during this cold February. I hope you are surrounded by plenty of warmth and often enjoy a bowl of hot soup as we make our way through the winter months.

I was very sorry to hear of the passing of Deonna Day, 13, whose struggle with cancer ended on February 6, 2013. Deonna brought light into each room she entered. My condolences to her family and friends on this great loss.

Earlier this year, several of us traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the Inauguration of President Barack Obama on January 21. Tribal officials from a number of bands and communities throughout Minnesota also attended, including Leech Lake, White Earth and Shakopee. Several Mille Lacs Elders and a few members of my office

Dakota, Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, and Charles Galbraith, Navajo, Associate Director with the President's Office of Public Engagement.

NCAI was founded in 1944, and is the oldest and largest organization of American Indians and Alaskan Natives in North America. Its purpose is to (1) protect and advance tribal governance and treaty rights; (2) promote the economic development and health and welfare in Native communities; and (3) educate the public toward a better understanding of Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

NCAI topics

At the meeting, we were glad to hear that self-governance is a high priority for Kevin Washburn, who focuses on ways that the tribes are moving towards that goal. Other topics discussed were energy development on tribal lands, leasing opportunities under the Hearst Act, and ways that Mille Lacs and other communities can implement the Hearst Act. We learned about threats to the Indian Child and Welfare Act, self-governance funding, the trust responsibility of the BIA, contract support, the Stafford Act, and the federal budget process and its impact on Indian Country.

That's a lot to keep straight, I know. I'll start with the Hearst Act, which was signed by President Barack Obama in July 2012, and permits Indian tribes to lease their

lands for up to 25 years without Department of Interior approval. This change will cut back on some bureaucratic red tape and streamline business and housing development, while at the same time creating jobs on reservations.

ICWA

The Indian Child and Welfare Act also came up in discussion. ICWA passed in 1978 because for decades, thousands of American Indian children were removed from homes and communities and placed in foster care or adoptive homes that were often

non-Indian. The passage of ICWA reversed that trend, giving tribal governments a strong voice concerning child custody proceedings.

That voice may be eliminated. Late in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to rule on a case that originated in South Carolina. A Cherokee man challenged the adoption of his child by a non-Indian couple, and the couple then filed a lawsuit. The non-Indian couple is working with an anti-ICWA coalition that seeks to repeal portions or all of ICWA. As you may guess, tribal officials and child welfare employees from across the country are watching this case very closely.

I'll mention just one more important policy matter before us: a change to the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. An amendment to the Act passed in January by the U.S. House of Representatives gives tribes the opportunity to make requests for emergency aid directly to the President, rather than through a state's governor. That change makes sense since tribes are co-equal sovereigns with the federal, not state, government. Now we will wait to see what the U.S. Senate will do with its version of the amendment.

The role of governments came up during an event sponsored by U.S. Senator Al Franken from Minnesota and attended by MLB Director of Government Affairs Jamie Edwards and me. The senator wanted to discuss ways to build government to government relationships, which is a pretty important subject.

I could fill the whole paper with all that we heard and saw during the brief visit to our nation's capital. It's an exciting time for the Mille Lacs Band, both with local and national developments. As most of you know, we're casting our net further into the hospitality business with the purchase of two St. Paul hotels, as reported in last month's newspaper. And we're strengthening our ties to federal leaders who have a direct impact on the quality of life here on our reservation.

Again, it was a privilege and honor to represent you. Miigwech for this opportunity.



The U.S. Capitol Building

staff witnessed the historic and moving ceremony.

It is always an honor to represent the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe during ceremonies and celebrations. In addition to the inauguration activities, lots of other work was accomplished.

Here's an example of the way connections are made in Washington. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) hosted a meeting for tribes to meet with Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as with White House staffers Jodi Gillette,

Tips for Filing Income Taxes

Curt Kalk Secretary/Treasurer



Hello fellow Band members.

I hope the winter season has found you well. I have been fairly busy, especially now that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has begun its annual audit.

One thing that has come to my attention is that some Band members file for state

income tax exemption and others do not.

I would like you to know that is not the function or responsibility of the Band's OMB department to determine whether Band members are eligible to qualify as being exempt from state income tax. By signing the exemption form, you acknowledge it is your individual claim.

However, if an individual Band member needs assistance to assess whether they are eligible to file exempt, my office would be glad to help. Please know that the decision to file as exempt or not exempt is entirely that of the Band member. As you make this decision, there are some factors to consider, including where you live and if you live on trust land.

The Mille Lacs Band has three types of land:

- Land held in trust (trust land) by the United States for

the Mille Lacs Band.

- Land held in trust by the United States for individual Band members (allotted land).
- Land the Band has purchased, but is not held in trust by the United States. The Band pays real estate taxes on these lands (fee lands).

Those who desire to claim exempt from state income taxes must meet several criteria. You must be an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe, work for a federally recognized tribe, and reside within an Indian reservation. This also applies to trust lands outside of the reservation boundaries. Please remember that there is a difference between reservation boundaries and Ceded Territory boundary — 1837 Ceded Territory is not a qualifying factor for state income tax exemption.

If you are unsure whether you should file as exempt from state income tax, my office can assist you. Please note that this determination is based on your residency. The address you provide as your primary residence for the past year is what determines your residency. Those who have claimed exempt and don't meet the criteria should



Get your calculators ready: it's tax season.

consider correcting their claim to avoid penalties and fees owed for back income taxes. There are many individual situations that apply. The above information is a basic outline of how state income tax exemptions may apply to you. If you are unsure whether you qualify, please check with your tax preparer for more detailed information.

Also remember that you must still claim the Nelson Act payments as income, but those funds are not state or federally taxable. My office will provide documentation or information for this claim if needed.

Big, Bad, Ugly Federal Budget

Mark Trahant Freelance Journalist

The federal budget numbers that are thrown around are so huge that the very mention of them scares us. Trillions are tossed about, a trillion dollars! The number requires twelve, yes, twelve zeros.

But what does this number mean in a country of more than 310,000,000 people, and more specifically, in Indian Country? One way to think about these numbers is to forget the millions, billions and trillions, and shift to percentages.

For example, the 2011 budget deficit was 8.7 percent of all the spending in the economy, also known as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Federal spending accounted for 24 percent of the GDP with revenues of just over 15 percent. That's the gap that has to be fixed. The total public debt stood at 67 percent of GDP, plus a smaller amount that the government owes itself, and basically promises to pay Social Security.

It's true that the federal government is spending more money now than ever: 24 percent compared to the 40-year norm of 21 percent. Revenues, mostly taxes, are down from an average of 18 percent to 15 percent. But most of that is because we are aging as a society, not because of a "spending addiction."

But that brings me back to big, bad, ugly budgets.

In January, Senate Republicans re-released a chart showing the growth of "welfare." The headline read: "Federal Welfare Spending to Grow Almost 80 percent Over

The Next 10 Years. Slowing The Growth Rate To 60 percent Would Save \$1 Trillion."

The press release stated that the numbers don't include state contributions to federal welfare programs (primarily on low-income health assistance), which brought total welfare spending in FY2011 to more than \$1 trillion. That amount dwarfed any other budget expense including Medicare and Social Security! Why, that was enough money to mail every impoverished family a check for \$60,000 each year!

The numbers are factual, but absolutely misleading. The clue is the phrase "low-income health assistance" which is categorized as "welfare." The number reflects Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Medicaid and CHIP costs consumed most of the Republican budget expenses.

Consider this: Medicaid is about 1.8 percent of the GDP and Medicare is 3.2 percent. Social Security uses 4.8 percent of the GDP, and other programs like the military use 3.6 percent of the GDP. On the appropriations side of the ledger (or money that Congress authorizes annually), all non-defense spending uses 4.3 percent of the GDP. Non-defense spending includes: education, transportation, Interior, Indian health, welfare — all domestic spending.

The division between entitlements and appropriation is important to the future of the Indian health system in this

fiscal environment. It has been argued by many tribal leaders that all federal Indian health programs should be funded as entitlements because that spending is based on treaties.

For now, most Indian health funding is appropriated. That means Congress must positively enact for more spending to occur. Medicaid, on the other hand, is automatic. If a person is eligible for the program, the money is supposed to be there. (And, to further complicate this process, Medicaid is a state partnership, so the states set the rules even for the Indian health system where the federal government pays all the costs.)

There are at least 794,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives on Medicaid and another 27,000 on the Children's Health Insurance Program. The revenue collected (FY 2009 numbers) ranges from 15 percent to 50 percent for Indian health system clinics and hospitals. More importantly: it's a growing number, one that can automatically be increased under the Affordable Care Act.

The long-term challenges to the federal budget are real. But most of that can be fixed, especially if we focus on improving health care quality and reducing the cost.

But it's hard even to debate how to do that when one side tosses around misleading budget data.

Mark Trahant is a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe. He is an award-winning journalist and a former newspaper editor. This column was used with permission.

A DANCE OF COURAGE

Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer Craig Dirkes/The Salvation Army Photography

Editor's note: We are sad to report that Deonna Day lost her battle with cancer on Wednesday, Feb. 6. This story was written before she passed as a way to honor her. It was also intended to be a tribute to Deonna and her continued strength as she courageously fought the fight of her young life. Our deepest and heartfelt condolences go out to her family, friends and loved ones.

There are so many joys of being a teenage girl. Whether it's hanging out with friends, giggling about boys, or spending huge amounts of time shopping for the perfect outfit, being a young girl on the cusp of life's next chapter can be an exciting time.

Thirteen-year-old Deonna Day is like most of her peers in many of those same ways, but there's one sad fact that sets her apart.

Deonna has a rare form of cancer that, according to her doctors, is terminal. That means Deonna's young life will be cut drastically short.

"This is completely devastating...it's a mother's worst nightmare," said Nichole Sam, Deonna's mom.

Cancer Diagnosis

The bout with cancer began when Deonna was 11 years old. The family had moved from the Twin Cities to District I and had only been living in their house for a short time when they learned of Deonna's diagnosis.

"She had a bump on her chest that kept growing bigger, so when the doctors performed a biopsy they discovered

the cancer on her clavicle bone and that's how we knew," her mom said.

Deonna has a bone cancer called synovial sarcoma that is found in the soft tissue near the large joints, arms or legs. It commonly affects young people under 30 years old, but is so rare that it accounts for less than one percent of the cancers found in a given year.

As soon as it was discovered, Deonna was admitted to the hospital and began chemotherapy treatments immediately. The treatments continued through the fall of 2011 and winter of 2012. During that time, Deonna and Nichole would commute between Onamia and Minneapolis as they sought treatment at the Amplatz Children's Hospital at the University of Minnesota.

"Going back and forth to Minneapolis was hard because we would have to go so often," said Nichole. "I had to leave my other children with a babysitter and for a while we just stayed in Minneapolis with a friend."

"This whole thing has been really hard. I have been feeling desperate because I don't know what to do and I don't know what will happen."



Remission

After Deonna completed her treatments last winter, the cancer went into remission. It seemed that all was well and the family was thrilled. Life seemed to be heading back to normal. The family, including Deonna's three younger siblings, took a 10-day trip to Disneyland that was granted through the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Minnesota.

"They had a great time and they were really happy," said Tammy Moreland, who works for the Band's Family Services Department and has been involved with the family since they moved to District I.

"When we found out the cancer came back, it was right before Thanksgiving. It had spread to her lungs and her abdomen," said Tammy, who attends all of Deonna's doctor's appointments and has been a strong source of support from the beginning. She meets with the family weekly and talks to Deonna a few times a week to check on her.

"I was there when Deonna first got the

"Deonna is hoping she can conquer this. Nichole is trying very hard to be strong and is holding on to hope for a miracle," she added. "This, naturally, is a very scary thing for anyone to go through."

Deonna's prom

People who know Deonna describe her as a girl full of hopes and dreams. They say she is beautiful, loyal and strong-willed. She considers her cell phone a must-have accessory.

She doesn't attend school at Onamia any longer as she is happiest at home and when she's hanging out with her friends from the Boys and Girls Club — something she does daily if she's well enough, her mom said.

"She doesn't say much to me about what's going on, but I can tell it bothers her and I know she's scared, but she won't say it," Nichole said.

However, when she was asked what she wanted to do before her health began failing her, Deonna said she "wanted to get dressed up and go to the prom."

That's when Tammy sprung into action. She immediately began contacting Band members and Band employees to see if they could help pull off a prom in about 10 days' time.

"The doctors told us not to plan for more than 15 days out at a time, so we knew that if we wanted to make the prom happen it had to be sooner rather than later," Tammy said. "We didn't know if she could wait until the spring."

One of the first calls she made was to Bugs Haskins, Nay Ah Shing Activities Director, at the Nay Ah Shing Upper School. Bugs made it a priority to get the prom planning underway.

More than 100 people attended the prom, which was held on Dec. 1 at the upper school. There was a grand march that showcased the attendees dressed in their finest. The kids did karaoke, took photos in a photo booth and danced the night away.

Dozens of people and Band departments (including the Legislative branch) donated their time, talent and energy to "Deonna's Prom." The Elders donated dinner, commissioners gave money to pay for a limo



Deonna with her mom and baby sister

to take Deonna to St. Cloud for lunch and to get her hair styled, professional photographers took pictures, the Salvation Army donated dresses and suits, and the disc jockey donated his services.

"Deonna had a fun time. It was a dream come true for her," Tammy said. "It was beautiful. She was beautiful."

Next steps

Nichole says the family doesn't spend a lot of time talking about Deonna's illness. They try to lead a normal family life when they're all together.

Two weeks after the prom, a traditional healer held a ceremony for Deonna. He also gave Deonna her Indian name, which loosely translated means "amazing strength." It's the strength that is helping her fight the cancer.

Deonna's final chemotherapy appointment was Jan. 4. She met with her doctors on Jan. 14 to talk about the next steps. Since then, she has had a decline in her health and will remain at Minneapolis' Children's Hospital indefinitely. Her medical needs are too great at this time for her to go home.

In the meantime, Deonna's family and friends are doing what they can to make her feel more comfortable. They have also set up a few special activities, including bringing staff from a local beauty salon to give the Deonna and her friends manicures and pedicures.

"I've been through so much and the lesson I've learned that I want to share with people is to tell them to cherish their kids," said Nichole. "Life is short. One day it could be OK and the next day it all changes."



news of the terminal illness and at first she didn't understand. She thought she would be OK because she was in remission," said Tammy. "I had to tell her that it wouldn't go away and tried to help her process what the doctors were telling her."

Dear Readers:

We hope you are pleased with the recent changes made to the Ojibwe Inaajimowin. We made them with you in mind and hope that the colorful pages, addition of photos and different types of news stories make the time you spend with the paper more enjoyable and informational.

We want to remind you that this newspaper is for you and we welcome your feedback.

The team who puts the paper together is always seeking suggestions and story ideas to make this publication as informational and fun to read as possible.

Elders — do you want to share stories of growing up? Culture? Traditions? We would love to hear them!

Band members — do you have a family story that you'd like to share? Do you know someone with an interesting hobby or talent? Are you interested in telling us about your experiences doing crafts, hunting, ricing, or teaching the language? We welcome all of your ideas.

Band employees and staff — does your department have a new employee, new equipment or a new project? How about a significant anniversary? Are there changes in health policies or treatments that will affect clinic patients? Maybe the law enforcement officers have new equipment. Or a grant program recently won will allow the hiring of young people for important work.

There is a lot going on with each of you, in each of the Districts and throughout the Mille Lacs Band. Please share those things with us so we can find ways to feature them in an upcoming edition.

We will continue to ask you for ideas when we see you and when we call. At the same time, it would be great if you, our readers, let us know of news tips.

You can reach us by phone at **612-372-4612** or by email at **andy@redcircleagency.com**

Thanks!

The staff of Ojibwe *Inaajimowin*

iPad mini Winner

Congratulations to *Rachel Louise Sam* for winning the iPad mini!



DISTRICT 1

Cyber Bullying Policies Remain Strong

Trip Johnson Staff Writer

Ask any school administrator and they will tell you: technology is great, but with new technology comes new challenges. One area where this is especially true is Cyber Bullying.

"You and I didn't go to school with phones strapped to our belts," said Jason Long, Dean of Students at Nay Ah Shing School. "It's a different era."

As more and more kids communicate via text messaging and Facebook, more and more attention has been paid to what they are saying to each other, and how it is affecting their lives — both at school and at home.

"We saw this coming a long time ago," said Jason. "And in fact, our Cyber Bullying policy, which has been in place for four years, has been copied by many other B.I.E. schools — both in Minnesota and across the country."

In basic terms, a piece of electronic communication (e-mail, Facebook post, Twitter post, etc.) is defined as Cyber Bullying if it makes a student feel threatened or unsafe. "One thing we realized early on," said Long, "is that to be effective, our policy would have to cover things written or posted during non-school hours as well. Because kids bring all that to school with them. If someone says something bad about them on Facebook at home at night, that's something they bring to school with them, and now it's something we have to deal with."

Whether a specific post or comment constitutes bullying can be a matter of judgment, but thanks to the School Board's comprehensive policy (see box below), most cases



As more and more students communicate electronically, school policies must reflect this behavior and protect students.

are pretty clear. "We have three basic expectations for our students," said Jason. "Be Safe. Be Respectful. Be Responsible. So when you think about bullying, it really violates all three of these expectations. You're making someone feel unsafe. You're not respecting them. And you are not being a responsible member of your community."

As far as consequences for bullying, that too is a well-defined process. "Our job as teachers is to educate. Not just math and reading, but also social skills," said Jason. "So before we start handing out severe punishments, we want to make sure every kid understands what bullying is, and why it's not OK." Initial consequences usually involve loss of technology privileges. Only after fourth and fifth offenses do things like suspension and expulsion come into play.

"Bullying is everywhere, whether you have policies or not," said Jason. But because the policy at Nah Ah Shing is so strong, it allows school officials to deal with issues quickly and fairly, so that more time can be spent "catching kids doing the right things — something that benefits us all."

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe School Board Policy on Bullying

Any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to one or more students or which substantially interferes with another student's or students' educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. The integrity of the school must be respected at all times. Cyber bullying outside of the school that potentially can affect the security or safety of the learning environment will be addressed as a school disciplinary issue. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a student against another student that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:

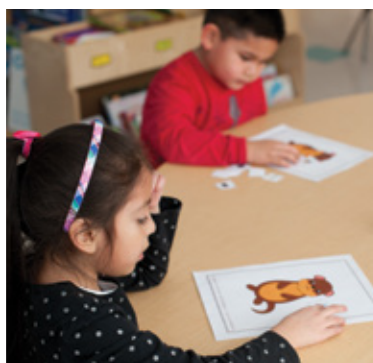
1. Harming or causing distress to a student
2. Damaging a student's property
3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property
4. Creating a hostile educational environment for a student.

Cobell Settlement

The long-running lawsuit filed by Eloise Cobell, a member of the Montana Blackfeet, in 1996 over the federal government's handling of individual Indian money accounts was settled in 2012. To that end, there are likely beneficiaries across the country who are eligible to join and that could include Mille Lacs Band members. To find out more, please visit IndianTrust.com. You will be prompted to fill out an online form. For those who do not have internet access, you can request a paper copy by calling 1-800-961-6109. **The deadline to file a claim is March 1, 2013.**



Happy students are excited to hear that it's time for puzzles.



Second grade students taking an accelerated reader test.

Kindergarten students working on a "Groundhog Day" Activity.



Middle schoolers participating in a math lesson.



Senior student completing an American Government assignment.

Wanted: Youth Powwow Dancers

Be a contestant at the 47th Annual Mille Lacs Band Traditional Powwow Royalty Contest

Do you love to dance at powwows? Would you like to be a role model for other youth?

Held August 16-18, 2013

Must be:

- 6-18 years of age
- Mille Lacs Band member, or
- Direct descendant of a Mille Lacs Band member

Jr. Brave & Jr. Princess - 6-12 years of age

Sr. Brave & Sr. Princess - 13-18 years of age

Deadline to sign up is August 2, 2013, but we recommend that you sign up early so you have plenty of time to complete your required tasks for your points.

For more information and application packets contact LeAnn Benjamin at 320-532-7595, e-mail: LeAnn.Benjamin@millelacsband.com or Chasity Gahbow at 320-532-4742, e-mail: Chasity.Gahbow@millelacsband.com

Interested in submitting to the *Inaajimowin*?

The deadline for the March issue is February 15th and the deadline for the April issue is March 15th.

For **birthday announcements**, send name, birthday and brief message (20 words or less).

Send your submissions and birthday announcements to Andy McPartland at andy@redcircleagency.com or call 612-372-4612.

Diane Gibbs's Light Rail Speech



Good Afternoon — I am Diane Gibbs — District III Representative of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe serving this area.

And I am here today to say that we fully support the NLX rail project.

From the Twin Cities through Hinckley and to Duluth, The Northern Lights Express (NLX) will connect families and friends along the way.

It will bring more jobs to the area and spur additional economic development.

It will also expand bus service in the region.

In my community (Aazhoomog) — 25 miles east of here along the St. Croix River on the border of Wisconsin — we are excited about having additional transportation options.

For example, it will give people of our community a great opportunity to pursue post-secondary education in the Twin Cities and Duluth. Minimizing concerns about transportation issues also allows us to connect with family members and friends who live in the Twin Cities, Duluth or other areas.

What a wonderful asset for our region.

We also would like to applaud the students at UMD who are stepping up to support the project.

We can all work together to help create green solutions to transportation problems; imagine what else we might accomplish by working together.

Remember the quote from Henry Ford:

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

And I truly believe this!

Let's connect. Let's join forces. Let's create change.

Chi Miigwech/Thank you!



DISTRICT 3

DIANE GIBBS SPEAKS AT HINCKLEY CONFERENCE

Proposed Light Rail Could Add Jobs in District III

Deborah Locke Staff Writer

Rail transportation in the Hinckley area will bring jobs and economic development to the area. College students who don't have cars could take the train to Duluth or the Twin Cities for classes. A new rail line to northern Minnesota means that families would have more than one transportation option.

Those remarks and more by Diane Gibbs, DIII representative, were made at a Hinckley press conference on December 8, 2012 that was spearheaded by students from the University of Minnesota- Duluth (UMD). Many of the students are members of the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG). The conference was held at the Hinckley Fire Museum. Remarks in favor of the high speed light rail project were also made by Doug Carlson, Pine County Commissioner, and Jim Oberstar, former Eighth District Congressman.

Press conferences in favor of light rail were organized by students and held the same day in Duluth, Hinckley, Cambridge, Coon Rapids and St. Paul. The purpose for the multi-location gatherings was to drum up more interest in the proposed Northern Light Express high speed light rail line. The line would run 155 miles between Minneapolis and Duluth on existing track at 90 miles per hour.

In her remarks, Diane said she applauded the UMD students for their support, adding that if everyone worked together the rail system could create a more environmentally-friendly solution to transportation issues in the more remote parts of the state.

Since 2011, the Mille Lacs Band has been a member of the Northern Lights Alliance, which started in 2007. The Alliance commissioned a feasibility study and in 2007 released study results that showed that Grand Casino Hinckley was one of the state's top destinations. Preliminary engineering work was expected to start in January 2013, and will take about 20 months to complete.



Pictured, L-R: Pine County Commissioner Doug Carlson, District III Representative Diane Gibbs, and Former U.S. Congressman James Oberstar

About 80 percent of funding for the project would come from the federal government. Some money has already been approved: in May 2011, the project received a \$5 million grant from the Department of Transportation and \$1.1 million from the Federal Railroad Administration.

At the Duluth press conference also held December 8, UMD student Jason Reid said that the U.S. is very “car oriented.” The addition of light rail would move people northward from the more dense population areas in the state.

Newly-elected Congressman Rick Nolan from the Eighth District was named to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Nolan has said he will use the seat to try to secure money for the Northern Lights Express high speed rail project, among other goals.

A high speed train ride from Duluth to the Cities would take about two hours and 15 minutes with three stops, including Hinckley, along the way. A car ride from Duluth to Minneapolis is about two and a half hours, without stops.

MPIRG has chapters at seven Minnesota colleges and universities, including UMD and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus.

This article first appeared in the January/February issue of the Aazhoomog News, and is being reprinted due to the importance of the topic.

“Coming together is beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Pushing Back at Old Man Winter

Deborah Locke Staff Writer

Once in a while Mother Nature provides Minnesota with weather so cold that you actually enjoy a spill from scalding hot coffee.

So cold that you need to kick a hole in the air to get back inside.

Call those exaggerations. But plenty of Mille Lacs Band members have firsthand knowledge of severely cold weather from days gone past, and may remember 100-year-old family stories of winter nights in the wigwam.

Flash forward to 2013 which, so far, has delivered the coldest weather in four years to Band members throughout Minnesota, including rural and metropolitan areas.

We know most readers have good survival skills. The following is a gentle reminder mostly pulled from the emergency preparedness section of the Centers for Disease Control website. The CDC notes that when Elders and infants experience a loss of body heat, serious health problems can arise. The ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age; to guard against misreading a cold snap, those over age 65 should have an easy-to-read outside thermometer near the door.

Here are a few precautions for your health and safety, starting with the monitoring of body temperature.

Infant and Elder care

Infants less than 12 months old should never sleep in a cold room because they lose body heat easily and can't make enough body heat by shivering. Infants and babies need warm clothing and a warm indoor temperature. If the temperature can't be maintained, stay somewhere else. If you are in an emergency, keep your infant warm with your own body heat.

Those age 65 and older also generate less body heat due to slower metabolisms. Relatives and friends should check on Elders frequently to ensure that they are adequately warm. If they have an outside LP Tank, check the fuel gauge to ensure enough fuel for a cold spell. Make sure they have enough food, both for themselves and for any pets.

- During a power failure, use an alternate heating source such

as a fireplace or woodstove if your home is equipped with one. Make sure you have a radio with battery backup to receive information from the Band or local electric co-op on how long the power failure may last or numbers to call for assistance or temporary housing.

- Do not burn paper in a fireplace. Never leave lit candles unattended.
- Never use an electric generator indoors, in the garage, or near the air intake of your home. Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords to plug in a generator. Don't use a generator or any appliance if it's wet because of the electrocution risk. Don't store gas indoors where fumes could ignite.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters and ensure the space heaters have an automatic shut off if they are tipped over to avoid a possible fire danger.
- Supplies to have on hand: blankets, matches, a dry-chemical fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, flashlights or a battery-powered lantern, a battery powered radio, extra batteries, a non-electric can opener, a snow shovel, rock salt, special needs and items like diapers, hearing aid batteries, medicine, food that needs no cooking like bread, crackers, cereal, canned goods and dried fruit. Store water in case your water pipes freeze and rupture. In an emergency, snow can be melted for water. Bring the water to a rolling boil for one minute which will kill most microorganisms. Avoid alcohol or caffeinated beverages which cause your body to lose heat more rapidly. Drink warm, sweet beverages or broth.



Plan ahead: snowy winter weather has led to delays in rush hour commutes.

Staying Warm at Home

If you didn't prepare your home for the cold snap this year, you could start to prepare for one next year.

CDC recommends that homeowners:

- Check your emergency supplies when a period of extreme cold is predicted.
- Have your chimney or flue inspected each year.
- Install a smoke detector and battery-operated carbon monoxide detector near the heat source.
- Weatherproof your home with information from "free energy home audits" conducted by your local electric or gas supplier.
- Keep your steps and sidewalks free of ice with a de-icing compound and ensure that the sidewalks of any Elders are safe to walk on. Have a good supply of sand on hand to use on walkways when it's too cold for the de-icing chemicals to work.
- Pet owners, too, need to become vigilant in severe weather. If it's cold enough for you to wear a coat outdoors, consider a fabric coat for your dog as well as boots. Paws are sensitive to cold and will quickly become frostbitten in extreme temperatures. Bring your pets inside all the time during a severe weather snap.

If the weather changes while on the road and you become stranded while traveling, here's some advice:

- Stay in your vehicle. Tie a bright cloth to the antenna and raise the hood of the car if it isn't snowing. If you have a cell phone that works, call 911.
- Move what you need from the trunk to the passenger area.
- Wrap up entirely in extra clothing, blankets, even newspapers.
- Stay awake.
- Run the motor and heater for about 10 minutes each hour and open one window a crack to let in air. Be sure that snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe.
- Move your arms and legs while seated to improve circulation.
- Don't eat snow; it will lower your body temperature.
- Huddle with others for warmth.

For more information, go to the National Weather website at www.ready.gov which gives helpful lists to ensure your family's safety at home and on the road, no matter what the weather or season.

The Bird Man of Mille Lacs

Deborah Locke Staff Writer

While vacationing in Corpus Christi, Texas, early in February, Kelly Applegate spotted a purple martin. The two-ounce martins, with a wing span of up to 14 inches, are now on their way north from Brazil.

Who knows, maybe that very bird summers along the shores of Mille Lacs Lake. Maybe that bird would become the object of study by the Minnesota Purple Martin Working Group, of which the Mille Lacs Band is a member. That study shows that since 1966, Minnesota's purple martin population has declined by 80 percent.

Kelly, a Mille Lacs Band member, is a wildlife biologist and fisheries technician. He's worked at the Band's Natural Resources division since 2006. A study of the bird's migrating patterns started in 2007 and includes scientists from York University in Toronto, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Audubon Society, and Kelly himself.

With his fascination for and protective nature toward the birds, not to mention his encyclopedic knowledge, it's fitting to dub Kelly a present day bird man of Minnesota.

Native ties

The little birds first forged a bond with American Indians long ago. Their natural habitat, the hollowed out trunks of trees in the old forest, was clear cut by timber

industry barons in the 1800s. So purple martins from the southeastern United States overcame that loss by nesting in hollowed out gourds used to store grain by southeastern tribes.

"Martins have always been here," Kelly said. "They've adapted with humans and a changing landscape."

As more Europeans settled throughout the country, the idea of a multi-compartment martin house was born. The birds abandoned nesting in hollowed out trees and today, 100 percent of martins are dependent on humans for housing. In the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of back yards throughout the U.S. contained a flagpole and a martin house.

Kelly said that recent research shows that the ideal martin house is 12 inches long to prevent hawks, owls and other predators from entering. The martins are also sensitive to location: they will not nest near tall trees where predators hide.

Sparrow encroachment

Then came the late 1970s and the martin multi-house in so many suburban yards went out of fashion. Fewer houses meant fewer martins. In addition, the population of year-round European starlings and the English house sparrow increased greatly so the birds competed for the same housing.

Unpredictable and harsh spring weather creates challenges for the birds that are due back in Minnesota in mid-April: a severe cold snap damages the bird's ability to catch insects or keep babies warm during an unseasonably cold spring. When the birds become desperate, humans step in, leaving feeders with meal worm, crickets or scrambled eggs. A normal martin life span is five to seven years, although Kelly knows of a bird that lived to the ripe old age of 13.

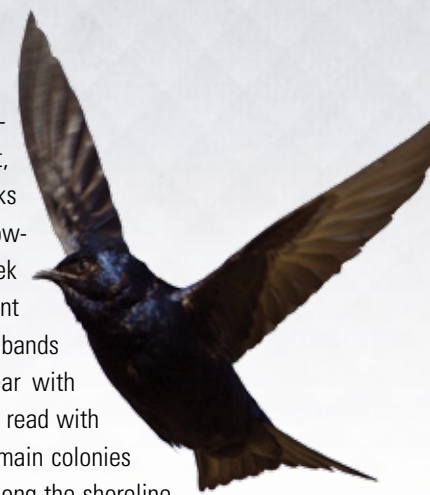
The martins require various levels of management, Kelly said. The birds he works with are in houses that are lowered on a cable. Each week he opens the houses to count eggs and band birds. Kelly bands 800 to 1000 birds each year with numbers large enough to be read with a telescope. There are five main colonies in the Mille Lacs area, all along the shoreline and all on tribal property.

Eddy's martins

The most visible martins to a tourist's eye take up summer residence in the 18 units behind Eddy's Resort, where geolocator deployments take place. That may sound like a military maneuver, and in some respects, it is. The birds receive a fingernail-size device that's tied on. The geolocators measure the amount of sunlight, which tells scientists where the birds travel. Most purple martins go to Brazil for the winter months, and with a stopover in Yucatan on their way back and forth to North America.

That means the purple martins have something else in common with American Indians: flexibility. Mille Lacs Band members live everywhere throughout the United States, in cities, small towns, on reservations, in rural areas. Martins do the same, from the Amazon River to the Mille Lacs Lake shoreline, adapting as they go. And like Indians on a lot of reservations, they have a housing shortage.

Want to help? Kelly said he'd be happy to advise anyone on how to put up martin housing. Call him at 320-532-7747.



Public Health Survey

Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer

Band members asked to participate

Beginning in April, Band members will be asked to participate in a survey that is designed to assess the health needs of the community. The Band's public health department will administer the survey with the goal of getting a stronger understanding of ways the staff can better serve the community.

"The purpose of this survey is to gather information from community members about many different aspects of health, behaviors, and the community," said Kimberly Willis, a Prevention Specialist and Performance Improvement Manager for the Band's Department of Public Health.

"We also want to get the opinions of Band members on a few different issues," she added.

The Mille Lacs Band Community Health Assessment provides an opportunity for Band members and those community members living with Band members in each of the districts to have their voices heard. Those living in Districts I, II, IIA, III and Hinckley are invited to participate in the survey and will

be eligible to receive a \$25 gift card to use at Band-owned businesses. Participants must be 18 years and older.

"The community health assessment is an excellent way to get involved in the community and what happens in the community," said Kimberly. "The Mille Lacs reservation has many unique strengths as well as challenges and we need help determining what those challenges are."

The funding for the assessment came through a substantial grant offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The needs assessment is a straightforward way to estimate the needs of a community by asking residents about their satisfaction with services, development of services and what services they think are needed.

"When used over the course of time, a community assessment is able to show if current programs are working or not," said Kimberly. "And it will give us an idea of what the community wants to see happen to make the Mille Lacs reservation the best possible place to live."

To create the assessment, several departments within the Band collaborated on the effort so they could get the best measures of the health and behavioral health status of the Mille Lacs Band community.

"A lot of thought and detail went into the creation of the assessment especially to measure where the Mille Lacs people are in terms of their cultural and spiritual health," Kimberly said.

Besides helping assess programs and services, the survey will show departments what they might need to focus on. The results will also help departments continue to apply for grants and secure funding needed to offer programs.

The results of the assessment will be shared with the community through various platforms. It will also recur every three years so that the departments can monitor trends on the Reservation and the effectiveness of newly implemented changes.

More information about when the assessments will be offered will be shared as the dates draw nearer through postings in the clinics, schools, community centers, and other Band governmental departments. A meal will be provided to participants and their families at the various test sites in each of the districts.

The Boys and Girls Club will be providing childcare during the time their parents are completing the assessment. There will also be a lunch/dinner provided to participants and their families.

Circle of Health Update

Prescription copays/reimbursements: Recently there seems to be some confusion as to the Circle of Health benefits relating to prescriptions. **There have been no changes.** We cover copays for covered prescriptions. If your insurance does not cover a medication, there is no assistance from the Circle of Health. The full cost of the uncovered medication would be the Band member's responsibility. For those on state programs (Medical Assistance or Minnesota Care) we will reimburse the \$1 or \$3 copayment only. If you have questions, please contact your claims processor for assistance.

MLTC (Mille Lacs Tribal Community): The next open enrollment period is April 1, 2013. Circle of Health mails out notices to eligible Band members prior to each open enrollment period. If you do not have health insurance, please contact your claims processor for assistance.

Medicare Reimbursements: The Medicare Part B and Part D reimbursement checks were mailed on January 11th. If you did not receive your reimbursement, please call to make sure we received your 2013 Benefit Statement from Social Security. We can't reimburse you if you didn't send us this letter.

All District Elder Meetings: Department Director Carol Hernandez will discuss Medicare, Medical Assistance Spenddowns, and Durable Medical Equipment benefits at the following Elder meetings:

March 21: District 2 – ALU
May 16: District 3 – ALU

Meetings start at 11:30 am. She will stay after the presentation to answer personal question or to collect medical bills/statements to take to Circle of Health.

Contact information:

It is very important that Band members notify Circle of Health of contact information changes (address/ phone). Circle of Health makes every attempt to notify Band members of important changes, especially when it requires action on their part.

Claims Processors:

Roberta Lemieux: A–L
Tammy Smith: M–Z
800-491-6106 or 320-676-8214
Fax: 320-676-8214
Circle of Health
2605 Chiminising Drive
Isle, MN 56342

Child Support Update

The 2012 child support payment statements were sent out on January 31. Included with the statements is additional information that clients may find useful in assisting them in child support cases.

Those who pay child support need to remember all their open obligations when receiving funds from annual tax refunds, stimulus payments, or other forms of settlement payments. If individuals are not paying their full monthly obligations across all cases each month, the difference of what they are paying and what they owe is added to arrears balances, with the interest and fees making it extremely difficult to overcome the fast-growing debt.

"Child support arrears does not go away," said Amy Doyle, director of the program. If non-custodial parents would like to discuss arrears management options, contact the child support office for assistance. The number is 320-532-7755.

TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

Happy February birthdays:

Happy Birthday **Kaitlin** on 2/2 from Rachel, Waylon, Andrei, Brevin, RaySean, Grandma Chicken, Marcus, Jess, Cici, Lil Marc, Nate, Ant, Mick, Phil, Nade, Char, Pj, Whit, Carter, Val, Kev, Mariah, Jaz, Micheal & Jayden • Happy Birthday **Sissy** on 2/2. Daddy Loves you Baby. • Happy Birthday **Brevin** on 2/4 from Rachel, Waylon, Kate, Andrei, RaySean, Grandma Chicken, Marcus, Jess, Cici, Lil Marc, Nate, Ant, Mick, Phil, Nade, Char, Pj, Whit, Carter, Val, Kev, Mariah, Jaz, Micheal, Jayden, Craig, Arielle, Nick, Jenai, Jayla, Randi, Brad, Bruce, Deanna, Cilla & Stace. • Happy Birthday **Boo Boo** on 2/4, Daddy Loves you son. • Happy birthday **Baby Chris** on 2/7 from Rachel, Waylon, Boo, Randi, Brad Jr., Bruce, Val, Jay & Brad Sr. •

Happy Birthday TANK Wagner on 2/13, with love from gamma, Uncle, Mommy, Elias, Alizaya and Rico. • Happy Birthday **Braelyn** on 2/22 from Rachel, Waylon, and Boo, Randi, Brad, Bruce, Val, Jay, Daddy, Eric, Wes, Payton, Brynley & Papa Brad. • Happy Birthday **Cordell** on 2/23 from Rachel, Waylon, Boo, Randi, Brad Jr., Bruce, Val, Jay & Brad Sr. • Happy Birthday **Kelly** on 2/27 from Rachel, Waylon, Brevin, Kaitin, Andrei, Marcus, Jess, Gram joyce, Mama Tammy, Mandy, Dev, Poose, Milly & Bee. • Happy 18th Birthday to **Joseph!** Love Mom, Dad, Grandma, Uncle John, Sam, and family.

Happy February birthday to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Nancy Ann Arnoux
Laura Ann Ashcroft

Melanie Ann Benjamin
Debra Jean Blake
Judy Ann Carlson
Harry Richard Davis
Bonita Louise Eagle
Douglas Willard Eagle
Eileen Frances Farah
Eugene Duane Garbow
Beverly Ann Graves
Mary Louise Hoffer
Donald Ray Houle
Conrad Kegg
Maggie Kegg
Victoria Gina Mitchell
Gilbert Wayne Moose
Debra Lee Northrup
Robin Lou Oswaldson
Rhonda Lynn Peet
Alan Pindegayosh
Lawrence Virgil Reynolds
Ellen Marie Roth
Bette Sam
Darlene Frances Sam
Gladys Diane Sam
Kenneth Wayne Shingobe
[Mitchell]
Alvera Marie Smith
Elizabeth Ann St. John

Robert Lee Staples
Audrey Lorraine Stately
Berniece Sutton
Emma Edna
Thomas Ramona Joyce
Washington
Patrick Weyaus
Marilyn Jean Whitney
Clyde Manuel Wind
Dorothy May Wistrom

Happy belated birthdays:

Happy Belated Birthday to **Brandon Wiedewitsch** on 1/15, with love from mom, sister, Punky, TANK-O, Sissy Bear & Rico. • Happy Belated Birthday to Mille Lacs Band Elder **Steven L. Pawaush** on 1/25. Yippie ki-yay!

Other Announcements:

Miss Reginna Moose has been attending the Tribal Community College at Cass Lake, receiving all A's and has

been awarded a scholarship, which she will use this coming fall, then graduate in the spring. She also got on the Dean's List. Ginna is the daughter of Linda Moose, granddaughter of Caroline Boelter. Yeah Ginna!! • **Avery Joyce Aubid** was born on 5/9/12 to Rachele Moose and Azhibik Aubid. Welcomed home by older sister Aaliyah, older brother Ayden, grandmas Dorothy Aubid, Linda Moose, and Great Grandma Caroline Boelter. Weight 7 lbs., 14.5 oz., length 19 inches. • Congrats to Brandi and Grant on the birth of their son, **Rico Harvey Garbow**, on 11/19/12, with love from gamma Tammy, Uncle Brandon, brothers Elias, TANK, sissy, gamma Beverly Kegg and family.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|-------------------|---------|--|---|--------|--|
| 17 | 18 Chief's Day | 19 | 20 Chief Executive Elder Trip Treasure Island Resort & Casino DIII Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Aazhoomog Center Chiminsing Bingo 6 p.m. Chiminsing Community Center | 21 Chief Executive Elder Trip Treasure Island Resort & Casino. Call Lacey Ballinger for more information: 320-532-7486 Beading Circle 6 p.m.-8 p.m. MSU St. Paul Supplies provided | 22 | 23 Ojibwe Moccasin Workshop Noon-4 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum. Fees apply. Reservations required, call 320-532-3632 |
| 24 Ojibwe Moccasin Workshop 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum. Fees apply. Reservations required, call 320-532-3632 | 25 | 26 | 27 District II-A Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chiminsing Community Center Contact Lesley Sam: 320-676-1102 | 28 Urban Comm. Meeting 5:00 p.m. All Nations Church District II-A Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Chiminsing Community Center Beading Circle 6 p.m.-8 p.m. MSU St. Paul Supplies provided | 1 | 2 Kids Crafts: Story Book Time & Shoulder Bag Noon-3 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum. Fee is \$7 (museum admission not included) |

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millelacsband.com



Heating, Water, and Maintenance Problems?

During normal business hours, tenants in Band rentals and private Elders living within the service area should call 800-709-6445, ext. 7433, for work orders.

After business hours, tenants with maintenance emergencies should call 866-822-8538 and press 1, 2, or 3 for their respective district.

Boiler's Licensure Training Event

March 6, 13, & 20 from 8 a.m.-Noon.
At the Government Center's Media Room
Participants must attend all three sessions.
Contact Paul Janowiec to reserve a spot:
Paul.Janowiec@MilleLacsBand.com