

# OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE  
STORY  
AS IT'S  
TOLD

FEBRUARY 2018 | VOLUME 20 | NUMBER 02



## NEW WARRIORS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE DELIVERS 2018 STATE OF THE BAND

SECRETARY-  
TREASURER  
ADDRESSES BAND

CHIEF JUSTICE  
SPEAKS OF  
RIPPLE EFFECT

HEARING ON  
LINE 3 CULTURAL  
IMPACT

ARTIST, YOUTH  
CREATE PAINTING  
AT NAY AH SHING



PHOTOS BY BOB PEARL, BRETT LARSON, AND STEVE KOHLS/BRAINERD DISPATCH

Community members of all ages filled the Grand Casino Mille Lacs event center for the 2018 State of the Band Event January 9.

## Power to the People — Leaders Praise Grassroots Efforts

Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin spoke of a “new warriorism” driving Band members to improve their community at the 34th annual State of the Band event January 9 at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs Events & Convention Center.

In her State of the Legislative speech, Secretary-Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu (see page 8) applauded grassroots efforts by groups like Smudge Walkers, Sober Squad, and Natives Against Heroin. Chief Justice Rayna Churchill also addressed the opioid crisis in her State of the Judiciary speech (see page 9).

The event began with a Flag Song by Little Otter Singers and presentation of the colors by veterans Tony Pike, Quintin Sam, Renee Pewaush, and Larry Heglund, followed by an invocation by Lee ‘Obizaan’ Staples.

Obizaan gave a brief translation of his prayer, saying he offered tobacco to the Manidoog, acknowledged the Drum, and thanked the Drumkeepers. “We have 11 drums on this reservation, and it is from there that we get our help as a people,” said Obizaan. “I asked that those Manidoog would look kindly on us as a people and give us help, especially with the drug abuse on our reservation.”

Obizaan encouraged Band members to attend ceremonies, saying it would nourish their Anishinaabe spirit. “The Chimookomaan wanted us to abandon all these teachings, and that was the worst thing that could happen to us as a people,” he said. “Don’t discount the importance of those ceremonies.”

Corporate Commissioner Joe Nayquonabe Jr. served as master of ceremonies, introducing distinguished guests before turning the microphone over to the leaders of the three branches of Band government.

### Legislative, Judicial updates

Secretary-Treasurer Beaulieu began by convening the First Session of the 18th Assembly with a roll call of Band Assembly members Sandra Blake, David ‘Niib’ Aubid, and Harry Davis,



PHOTO BY BOB PEARL

Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Joe Nayquonabe

who stood and greeted the crowd.

Secretary-Treasurer Beaulieu summarized the year’s accomplishments, which included construction of the Hinckley Community Center, planning for the new District I Clinic, purchase of a dialysis facility in Isle, a new license plate design, and a transition to new budgeting software.

She said the Band’s long-term savings are performing well, and a new Revenue Allocation Plan (RAP) will be submitted to the Department of the Interior. Secretary-Treasurer Beaulieu and Commissioner of Finance Adam Valdez gathered input on the RAP last year from Band members in all districts and the Urban area.

Secretary-Treasurer Beaulieu ended on a personal note, saying the new Legislative Women’s Gatherings have been “extremely beneficial to me as a woman and as an elected official for the Band.”

Chief Justice Churchill introduced her fellow Appeals Court judges Ramona Applegate and Clarence Boyd and District Court Judge David Christensen. She spoke of the “ripple effects” of the opioid crisis, which has affected everything from families to courts, from law enforcement to schools, and from clinics to surrounding communities.

She called for a “three-branch plan of action” and said she would be calling a meeting with the Chief Executive and Band Assembly.

### New warriorism

Chief Executive Benjamin’s speech focused on the deep involvement of Band members in addressing the drug epidemic and the need for a law enforcement resolution in Mille Lacs County.

“Over the past year and a half, something has happened throughout our Band community, in every District, in every family, in every home,” Benjamin said. “This is the Band’s revolution against drugs, crime, violence, and environmental destruction. As a Band, 2017 was not just a year of Band member interest, it was not just a year of Band member activism, it was a year of a new warriorism for the Mille Lacs Band! And it is one of the most profound changes to happen in our community in decades.”

“We are fighters who stand our ground, and that is why we are called the Non-Removables,” she went on, referring to the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band, which the federal government publicly recognized as early as the late 1800s. “These Band members are new warriors for justice and peace.”

Benjamin reminded the crowd that in 2015, the Band recorded seven drug overdoses. Since Mille Lacs County revoked its cooperative law enforcement agreement with the Band in 2016, the Band has had more than 75 overdoses and 15 deaths. After little to no forward progress and an alarming escalation in overdoses and drug-related deaths, the Band filed a federal lawsuit in November 2017.

“We put off the lawsuit as long as we could,” Benjamin said. “The County wanted us to sue on the boundary. The County used the best leverage they had — they stopped law enforcement services.”

Benjamin went on to thank the federal government for its support of the Band and its tribal police department, and to announce that Band member Sara Rice — one of the Band’s “new warriors” — will move from interim to permanent Mille Lacs Band Chief of Police (see page 7).

“I am so humbled by all the Band members who have come forward this year as Warriors,” Benjamin concluded. “You give me strength; you give us all strength — because the power of the people is always greater than the people in power!”

For the complete text of Melanie’s speech, see pages 3 through 7.

### 2018 Initiatives

Chief Executive Benjamin previewed numerous initiatives for the coming year, including:

- The opening of new community center in Hinckley, which will be a hub for family and community activities, wellness programs, and cultural offerings, and the groundbreaking for a new District I community center.
- The renaming of the Mille Lacs Band Government Center in honor of the late Marge Anderson, longtime Chief Executive of the Band.
- An initiative to transition more Band renters into home ownership.
- The opening of a Band dialysis center in Isle.
- Continued growth in the Band’s non-gaming investments and job creation, as well as small business opportunities for Band members.
- The opening of an auto shop to service Band vehicles and create training and job opportunities for Band members.
- The continuing transition of the Nay Ah Shing School into an Ojibwe language immersion school, and a new pursuit to create a vocational high school.
- Pursuit of a radio station to serve the reservation and provide information to Band members.
- Continued focus on addressing the opioid crisis with a comprehensive, culture-based prevention and treatment approach. “Band government cannot stop a person from trying drugs or becoming addicted,” Benjamin said. “But what we can do is offer help to those who are ready to receive it.”

# A NEW WARRIORISM

## 2018 State of the Band

Chief Executive Melanie Mandaamin Benjamin

**M**adame Speaker, members of the Band Assembly, Madame Chief Justice, Judges of the Court of Central Jurisdiction, fellow Band members, and honored guests, it is my duty under Band law and my honor as Chief Executive to deliver the 2018 State of the Band Address.

I want to begin by saying Miigwech to my family. To my son Clayton, and daughter-in-law Candy, to all my grandchildren, and my sisters and brothers: Miigwech for your support, which keeps me going.

Also, Miigwech to the other elected and appointed officials, especially those people who have worked so hard in the spirit of cooperation on behalf of all Band members. And chi miigwech to all Mille Lacs Band members here today.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is not the government. It is not those who lead the Band. The Mille Lacs Band is you, the Band members. The Band is our ancestors who came before us, those here today, and the children who have yet to be born. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is the People.

Our Band Statutes include language in Chapter 3 that states, “to the People is reserved the power.” And one thing you have proven again and again, is that the Power of the People is always greater than the People in Power.

The State of the Band Address is a report of the past year and the progress we have made. It is a report of the challenges we have faced and a sharing of our goals for the New Year.

In our language, there is a phrase our grandparents used: Gwayakocchigewin. It means “making decisions the right way.” When we set goals for our Band, this is what we try to do.

Making decisions the right way means honoring our connections with one another. As Band members, we are each connected to our families... our families are connected through the Band... our Band is connected with all Anishinaabe... and the Anishinaabe are connected to the Creator. Each one of us can impact everything and everyone around us.

Young or old, we all have wisdom and gifts to offer our Band. Making decisions the right way means respecting the gifts of all people, and listening to all voices.

This is how I strive to lead: By following the collective advice from you, the People. This is also how our commissioners are instructed to carry out their duties.

Band members should be part of every decision we make. You should be encouraged and welcomed into every public meeting. You have a right to transparent government. You have a voice and the right to know exactly how decisions are made, who made them, and a full explanation of why they were made... because this is your government!

As a Band government, we made progress together in many areas in 2017. Still, this was a tough year for our Band community. We faced many challenges, but none so heartbreaking as losing so many people to the drug epidemic. This was a year of profound sadness and loss for many families.

For those who lost loved ones and for those who right now have loved ones trapped in addiction, I know it can seem hopeless. Especially when we are surrounded by negativity.

There are those in the community who have been told for so long by so many to be cynical and fearful and doubtful about our future. At times, giving up might seem tempting.

But whether those messages come from skeptics from the outside or naysayers from the inside, one thing I know for certain — they are wrong!

Feeling hopeless can become self-fulfilling, which is why we cannot — we must never — give in to those feelings and allow them to impact our willingness to fight. To fight for our

families, our rights, and our future.

There is hope of a better day. Because the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe never gives up and never gives in. We are fighters who stand our ground, and that is why we are called the Non-Removables.

Last year at the State of the Band Address, we had just finished the 2016 Presidential election, which was driven by the politics of fear, ignorance, and racism. We did not know what lay ahead, but we knew that allowing fear of the unknown to take hold was something we could not afford. This election was an awakening for many... a time to get busy getting involved as activists, like never before.

We talked about the 1980s, when our elders created our division-of-powers system of government, and how they modeled our government after the Ceremonial Drum. On the Drum, everyone has a role to play and a way to use their gifts, and no person is more important than anyone else.

Each person is critical. That is how our founders wanted government to run. They did not want Band members watching from the outside. They wanted you actively involved from the inside, being part of making change.

In 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King spoke about how, throughout history, too many people don't pay attention during great periods of social change. He said that every society has its protectors of the way things are as well as some people: ...who are notorious for sleeping through the revolution.”

**“Band members have come forward in new ways, stepping up as New Warriors, to defend our community, defend our rights, and fight for our future.”**

Dr. King said, “Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake...”

At Mille Lacs, over the past year and a half, something has happened throughout our Band community, in every District, in every family, in every home. This is the Band's revolution... against drugs, crime, violence, and environmental destruction. As a Band, we are awake!

That spark of political activism we talked about last year — the kind our Elders wanted for us — has caught fire.

2017 was not just a year of Band Member interest. It was not just a year of Band Member Activism. 2017 was a year of a New Warriorism for the Mille Lacs Band! And it is one of the most profound changes to happen in our community in decades.

Band members have come forward in new ways, stepping up as New Warriors, to defend our community, defend our rights, and fight for our future.

They are those people who testified at the Line 3 pipeline hearings; the bus load of Band members who traveled to



PHOTO STEVE KOHLS/BRAINERD DISPATCH

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin

Washington, D.C., to protest pipelines at the March on Washington; and more than 100 Band members who took a stand at the Un-Cuff Our Cops Rally at the State Capitol.

From Bobby Eagle, to Tania Aubid, to Mick Davis — Band members from all parts of our lands and all walks of life engaged in the battle to help and protect our community in whatever way they could.

Our New Warriors are the 200 adults and youth who walked in the Smudge Walks; the Per Cap Patrol who tell drug dealers to get off our reservation; those in the March for Family Peace; the kids in the Chameleon Run; the Sober Squad; Mothers for Tradition, and Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations. These Band members are New Warriors for justice and peace.

The slide show you are seeing today includes photos of our New Warriors in action!

After attacks on our division-of-powers government started at the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe meetings in 2016, I asked Band members to learn all they could about our government and our Constitution.

More than 30 Band members volunteered to take the Certificate Course in our history, our Band government, and federal Indian law. These are New Warriors who gained new wisdom.

A record number of Band members have been attending MCT meetings and the Constitutional Conventions, to defend our system of governance, our right to be self-governing, and our right to make our own decisions.

Mille Lacs Band members are not grand-standers. It is not our way to talk over others and be the center of attention. We don't insult and attack others. That is not our way. For us, humility is a virtue.

Instead, Mille Lacs Band members are defending our system of governance by being respectful, and by sharing their knowledge. The number of Band members who understand the MCT system today has greatly increased in just one year.

The MCT system that was once a bit confusing for many is now talked about every day on Band member Facebook pages. These are New Warriors getting involved in government.

Individual Band members also came forward. At the Smudge Walk, several brave youth told stories of how addiction has impacted their families. At the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless conference, Curtis Sam and Brad Jones shared their experience of homelessness. Many Band members began attending Band Assembly and APB meetings. People like Kevin Stobb even took time off of work to speak in Band Assembly about the drug epidemic.

There are people of amazing strength right here in this room... role models who have survived hardship and lived through bad times... especially our Ogichidaa who fought and lived through wars, and chose to protect our country.



PHOTOS BY BRETT LARSON AND BOB PEARL

**Top to bottom: Diane Gibbs and Lawrence Staples; Daniel Churchill and Suzanne Wise; Adrian Wade; Officer Adam Cook and Kate Kalk.**

There are those who faced down the demons of alcohol, of pills, and of needles and have become leaders in our community in the fight against drugs. They are leading our battle to save our culture and language.

And most important, the silence has been broken. Our New Warriors are the mothers and fathers, the grandmothers, the uncles and aunties, and kids speaking out against drugs, violence, and crime. Even grandmothers in their 80s and 90s are taking on drug dealers on Facebook!

We are grateful for Elders like Letitia Mitchell, who is always looking out for the kids, and Frances Davis, who spent her life protecting our health. They are warriors!

Last year, we lost one of our greatest cultural warriors. Larry "Amik" Smallwood led by example. He lived the good life and will be remembered as a role model for all of us. Amik kept the language, culture, and traditions alive. We must remember him by trying to live our lives as Anishinaabe.

What I know about our history is that Band members are at their best when times seem to be at their worst. The fear has lifted, and the code of silence has been broken.

Our voices are heard, our New Warriors have risen up, and we are awake! This is why I believe — and I want you to believe — we can and will beat this epidemic.

There are no Band members too young to make positive change in our community, and sometimes it is the youth who lead the change. At this time, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the work of some very special young Band members.

Last summer, at our annual convention of Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations, these young ladies had the powerful experience of being part of a gathering of strong Native women leaders. They attended workshops that inspired and motivated them to believe in themselves — and help their people at home.

After returning home, they wanted to keep meeting and keep the momentum going. They wanted to share the gift of empowerment with other Native youth. So, we formed a Breakfast Club.

Every few weeks, these young ladies and I have been meeting at the Cedarwood Restaurant before school. They have been talking and planning about how they can contribute to change. Later I will be inviting them up to talk about their plans. They are great examples of New Warriors. You will hear more about that later in the program.

### Commissioners' updates and directives

2017 was a year of transition for the Executive Branch. We said farewell to several commissioners. Some were not ratified for another term, and some pursued other opportunities. At this time, I want to acknowledge Samuel Moose, Michele Palomaki, Susan Klapel, Catherine Colstrud, and Ed Minnema. I especially commend Sam, who served the Band for 16 years, and I commend Michele because for a while she did every Commissioner job by herself — without complaining. Miigwech to each of you for your service to the Mille Lacs Band.

Chi Miigwech to the many Band members who allowed me to nominate them for these Commissioner positions, and did not make it through the legislative process. It takes courage to step forward, and I am deeply grateful for your willingness to offer your gifts to the Band.

Today, we finally have a full Cabinet of strong leaders, and new commissioners have been sworn into office. I would like to introduce them at this time. Commissioners, please stand when you hear your name:

Commissioner of Administration Shelly Diaz; Assistant Commissioner of Administration Tiger Brown Bull; Commissioner of Education Rick St. Germaine; Commissioner of Health and Human Services Rebecca St. Germaine; and Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington. Joe Nayquonabe was finally ratified for another term as Commissioner of Corporate Affairs. And last but not least, our one Commissioner whose term did not expire... Commissioner of Community De-

velopment Percy Benjamin. Miigwech, Commissioners.

### Corporate commissions

2017 was a challenging year for gaming tribes. Our region of nine Midwest states had the lowest growth in gaming nationwide. But as the lake recovers, which is happening — so will our businesses.

The good news is that due to very smart planning and forecasting, we were prepared for decline. Declining gaming revenue was offset by new revenue from our off-reservation hotel investments. 2017 was one of our best years for revenue from these hotel properties.

With a directive to maximize Band member employment, Corporate Ventures created two new programs to help hire and keep Mille Lacs Band members. The "YouPick" program was created, which allows Band members to work at times and dates that fit their schedule.

Also, a Band member loyalty program was created to ensure Band members are making a livable wage, to encourage attendance and to reward outstanding work ethic. So far, 80 Band members have received their first bonus payout from that program.

For 2018, I've directed Commissioner Nayquonabe to continue growing our non-gaming investments, maximize non-gaming job creation, and support more small business opportunities for Band members.

### Administration

The Commissioners are continuing to work on the strategic plan which is based on the existing plan. This new plan is being created with community input. I want the Commissioners to continue to hold public meetings on the plan and present it to the people by August 1.

In Administration, the Executive Branch meetings we began two years ago are ongoing. Through Band Member feedback, we are working toward Economic Justice.

We must reduce government spending while moving Band members off government programs and into self-sufficiency. Our goal is to transfer the savings to hard-working Band members who seldom use our programs.

In the Band Department of Labor, we now have many exciting changes coming, although problems resulting from turnover in leadership and staff had to be addressed first. Several months ago, the Commissioner of Administration notified me of discrepancies in how 477 support service benefits were being issued. Services were immediately frozen, and as Chief Executive, I ordered the Solicitor General to begin an investigation. The Commissioner of Finance has since joined the investigation, and an audit was just completed.

Federal programs are required to follow guidelines to maintain compliance and receive federal funding. For DOL, corrections have been made, and this program is now on course again.

To date, despite the audits, reviews, and inquiries, none of our programs have ever lost federal funding, although other tribes have. We continue to operate in accordance with federal guidelines.

One exciting opportunity DOL is pursuing: After many years of Band members requesting that we open an auto shop, we are now positioned to make this a reality, and I am issuing a directive to make this happen.

This will be a partnership between the Department of Labor and Community Development. Besides offering mechanic services for Band vehicles, this venture will also serve as a training program for Band Members who want to become certified mechanics.

Administration is also proposing a radio station on the reservation to broadcast information to Band members.

### Natural resources

In Natural Resources, I am happy to report that 2017 was a good year for our ogaa — the walleye. They appear to be



PHOTO BY BOB PEARL

The crowd filled the ballroom and overflowed into the meeting rooms at the January 9 State of the Band event.

recovering well in Mille Lacs Lake. New funds will allow us to conduct our own research rather than waiting for the state's numbers.

The Band fought very hard this year on the legal front to stop the Line 3 Pipeline that is proposed to follow the same path as Sandpiper. The Band is now a party in the legal process — and we stay on top of these issues through our lawyers.

Because of the actions of tribes and those who want clean water, Enbridge is now required to also examine other route options much farther south from our watersheds and lands. This fight is not over, but we will keep fighting until it is.

For 2018, we will continue protecting our resources and improving habitat. Also, Commissioners Harrington and Rick St. Germaine are working to transfer the Cultural Grounds back to Natural Resources. This is being done to ensure there are no federal restrictions preventing Band members from working in our cultural programs.

### Education

In Education, transitioning Nay Ah Shing School to an Ojibwe Language Immersion School is very close to becoming a reality. Five teacher trainees will be teaching students both in the elementary and secondary classes at Wewinabi and Nay Ah Shing. Immersion classes in preschool and kindergarten were launched last fall, teaching students only in Ojibwe.

We are very proud that Nay Ah Shing reading scores have greatly improved in kindergarten, as well as the first through the fifth grades. We expect scores to continue rising this year. Miigwech to our teachers, staff, and students!

For 2018, we will continue to work on the Immersion School transition and are very close to becoming one of a handful of immersion schools in the Nation. We will also pursue an exciting opportunity to create a vocational high school at the site of the old college. In today's job market, trade and skill jobs such as mechanics, welding, and plumbing are in the highest demand they have ever been. A reservation vocational school will provide more opportunity for Band members who are passionate about skilled, hands-on work.

### Community development

In Community Development in 2017, a beautiful new community center was completed in District III. This building will serve as a hub for family and community activities, wellness programs, language, and cultural offerings.

Also, plans were finalized for the new District I community center, which will break ground early this year. Lady Luck Estates is moving forward, which will create affordable housing for Band members in the Hinckley area. HHS was very excited to propose a new clinic in District II, but that is pending Band Assembly approval.

We have a very exciting housing initiative underway. Currently, there are 267 Band members on the home loan waiting list. I instructed Commissioner Benjamin to find a way to clear that list. After analyzing the waiting list, more than 60% ap-

pear to be qualified for a home loan.

Commissioner Benjamin recently presented this information to the Band Assembly and requested an appropriation for loans. If all goes as planned, we are close to being able to offer loans to about 100 Band members on the waiting list. They will be given an opportunity to purchase houses at very little cost — and use their loans to renovate these homes for ownership. This way, we will move renters to home ownership. Miigwech to the Band Assembly for their strong support for this project.

### Health and human services

In Health and Human Services, our Four Winds Treatment Center and Healing Lodge is now operational. Four Winds Healing Lodge is the only tribally owned residential treatment center in the region.

We are finally close to a decades-long goal of establishing our own Mille Lacs Band Dialysis Center. Located in Isle, this center will serve Band members and others with nine dialysis chairs, new equipment, and provider care. We anticipate open-

**“Instead of working with us to improve law enforcement, Mille Lacs County has done everything it can to interfere, including ending the law enforcement agreement with the Band.”**

ing in the fall of 2018.

My top directive for Commissioner Rebecca St. Germaine continues to be attacking the opioid crisis with a comprehensive prevention and treatment approach.

For families whose loved ones are suffering from addiction... we know how frustrated you are. Band government cannot stop a person from trying drugs or becoming addicted. But what we can do is offer help to those who are ready to receive it.

Tremendous work has been done in both prevention and treatment. Our HHS Department has developed a Harm Reduction Response Action Plan, and this plan is a cultural approach to prevention and healing that involves 30 initiatives.

You will find on your table a description of these initiatives, but I'll highlight a few. We have begun a Precision Medicine Initiative, which studies a person's DNA and tailors medication to fit their unique genetic needs. We are working toward a drug court, bringing together social services, physicians, attorneys, and probation officers to come up with the best plan for those addicted. We are also looking at alternatives to State of Minnesota Rule 25 Assessments. All of this is a much better approach to recovery than jails.

Finally, I strongly believe that we must require all elected officials and our staff to submit to regular, random drug-testing... several times each year. It is a privilege and an honor to serve Band members in an elected capacity, and also a privilege for our staff.

In the midst of this drug crisis, we should be held to a higher standard than everyone else when it comes to setting an example for the community. As Band members, you should demand that from us, and I hope that you will.

### Law enforcement

Finally, we come to the issue that has consumed the majority of my time as Chief Executive this past year, along with our Government Affairs staff and legal team. Last January, the Tribal Law and Order Act had just gone into effect, despite the objections of Mille Lacs County. The Band, the federal government, and the State now share concurrent jurisdiction over major crimes in Indian Country.

Rather than working with us to improve law enforcement, Mille Lacs County has done everything it can to interfere... including ending the law enforcement agreement with the Band in July 2016. In 2015, we had 7 drug overdoses. Since the County revoked the law enforcement agreement, we have had more than 75 overdoses and 15 deaths.

Instead of working to protect our community, the County not only terminated our law enforcement agreement — it demanded that other counties terminate their agreements with us, sought to strip our police officers of their state licenses, and threatened our officers with arrest if they did their job.

In general, the County has refused to carry out its full responsibility under Public Law 280 to provide adequate public safety for Band members in District I.

And for the most part, the highest officials in the State of Minnesota, including the Attorney General, have refused to intervene. There is an institutional problem when it comes to some Minnesota counties and Indian tribes. A tribal attorney from North Dakota pointed out the racial tensions Native Americans experience in the states that border Canada. He calls it the “The Deep North.”

That title was definitely earned this past year in Minnesota. Last summer, it appeared help might be coming from the State, when the Governor seemed to be laying down the law. After calling Mille Lacs County's approach “dangerously irresponsible” and “morally indefensible,” he gave the County and Band until September 29 to re-sign the 2008 Law Enforcement

agreement. We immediately signed and sent it to the County and the Governor. But the County refused.

At the end of the day on September 29, the Governor did nothing other than request more mediation and complain about the Supreme Court's decision upholding our treaty rights. The Mille Lacs Band has always behaved honorably and kept our word, but we are not descended from fools.

At this point, the Band Assembly and I met... and we instructed our attorneys to prepare for legal battle.

On November 17, 2017, the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band filed suit in federal court against Mille Lacs County, Sheriff Brent Lindgren, and County Attorney Joe Walsh.

The County seemed to think we were afraid of a lawsuit. We are not. The only thing we fear is the impact a lawsuit has on individual Band members, especially our children and youth. I am asking the non-Indian community: If you feel you have a dispute with the Band, please do not take it out on our children, our elders, or the Band members.

For our neighbors and fellow taxpayers living in Mille Lacs County, know that this lawsuit the county wanted will likely cost you more than \$2 million dollars.

In contrast, the Band was providing \$3 million dollars of law enforcement services to citizens in this county, and the county

vation. At that meeting, he offered to send in federal law enforcement to do the job the State of Minnesota and the County refused to do... and we immediately agreed. With the backing of the BIA federal police force, our federally deputized tribal police officers made more than 40 arrests during the December per cap week.

The BIA's federal police force provided the support and assistance the State and County would not. At the last minute, the Governor did order the State Patrol to come up to the reservation and assist, which was appreciated.

Years ago, Congressman George Miller — a friend to the tribes and a liberal Democrat — told tribal leaders to never allow the Democrats to turn us into their ATM machine. He told us to make demands of the party in exchange for support and votes.

When it comes to state and national politics, like most tribes, the Mille Lacs Band has always had good friends on both sides of the aisle. We have supported and voted for those who support us.

It is true that many of our strongest supporters in recent years tended to be from one party. So it is very ironic that we have received more help from the current administration in Washington, D.C., than we have received from the Democratic

my brother every morning," and the Elder responded that he thought that was nice and good.

Then the boy said, "While we're eating breakfast, she wraps this big rubber band around her arm like this. Then she takes a needle and puts it into her arm. And then she gets really sleepy right before we go to school."

There are those in the County and State of Minnesota who have issues with us as a Band: whether it's because of wall-eye, or treaty boundaries, or just because of who and what we are. But what about that little boy? What about his brother and his generation? What pleasure do County leaders who used law enforcement to force a boundary lawsuit get out of the life they are creating for them?

The County and Governor both wanted us to sue on the boundary. But we sued to end the drug epidemic. We sued for that little boy and every other child's life. Because when we needed help, the County and the State turned their backs.

One thing is certain: History will not treat them well.

On a much brighter note, Miigwech to our friends in Pine County. We renegotiated our law enforcement agreement with Pine County in May. Pine County not only ignored pressure from Mille Lacs County to walk away from us, but Pine County expanded our law enforcement agreement!

To our friends in Pine County, we are very grateful for your support, your friendship, and for being committed to a partnership in which everyone benefits — Indian and non-Indian.

Many New Warriors have also emerged this past year. Young and old are speaking out and getting involved in the war against drugs... and tribal police and the community are closer than ever before. There is one warrior in particular I want to acknowledge.

Band Member Sara Rice has served as our Interim Chief of Police for the past year and a half. We knew she was an excellent officer, but I've learned she is also a natural born leader and warrior for the rights of the Band.

She has fought for our Band members in the Governor's office and on the mediation team. She fears nothing in life that I know of — except she is no fan of flying. Despite that, she got on a plane multiple times with me to fight for you in Washington, D.C.

Her courage, her wisdom, and her ability to tell your story as a Band Member and police officer made her an indispensable member of our team. When we were meeting with law enforcement officials in Washington, D.C., it was Sara they wanted to listen to, not the attorneys. When a person gets very angry, it is normal to become tongue-tied. But the opposite happens to Sara — the angrier she gets, the more articulate she becomes!

She helped us get the attention of the United States government, and is a big part of why we have received so much help from the BIA. She has been an outstanding leader of our police force during a time of great stress and uncertainty... and she has the full support and confidence of the officers she leads.

That is why today, I am making this official: Sara Rice, Miigwech for your service as Interim Chief of Police... but your title is changing. You are now the permanent Chief of Police of the Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department. May you serve many years, Sara.

We have also learned that Sara is the newest member of the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training. To our knowledge, she is the first tribal police chief to serve on the POST Board. Congratulations on this honor, Sara!

### The power of the people

The Mille Lacs Band is not new to fighting for our rights. In the early 1860s, an Indian agent who was not very good at his job had a meeting in Crow Wing with several Bands of Chippewa from all over in the region. He made this speech:

"My red brothers, the winds of fifty-five winters have blown over my head and have silvered it with gray. In all that time I have never done wrong to a single human being. As the repre-



PHOTO BY BOB PEARL

**Alexis Staples spoke to the State of the Band crowd, joined by Aubrey Benjamin, Shaina White, and other young women who attended the Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations (WEWIN) conference last summer.**

chose to turn that away. I guarantee that property taxes will go up. Please ask your County commissioners to explain why they believe this is good public policy.

But do not let them tell you it is necessary to prevent the Band from asserting authority over non-Indians. Let me go through the list of things we cannot and will not do, regardless of the reservation boundary: We cannot tax non-Indians, we cannot zone non-Indians, and we do not have criminal jurisdiction to prosecute non-Indians. If anyone tells you otherwise, look at Mille Lacs County Attorney Janelle Kendall's memo from 18 years ago.

We put off the lawsuit as long as we could. The County used the best leverage it had to force us into court — it terminated the law enforcement agreement and sought to strip Band police of their authority to enforce the law. The County then pretended there was no problem as drug dealers roamed free on the reservation and as our people died because of the crime. We suffered, some of us died, and we buried our Band members. We could not find anyone to help.

But help suddenly came from a very unexpected place: from the United States Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

With only 48 hours advance notice, Secretary Zinke suddenly decided to fly to Minnesota to visit the Mille Lacs Reser-

leaders and officials in the State of Minnesota.

Ever since the execution of Dakota warriors in Mankato — the largest mass execution in American history — the State of Minnesota has allowed land to be taken, allowed treaty rights to be trampled, and stood by doing nothing while our people died.

This is not just history — it's happening right now! They are still earning the title of "The Deep North."

In 2018, there will be several key races in Minnesota. The seats for Governor, Attorney General, Members of Congress, the State House, and two U.S. Senate seats will all be up for grabs.

We must let all candidates know two things: First, do not take our votes for granted; and second, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will not be your ATM machine. We will target our support and votes to defeat those who let our people die. We will only support candidates for state and federal races who support us and our rights, regardless of political party... and we will spread that message to tribes across Minnesota and the nation.

One of our police officers told me this story. After the morning drum ceremony at school, a first grader came up to an Elder who works at the school. They had talked about breakfast that day. The little boy said, "My mom cooks breakfast for me and

sentative of the Great Father and as your friend, I advise you to sign this treaty at once.”

As the story goes, as quickly as a flash of lightning, Shawbosh-kung, the head chief of the Mille Lacs Band, sprang to his feet, and said:

“My father, look at me. The winds of fifty-five winters have blown over my head and have silvered it with gray. But – they haven’t blown my brains away.”

And then the gathering erupted with laughter from the other Indian people present.

The first year I worked for Chairman Arthur Gahbow, he made a speech about the Nelson Act. He said,

“I see a people who stayed on their own land after the Nelson Act tried to move them... I see a people who stayed on their land in spite of the burning of their houses by the County Sheriff... I see a people who are proud and strong... In your veins is the blood of Shaw-Bosh-Kung and Shaw-go-Bay. In your hearts, there is the spirit of... warriors...”

During the last major lawsuit, another great warrior, Chief Executive Marge Anderson, led the Band. Her time in office saw many changes, and under her watch the Band found prosperity and won a Supreme Court case against the State for our hunting, fishing, and gathering rights.

After receiving permission from Gina Anderson, today I am issuing a proclamation that the Mille Lacs Band Government Center will be renamed after Marge Anderson. The building itself will be a monument to her work and leadership. We will announce a date soon for the renaming ceremony, so look for that announcement. Miigwech to the Anderson family for allowing us to do this in Marge’s honor.

The great Lakota Chief, Sitting Bull, once said, “Warriors are not what you think of as warriors. The warrior is not someone who fights... He is one who sacrifices himself for the good of others. His task is to take care of the elderly, the defenseless, those who cannot provide for themselves, and above all, the children, the future of humanity.”

You, the Band members, are the New Warriors! Warriors put others first. Their foremost concern is protecting their families and their communities. A Warrior is forceful and effective without being overbearing. A Warrior is someone of character, wisdom, and insight.

The true Warrior is engaged in a struggle, and it is a daily fight. Warriors have honor; they never desire to harm others. They are people of peace and compassion.

I look out into this audience and see a room full of Warriors. You will lead our people into a new time of peace and justice. We will continue to fight all things that are toxic to our community — whether drugs, racism, or injustice.

We stand together at this time and have the Great Spirit on our side. We have our goodness, our decency, our beliefs, our language, and our traditions. We have our sovereignty as our sword and our shield.

I am so humbled by all the Band members who have come forward this year as Warriors... who are speaking out against injustice... there are hundreds of you, young and old. I am very grateful to every one of you.

You give me strength... you give us all strength... and I have never felt stronger! Because the Power of the People is always greater than the People in Power! Miigwech!



PHOTO BY DIANE GIBBS

Kayona Williams shared a moment with Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin after the State of the Band address.



PHOTO BY BRETT LARSON

Shelly Day, Monica Benjamin, and District III Representative Harry Davis.

## Tribal Police Chief Earns Back-to-Back Honors

Brett Larson Staff Writer

Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin announced at the 2018 State of the Band Address January 9 that Binesiikwe Sara Rice has been appointed Chief of the Mille Lacs Tribal Police Department. Benjamin also announced that the Governor had just appointed Rice to the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

“Sara Rice has been an outstanding leader of our police force during a time of great stress and uncertainty,” Chief Executive Benjamin said, referring to Mille Lacs County revoking its cooperative law enforcement agreement with the Band in 2016 and the escalating opioid crisis that has followed. “She has the full support and confidence of the officers she leads.”

The announcements were met with a standing ovation.

Rice said she is humbled and honored by the appointment. “I am grateful to Chief Executive Benjamin for putting her faith in me and look forward to serving my fellow Band members in this role.”

Rice is an enrolled member of the Mille Lacs Band and has spent her entire life on the reservation. She attended Onamia High School, received her law enforcement degree from Central Lakes College, and earned a bachelor of arts degree in organizational behavior from the College of St. Scholastica.

She joined the Mille Lacs Tribal Police in 2001 and has served the Band ever since as a Police Officer and Conservation Officer prior to being named Interim Chief in 2016.

She acknowledged Band member officers who preceded her and served as role models, as well as cultural mentors who helped her develop her Anishinaabe identity, which gave her the strength to take a leadership role.

“I want to help set the tone for structure and stability, especially at a time and place of so much volatility around us,” she said.

In 2016, Mille Lacs County revoked a law enforcement agreement with the Band, which has taken away Tribal officers’ authority to enforce Minnesota law in the midst of a drug crisis.

“We knew Sara was an excellent officer,” Chief Executive



PHOTO STEVE KOHLS/BRAINERD DISPATCH

Tribal Police Chief Sara Rice received a standing ovation during the State of the Band address.

Benjamin said in her address, “but I’ve learned she is also a natural born leader and warrior for the rights of the Band.”

Rice has been actively involved in the Band’s negotiations with the County over a new agreement, in successfully strengthening the Band’s law enforcement agreement with Pine County, and in securing federal and state law enforcement support on the Mille Lacs Reservation.

In November, Rice escorted U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke on a ride-along during the Secretary’s visit to the Mille Lacs Reservation.

### POST board appointment

Governor Mark Dayton appointed Sara to the Minnesota POST Board, making her the first tribal police chief to serve in that role. “Chief Rice will bring an invaluable perspective to the

POST Board, as it works to provide law enforcement officers throughout Minnesota with the additional training and support they need to better protect and serve their communities,” Dayton said.

“I would like to thank Governor Mark Dayton for appointing me to the Minnesota POST Board,” Rice said. “It’s an honor to have the opportunity to serve the law enforcement community in this capacity.”

POST is responsible for licensing more than 10,500 active peace officers and more than 250 active part-time peace officers. The POST Board has the legislative authority to adopt administrative rules that have the force and effect of law, rules that enable the board to establish policies and standards to which all licensees must adhere.

# Band Assembly Called to Order — 2017 Legislative Highlights

Secretary-Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu

Good morning and welcome. It is great to see everyone. As it has been at the last three State of the Band Addresses, I am again, honored and humbled to stand before you as the Secretary-Treasurer for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. As the leader of the Legislative Branch, I also serve as the Speaker of the Band Assembly, so part of my responsibility is to now call the 1st Session of the 18th Assembly to order.

The Band Assembly not only enacts revised and new laws, we also review and approve hundreds of other business items annually. Including but not limited to: Appropriation bills for all government budgets including Corporate Ventures non-gaming and casino operations, contracts, resolutions for land leases, foster care licenses, and grant applications. We oversee and analyze all Band investments. For the sake of a timely report, I'm going to highlight a few areas in which we are most proud.

We finalized revisions to the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance and sent to the Chief Executive for her concurrence. It became law, and the new TERO Commissioners were ratified by the elected officials. Those Commission members are Virgil Wind, Valerie Harrington, Mitch Matrious, Bonnie Dorr, Bob Eagle, Cheryl Miller, and Scott Tossey.

The new TERO Commission replaces the Administrative Policy Board as the TERO enforcement entity. The commission will work with the TERO Director, Craig Hansen, to develop the policies and procedures for the TERO program, which is aimed

**“As we know, no one is immune from the effects of the drug epidemic that has attacked and crippled our community. ...Band Assembly has a special appreciation, and a heartfelt thank you goes out to those individuals and groups publicly opposing the epidemic.”**

at creating an environment that provides a content work place for all employees and a productive workforce for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Band Assembly continues to support the Four Winds Treatment Facility in Brainerd. It was last reported that they were almost at full capacity with 16 clients. As we know, no one is immune from the effects of the drug epidemic that has attacked and crippled our community. The Band Assembly will continue to do what we can to support the Executive and Judicial Branches of Government as well as other Community efforts that work to address the problem. Band Assembly has a special appreciation, and a heartfelt thank you goes out to those individuals and groups publicly opposing the epidemic, such as: Sober Squad, Smudge Walkers, and Natives Against Heroin. CHI MII GWECH TO YOU ALL. And for those struggling with addiction, we will continue to pray for you.

If any of you have driven by the Sher property here in District I, just a few miles north on County Road 25, also known as Timber Trails Road, you can see the District I clinic taking shape. This is exciting because those of you who work in the current clinic and health services area know that expansion is needed in order to provide cohesive clinical services to our growing population. Coming along soon will be the new District I Community Center that will include a swimming pool, additional meeting spaces, and areas for expanded recreational activities.

Band Assembly appropriated the funds for the purchase of

a dialysis facility in DII, Isle. We are closing on the purchase this week. The new facility will be a convenient option for those individuals needing dialysis treatments. Keep watch for more information from HHS.

The finishing touches are being completed at the new Hinckley Community Center in District III and although I haven't had a tour yet, I hear it is a spectacular facility with new meeting spaces and areas for increased recreational activities.

Government budgets for fiscal '18 – '19 have been approved by both Band Assembly and the Chief Executive. We were short money for projected needs based on the forecast of net revenue earnings from the casinos. After thorough evaluation of proposed budgets, consideration of declining and flat gaming revenues, increase in Band membership, and higher demand for Band programs, the elected leadership agreed to authorize a small appropriation of the earnings from our fiscal year '17 Long Term Savings to supplement the projected shortfalls. We have no plans to touch the principal balance in our Long Term Savings. Our Long Term Savings Investments are doing well.

The success of the Band's Long Term Savings is not because of one person alone. The Band's elected officials appointed Adam Valdez as the Commissioner of Finance to oversee the Band's investment portfolio. Adam's expertise in finance, investments, and the stock market has had a significant impact on our investments in a good way.

In relation to budgets, last spring, I held Revenue Allocation Plan (RAP) meetings in all districts and the urban area. I, with the help of the Commissioner of Finance, presented information on the Band's current Revenue Allocation Plan, and we talked about the challenges in meeting budget needs based on the percentage allocations of the Plan. I took comments and answered questions from the audience. We then had subsequent discussions with Band Assembly, the Chief Executive, and Band Commissioners on the various factors that require changes to the RAP. We are finalizing proposed revisions to the Revenue Allocation Plan, revisions that are based on the needs that I earlier mentioned. Once this proposal is finalized and approved by Band elected leadership, it will be shared with community members, and it will go to the Department of Interior for approval.

In 2017, the Office of Management and Budget undertook the major task of converting our existing accounting software system, Fundware, to the AX Microsoft Accounting Software system. The conversion was long overdue. The Band had been using Fundware for over 17 years, and the system had become cumbersome, hard to manage, antiquated, and was very deficient from a technological standpoint. The company that owns Fundware advised the Band that they would cease supporting the software after December 31, 2017.

AX is an improvement from Fundware in regards to technology, system functionality, and the platform the system utilizes. It has the look and feel of Microsoft Office and works very well with Microsoft Office products.

The conversion took over 15 months to initiate and complete because of the enormity of the processes and transactions that OMB handles on a routine basis. There were a few glitches, as could be expected in any major software conversion. There are still a few remaining items to iron out with the system and certain processes including further training, but overall, the Band has gained a system that will be extremely beneficial to the Band and Band members. OMB staffers are working very hard to gain full knowledge of the new system, and they plan to roll out their knowledge and access to the system across the Band government in the near future.

I am now going to share OMB processing statistical information.

The OMB Department is comprised of 16 employees man-



PHOTO STEVE KOHLS/BRainerd DISPATCH

**Secretary-Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu called to order the 18th Session of the Mille Lacs Band Assembly.**

aged by the Commissioner of Finance.

They manage 22 areas of service (funds) comprised of over 259 distinct budgets.

There are 75 active grants of which 38 are federally funded, 35 are state funded, and two are privately funded.

The total amount of grant funds is \$30,961,455.

External reporting to funding agencies consists of 17 monthly fiscal grant reports, 43 quarterly fiscal grant reports, and 17 year-end annually fiscal grant reports.

Accounts payable checks processed in the last three months average 5,548 checks and EFTs per month.

Payroll averages 3,429 checks per month with 85 percent being done as direct deposits.

Per capita averages 3,200 per month — with 45 percent being done as direct deposits.

Minor Trusts has about 115 transactions per month — this includes payouts and hardships.

So that gives an idea as to why the software upgrade is crucial to the OMB office: the tremendous amount of transactions they process and keep records of. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we work to accomplish this upgrade.

This past year, we had the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe motor vehicle license plate redesign contest, and Band Assembly examined the submissions, voted, and selected the plate designed by talented young lady and Band member Simone Boyd-Evans. Regular plates are available, but I was informed there is a slight delay for the Veterans' plates.

Congratulations, Simone! Awesome job!

Since 2015, the Legislative Office has hosted three annual legislative women's gatherings. Success and appreciation of the gatherings led to us starting condensed monthly women's gatherings where we have Kim Sam, with her Mothers of Traditions concept, come in and talk to our ladies about wellbriety and life. We also play Ojibwe Bingo facilitated by Mikayla Schaaf to keep us sharp on some of the language, and of course we have a delicious meal. Spending time with fellow women in the community talking about issues in our lives and suggestions on how to cope with those issues has been extremely beneficial to me as a woman and elected official for the Band. Mii Gwech to these ladies for making our gatherings fun and fulfilling. We will continue to have monthly gatherings based on interest.

Lastly, don't forget to pick up your Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe flag, courtesy of the Band Assembly. Display it proudly at home, work, car, or wherever you see it fitting nicely. It's a great way to show how proud you are of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

That completes my report. Please enjoy the rest of the presentation, and now I'll turn it back over to Joe to move on to the next agenda item.

Miigwech!

# State of the Judiciary: The 'Ripple Effect' of the Opioid Crisis

Chief Justice Rayna Churchill

Aaniin, Madame Chief Executive Benjamin, distinguished members of the Band Assembly, my fellow Mille Lacs Band members, employees, and guests, welcome to the 2018 State of the Band Address. It is a pleasure to provide you with the State of the Judiciary Address as prescribed by the Band Statutes. On behalf of the Judicial Branch, it is a pleasure to see all of you brave the cold weather and attend this annual event.

I, Rayna Churchill, serve as the Chief Justice as well as the District III Appellate Justice. Clarence Boyd, Zah gah gew, serves as the District I Appellate Justice, and our newest member, Binesi ikwi, Ramona Applegate, serves as the District II Appellate Justice. Please stand and be recognized.

The Appellate Justices hear cases appealed from the District Court. We also hear Mille Lacs Band Election Disputes and Unlawful Detainer cases as prescribed by the Band Statutes.

At the District Court level, Honorable David Christensen, Mah ishoo Mah guhrec, primarily hears cases involving family matters, truancy, child support, civil, criminal, domestic violence, and harassment matters. Please stand to be recognized.

In 2017, we saw a 6 percent increase from 2016 in new court case filings, which is approximately 80 additional cases. There were 1780 hearings conducted and 3,621 orders issued by the court in 2017. The District Court Judge, Special Magistrates, Court Staff, Bailiff/Process Server, and Guardians ad Litem worked diligently on all of the cases filed and heard. I would like to give them a nod in appreciation for their dedication to the Judicial Branch and the work they do to provide justice. Thank you!

I would like to turn your attention to the presentation on the screen. As you can see this is a drop of water, which has caused a ripple effect. A ripple effect can be positive or negative depending on the situation.

Within our court system, we have noticed during the past two years the effect the opioid crisis has in all types of court cases. For example, in the center is the opioid and drug crisis. The impact it has had on the Tribal Court is shown on this slide in the maroon tint. The opioid ripple effect, caused:

- The need for children to be removed from homes, which in turn resulted in guardianship and custody petitions being filed,
- An increase in truancy cases,
- An increase in domestic abuse and harassment orders issued,
- Elder abuse issues,
- More unlawful detainer filings, which are evictions from Band homes,
- Increase child support & paternity cases,
- Criminal and civil complaints; and,
- Lastly, electric shut off for the homes of those who use these drugs.

This, in turn, has affected the Mille Lacs Band Government Services in many areas as shown in the blue ripple. Whether it is Tribal police being called, Housing Maintenance boarding up and renovating homes, Family Services removing children from their homes for their safety, Health & Human services departments addressing the needs of the users, their families and children; Circle of Health costs, the finance office, etc. Each department is affected. The ripple effect moves outward touching the reservation in all areas as indicated in gold. Districts I, II, III, and the Urban area. Immediate family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, and all employees that work on or for the reservation are impacted. We cannot forget that it affects the culture and traditions of the Band as well. Lastly, the ripple affects the external communities — meaning the surrounding towns, counties, and statewide.

The opioid problem is not new to the Mille Lacs Band; however, it significantly resurfaced the past two years. This year alone there were 12 deaths directly related to heroin and

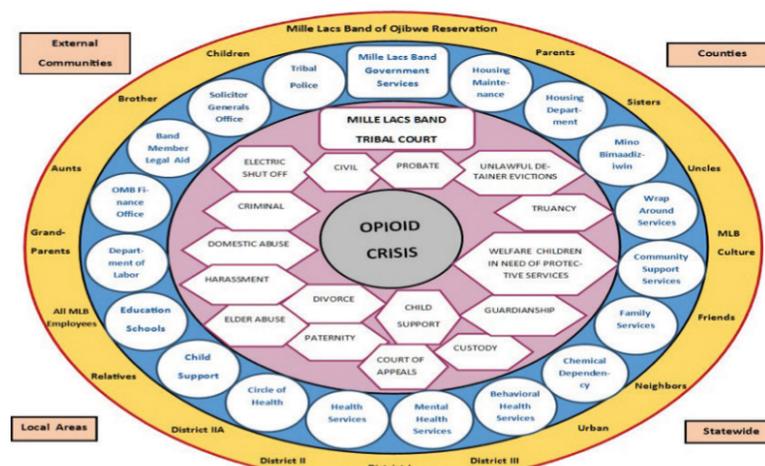


PHOTO BY BOB PEARL

Chief Justice Rayna Churchill delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address.

substance abuse that we are aware of. That is one death a month for our small community. There may be other casualties indirectly related to the use of drugs. This is not acceptable.

I read in the Band's newsletter that every department supervisor from the Band's Health and Human Services Department attended a meeting to create a coordinated response to prevention and treatment. I was happy to read that article because it means that we are moving in the right direction.

A major goal that I mentioned at last year's State of the Band was to conduct a Band-wide Justice System Strategic Planning Meeting after everyone had time to review the Needs Assessment. The goal was attained in 2017. During the last two days in August, the Center for Court Innovation assisted us in the Strategic Planning meeting in which all of the elected officials were invited and many of the Elected Officials, Commissioners, and Directors participated. After two additional condensed sessions in October and November, we completed the strategic planning matrix. The outcome of the strategic plan indicates several goals and objectives to address the gaps in the Band's services.

For presentation purposes, I will condense the top five problems indicated by the planning stakeholders:

Our MLB Statutes are outdated and need to be revised to improve the administration of justice within the Band.

**"We need to come together and be that drop of water that causes a ripple effect of a positive nature."**

Substance Abuse is the most pressing community safety concern. We need to develop a culturally acceptable, collaborative, healing based approach within the justice system to address substance abuse.

There is a lack of cultural practices within the justice system. Cultural practices, traditional forms of dispute resolution, and healing should be incorporated into the justice system.

Truancy and juvenile delinquency threaten the future of the Band. We need to develop a response to address truancy and provide resources for the youth.

The Mille Lacs Band should strengthen communication and cooperation among internal and external justice system agen-

cies, social service providers, and community-based partners at all levels.

I will be reaching out to the other two branches to request a three-branch meeting to create a plan of action to address the goals and objectives determined by the Stakeholders in the Strategic Planning Meeting.

In 2017, we strengthened court security by implementing the use of a walk-through metal detector and hand-held wand to ensure the safety of all who enter the courtroom.

Due to the increase in number and the complexity of court cases, we received additional funding for another Special Magistrate to conduct hearings on Mondays for the next two years. This will give the District Court Judge time outside of the courtroom to compose orders. We also received additional funding for another court clerk.

We have added a second week of hearings on the Band Website so that it now displays two consecutive weeks of the court docket.

Based on the issues that we see on a daily basis in the Judicial Branch, I would like to take the time to recognize those individuals who have appeared in court — any court — due to drugs, alcohol, or any addiction, and have overcome them. I applaud those individuals who have the strength and determination to overcome their dependency, and reached for a higher purpose in life. It is a pleasure to see these individuals moving forward in life and reaching out to others to help them as well. Chimiigwech!

In closing, the Mille Lacs Band can move beyond the opioid crisis and other drug related problems. This does not define who we are as a Band, as Ojibwe Anishinaabe, as a people that speak and practice the traditional ways. We can overcome by uniting — each Branch working in unison to accomplish an end-result. Every one of us has been affected, in one way or another, by this crisis — thus the ripple effect. As stated earlier, I will be reaching out to the other two branches to determine a date for a three-branch meeting so that we can address these issues.

We need to come together and be that drop of water that causes a ripple effect of a positive nature. I found this quote from the Dalai Lama to be profound and wanted to share it with you.

"Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects."

Let's move the Band forward as a whole, as a tribe united, to make a difference for our members. Thank you for attending the 2018 State of the Band Address.



MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

## Preserving Our Language and Culture

By Larry Amik Smallwood

*The late Larry Amik Smallwood wrote this for the Moccasin Telegraph series published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted to help preserve his teachings and pass them on to the next generation.*

We keep talking about our dying language and culture as time goes on. Our spiritual leaders and Elders are becoming fewer and fewer, yet nobody wants to put any effort into pursuing that part of life, which is important to us as Anishinaabe people. It seems everyone cares more about what's happening every day with contemporary issues and the way of life. The main concerns are: "Where are you going tonight?" "What are you doing this weekend?" "Who is all going to be there?" "I can't make it to the Big Drum ceremony, I have a pool tournament." The list goes on.

We in the Mille Lacs area offer a lot in the way of culture and language. We have all our ceremonies. We have places you can go to learn some of the language and culture, the schools, the community, the Language and Culture Grounds in Rutledge. These places all wait for us. We have to set aside meaningless priorities and get to know about who we are, so we can continue being the proud Anishinaabe that we once were.

People ask what we teach at the immersion grounds. Here's an example, taken from a three-day event we hosted.

We had some beginning Ojibwe language lessons for people who had never learned Ojibwe before.

We had a gentleman doing some black ash basket weaving. He showed people how to peel the bark off the tree and make baskets out of it.

At the same time, there were ongoing workshops where one of the instructors did some deer hide tanning the old way — scraping and soaking the hides, scraping the hair off, and using the brains of the deer to tan the hide. I remember watching my mom tan hides this way. It smelled bad, oh man, did it stink!

Then we had a lady in another part of the center making traditional pointed-toe moccasins, the original Ojibwe moccasins. She was doing beadwork and moccasin making, showing people different ways to stitch.

We also had some unfinished rice from the previous fall, so we had a hands-on ricing demonstration. People actually got in there and parched the rice, jigged it, winnowed it, and boiled it. That took a couple days.

Some people come to the center for just one day at a time, which is not enough time to teach them a lot. So these people get a little bit of information on our culture, a little bit of our history, a little bit on the tribal government, then they go down on the center's grounds to get hands-on experience doing whatever the instructors are doing that day, whether it's hide tanning, finishing rice, or something else. Whatever we do, though, the goal is always to help teach and preserve our ways.

So there is a lot of language and culture offered in our areas. All we have to do is make an effort to learn, learn so we can pass it on to our children, grandchildren and we-ehs.



## Youth Create Tribute to Mentor With Help From Native Artist, Community Members

By Adrienne Benjamin Mille Lacs Band Member

During the weekend of January 5 – 7, the Ge-niigaanizijig youth project welcomed renowned Native artist Steven Paul Judd, a Kiowa/Choctaw artist from Oklahoma best known for his t-shirt campaign with the NTVS clothing company. He has been a writer for Disney, a director of small films, and an all-around mixed media artist. Steven's NTVS website bio states that he "creates art that makes you laugh, makes you think, and makes you feel pride," and he accomplished just that in his short time here in Mille Lacs.

Steven was contacted after Ge-niigaanizijig leaders came up with an idea to pay homage to Amikogaabaw'iban (Larry Smallwood), who was vital in the creation of the Ge-niigaanizijig youth project. They wanted to teach the youth about this beloved mentor and introduce them to art and to Ojibwe language associated with creativity.

"Steven was the perfect choice, as he is a hip up-and-coming popular artist," said Byron Ninham, Ge-niigaanizijig Project Director. "We want to engage the kids and get them excited about language and about art, and this was a great way to do both."

The youth began the weekend with a prayer by staff member Waabishkigaabaw (John P. Benjamin) and a light dinner and meet-and-greet with Steven Paul Judd. The expectations for the weekend were explained, and the youth were off to bed

to prepare for the next day's activities.

The next day began with Steven telling his life story. He told the youth that he was working at his tribe's bingo hall and saw an ad for a screenwriting competition for Disney. He was among 10 finalists selected to become new screenwriters for upcoming Disney sitcoms. His message was, "Whatever your dream is, you should work to make it happen."

He went on to show the kids his art creations that ranged from Mindians (an artistic play on the Minions) to photo pop art in which he overlaid images of Godzilla into old photos of teepee villages. He stressed the importance of seeing Native faces represented not only on TV but in art and advertising as well.

The next session was the tile art project. The end result was kept a secret to the youth. As they were painting, many of them were trying to guess what they were painting; guesses ranged from a map to a galaxy. When the tiles were all put together, a wonderful feeling fell across the room as members of Amik's family, Ge-niigaanizijig staff, community members, and youth realized that they had created a painting of Amik.

They stood together around the art piece and held a talking circle, sharing thoughts about the meaning of the piece and stories about Amikogaabaw'iban. It was truly a beautiful moment for all involved.

After that session, an amazing dinner was cooked by Anthony Buckanaga, and Steven worked on one last painting for the community. It was his own rendition of the cover of the Dr. Seuss book *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, translated into Ojibwemowin. That awesome painting will find a home in one of the tribe's buildings after it is prepped and properly framed. The two paintings were also displayed front-and-center during the State of the Band speech on January 9.

The next morning, the youth talked about their experiences with group staff and shared their thoughts and feelings about the weekend. They also talked about what learning language and culture means to them and why it is important to continue learning the language. Jenai Beaulieu said it best: "It's important to learn about your culture because it's what all of the Elders in the past would have wanted us to do."

The next Ge-niigaanizijig camp is tentatively scheduled for March and will involve theater. Be on the lookout for more information as it is available.



# East Lake Hearing Focuses on Cultural Impact of Proposed Line 3 Pipeline

By **Li Boyd** Mille Lacs Band Member **Brett Larson** Photographer

On the evening of January 16, smoked fish and hominy soup opened the informational hearing for the draft Anishinaabe Cumulative Impact Assessment (ACIA) at the East Lake Community Center. The fish was locally sourced from the waters of Turtle Island and served as a reminder of what the ACIA was developed to protect. Tap water from the clean, local well was also served, to illustrate what is really at stake and under discussion in the pages of this document. It was written to address the Enbridge Line 3 Replacement project, but its creators hope it could serve as the foundation for much more.

District II Representative David 'Niib' Aubid opened the event with remarks in Ojibwemowin comparing corporations like Enbridge to the Wiindigoo — the evil spirit monster of Anishinaabe oral traditions. Winona LaDuke, whose organization Honor the Earth developed the ACIA in conjunction with the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, followed with a summary of the document.

The ACIA is built around the understanding that Indigenous communities have fundamentally different values than those of the dominant corporate culture. Anishinaabe people are connected to the land in ways that the Minnesota state government doesn't understand and can't quantify. Yet mega-projects like Line 3 impact the land, and therefore the Anishinaabe, more than perhaps any industry in the region. The most crucial part of evaluating a project like Line 3 for approval is determining what existing conditions are and how much the project is likely to change them.

For the State, this is encapsulated in the Environmental Impact Statement, which weighs project costs, profits, and revenue against things like habitat loss, social justice, and potential serious risk. The State deals in numbers and studies — quantities that can be cataloged and compared. In the State's system, everything, even the health and wellness of its residents, is reduced to a commodity versus a cost.

Indigenous understanding is concerned with the health of the village as a whole, the community's spiritual well-being, and the robustness of the land and animals. Everything is connected. To this day, most Native community leaders prioritize spiritual health over economic concerns. The Anishinaabe duty is to each other and the earth, and the ACIA was created to evaluate Line 3 impacts by these standards.

With the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the subsequent release of the revised Final Environmental Impact Statement, it became clear that the State had no intention of addressing the concerns of Indigenous communities. The State suggested that impacts could be mitigated through education and pay-offs to affected communities.

Fortunately, Honor the Earth and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe created their own assessment, which is diligently researched

and crafted to fill in the blanks of the State's reports. The document serves as a historical analysis and a framework for tribes to address the failings of the State regulatory process. Indigenous communities in the United States, including the Anishinaabe, have dealt with loss and inequity for generations, suffering undue trauma as a result of industrialization. The ACIA is a statement that the people will no longer be ignored in the State process. The people are speaking — telling the State and Enbridge that their oil and chemical projects are not welcome, and the ACIA is the most comprehensive supporting document for these arguments ever created.

The ACIA focuses on Anishinaabe knowledge that can't be expressed outside of a cultural context. The Anishinaabe connection to land is interwoven with spiritual beliefs and the understanding that the land, landscape, plants, and animals are all alive and have their own spirits. The Anishinaabe people have recognized these manidoo for as long as they have lived in this region, and though these things are intangible and unquantifiable, they are an imperative truth to Anishinaabe people. The people must care for the manidoo who, in turn, care for them, and it must be ensured that the ecosystem around these beings not be diminished. Enbridge has demonstrated no ability or even willingness to take on the responsibility of caring for and watching out for these beings. To the State and these industrial corporations, these Anishinaabe truths might as well be fanciful myths with no meaning.

Some might argue that historical trauma has little bearing on present-day events, but the comments made by Tania Aubid illustrate the link between past and present trauma. After Winona's summary of the ACIA, Tania spoke about her experiences last year at Standing Rock during the resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline. She recounted her experiences of an event in which the pipeline construction crews bulldozed sacred sites that had been recently reported to the State of North Dakota. "I witnessed them plowing up the ancestors," Tania said. "That's trauma. And Enbridge had a 28 percent hand in Standing Rock."

Following Tania, Keenan Gonzales testified that the pipeline would affect "everything that makes Minnesota Minnesota" — water, fish, rice, trees, and game. He questioned society's priorities, saying it would make more sense to invest in renewable energy.

Harvey Goodsky talked about his experience paddling the Mississippi from the headwaters to Big Sandy Lake. "The Mississippi alone, that one body of water alone, is enough to fight for," he said. "Thank you to those who showed up and those who put together the Anishinaabe Cumulative Impact Assessment."

The ACIA is available in its entirety at [mnchippewatribe.org/impact\\_assessment.html](http://mnchippewatribe.org/impact_assessment.html).

## February News Briefs

**Native Vets Memorial Planned for National Mall:** A memorial on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian will acknowledge the military sacrifice of Native Americans, who served in the U.S. military at a higher per capita rate than any other ethnic group in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Museum staff have met with tribal leaders to discuss a design that will include the 567 federally recognized tribes and their spirituality. *Source: cbsnews.com.*

**Tribes Challenge Discriminatory Voting Practices:** Native American advocates are gathering stories from Indian Country that show a wide range of obstacles to voting, including election sites far from reservations, poll workers who don't speak tribal languages, unequal access to early voting sites, intimidation of tribal members at polling places, and voter ID requirements. If working with local election officials doesn't work, tribes may turn to the 1965 Voting Rights Act to try to force changes. *Source: seattletimes.com.*

**Line 3 Construction Could Begin This Summer:** The Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioner (PUC) voted unanimously in January to set an April briefing deadline, which means a decision on issuing a permit to Enbridge Energy could come as early as May or June. On January 2, five Minnesota Ojibwe tribes — Mille Lacs, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, White Earth, and Red Lake — filed a petition asking the PUC to delay the permitting process until a cultural survey on the proposed route was finished. Although the route avoids reservations, tribes argue that their off-reservation treaty rights give them reason to oppose the pipeline. *Source: minnpost.com.*

**Dakota Tribes File Suit Against Drug Companies:** Three tribes from South Dakota have joined the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in filing suit against manufacturers of opioids, saying they concealed and minimized the risk to tribal communities. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, and the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate sued 24 manufacturers alleging the opioid epidemic has wreaked havoc on all of South Dakota's nine tribes. Native Americans have the highest rate of opioid overdose, and one in 10 Native youth age 12 or older used prescription opioids for non-medical purposes in 2012 — double the rate for white youth. *Source: brainerddispatch.com.*

**Water Clarity May Be Hurting Walleyes:** Attendees at the DNR Roundtable in January heard from scientist Gretchen Hansen, who is trying to understand the decline in the Mille Lacs walleye population by studying food webs, invasive species, and other factors. She said water clarity has increased more dramatically than water temperature, which may be forcing small walleyes into deep water, where they are preyed upon by larger walleyes. *Source: stcloudtimes.com.*

### What's your story?

Send suggestions to [brett.larson@millelacsband.com](mailto:brett.larson@millelacsband.com) or call 320-237-6851.

The March issue deadline is February 15.



Keenan Gonzales, Tania Aubid, and Harvey Goodsky testified at the Tribal Cumulative Impact Assessment hearing at East Lake Community Center January 16.

## February Band Briefs

### All-Native Basketball Tourney March 30 –

**April 1:** The new Hinckley Community Center will play host to a basketball tournament from March 30 to April 1 sponsored by the Mille Lacs Band Niigaan Program and the Onamia Indian Ed Program. All proceeds sponsor Mille Lacs area youth initiatives. For more information or to register your team, contact Byron Ninham at 320-362-1023.

**District III Program Fair February 14:** Come to the Aazhoomog Community Center February 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to learn about programs, services, and jobs, fill out job and service applications, and meet with representatives from Band programs.

**Construct Tomorrow February 22:** Construct Tomorrow, a hands-on opportunity for area high school students to learn about careers in the construction industry, will be held February 22 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Grand Casino Hinckley Events Center. Throughout the day, attendees will be able to explore the trades through hands-on activities, learn about apprenticeship programs, and meet potential employers.

Construct Tomorrow in Hinckley is hosted by the Mille Lacs Band in partnership with Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc., a nonprofit employment and training agency and partner in the Minnesota Workforce Center System, and Construct Tomorrow, a collective of apprenticeship instructors, prime and sub-contractors, government representatives from labor and workforce development, and youth educators. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1nyQJ2l>.

For more information call TERO Director Craig Hansen at 320-532-4778 or 320-630-2617 or email [craig.hansen@millelacsband.com](mailto:craig.hansen@millelacsband.com).

**New Wellbriety Group in District III:** Monica Haglund is starting a new Wellbriety group on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Hinckley Corporate Building. For more information, contact Monica at 320-384-0149.

**Band Member Featured at Cedar Cultural Center February 10:** The Cedar Cultural Center presents the seventh annual Cedar Commissions on February 9 and 10, featuring new works by City Counselor (Nicky Steves), Julia Hobart, Shawn Mouacheupao, Leah Lemm, Julian Manzara, and Ashantiva (Elizabeth Ashantiva). The Cedar Commissions is a flagship program for emerging artists made possible with a grant from the Jerome Foundation, and has showcased new work by nearly 40 local emerging composers and musicians since its inception.

Leah Lemm, who will perform on Saturday, February 10, is a singer/songwriter and member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Leah's RUINS travels through the course of moments, the times between waking and dreaming, and across a land that has intelligence and emotion — at the cusp of deterioration and rebuilding. The work is vocally and lyrically driven with piano as a loyal sidekick, and the rhythm section as companion characters. Leah weaves Morse code and sirens into the composition, calling on poetic sounds to add to the cinematic, post-apocalyptic landscape.

**Send your briefs, shout-outs, kudos, and thank yous to [brett.larson@millelacsband.com](mailto:brett.larson@millelacsband.com).**



PHOTO BY OFFICER A. KRUYER

Metro Transit Officers who participated in the event were Officer Blakey, Officer Eam, Community Outreach Carol LaFleur, Officer Jones, Officer Johnson, Sergeant Hutchinson, and Officer Kruyer (not pictured). Heidi is pictured standing in front of Officer Johnson, and Aureliano is in the very front.

## Urban Youth 'Shop with a Cop'

A Mille Lacs Band member and a Band descendant were among the kids lucky enough to "Shop with a Cop" December 11 as part of an annual Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) program.

Heidi Stenquist, 11, and Aureliano Costillo, 9, shopped at Target with Metro Transit Officers as part of the department's Community Outreach Program, which provided \$100 gift cards for each child to purchase Christmas presents for immediate family members and treats for themselves.

Before shopping, the youth ate dinner with officers at the police department and toured the MTPD facility. The youth had a great experience hanging out with officers and meeting K9 Jack.

Heidi's mom, Tanya Stenquist, said her daughter had a lot

of fun and that everyone was very nice. "She was really happy that they said she could buy gifts for her family and dog," said Tanya.

Aureliano said he enjoyed shopping at Target and picking out toys for his sister and a Lego game and Pac-Man for himself. He also liked touring the Metro Transit Police building and visiting Chief Harrington's office — as well as the cheese and pepperoni pizza! Aureliano's mom, Leslie Shabaiash, said it was a great experience to meet the people who protect the community.

Metro Transit Police Chief John Harrington and a former colleague created "Shop with a Cop" in 2000, when Harrington was a commander with the St. Paul Police Department.



Left: First-place winner Rachel Dorion. Center: Second-place winner Dawn Chosa. Right: Third-place winner Kelvin Shingobe.

## HHS Sponsors Manoomin Cookoff

The judges at the 3rd Annual Health and Human Services Cooking Contest January 18 had their work cut out for them, choosing the best out of 15 phenomenal entries.

With a manoomin theme, it's not surprising that Band members demonstrated impressive cooking skills. Dishes ranged from traditional hotdishes to sweet breakfast porridge to exotic Asian- and Mexican-fusion recipes. A steady stream of guests left with full bellies after sampling the fare.

In the end, it was Rachel Dorion, Dawn Chosa, and Kelvin

Shingobe who took the top three prizes, which included gift cards and plaques made by Tracy Burr.

Rachel, who prepared a "Mille-axican" hotdish, said she enjoys preparing food for large groups of people. One of her favorite experiences in recent years was cooking weekly meals at the Minobimaadiziwin Hotel.

Miigwech to the organizers, chefs, judges, and guests for another year of good eatin'.

# Indians in Minnesota Reclaiming Traditional Tobacco

By Kelly Smith Star Tribune

*This story was reprinted with permission from the Star Tribune.* Mat Pendleton pulled his kids away from the basketball and video games on a recent Saturday to teach them a bit about a long-lost tradition.

Not far from the banks of the Minnesota River, they joined other youngsters trudging through snow in thick brush to harvest traditional tobacco — a cultural practice that's making a comeback on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation, two hours southwest of the Twin Cities.

"This is the red osier dogwood," said Pendleton, the band's recreation director, pointing to thin trees also known as red willow. "When we harvest it, we take what we're going to use."

Pendleton's work on this day is part of a growing effort by Lower Sioux community leaders and American Indians across the state to re-establish the use of sacred tobacco, which is intended to be set out in prayer — or smoked but not inhaled — for spiritual and ceremonial purposes. In so doing, they also hope to decrease consumption of commercial tobacco, which is used in cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.

While smoking rates among the general population have decreased, smoking rates among American Indians remain the highest of any racial group in the United States. In Minnesota, 59 percent of American Indians report smoking, while about 14 percent of the entire adult population smokes. In fact, American Indians across the Northern Plains have the highest smoking rates of American Indians in the country.

"When we get below 50 percent, then I think we'll have reached a turning point," said Sharon Day, executive director of the Indigenous Peoples Task Force in Minneapolis. "Quickly, we are making those changes, mostly through our own efforts."

Minnesota's nearly 60,000 American Indians have the highest cancer and cancer mortality rates in the state, according to health data. As a result, the 11 sovereign tribes are implementing more rules about commercial tobacco and encouraging the use of traditional tobacco.

On the Fond du Lac Reservation in northeastern Minnesota, six of seven pow wows use traditional tobacco and all government buildings have smoke-free rules. The first floor of the band's downtown Duluth casino also went smoke-free in 2015 — the first casino in the state to do so.

In east central Minnesota, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has imposed commercial "tobacco free" rules for tribal buildings and all ceremonial dances have gone smoke-free. This year, the band started growing tobacco plants in a tribal greenhouse for use in prayers, and is partnering with schools

to boost education for kids to prevent them from using commercial tobacco.

In Welch, the Prairie Island Indian Community established a policy this year that promotes sacred tobacco and prohibits commercial tobacco in tribal buildings and recreational areas. It also has added tailored and culturally relevant tobacco cessation services at a clinic.

And in southwestern Minnesota, Lower Sioux community buildings and one pow wow are free of commercial tobacco. The tribe also started monthly workshops three years ago to teach residents how to harvest traditional tobacco.

"We're at this unique time in history where native people are reclaiming that traditional use," said Kris Rhodes, CEO of the American Indian Cancer Foundation in Minneapolis. "Minnesota is leading the way."

The state is "at the front end of the movement," said Jaime Martinez, director of community development for ClearWay Minnesota, an anti-smoking nonprofit that has funded tribal efforts and launched a "Keep Tobacco Sacred" campaign.

But, he added, "we still have a ways to go."

## Finding cultural identity

For American Indians, tobacco — called cansasa in Dakota and asemaa in Ojibwe — was never meant to be inhaled, but rather, to be used in ceremonies to honor the Creator and to offer in prayer.

But with the introduction of commercial tobacco by white settlers, and later, a federal law forbidding American Indians to practice traditional ceremonies, tribes relied more heavily on commercial tobacco.

"Cigarette smoking became ingrained in our religious ceremonies," Day said.

That began to change after 1978, when Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, designed to protect and preserve the traditional religious rights and cultural practices of American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts and Native Hawaiians.

Today, the effort to revive the use of sacred tobacco comes as tribes across Minnesota work to re-establish other traditions, too — from promoting native languages through new Dakota classes to playing old-style lacrosse games known as the "Creator's game" to planting wild rice. The state health department also gives \$1 million a year to 10 tribes for tobacco measures.

Some tribes make traditional tobacco from the red osier dogwood tree, which has no nicotine. Others use a tobacco plant — replanted throughout Minnesota since 2000 — that

has nicotine, but not the cancer-causing agents in cigarettes. Some use combinations of both.

This month, Pendleton and Elliot Christenson, the Lower Sioux's tobacco prevention coordinator, held the season's first monthly workshop, funded by the tribe, the state and Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. In front of about a dozen children, the men spoke of harvesting tobacco, a tradition they missed out on when they were growing up.

"I was lost," Pendleton said of the difficulties of being an American Indian in a world that discouraged native traditions. "I didn't know who I was as a Dakota. It's tough living in two worlds — being an American and Dakota."

Kara Siegfried, coordinator of the Communities Eliminating Tobacco Inequities program from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, said reviving traditions can have a positive impact on children.

"Kids nowadays are much more proud of who they are," she said.

## 'Prevention through culture'

On a cloudy December Saturday, Pendleton led a group of kids through the tangled woods behind Jackpot Junction Casino to show them how to cut bark from the red osier dogwood.

The branches grow back after being cut, but the tribe also replants some in the spring. At the Lower Sioux, it is only harvested from the first snowfall in winter until the first thunder in spring.

Pendleton showed the kids how to cut the tree near the ground after dropping a handful of dry tobacco next to it in a prayer.

"Thank you for this day," he said, "for this tree, for giving us what we need to pray."

Inside the recreation center, after everyone took turns smudging themselves with burning sage, Pendleton showed the kids how to scrape off the soft red bark, which can be used for tea. They then shaved off big flakes of green wood — the cansasa — down to the hard core, which can be repurposed for drumsticks or prayer sticks or burned in a sweat-lodge fire.

While a group of women made tobacco bags out of deer hide, the kids sat at a table, unbothered by phones or electronics and concentrating on carving the tree branches with spoons while following the sacred tradition for the very first time.

"Prevention through culture," Pendleton said. "It ... benefits youth to learn what it's meant to keep it sacred. That's my passion — my kids [and] bringing our way of life back."



## Sovereignty and Conservation

Keken Stark, an attorney with the Lac Courte Oreilles Band and former attorney with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, gave a presentation on tribal sovereignty and conservation codes January 18. The event was sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources.



# TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

## Happy February Birthdays to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Ramona Anne Applegate  
Debra Rose Barge  
Cynthia Eileen Beaulieu  
Marie Ann Bengtson  
Larry Benjamin  
Laurie Marie Benjamin  
Randy Elmer Benjamin  
Robert Patrick Benjamin  
Patricia Lorayne Christofferson  
Kella Rae Churchill-Johnson  
Curtis Anthony Cody  
Francis Charles Colton  
Dean Russell Davis  
Laureen Gay Davis  
Lucille Deborah Doffing  
James Joseph Dorr  
Robert Allen Dorr  
Bonnie Elaine Dumler  
Robina Lou Eagle  
Dawn Renee Fahrlander-Peel  
Mary Flores

Terry Duane Frye  
Cheryl Darlene Garbow  
Donald Anson Graves  
Marie Jane Gudim  
Kathleen June Hill  
Bradley Allen Kalk  
Curtis Leroy Kalk  
Leslie Roger Karsjens  
Sandra Arlene Kegg  
Jeffrey Jay Keller  
Susan Marie Kramer  
Barbara Jane LaBlanc  
Lorelei Lee LaFave  
Mert Elaine Leibgott  
Anita Ann Misquadace  
Wanda Kay Misquadace  
Pauline Moose  
Wanda Roxane Navarro  
Lester Lee Nelson  
Victoria Marie Nichols  
Jeffrey Sheldon Nickaboine  
Michael James Nickaboine  
Marie Esther Paschke

Marlene Ruth Poukka  
George Wilbur Premo  
Debra Jo Sam  
Fred L. Sam  
Kathryn Mary Sam  
Francis Dean Schaaf  
Susanna Lee Schaaf  
Thomas William Schleeve  
Roy Alden Shabaish  
Russell Shabaish  
Edward Skinaway Jr.  
Merle Lee Skinaway Jr.  
David Smith Jr.  
Terrance Lee Smith  
Gloria Ann Starkey  
Sami Thomas  
Robert Tibbetts Jr.  
Bernard Leroy Weyaus

## Other Announcements:

Congratulations to Commissioner of Natural Resources **Bradley Harrington**, who has been named to the Board of Directors of the Tiwahe Foundation, a resource for giving that strengthens American Indian communities by building capacity through leadership, culture, values, and vision.

## Submit Birthday Announcements

Send name, birthday, and a message **20 WORDS OR LESS** to [ellen.heidel@redcircleagency.com](mailto:ellen.heidel@redcircleagency.com) or call **612-465-8017**.

Deadline for March issue is Feb. 15.

## Healthy Pets, Happy Pets

Ten dogs and 26 cats were treated at the MNSNAP pet clinic at Chiminising Community Center January 23, which included 21 spayed and 15 neutered. The clinic was sponsored by District II Representative David 'Niib' Aubid.



## Mille Lacs Band Recovery Groups

### District I Mille Lacs

#### Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition

Mondays, 5:30 – 7 p.m., 17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia (Next to the Halfway House – Brown Building)  
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-7773, ext. 2419

#### Wellbriety Migizi Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel  
700 Grand Avenue, Onamia, Minnesota

#### Wellbriety Celebrating Families

Tuesdays, 6 – 8 p.m., Mille Lacs Band Halfway House Group  
17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia, Minnesota  
Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

### N.A./A.A. Welcome

Hosted by Mille Lacs Band Halfway House  
Wednesdays, 7 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia (Red Brick Building) Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

### Wellbriety Sons of Tradition

Sundays, 1 – 3 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia  
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-7773, ext. 2419

### District II East Lake

#### AA Group

Mondays, 5 – 6 p.m., East Lake Community Center  
Contact Rob Nelson at 218-768-2431

### District III Hinckley & Aazhoomog

#### NA Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Aazhoomog Community Center

#### Wellbriety 12 Step Group

Tuesdays, 12 p.m., Aazhoomog Clinic Conference Room  
Contact Monica Haglund at 320-384-0149

## RECURRING EVENTS

### Ojibwe Language Tables

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., DI, District I Community Center  
Thursdays, 4:30 p.m., DII, East Lake Community Center (3:30 p.m. on last Thursday)

### DI Open Gym

Open Gym is held at the DI Community Center,  
Mondays – Thursdays: 3:30 – 9 p.m.

### DI Women's Group (Strength & Support)

Thursdays: 3:30 – 5 p.m., Public Health Building (17230 Noopiming Lane)

### Healer Herb Sam is Available in the Urban Area

Fridays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call 612-799-2698 or stop by the Powwow Grounds (1414 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls.)

### B-Ball League Night: Thursday Nights

## Anonymous Drug Tip Hotline

The Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department's anonymous drug tip line is 320-630-2458. Feel free to leave voicemails and/or text messages. If you would like a call back, be sure to leave your name and phone number. In case of emergency, dial 911.



## Opioid/Heroin Awareness Community Outreach

February 21, 2018 | 6 – 7 p.m.

Grand Casino Mille Lacs, Autumn Room  
The Opioids/Heroin in Indian Country meeting will include:

- Identification and effects of opioid/heroin drugs
- Fentanyl and causes of overdoses
- Combating opioids/heroin at the community level
- Investigation and prosecution of opioid/heroin drug cases

This meeting will consist of the OJS Division of Drug Enforcement presenting information on the opioid/heroin trends we are seeing around the country. DDE would like to hear from attendees on the opioid/heroin trends they are seeing in their specific areas, what is currently being done to address the drug issues, and what they feel they need to address them.

This seminar should be attended by community members, tribal employees, community stakeholders, and law enforcement staff. If you have any questions, please contact the BIA Division of Drug Enforcement office at 918-781-4650.



## Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post February Events

### Kid Crafts Storybook Time & Dream Catcher:

Feb. 10, 12 – 3 p.m. Enjoy Native American stories from 12 – 1 p.m., then from 1 – 3 p.m., children can weave a dream catcher to take home. Allow an hour to make the craft. Light snacks will be available. Recommended for ages 8 and up. Cost is \$5/dream catcher kit.

**Ojibwe Moccasin 2-Day Workshop:** Feb. 10 & 11, Sat. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Learn techniques of working with leather to make a pair of Ojibwe-style moccasins to take home in this two-day workshop. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided both days. Cost is \$75.

**Puzzle Pouch 2-Day Workshop:** Feb. 24 & 25, Sat. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Learn techniques of working with leather and create an Ojibwe puzzle pouch to hide your treasures in and amuse your friends. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided both days. Cost is \$75.

## The Write Stuff

*Ojibwe Inaajimowin* is always seeking submissions from Band members. If you have something to share, email [brett.larson@millelacsband.com](mailto:brett.larson@millelacsband.com) or call 320-237-6851.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Want Your Event Here?</b> Email <a href="mailto:ellen.heidel@redcircleagency.com">ellen.heidel@redcircleagency.com</a> or call 612-465-8017. Visit <a href="http://millelacsband.com/calendar">millelacsband.com/calendar</a> for additional MLB events.</p> <p><b>Band Assembly Meetings</b> Band Assembly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at rotating locations throughout the districts. For locations and other info, call the Legislative office or visit <a href="http://millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com">millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com</a>. Meeting dates, times, and locations are subject to change.</p> <p><b>DIII Community Meeting</b> The date for the February District III Community Meeting has not been determined as of press time. Watch for postings or mailings, or check <a href="http://millelacsband.com/calendar">millelacsband.com/calendar</a>.</p>				<p><b>1</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 12 – 2:30 p.m. Urban Office <b>Housing Board Mtg.</b> 1 p.m. Hinckley ALU <b>DIII Wellbriety Mtg.</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9 a.m. Four Winds <b>Augsburg U Annual Native Youth Day</b> 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. 715 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, MPLS <b>Healer Herb Sam</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Zumba Fitness</b> 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. <b>DI Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition</b> <b>DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting</b> <b>DII AA Group</b> <b>DIII NA Meeting</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9 a.m. Minobimaadiziwin <b>Language Tables</b> 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center <b>DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families</b> <b>DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>7</b> <b>Zumba Fitness</b> 3:30 p.m. DI Community Center <b>DI Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center <b>Coed Basketball League</b> 6 p.m. DI Community Center <b>DI NA/AA Welcome</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>8</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9:30 a.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. <b>DIII Wellbriety Mtg.</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9 a.m. Four Winds <b>Indian Magnet School Powwows</b> 6 – 8 p.m. Indian Magnet School <b>Healer Herb Sam</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>10</b> <b>Ojibwe Moccasin 2-day Workshop</b> 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Indian Museum <b>Cherish the Children Trad'I Pow Wow</b> 11 a.m. St. Paul Central H.S. <b>Elder Luncheon Meeting &amp; Bingo</b> 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. All Nations Church <b>Kid Craft – Storybook Time &amp; Dream Catcher</b> 12 – 3 p.m. Indian Museum <b>DIII Wisdom Steps Basket Social Fundraiser</b> 2 p.m. Aazhoomog Com. Ctr. <b>Leah Lemm</b> 7:30 p.m. Cedar Cultural Ctr.</p>
<p><b>11</b> <b>Ojibwe Moccasin 2-day Workshop</b> 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Indian Museum <b>Cherish the Children Trad'I Pow Wow</b> 11 a.m. St. Paul Central High School</p>	<p><b>12</b> <b>Zumba Fitness</b> 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. <b>DI Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition</b> <b>DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting</b> <b>DII AA Group</b> <b>DIII NA Meeting</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>13</b> <b>Ain Day Yung Ctr.'s Foster Recruitment</b> 5:30 – 7 p.m. <b>Language Tables</b> 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center <b>DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families</b> <b>DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group</b> <b>Open Gym</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>DIII Program Fair</b> 10 a.m. Aazhoomog Com. Ctr. <b>DI Community Mtg.</b> 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center <b>DI NA/AA Welcome</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>15</b> <b>Housing Board Mtg.</b> 1 p.m. Mille Lacs Gov't Ctr. <b>DIII Wellbriety Mtg.</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>16</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9 a.m. Four Winds <b>Healer Herb Sam</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>
<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b> <b>CHIEFS' DAY — Gov't Offices Closed</b> <b>DII Sobriety Feast</b> 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. <b>DI Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition</b> <b>DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting</b> <b>DII AA Group</b> <b>DIII NA Meeting</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>20</b> <b>Circle of Health Outreach</b> 9 a.m. Minobimaadiziwin <b>DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families</b> <b>DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>21</b> <b>DII Community Mtg.</b> 5 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. <b>Opioid/Heroin Community Outreach</b> 6 – 7 p.m. Grand Casino Mille Lacs, Autum Room <i>See page 14</i> <b>DI NA/AA Welcome</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>22</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Construct Tomorrow</b> 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Events Ctr. <i>See page 12</i> <b>DIIa Community Mtg.</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Com. Ctr. <b>Urban Comm./Exec. Branch Mtg.</b> 5:30 p.m. All Nations Church <b>DIII Wellbriety Mtg.</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>23</b> <b>Healer Herb Sam</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>24</b> <b>Puzzle Pouch 2-day Workshop</b> 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Indian Museum <i>See page 14</i></p>
<p><b>25</b> <b>Puzzle Pouch 2-day Workshop</b> 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Indian Museum <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>26</b> <b>DIII Wellbriety Feast</b> 5:30 p.m. Aazhoomog Community Center <b>DI Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition</b> <b>DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting</b> <b>DII AA Group</b> <b>DIII NA Meeting</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>27</b> <b>DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families</b> <b>DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>28</b> <b>DI NA/AA Welcome</b> <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p><b>East Lake Community Center Events</b> <b>Pucker-Toe Moccasin &amp; Skirt Making:</b> February 1 &amp; 8, 5 p.m. <b>Ribbon Skirt/Shirt Making:</b> February 8, 5 p.m.</p> <p><b>Other Events</b> <b>Augsburg University Annual Native Youth Day:</b> February 2, 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The address for drop off/pick up is 715 22nd Ave. S Mpls. FMI or to sign up contact Jennifer Simon 612-330-1144 or <a href="mailto:simonj@augsborg.edu">simonj@augsborg.edu</a> <b>Ain Day Yung Center's Foster Recruitment Session:</b> February 13, 5 – 7:30 p.m. First 5 people to RSVP &amp; attend will receive a \$10 GC. Those who bring interested friends can win a \$50 GC. RSVP by Feb. 12 to Jasmine Grika 651-227-4184, ext. 16 or <a href="mailto:jasmine.grika@adycenr.org">jasmine.grika@adycenr.org</a></p>		

# Commissioners Attend Indigenous Governance Program

January in Tucson (JIT), the annual intensive education session in Indigenous governance offered by the University of Arizona (UA) Indigenous Governance Program, kicked off last week by welcoming an international group of tribal leaders, citizens, legal practitioners, scholars, and other professionals, including members of the competitive Tribal Professionals Cohort (TPC).

Among them were Commissioner of Administration Shelly Diaz and Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington.

The UA Indigenous Governance Program is an educational

partnership between the Native Nations Institute (NNI) at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and the Indigenous Peoples' Law and Policy Program (IPLP) at the James E. Rogers College of Law. In 2018, its three-week JIT event offers 14 different courses, ranging from Indigenous Food Sovereignty to Tribal Business Law, all aimed at strengthening Indigenous governance. Each course may be taken on a for-credit or not-for-credit basis.

Since its inception in 2012, JIT has attracted participants representing more than 50 Indigenous nations from six differ-

ent continents, who have earned over 600 executive education or academic credits through the UA Indigenous Governance Program. This diversity provides participants with new perspectives on familiar governance challenges and helps make JIT a truly unique educational experience.

Beginning in 2016, JIT has provided free governance education opportunities for citizens of U.S.-based tribes through its Tribal Professionals Cohort. The TPC covers the cost of registration, tuition, travel, and accommodation for successfully admitted candidates.

The TPC 2018 consists of a select group of tribal citizens who have made a demonstrated commitment to build Indigenous governance capacities within their home communities. In addition to Commissioners Diaz and Harrington, this year's TPC includes Bridget Valenzuela of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Leonard Bruce from the Gila River Indian Community; and Desirie Wilson of the Red Lake Nation.

NNI Executive Director Joan Timeche (Hopi) notes, "The Tribal Professionals Cohort is designed to build Indigenous governance capacity one person at a time." To date, 16 individuals representing 12 U.S. Native Nations have participated in the TPC.

JIT 2018 is hosted at the James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona, January 8 – 26, 2018.



## Need Help?

If you or someone you know is injured or in immediate danger, call 911 first.

**Tribal Police Department dispatch:** 888-609-5006; 320-532-3430.

**Emergency Management Services:** 24-hour fire, disaster, and emergency management response: Monte Fronk, Emergency Management Coordinator: 320-362-0435.

**Addiction/Behavioral Health:** 800-709-6445, ext.7776.

**Community Support Services:** For emergencies related to food and nutrition, Elder services, Elder abuse, sexual assault, or emergency loans, call 320-532-7539 or 320-630-2687.

**Domestic violence:** (c) 320-630-2499. **Women's Shelter:** 866-867-4006. **Batterers' Intervention:** 320-532-8909.

**Heating, water, or other home-related maintenance problems:** If you live in a Mille Lacs Band Housing-maintained home, call for housing maintenance service in your district. During regular business hours, please call our Customer Service Representative at 800-709-6445, ext. 7799.

If you live in a home not maintained by the Mille Lacs Band and need assistance after hours with utilities or heating, please contact: After Hours Emergency Service: 866-822-8538. (Press 1, 2, or 3 for respective districts.)

**Mille Lacs Band Family Services:** Foster Care: 320-630-2663; Social Worker: 320-630-2444; Toll-free: 800-709-6445, ext. 7588. Family Violence Prevention: District I 320-532-4780; East Lake 218-768-4412; Aazhoomog 320-384-0149; Hinckley 320-384-4613; Toll-free 24-hour crisis line 866-867-4006.

PRESORTED  
 FIRST CLASS MAIL  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 TWIN CITIES MN  
 PERMIT NO 30308

**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE**  
 43408 Oodena Drive  
 Onamia, MN 56359  
[millelacsband.com](http://millelacsband.com)



## Update Your Address

**More than 150 Band members** have addresses that are being rejected by the U.S. Post Office. If your address on file with the Enrollments Office is incorrect, you may not be receiving important mail from the Band. Each time you move, you need to fill out a Change of Address form from Enrollments at 320-532-7730. You can download a Change of Address form at [millelacsband.com/services/tribal-enrollments](http://millelacsband.com/services/tribal-enrollments).

## Aazhoomog Clinic Hours

Providers are at the Aazhoomog Clinic in District III from Monday through Thursday. The dentist is in the office on the last Friday of every month, and the foot doctor is available the first Wednesday of every month. Call 320-384-0149 to make an appointment or ask a question.