



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 47 NUMBER 1

STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY THIS WINTER!

With winter in full force, the Bois Forte Health and Human Services wants to remind all band members to get a flu shot and to stay up to date on COVID-19 booster shots!

Here are some additional tips to keep you safe and healthy!

- Eat healthy and stay active!
 - Get plenty of rest.
- Wash your hands often to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Bundle up to stay dry and warm.
- Pay attention to weather related messages and adhere to them!
- Cover your cough and sneezes!
- If you or a family member are sick—stay home!

Fortune Bay expands its retail services with smoke shop

TOWER— The Bois Forte Business Development Corporation has ventured into numerous commercial ventures in the past. Some have failed, i.e., two Tim Horton's franchises, while others, like the Y Store, have proven to be a solid investment.

With any luck, Bois Forte could soon be on the cusp of hitting a home run by delving into the lucrative cannabis edibles industry.

Bois Forte Tribal Council District I Representative Shane Drift called the new venture a bold move for the tribe and added that it is a step in the right direction. He said he has posted on his Facebook page about the tribe getting into the THC/Edibles business.

"Band members have voiced their opinions about the tribe getting into the THC/Edibles business," said Drift. "It is awesome to see that the tribe is branching out into the THC/Edibles market."

The process went on a fast track in early November when Fortune Bay's maintenance team and slots department started making way for a 2,500-square-foot rental space that will open as a Smoke Shop in early 2023 carrying various products.

The Bois Forte Tribal Council agreed at its BFDC meeting in November to expend \$150,000 for the new retail business. While it is being

referred to as a Smoke Shop, edibles will be the main selling point for the company.

Construction continues at a fast pace as the cabinets and furniture that will fill the shop have already been installed. Fifty-three slot machines were taken off the floor to make space for the new venture. The new shop, which will include a large seating area and retail area, will be located on the casino's first floor. Seventeen of the 53 games were returned to its vendors, while the remaining 36 games have been returned to the gaming floor.

Bois Forte is working with a Minnesota-based edibles company for its product line. BFDC's CEO /FBRC GM Mayan Beltran had made a trip to their facility earlier this fall and was impressed with what he saw.

Beltran and members of the Bois Forte Tribal Council then met with the key players from the business at Fortune Bay Resort Casino to further discuss how they could work together with this opportunity.

Since then, Beltran and other key personnel visited similar businesses and attended a Hemp Fest in the Twin Cities to get more ideas on how to best position itself as the best smoke shop in the region.

"Jake, E.J, and I went to it," said Beltran of former Director of Marketing Jake Aune



LOOKING GOOD!— Dan "Jiggy" Jandrey was busy working on the new Smoke Shop that is being constructed at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. If things go as planned, the Smoke Shop will open in early 2023.

and Director of Gaming E.J. Deegan. "A bunch of people are doing what we're trying to do, including a lot of smaller operations. However, we will bring credibility and an expanded product line, which could become a big business for us."

The edibles industry has many products aimed at providing a better quality of living for those suffering from arthritis pain, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and other day-to-day health problems one might experience. While some edibles

are in gummy form (and other chewables), other options can be consumed via baked goods (cookies, brownies, etc.) or in liquid form. These can include topical oils you put on your body or in a liquid form you can drink.

"They have pretty much everything, including cookies, popcorn, ice cream, and vape products," said Beltran, who met with its Minnesota vendor following the December BFDC meeting to expedite getting products in so the shop is

See shop page 2



PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAIL!—Adam Schelde has an eye for detail as he was part of the maintenance crew repurposing a part of the gaming floor that will now be a Smoke Shop at Fortune Bay.

Shop from page 1

ready to go. “We’ll keep an eye on what’s selling and what is not selling and get rid of a certain product if it’s not selling.”

Aside from edibles, the plan is also to sell vape products and other paraphernalia. In anticipation of customers wanting to try products, Fortune Bay’s maintenance team bought a larger storage shed and refurbished it to include lights, heat, and ventilation. The casino and resort will remain smoke-free.

The initial plan was to offer more potent THC products, but for now, state-legal products will be sold while Beltran and our legal team determine if Bois Forte wants to explore those options.

“We have to do our due diligence of the safety of the products we want to carry,” said Beltran of offering products that exceed the state limit.

Although not set in stone yet, Beltran said he envisions the new business to be open seven days a week and have

similar hours to the casino’s weekday hours, which are 8 a.m. until 2 a.m.

Beltran said he expects the store to have eight full-time employees when the business opens.

“We’ll probably go with 10 a.m. until 2 a.m. daily,” said Beltran of the hours of operation. “Again, that can change based on our ability to find the staff, how the business is doing and adjust those hours as needed.”

Beltran reported at the December BFDC meeting that the current Whispering Winds Gift Shop staff would work at the new retail store to help man the shop as needed. On the flip side, those hired to work in the Smoke Shop will be cross-trained to work in the gift shop as needed.

If the new business garners the type of success Beltran and members of the Bois Forte Tribal Council envision, plans would then be made to expand offers to the struggling Nett Lake C Store and the Y Store on Highway 169.

“We would also look at offering products at the new convenience store being planned for in Eveleth,” he said of the yet-to-be-constructed store that the council recently signed off a letter of intent with the city of Eveleth.

While naming ideas for the new store at Fortune Bay continued to come in, Beltran encouraged Fortune Bay employees to get creative in finding a name for the Smoke Shop so that our marketing team could start designing a sign for the shop.

Beltran had already given his marketing team a directive to develop other branding ideas for the new business, and he has been pleased with what he has seen thus far.

“We think it will do extremely well for us,” said Beltran of the Smoke Shop. “Edibles, especially those tied into health and wellness, are exploding now, and we’d like to capitalize on that wave to help increase revenues for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa.”

Chairwoman Cathy Chavers

Boozhoo
Happy New Year to everyone! I



hope that 2023 will be a great year considering the past couple of years.

I was going to report on the Tribal Leaders Summit at Washington DC however a winter storm prohibited me from attending as the Minneapolis airport was shut down. The Tribal Leaders summit did have great discussions with the tribal leaders and the various departments at the federal level.

As of the writing of this article, the Tribal Leaders Summit with Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flannagen is in mid-December at Prairie Island. Minnesota has a 17 billion dollar surplus within the state’s budget. This will be discussed at the Governor’s summit

I am sure in great detail. I will give an update in my next article on this meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to say “Chi Miigwech,” thank you to all the staff under the Bois Forte Reservation. This includes the tribal government, Fortune Bay, Y and C Store and The Wilderness, along with the Nett Lake School as well. These past couple of years have been an unprecedented stressful, worrisome, extremely excessive workloads and unexpected circumstances and situations that arose. All staff had to make adjustments to their “normal” work they had prior to pandemic due

to additional workloads, CARES and ARPA funding and much more. I have the utmost respect and appreciation for all our employees that work with our children, families and band members. I want them to know that their hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed.

I have made the comments to staff that they are the boots on the ground, working with our band members and others providing quality services and great customer service. It is our employees that make the difference!

State of the Band is all set for Thursday, January 19th

After a two-year absence, the Bois Forte State of the Band will once again be an in-person event.

“It is much more personal being able to gather with one another for such an important event to our people,” said Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers. “We look forward to reconnecting with our friends and family.”

The 2023 State of the Band will take place at Fortune Bay Resort Casino’s conference center, with the official program slated for 3:30 p.m. in The Woodlands Ballroom. The Bois Forte Honor Guard and Bois Forte Drum Group will participate in the ceremony.

“Key Bois Forte staff have been meeting weekly to plan this event,” said Executive Director Luke Warnsholz. “We want to make sure we have everything covered so that this event is one we’re all very proud of.”

The event officially kicks off in the pre-function area at noon, with Bois Forte departments staffing informational booths. The executive dining room next to the former Tamarack will be used as a place for elders to gather to have a cup of coffee and some snacks.

Registration will take place in the resort lobby area where band members will be given a ticket good for a commemorative t-shirt and a tote bag to carry informational pamphlets and trinkets handed out at booths.

Over 30 booths were set up in years past with information on Health and Human Services, Indian Child Welfare, Housing, Urban Offices, Energy Assistance, Education, Wisdom Steps, Natural Resources and Forestry, Heritage Center and Cultural Museum, and Big Woods Transit.

There were also booths for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, 1854 Treaty Authority IDs and Enrollment Tribal IDs, Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, and many more. Fortune Bay’s HR team also has a booth with information on available jobs.

A presentation on Bois Forte’s financials will be done at 1 p.m. in the Executive Boardroom by Bois Forte’s Chief Financial Officer Kim Greiner, and Fortune Bay Director of Finance Brad Anderson.

“There is a wealth of information available for band members wanting to find out what all of our programs have to offer—and how they can uti-

lize our resources to assist them,” said Chavers.

As has been the case for the previous State of the Bands, Chavers will talk about the accomplishments from the past year while also providing a glimpse into 2023 and what Bois Forte Band members can expect from their leadership. Other members of the council will also be given an opportunity to address those in attendance.

Dignitaries are expected to provide in-person or video tributes wishing the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa success going forward.

Following the official program, Fortune Bay’s culinary crew will provide a meal to those in attendance.

“Our staff has been working hard to ensure the 2023 State of the Band brings back some normalcy to our lives and to keep them informed on what we are doing to help make a difference in the lives of our band members,” said Chavers.

For those band members unable to attend the event, the program will be available by visiting the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa’s website (www.boisforte.com).

BOIS FORTE BEHAVIORAL PRESENTS: CIRCLE OF SECURITY PARENTING GROUP



ABOUT THE COURSE

Circle of Security is a relationship-based parenting program. The class will include videos, reflection, and discussion.

Who should attend? Parents of children, foster parents, anyone raising children. Its never too late to find new ways to connect!

This group will help you to:

- Learn how to provide a loving, safe, and secure base for your children
- Understand your child’s emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- Support your child’s ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of your child’s self esteem
- Learn how parenting choices impact your relationships with your children and your children’s behavior.

WHEN:

Group starts **Tuesday January 10th, 2023.**

Group will run from **2:30p.m.-4:00p.m. for 8 sessions.**

Attendance is required to receive certificate of completion.

WHERE:

Group will be held Virtually **Via Zoom**

Zoom meeting information provided at registration.

Register by Thurs, January 5th by Calling Erin Danielson 218-757-3295

8 WEEK CLASS

Must hold active health insurance

Recent Diagnostic Assessment required at start of group

For any parent(s) who are eligible for Bois Forte Services

Starts

January 10th

for 8 sessions every Tuesday

2:30p.m.-4:00p.m.

Group Facilitator:

**Keran Flynn-Kroska
PhD, MS, LMFT-S**

**REGISTER BY FRIDAY
JANUARY 5TH**

Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council cordially invites you to the

2023 STATE OF THE BAND

Thursday, January 19, 2023
Woodland Ballroom
Fortune Bay Resort Casino
Tower, Minnesota

12:00pm - 3:00pm
Registration and Informational Booths

1:00pm
Special Financial Presentation
Executive Board Room
(Bois Forte Tribal ID Required)

3:30pm - 6:00pm
Formal Program and Dinner
(Seating begins at 3:00pm)

Warnsholz is ready to make a difference for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa

NETT LAKE—As a very driven person, 25-year-old Luke Warnsholz has fit right in as the executive director for the Bois Forte Tribal Government.

That's not to say there won't be some growing pains along the way, but for the time being, Warnsholz is utilizing his talents to make an impact for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa.

"It's important that we all come together and move forward," said Warnsholz, who attended Minnesota State Community and Technical College for his Associate of Arts Degree and then received his Master of Business Administration Degree from Bemidji State University in 2021. "There are many different aspects that happen daily, but we need to start striving for

the future of Bois Forte."

He understands there will be some obstacles along the way, but the goal is to make Bois Forte a more self-efficient reservation.

"It's essential that we make and utilize good business decisions for future investments that will ultimately help our people," explained Warnsholz. "There will be many projects and changes we wish to see, but it all starts with a budget."

Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers is confident Bois Forte hired the right person to take over such a key position.

"I feel that Luke will bring a new and inspired insight for the Bois Forte Tribal Government," said Chavers. "He brings with him the education and overall tribal knowledge in relation to our ways as An-

ishinaabe people."

Warnsholz, who was born in Bemidji and grew up in Mahnomen, Minnesota, learned at a young age that the only way to advance in life is to stay focused, work hard, and set goals for yourself. He recalls working several entry-level jobs on the White Earth Reservation and Shooting Star Casino and eventually finding other gainful work experiences in cities such as Fargo, Bemidji, and, most recently, Las Vegas.

"Success can be measured in many ways, but eventually, one day, I did want to come back to a reservation and help," said Warnsholz, who is currently in a doctoral program at Walden University and pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Degree with an emphasis on

Leadership.

While simple as it sounds, Warnsholz said one of his primary goals and aspirations is for everyone to have an open mind and be receptive to new ideas.

"It's important to be adaptable to changes and make them based on what's best for the organization," said Warnsholz. "I like that I get to help and make decisions that benefit the great people of the Bois Forte Reservation. Growing up in Mahnomen, I know the different struggles we all face growing up on a reservation, and I want to do what's best for the community."

Bois Forte Tribal Council District I Representative Shane Drift said he feels Warnsholz will do an excellent job as the executive director.

"He's young and educated," said Drift, who added that Warnsholz understandably has a lot to learn about our tribal government, departments, programs, directors, employees, and band members. "He brings a fresh outlook on things and is eager to get things done."

And playing off the adage of it taking a village to raise a child, Warnsholz knows it will take a team effort to achieve the goals set forth. In order for this to be attainable, he believes all staff needs to buy into the team concept. That means not having hidden agendas or trying to thwart ideas brought forth to better Bois Forte.

"Change can be very difficult at times, but many aspects of business and the modern world are changing by the second," said Warnsholz.

Lack of communication can be a huge issue in tribal government. When asked

what he'll do to ensure communication is a strength, not a weakness, Warnsholz spoke of how important that component is.

"One way that communication could be used as a strength with Bois Forte is through technology," explained Warnsholz. "Social media is a great way to spread proper communication. One way we as an organization could develop is adopting different policies and procedures that we must follow to communicate among peers and band members."

While it is still very early in Warnsholz's tenure, he is doing his best to get up to speed on all departments and to open the lines of communication so that his staff knows he is there for them and for whatever help is needed.

Warnsholz said a typical workday includes phone calls, meetings, emails, text messages, and traveling. He said that staff could help him get better acclimated to his job by doing their best to understand things on the other side of the fence and knowing that every decision he makes may not be universally embraced.

"Some decisions that I make are not going to please everyone, but I hope my decisions are what's best for the community," said Warnsholz, who will split this time between Nett Lake and the Vermilion Sector. "I want everyone to feel free to contact me at any time. My work cell number is 218-316-2627, and my email is lwarnsholz@boisforte-nsn.gov."

477 PROGRAM

CONTACT

Vonda Carr 218-757-3261

vrcarr@boisforte-nsn.gov

UNEMPLOYED
OR
LAID OFF

- Tuition Assistance/Scholarships
- Job Search Assistance
- On the Job Training & MORE

ADULT
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- On the Job Training
- Resume Assistance, Cover Letters, Interviewing Skills & MORE

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CONTACT THE 477 PROGRAM TODAY. WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND TRAINING NEEDS.



Celebrating, giving thanks, and taking care of each other are year-round traditions.

As American Indian and Alaska Natives, we know the importance of good health. By taking care of ourselves, we are protecting our communities and generations to come.

Today we must continue to do our part. Updated vaccines are available for everyone 5 and older. Get your updated COVID vaccine to protect yourself and those you love against the original virus and Omicron.

Find updated COVID vaccines for everyone 5+ at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)



Whiteman hits milestone with 25 year sobriety medallion

DULUTH—For many people, New Year's Eve is a night that includes ringing in the New Year with a fancy dinner, maybe some alcoholic beverages and a night of dancing as the clock approaches midnight.

However, that is not the case for Bois Forte Elder Steve Whiteman who instead might treat himself to a plate of pancakes and a large glass of orange juice at Bridgeman's, which is one of his favorite restaurants.

"Right now, I am really against alcohol," said the 57-year-old Whiteman, who lives at Park Point Manor in Duluth, but loves making the trek up to the mall on a Duluth

Transit bus. "I want to encourage people not to start drinking because of all the problems it can cause. I don't want others to go through what I went through."

For Whiteman, his battles with alcohol began at an early age while brought up in a family where alcohol ruled. Alcohol was his whole world as he eventually became enslaved to whiskey.

"It was my breakfast, lunch and dinner," recalled Whiteman, who recently celebrated a huge milestone by celebrating his 25th year of sobriety, which was capped off by him receiving a medallion for reaching that goal.

Due to his penchant for

drinking whiskey until he was black out drunk, Whiteman couldn't hold a steady job or even function normally as he drifted from place to place. Friends and family gave up on him as they didn't like the person he became when he drank. This cycle continued for many years as his drinking became worse.

"I almost died, my blood alcohol content (BAC) was .599 and I am not sure how I made it through the night," recounted Whiteman, who gets very agitated if you press him on how he survived with a BAC that high. "I fell down that night and suffered a severe head injury. I had to learn how to walk and talk all over again--- the doctors didn't think I would make it and they called my family to say I was being given my last rites."

He decided from his hospital bed that he would never touch alcohol again. Given his addiction, that was not a promise easy to keep. After all, drinking was what the former Nett Lake resident grew up around as both his mother and father loved to drink.

"I was seeing stuff a kid my age should not have seen," said Whiteman, who recounted his life experiences in a short story he wrote. "I have seen a lot of fights that would traumatize a normal kid. But they didn't care what effect it had on me because they were too busy nursing their whiskey bottles."

The drinking and fighting would continue, but Whiteman's mom eventually suffered a massive stroke and died. He said his dad took it very hard and stayed drunk for a long time after she was

laid to rest. Rather than miss out on a party, Whiteman's father would take him along to parties, which led to the younger Whiteman experimenting with a bottle of vodka he found after the adults had passed out from drinking.

"I decided to get drunk," recalled Whiteman of that ill-fated night. "There I was 9 or 10 years old, chugging a big cup filled with half OJ and the other half vodka. Of course, I got drunker than hell and remember staggering all over the place."

This experience led Whiteman on a roller coaster ride for the next 20 plus years as he would fill his days and nights with a bottle. He recalls going to treatment several times, promising himself that this time would be the time he walked away from the grips of alcohol. However, those promises were never kept and the cycle of alcoholism continued.

And no matter where Whiteman moved to start a new life, the cycle followed him. Ironically, when he would go to treatment or a halfway house, it always seemed there was a liquor store nearby where in moments of weakness, he would once again succumb to the bottle.

"I walked by Rocket Liquor (in downtown Virginia) and it pulled me in like a magnet," recalled Whiteman. "I quickly became drinking buddies with the local drunks. I moved into the local hotel where all the drunks lived."

At this point, Whiteman said, he thought he had it made.

"I lived on main street with a liquor store and a bar downstairs of the hotel," said

Whiteman. "I didn't have to go too far to get my liquor. I didn't have a job because I was always too drunk to find work."

He recalled buying some groceries with food stamps he received and then selling the rest to his landlord so he could continue to feed his love affair with alcohol. Even bouts in prison did nothing to loosen the stranglehold alcohol had on him. Neither did getting hit by a truck while walking to a liquor store scare him straight. Nor did a bout of homelessness when he lived under a bridge in Duluth with one of his childhood friends.

"The spring of 1992 came around and I sobered up for a couple of months and wondered how I did it," said Whiteman. "I suppose it was just to get off the streets."

As was the case before, Whiteman's sobriety did not last long and he ended up getting drunk every day that summer of 1992. He said he drank a quarter of whiskey every day until he thought he was going to die.

"I wasn't happy with myself or the choices I made, yet I kept making the same choices," recounted Whiteman in his short story. "I finally got to the point where I was praying to God to let me fall asleep and never ever wake up."

But he did wake up and eventually found himself hanging with some women from Florida, one of whom coaxed Whiteman to move south. Unbeknownst to him, the one he ended up with had a cocaine problem and she fell off the wagon. So not only did he resume his drinking, but he now was also experimenting

See Whiteman page 9



PROUD MOMENT— Steve Whiteman is shown at the Duluth Urban Office holding up a medallion that he received commemorating his 25 years of sobriety. Congratulations Steve for this wonderful accomplishment—keep believing in yourself and enjoying the life you have built!

Catching up with Wendy Drift

Let's start by telling our readers a little bit about your background. Where were you born, where did you grow up, schooling, family, etc.?

Boozhoo! My name is Wendy Drift. I am the daughter of the late Wendell "Jap" Drift and Mavis Benner Drift. I was born in Virginia, MN, and grew up on the Nett Lake Sector of the Bois Forte Indian Reservation. I graduated from Orr High School in 1997 and moved to Nashville, TN, shortly after that to attend college. I also lived in Fredericksburg, VA, for a short time but eventually moved back to Nett Lake to be near family. My undergraduate degree is from the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD), and my Master in Science Degree is from Walden University: My backgrounds are in Counseling Psychology and Business Management. My partner, Liz, and I bought a house in Duluth in 2015 and absolutely love the city we now call home. We have a 14-year-old foster daughter, Alaya, who has been with us most of her life. We enjoy traveling, but we also love staying at home and exploring the hiking trails in Duluth.

How about your work history? Can you highlight some of the work you've done over the years?

I have an extensive work history, but I am most proud of obtaining higher education degrees to serve my people – the people of Bois Forte. My passion has always been helping people, and I knew that I would need to get advanced degrees to serve our people better. In my early work history, I was hired as the Indian tutor at the Orr High School and the after-school activities coordinator for the Nett Lake School. I loved working with the youth – I connected with them on a more personal level after school to better assist them during their school day. During that period in my life, I was working two jobs and attending college full-time at UMD. I remember my days starting at 5 am to get to UMD for class at 8 am and getting home from work at 9 pm. When I look back, I am not sure how I did it, but it has been

well worth it. After getting my B.S. degree, I was hired as an Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services worker and eventually got State licensed as a Mental Health therapist. I worked in Mental Health on the reservation for five years. My partner, Liz, who is a high school teacher, had to relocate from the North Woods School (near Cook) to South Ridge School (just north of Duluth). Around that time, Bois Forte was planning on opening the Duluth Urban Office, so I applied for the job and was hired in May 2017.

Tell our readers what your role is at the Urban Office and some of your primary duties on a day-in and day-out basis.

One of the main objectives of the Duluth Urban Office is to provide area band members with up-to-date resources (local as well as tribal) and help them access those resources. Each day looks different (which I enjoy) due to the diverse needs and issues that arise. Assistance for each band member may look slightly different due to their varying needs. Some of our band members may be experiencing homelessness, a mental health crisis, addiction issues, or grief due to loss. Assisting these folks to ensure their needs are met requires quite a bit of time and care coordination. I also offer different types of support services, which are also based on an individual's needs– some have physical mobility issues or lack of transportation which may require food shelf deliveries or getting the necessary paperwork/documents for accessing programs. Others may need help applying for jobs or housing or a little help navigating other programs and services.

In addition to providing those types of services, the Duluth Urban Office also offers free notary services, on-site Tribal IDs, free copying/printing/scanning or faxing services, and computer use. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had bi-monthly community meetings and cultural activities such as moccasin-making class, regalia-making class, frybread-making



AT YOUR SERVICE—Bois Forte's Wendy Drift always greets visitors with a "How can I help you attitude" and a friendly smile. Drift's office is located in the Damiano Building in Duluth at 206 West 4th Street, Office #204. Her office number is 218-336-1049.

class, etc. I will begin implementing similar activities in early 2023. We also have an annual summer picnic and a yearly elder's holiday dinner/party. During the pandemic, we had emergency programs for gas cards, food cards, and rent and utility assistance. In summary, I provide direct services to band members, coordinate services with outside agencies, and plan and coordinate cultural activities and events throughout the year. We are here to assist band members in any way we can.

Things were pretty hopping when I stopped by your office earlier today, is there always that much activity going on at the building, and do you work in conjunction with any of the other programs housed in the building?

Our Urban Office is located in the Damiano Center, which is always a hopping place. The Damiano Center provides many free services such as clothing, winter gear, bus passes, diapers/formula, and supplies for new renters (pots and pans, utensils, etc.) and serves food/hot meals five days a week. As for the Urban Office, some

days are quiet, and other days I have non-stop traffic. That's what I love about this job – I never know what the day will bring.

What are some of the things you most enjoy about your job—perhaps making a difference in the lives of those band members who count on you to help them?

I absolutely love helping our band members. I get great satisfaction knowing that I helped make a difference in their lives. And what they probably don't know is that they are helping and teaching me, too; It's a mutual exchange. :)

And finally—we're coming on another trip around the sun with 2023 fast approaching... have you thought about any New Year's Resolutions you'd like to make, and why are they important to you?

I don't really do New Year's Resolutions, but I always look for ways to improve myself. I believe in balance in life, so this year's focus will be on balancing my life with the physical (working out) and spiritual realms. I hope 2023 is good for you!

License plate initiative will raise awareness for MMIR

DULUTH— Intending to raise awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR), the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa certainly accomplished that feat in late December.

“It went very well,” said Bois Forte Tribal Government Registrar and Programs Manager Tracey Dagen of the event that unveiled new license plates from the bands mentioned above that will continue to raise awareness of the plight of missing Indigenous people. “I felt the support by those in attendance and it was great.”

Those in attendance included state-wide media attention, including a Christmas Day story in the Star Tribune and the support of Bois Forte band members who traveled to Black Bear Casino Resort to witness the event.

“We want to give Tracey a shout-out on the work she has done on behalf of Bois Forte,” said Bois Forte 477 Director Vonda Carr, whose staff drove down to be on hand for the historic event. “We wanted to be there to show our support. Congratulations to Tracey for her hard work and collaboration with the Fond du Lac band to bring at-



SUPPORTING A GOOD CAUSE—Tribal leaders and guests were out in full force for an event at Black Bear Casino Resort that raised awareness for Missing and Murdered indigenous people. Pictured in the back row, left to right, are Shane Drift, Sarah Kinnunen, Robert Moyer, Jr., Jenna Lehti, Vonda Carr, Warren Villebrun, Leeann Hoffman and Jenny Porter; second row, left to right, are Christina Hujanen, Tracey Dagen, Brandi Sykes, Cathy Chavers, Alexa Goodsky, Tara Geshick, Amber Wilke, Raini Boshey and Adrian Koski, front row, left to right, are Jordan Isham, Dora Porter and Tipuk Fitriyanti. Submitted photo.

tention to this initiative.”

The license plates will be available to band members from Bois Forte and Fond du Lac who live on their respective reservations. The hope is to make sure Missing and Murdered Indigenous people are not forgotten.

Carr said she was touched by the story of Fond du Lac Chair Kevin Dupuis, who shared the sad story of his sister being murdered some 22 years ago near Cloquet. The murder remained unsolved for 13 years, which only added to the pain felt by the Dupuis family.

“It was a somber event, but unlike many families, they were able to find closure,” said Carr. “That is why this new program is so important, as it will keep the spotlight on those who disappear and heighten efforts not to give up hope.”

Dagen concurred.

“Having the new MMIR plates out there will increase awareness of this pandemic,” said Dagen. “More awareness will help in finding our missing relatives!”

Dagen said that being a Water

Protector on the frontlines, she has seen how this social problem affects Natives, especially Native women. She added that meeting State Senator Mary Kunesh was inspiring and added that having her support will only amplify the cause that’s so important. Dagen said the senator was the driving force behind an office being opened that specifically deals with MMIR cases.

“It was a highlight to meet the main force behind the MMIR Task Force,” said Dagen of Kunesh, who is leading efforts to get a similar Minnesota license plate passed by the legislature. “I believe she will get the Minnesota MMIR plate pushed through for MMIR Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives.”

If that goal is accomplished, Dagen said, it will boost the efforts of Bois Forte and Fond du Lac.

“It’s encouraging that we can all work together on behalf of Indigenous people who have gone missing,” said Dagen. “We want to let those people and their families know they will never be forgotten.”



QUALITY DESIGN— Here is a sample of what the new MMIR license plates will look like. The new plates will cost \$120, plus a \$20 title fee for band members who live on the Bois Forte Reservation. For more information, contact Tracey Dagen at 218-757-3261, Ext. 1197 or 218-753-4542.



Whiteman from page 6

with cocaine. It was a vicious cycle and one that he did not know how to get out of.

He recalls staying awake drinking and doing cocaine for five straight days. When he finally looked in the mirror, he said he almost died looking at the lifeless reflection staring back at him.

"I looked like the living dead," recalled Whiteman. "I had rings around my eyes... my weight was easily less than 100 pounds. I thought it was about time it take a break."

Like the others before, that break did not last long and now Whiteman was suicidal. He tried to kill himself three times. He finally mustered up the courage to leave Florida and head back to Minnesota where he ended up in Duluth again. He no longer used cocaine nor other drugs he experimented with, but he continued abusing alcohol while going through another summer of homelessness.

"My alcoholism was still out of control—it got so bad no one wanted to drink with me," said Whiteman.

Another trip to the hospital for a head injury sustained while falling down in a stupor did not wake him up and lo and behold, he found himself in the hospital again one month later for a head injury caused by another drunken fall.

This led Whiteman to another poignant look in the mirror where this time he could not stand the person looking back at him. He recalled overwhelming feelings of disdain toward himself, and he once again thought about ending his life.

Fast forward to November 20, 1997, Whiteman's 32nd birthday. Like most birthdays before that, Whiteman celebrated by buying himself a bottle of whiskey, only this one would be the last.

"The last thing I remember was being in the skywalk that stretches over the highway and leads to the DECC," said Whiteman. "The ambulance found me out on Michigan Street—I was unresponsive and smelled very



Minute with Millie

Ahh, the vagaries of winter are especially vexing this year. At least for me. I sit in the living room, watching the latest episode of my current favorite movie. Lo and behold, a cold breeze works its way up my spine or settles right around my feet. I move to the kitchen, or to another spot.

Nah. Nothing works so I must find one of the blankets I have been gifted with and wrap it around me. Then I realize that I've left my coffee, tea or pop somewhere that requires me to move once again. Finally settled again and...yep. I must now hunt for the remote to backtrack the movie to where I was when that cold breeze first floated through the house.

I sigh deeply, raise my voice to call my son. He pops into the room and I ask him to find the remote for me. I am lucky he loves his mother very much as this event happens rather more frequently during these long cold days full of the vagaries of winter. Especially when I am settled and start watching my show when my alarm rings, reminding me that I have meds to take. Drats. Ratted.

Now, I must get up to shut the infernal machine off before it gets louder or starts chirping at me. Yeah, I have

one of those smart-phones. Upon occasion, I think it's well on its way to learning exactly what annoys me most. Then I remember the grem...ah. They might have come indoors along with the other creatures who want a warm spot to recline in of a cold winter's night.

I spend a few seconds debating..."Sonnn." I chance the fact that this time I may have just earned "the look." I breathe a sigh of relief when he merely shrugs and goes to get me a glass of water. And my phone.

Yep, the vagaries of winter are sometimes solved very effectively and efficiently when comfortably ensconced in a warm, gifted blanket to watch a bit of TV.



strongly of alcohol. It turns out I had a bad skull fracture, and my brain was internally bleeding."

This was the night he barely survived, but it was also the same night that Whiteman regained control of his life. Yes, he would have to learn how to walk and talk all over again, but he forged ahead and worked hard at rehab to make a life for himself again—one that did not include alcohol or any other mind-altering substance.

"When I learned what happened to me that night and how close I really came to death, it scared the #**^ out of me," said Whiteman, who believes he was assaulted that night and pretty much left for dead.

It would have been an awful way for a proud man like himself to go out and he is eternally grateful that it was not his time to die that night.

The next 13 months were spent at Park Point Manor in Duluth where he learned how to take care of himself again. He eventually moved into a

home for those suffering a Traumatic Brain Injury and lived there for a year before moving on. He is now at Lenox Place where he enjoys living and has established many friendships.

He thinks back to the days when he was consumed by alcohol, and he had to admit many years ago that he had a big problem with it.

"I admitted that alcohol had me beat and it was still going to win if I attempted to get into the ring with it," said Whiteman.

And like any great boxing champion, Whiteman knew some 25 years ago that he would never again get into the ring. Instead, he enjoys being outside the ring, living life to its fullest and appreciating the small things in life.

"I love my life today," said Whiteman as he gets back into a vehicle and heads to do a little shopping. "I've experienced many heartaches in my life due to alcohol—and I know I will not go down that path again."

Now **HIRING**



For a list of current job opportunities,

go to: www.boisforte.com/jobs

Obituaries

JACQUELINE KAY O'LEARY, 56 of Duluth, MN passed away peacefully on November 18, 2022, at Solvay Hospice House in Duluth after a short battle with cancer.

During her fight she married the love of her life, Troy Johnson. Jackie attended Fond Du Lac College and St. Scholastica graduating with a degree in business. She loved dogs, bird watching, and was a superb pool player.

Jackie is preceded in death by her

father Donald and mother Sharon, sons Samuel and Parnell, and special friend Roger Higbee.

Jackie is survived by her husband Troy; son Page Ashley; granddaughters Alexis and Evelyn; grandsons Dalton and Page Jr.; brothers Tom (Kris), Marty (Michelle), Patrick, Daniel (Sue), and Timothy; sisters Shawn (Jerry), and Susan; many nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews.



CECILE MARIE STRONG, 63, passed away on Sunday, December 4, 2022.

Cecile was born in Cook, MN to Louis Strong and Alice (Brown) Strong. She grew up in Nett Lake with her four brothers and two sisters. Later in life, Cecile moved to Duluth, back to Nett Lake, Virginia, and most recently Chisholm, MN. She loved her two kids very much, Kristen & Kevin Strong and would do anything for them. Her hobbies were collecting interesting items, she liked rummage sales, puzzles, listening to music, keeping a tidy house and doing what

she could for family. She grew up and believed in the catholic religion, went to church, and prayed often for those she loved. She always asked about her nephews and nieces.

Cecile is survived by her daughter Kristen (Squidg Morrison) Strong and son Kevin J. Strong; sister Carol (Leonard Konecny) Strong; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents: Louis Strong and Alice (Brown) Strong/Whiteman; brothers: Terrence Strong, Roger Strong, Lewis Strong, Jr., and Norman Strong; sister, Cynthia Strong; nieces: Rojean Strong and Terry Strong; and nephew Eric Strong.

Funeral and Church services were held at the RTG building in Nett Lake. The Wake was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. The Funeral Service was held the next day on Thursday, December 8, 2022.

Cecile will be buried at the newer cemetery in Nett Lake by her mom, auntie Celia Brown, brother's Norman Strong and Lewis Strong, Jr.

The casket bearers were Squidg Morrison and her nephews- Kent Lund, George Strong, Corey Strong, Ulysses Strong, and Tom Nicolas. The Honorary casket bearers were her other nephews, nieces, and her only surviving sister Carol Strong. Jared Bangs served as officiant.

It was a great day to be inside!



HAVING A GOOD TIME! - Bois Forte staff were treated to a special day at The Watering Can in Cook. "A creative and festive day for all ages as porch pots were assembled with fresh greens and lots of sparkles," said Bois Forte RN Jill Schuchard of the event. "The air outside was freezing but inside the green house at The Watering Can in Cook, the sun was warm and bright! Miigwech to all who attended." Submitted photo.

BOIS FORTE SOLID WASTE

***PLEASE NOTE: ONE CONTAINER PER HOUSEHOLD**

DO'S:

- Have your Solid Waste container out to the curb the night before or, no later than 8:00 AM on the day of your solid waste collection day.
- Remove container from the curb or front yard no later than 8:00AM on the day AFTER your collection day.
- Place container at least 5 feet away from any object (mailboxes, cars, trees etc.)
- Place container at curb with handles facing away from the road.

DON'TS:

- Do not overload or overfill the container. Make sure lid shuts, all trash must be bagged and tied shut.
- Operator will not be picking up loose trash or bags that are not in the Solid Waste bin. Yard waste does not go in container.
- NO PERSONAL TRASH CANS!! ONLY the Bois Forte Solid Waste containers will be picked up and disposed.
- DO NOT put RECYCLING in Solid Waste Container!

Current Solid Waste & Recycling Collection Schedule:

MONDAYS:	RECYCLING -	Nett Lake (All sectors)
TUESDAYS:	SOLID WASTE -	Nett Lake Village, Palmquist, HWY 65, Indian Pt & Sugarbush
THURSDAYS:	SOLID WASTE-	Vermilion
FRIDAYS:	RECYCLING -	Vermilion

Contact Frank Villebrun, Jr at (218) 404-5457 for RECYCLING

Contact Frank Barto, Sr at (218) 757-0193 for SOLID WASTE

January ^{Happy} NEW YEAR

Here is the Elder Nutrition Program's (ENP) menu for the month of January. Services offered include nutritious meals served daily, Monday through Friday at the Nett Lake and Vermilion Community Centers from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with home-delivered meals available to Elders who are unable to get to the ENP sites.

January 2: Burrito Bowl, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 3: Clam Chowder, Mixed Vegetables, Wheat Crackers, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 4: Chef Salad, Garlic Breadstick, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 5: Roasted Chicken, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Capri Vegetable, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 6: Bison Stew, Multigrain Bun, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 9: Sliced Beef with Gravy, Roasted Root Vegetables, Tossed Garden Salad, Dinner Roll

January 10: Chicken Penne Alfredo, Broccoli Florets, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 11: Wild Rice Meatballs with Gravy, Sweet Potato Fries, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 12: Split Pea Soup, Country Ham, Sweet and Sour Red Cabbage, Wheat Roll, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 13: Pork Loin, Garden Blend Rice, Diced Beets, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 16: Teriyaki Grilled Chicken, Brown Rice, Oriental Vegetables, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 17: Roast Turkey Slice,

Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Stuffing, French Cut Green Beans, Pumpkin Pie

January 18: Beef Pot Pie, Tossed Garden Salad, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 19: Grilled Chicken Breast, Spanish Rice, Sliced Zucchini, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 20: BBQ Pork Riblette, Au Gratin Potatoes, Broccoli Slaw, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 23: Baked Pork Chop, Rosemary Baby Red Potatoes, Cauliflower, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 24: Beef Lasagna, Green Beans, Garlic Toast, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 25: Cabbage Beef Soup, Relish Plate, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 26: Stir Fry Chicken, Brown Rice, Stir Fry Vegetables, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 27: Bison Stew, Multigrain Bun, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 30: Shepherd's Pie, Biscuit, Broccoli Florets, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

January 31: White Chicken Chili, Cornbread, Chef's Choice Assorted Fruit

Hockey great Henry Boucha to be featured on documentary

WARROAD— Boucha Films, and TPT/PBS, St. Paul have partnered in producing the Henry Boucha Story. Set to release in 2024. This one-hour documentary will air in the State of Hockey, followed by releasing to 350 PBS Channels across the United States.

The Boucha Films Executive Producer Henry Boucha, along with Leya Hale, Producer at TPT/PBS and film

crew was in Warroad from December 27th to December 31, 2022 to film the Warroad Segment for the Documentary.

Henry Boucha was honored during the Warroad Hockeytown Classic on December 29th prior to the hockey game Warroad vs Orono at the Warroad Garden in Warroad.

News for Bois Forte Elders

By Millie Holmes

The Centers are open for Congregate Dining from 10:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Home Deliveries will start at 11:00 in the village and continue to Palmquist and Indian Point.

If you have a dog outside, please have them on a leash when expecting the driver. Remember, while your dog may not bite you or your family, others coming into your territory are not considered part of its pack.

Please call 218-757-3790 by 9 a.m. to let the kitchen staff know if you will be eating in or picking up your meal. If you are not eating that day, please call as soon as possible, especially when warmer weather begins to make itself felt.

Staff will be available for all other calls at 218-757-3790 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If your call goes to voicemail, please be patient with our new phone system, which takes some time to learn.

Winter is finally here. Along with

winter comes the usual chores, such as shoveling snow from the porch, the drive, and the roof. And some elders will also need to have their trash can sites shoveled per the instructions handed out in November. These and other topics will be discussed at the Elder Activity Committee meeting on January 11, 2023, at noon, right after lunch at the Community Center in Nett Lake.

Staff is working on updating mailing addresses for the local area for newsletters and other important information in the coming months. Currently, the newsletters are being sent with lunch deliveries and are available at the Centers. Other items on the agenda will include:

- Fundraising ideas.
- Procedures for approving the spending of funds raised.
- Procedures for social activities for both Nett Lake and Vermilion.



Happy Birthday

ELIUS

7 on Jan. 23rd!

Love,
Mom, Dad & Hazel



Bois Forte NEWS



The *Bois Forte News* (BFN) is published monthly by the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. The BFN encourages submission of articles, community announcements, recipes, and photos.

Send to:
news@boisforte-nsn.gov

Contributions are subject to editing for grammar, length, and malicious/libelous content. BFN will attempt to include all material submitted by Band members and guests. Multiple contributions from the same source may be excluded or rotated to future issues to ensure equal access to all. For information on paid ads, please contact us.

Deadline for the Feb. 2023 issue is Jan. 20, 2023.

BIG WOODS TRANSIT is looking for VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

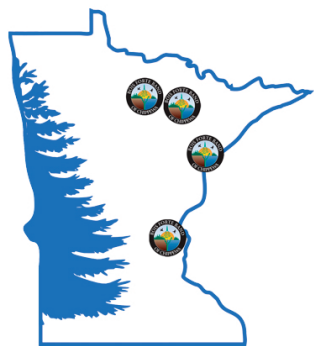
Volunteer Drivers take people to medical appointments and have the option to take elders shopping once a week.

Volunteer drivers will be reimbursed @ .625/mi (increased from .585!)

You are scheduled for 3 rides during the week

- 1. Nett Lake to Virginia round trip miles 124 X .625 = \$77.50**
- 2. Vermilion to Duluth Round Trip Miles 182 X .625 = \$113.75**
- 3. Nett Lake to Cook Round Trip Miles 66 X .625 = \$41.25**

Total Reimbursement for the week = \$232.50



Nett Lake Sector
5344 Lakeshore Drive
Nett Lake, MN 55772
Phone: 218-757-3261
Toll Free: 800-221-8129
Fax: 218-757-3312

Vermilion Sector
1610 Farm Road South
Tower, MN 55790
Phone: 218-753-4542
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Minneapolis, MN 55404
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Bois Forte Tribal Council

- Robert Moyer, Jr. — District II Representative
- Tara Geshick—Secretary-Treasurer
- Cathy Chavers—Tribal Chair
- Travis Morrison—District I Representative
- Shane Drift—District I Representative