



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 48 NUMBER 9

GET OUT AND VOTE!

Make sure you get out to vote this November! If you are new to the State of Minnesota, you can register online by visiting <https://mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/VoterRegistration/index> or call 877-600-VOTE (8683) between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., M-F.

Management changes take place at the Bay Ebert empowers Bois Forte band members to step into key roles

TOWER— Feeling the need to give Bois Forte band members a chance to lead Fortune Bay Resort Casino into the future, Bois Forte Development Corporation CEO Drew Ebert made some sweeping changes to do just that.

“From day one I wanted to understand the best path forward as a corporation while respecting culture and integrating into the tribal nation system,” said Ebert, who began his stint as CEO this past spring. “The solution was to enable and empower as many band members as possible, and frankly they have made it very easy for me because of their backgrounds, experience, and passion to succeed.”

The changes Ebert made entails Elizabeth Deegan taking over as General Manager, Alanna Sherman as Director of Human Resources, Paxton Goodsky as Director of Gaming, and Wes King as Director of Surveillance.

The changes at the top were announced by Ebert at a meeting he called in early August. He congratulated all of the new



TALENTED CREW!—BFDC CEO Drew Ebert, back row, second from the left, has made some key management changes to reward Bois Forte band members and others. Some of the band members have already been in leadership roles, but they too have been working extremely hard to lead Fortune Bay Resort Casino down a continued path of success. Pictured in the front row, left to right, are Taneesha Dupree, who is an Innovation Specialist; Fred Correa, who is the new Director of IT; Wes King, who is the new Director of Surveillance and Hannah Lehti, who continues to serve as the Director of Marketing. Pictured in the back row, left to right are Madison Porter, who is the new Bar Manager, Ebert, Elizabeth Deegan, who is the new General Manager, Alanna Sherman, who is the new Director of Human Resources, Josh Sherman, who is the new Tables Game Manager, Tara Wagner, who is the new Lead Manager on Duty and Paxton Goodsky, who is the new Director of Gaming.

leaders and told them that if they need any type of training to become more proficient in their jobs to just ask.

“We will give you the right tools to succeed,” said Ebert.

Each of the new leaders were tagged with an interim title to follow protocol, but it is

expected that all of the changes will be permanent.

“The interim titles are per policy because we must post the positions where interims will apply and interview like anyone else,” explained Ebert. “The interim title will drop after selections have been made.”

These moves also allowed other Bois Forte band members to step into positions of leadership, including Madison Porter as Bar Manager, Josh Sherman as Tables Game Manager and Tara Wagner as Lead Manager on Duty.

“We knew that the changes were coming, and we wanted to ensure a smooth transition across the board while reinforcing my shared vision for the corporation, to whatever extent possible, to be hosted and led by people of the tribe,” said Ebert.

Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers applauded the moves that Ebert had made. For her, it’s about the tribe believing in the talents of young band members, some of whom have already carved out successful careers, but were ready to make that next step.

“E.J. has been a loyal, hardworking employee for the band for many years,” said Chavers of Deegan, who had previously served as Director of Gaming for 15 years and has over 20 years of service at Fortune Bay. “It was time to entrust in her leading our flagship business and I believe she’ll do a great job for us.”

See Management page 2

Chairwoman Cathy Chavers



Boozhoo

I cannot believe that fall is already here. Our children will now be in school and hopefully there will be a ricing season. But as we all know, ricing depends on the weather and water levels. We have seen our water levels in this area be quite high yet.

I want to say Pidamaya and Chi Miigwech to the Shakopee Mdewakan-

ton Sioux for their generous grant of \$1,000,000 for the Bois Forte Heritage Center. Also, a shout out to Jaylen Strong and Doris Isham for their work in this effort as well. For those of you who are not aware, our current Heritage Center in Vermilion houses all our artifacts that we have acquired throughout the years. Tribes are still being contact about the repatriation of our ancestral artifacts throughout the country and outside the United States. The Bois Forte Heritage Center needs a new HVAC system, roof repair and repairing water leakage that has been occurring.

We can see that we will have a need, maybe sooner than later, that we may have to build or find a new expanded repository for our ancestral artifacts. We have individuals, colleges and universities that are repatriating items to the tribes more and more.

The Tribal Council, along with the various departments, have been meeting regarding the ARPA funding as the deadline to have this money obligated is

December 31, 2024. The money must be totally spent by December 31, 2026. We will be having meetings to make a determination on how these funds will be obligated, however it will be difficult as there are many needs.

Finally, I want to stress how important it is for all our tribal members and others to be sure to vote in this upcoming election in November. We are very happy to see Governor Walz be selected at the VP candidate of Kamala Harris. I really believe that Minnesota's administration of Walz/Flannigan has made

great strides in Minnesota regarding tribes and tribal issues. We were not being heard in the past but now we ARE at the table. That is important to be a part of the process before decisions are made and not being brought in after decisions are being made for our people. So again, please be sure to be registered to vote and make sure you cast your vote for the candidate of your choice. It does matter!

Chi Miigwech!

Management from page 1

Chavers had similar praise for the others as well and again felt it was perfect timing for Ebert to propose these moves.

"Alanna also brings a lot of talent to her position as does Paxton and Wes," said Chavers. "Fortune Bay was built on the idea that band members could carve out successful careers for themselves, while paving the path for other band members to follow in their footsteps."

Ebert agreed and added that the changes represent a step forward in the right direction and frankly something that should have happened years ago.

"I have faith in our new leadership," said Ebert, whose duties as CEO for the BFDC has meant less time spent at Fortune Bay so that he can concentrate on long term projects like the marijuana dispensary and eventual marijuana grow operation. "Moving forward, we will continue to create and share high standards, strong culture, patience, and a drama free environment, so that our work is done in a good way."

Editor's note: It was announced right before the Bois Forte News deadline that the Deegan and King had their interim titles removed—congratulations to Deegan and King!

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION NOTICE

Any Native or non-Native who has been convicted of a covered sex offense under any Tribal, State,

or Federal law and who resides, is employed, or attends school within the territorial jurisdiction of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa or on any property owned by the Band in fee or trust regardless of location or is employed by the Band regardless of location must register with the Bois Forte Sex Offender Registry Office.

Please take notice that for purposes of sex offender registration, "residency" includes overnight stays or longer within the territorial jurisdiction of the Band or on Band property.

Sex offenders convicted in the Bois Forte Tribal Court must register with the Bois Forte Sex Offender Registry Office regardless of the sex offender's actual or intended residency, employment, or attendance at school.

Sex offenders convicted in any other jurisdiction and thereafter incarcerated within the Band's jurisdiction must register with the Bois Forte Sex Offender Registry Office while completing any sentence imposed from the other jurisdiction.

Registration must occur within the following timeframes: (1) If incarcerated: before release from imprisonment; (2) If not incarcerated and currently residing, employed, or attending school within Band: within 3 business days of sentencing for the covered sex offense; (3) If after release from incarceration or after sentencing and residence, employment, or attendance at school is to be established within Band: within 3 business days of establishing residence, commencing employment, or attendance at school within Band; and (4) if visiting and staying overnight within Band: must notify SORNA Compliance Officer prior to visit and must register immediately upon entering the Band's territory.

Any Native or non-Native who fails to register may be subject to prosecution under Tribe, State, and/or Federal law and their information will be forwarded to the applicable law enforcement agency for possible apprehension and prosecution.

To register, or for additional information, contact Bois Forte SORNA Compliance Officer at the Tribal Court at 218-757-3462 or for after hours or weekends, contact the Bois Forte Police.

Happiest of birthdays to Lola & Lyla Pete who turn 11 on September 15th

Updates from the Planning & Community Development Departments

*Submitted by Carol Burr
Planning & Community Development Director*

Our department has been diligently working on several initiatives to enhance and maintain various programs through grant applications. Here are some key updates:

Current Projects

• Grants Researching For:

• Renewable Energy:

Researching solar energy and battery storage to potentially reduce residents' electric costs.

• **Safe Streets for All:** Enhancing transportation safety.

• **Transportation Safety Plan:** Improving overall transportation infrastructure.

• **Housing:** Securing funds for additional housing projects.

• **Demolition:** Addressing unsafe structures.

• Feasibility Study:

• **Second Road Out of Nett Lake Village:** Assessing the benefits of this project for the community.

Other ongoing projects include:

• Establishment of an Energy Department with grant funding and startup funding for renewable energy projects.

• Vermilion and Indian Point Docks.

• Reservation Boundary Signs.

• Nett Lake Food Shelf Renovation.

• Feasibility Study for second road.

Funded Projects

1. Vermilion Public Works/Food Shelf/Headstart Building

• **Location:** Vermilion on Farm Road

• **Purpose:** Public Works, Maintenance, Food Shelf, and Headstart Bay

• **Status:** Under construction

• **Completion Date:** End of December 2024



LOOKING GOOD!—The new Vermilion Public Works/Food Shelf/Headstart Building is coming along very nice! This photo was taken Monday, August 26th just seven weeks after a ribbon cutting ceremony was held commemorating the start of the project.

2. Department of Natural Resources Building

• **Location:** Nett Lake

• **Purpose:** Offices for DNR Staff, Wild Rice storage (climate controlled), and wild rice processing area

• **Status:** Environmental approved, finalizing drawings and specifications

• **Next Steps:** Project out for bid, construction projected to start spring 2025

3. Big Woods Transit

• **Location:** Nett Lake

• **Purpose:** New transit bus bay, offices, wash bay, etc.

• **Status:** Environmental completed and approved, working on application and paperwork

• **Next Steps:** Finish building drawings and specifications

Ongoing Grant Research for:

• Additional housing and government buildings, plus renewable energy projects,

transportation, safety, housing, demolition, water & sewer extension, walk/bike path, ceremonial house, language & culture programs, maintenance equipment, etc.

• Funding for:

• Additional housing.

• Government buildings.

• Services and programs for

Urban offices.

• Cultural programs.

Contact Information:

• **Carol Burr:** cburr@boisforte-nsn.gov | 218-757-3261, ext. 1274

• **Doris Isham:** disham@boisforte-nsn.gov | 218-757-3261, ext. 1268

• **Dave Anderson:** danderson@boisforte-nsn.gov

Feel free to reach out with any ideas or projects you would like us to consider. We are here to assess and research your suggestions.

Bois Forte Nutrition Education Program

Submitted by Marissa Rose

Miinan Blueberries

Nutritional Benefits

- Fiber
- Vitamin C
- Rich in Vitamin K
- High antioxidants (one of the top foods for antioxidants!)

Health Benefits

- May help lower blood pressure, prevent heart disease and improve memory
- Low in calories but high in nutrients
- Protects cholesterol in your blood from becoming damaged
- Helps reduce DNA damage

Fun Things To Make With Miinan

- Miinan Manoomin
- Miinan and Yogurt
- Miinan and Oatmeal

Ombigitooyok Waa Miijiyeg Club

This was our first year having the garden club. Our goal is to encourage food sovereignty and to have access to fresh, healthy and natural food products. It started in April and the last workshop will be in September. We have had guest speakers and topics for things like seed starting, pest control and food preservation! Each month there is a workshop in Nett Lake and Vermilion. Our participants were also able to visit The Gawboys farm/garden!



Another successful Summer Youth Program is in the books!

*Submitted by Leanne Hoffman
Bois Forte Education Programs Facilitator*

Summer is the favorite time of year for many. It is a popular time to enjoy the beautiful weather with friends and family as we don't have to shovel ourselves out of our parking spaces! For several Bois Forte Youth, summer is a time that offers them the opportunity to work and earn a few extra bucks!

This summer the Bois Forte Summer Youth Program hired eight youth from both the Vermilion and Nett Lake Sectors of the Bois Forte Reservation.

The program started on June 17, 2024, and ran through August 8, 2024. This eight-week program gave youth real world working experience for thirty-two hours each week.

As with many programs over time, the summer youth program has evolved from when it began decades ago. Instead of focusing on community service type work such as mowing, stacking wood, painting etc., it is now an internship-based program that starts with the youth going through the official Bois Forte Tribal Government hiring process as well as being required to follow the

same policies and procedures as tribal government employees.

Once the youth are hired, they are placed in different positions within the Bois Forte Tribal Government. For the first time in the program's history, positions were available at Fortune Bay Resort and Casino as one of our placements! Summer youth also worked internships at the Vermilion and Nett Lake Boys and Girls Clubs, Bois Forte Human Resources, Bois Forte Health and Human Services- Nett Lake Dental Office and the Nett Lake Elderly Nutrition Program. Chi-Miigwech to those supervisors, and also to those supervisors who requested an intern, but we were unfortunately unable to accommodate. We appreciate their generosity in taking the time to work with our youth to give them a productive and meaningful work experience!

As a new feature for the Summer Youth Program, we have added once-a-week Educational Days. We were able to collaborate with some great programs this summer. NccYou did a training with the kids to teach the importance of money management as well as credit and savings. We had the pleasure of

working with Fortune Bay's Security Director, Andrew Little, to get our youth CPR and First Aid certified. ZeitGeist, a video production company from Duluth, MN, came to Nett Lake and did a four-day training that culminated in the creation of a short film. The youth came up with the storyline, made props, shot the footage and then did a tiny bit of the editing, as there was just not enough time! This activity received great reviews, and we will be sure to offer it again next summer while opening it up to additional participants. Our final education day was with 1854's Marne Kaeske. She taught the youth about a few of our treaties with the U.S. Government as well as how to make their own knocking sticks. This was a hands-on lesson and such a cool opportunity! The youth were very impressed, and it is especially exciting being that ricing is just around the corner!!

That concluded our 2024 Summer Youth Work Experience. I already have ideas of what we can do next year and look forward to what next summer has in store for them!!



Bois Forte Emergency Preparedness and American Red Cross

Emergency Preparedness Fair

Sign Up for FREE Smoke Alarms & installation

Make sure you are on the community emergency notification system

Emergency demonstrations and informational booths

FREE FOOD & games!

**Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2024
5 - 7 pm
Bois Forte Fire Hall**

**Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2024
5 - 7 pm
Vermilion Center**

Questions? Please call Teresa KnifeChief at the Bois Forte RTG 218-757-3261 ext. 1194



LEARNING A TRADITION — Participants with the Bois Forte Summer Youth Program were busy making knocking sticks during one of their classes.

Higher energy costs are just around the corner!

As we see Summer slowly fade to fall, the activities of harvesting, hunting, and preparing for another winter to blanket us in snow starts to fill our free hours. With the seasonal transitions ahead, we are also faced with the knowledge that higher energy costs are coming once again.

Looming out there with higher energy costs are the commitment deadlines and efforts locally, regionally, nationally, and globally to become carbon-free. The shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy affects utility-scaled energy generation, the way our homes and businesses are being built and powered, as well as the future of our transportation industry. With the electrification of our economy moving forward, demand for electricity will climb and the need to provide new, clean, and renewable energy will be essential to sustain the growth.

Bois Forte is committed to finding better energy solutions for existing and future energy needs in this changing energy landscape. As part of Bois Forte's commitment, an Energy Department

has been created and work has begun to layout a framework that will enable us to find, fund and implement projects that will better the lives of our Bois Forte Band members.

Through the efforts of the initial work groups, the following three areas were determined to be the key energy priorities to be addressed:

1. High and rising electricity costs.
2. Access and generation of clean, renewable, and sustainable energy with less carbon emissions.
3. Energy self-sufficiency.

Each area alone has a wide range of opportunities to explore.

I have been consolidating past and present meeting information into a working layout for the development of the department and to use as a starting point for community engagement. I will be working to set up community meetings in Nett Lake and in Vermilion in September. I will welcome these meetings as an opportunity for open dialogue on energy topics that may be of interest or concern for our Band members.

I look forward to seeing you in September!

Amy Mason, Energy Director
amy.mason@boisforte-nsn.gov

NO OFFICIAL START TO RICING SEASON JUST YET

NETT LAKE— There's good news and bads to report on the 2024 ricing season. The good news is there will be a season, but the bad news is that it will be a challenging year.

"The Committee just met," said Bois Forte DNR Projects Director Chris Holm as *The Bois Forte News* was going to press. "Wild rice season will occur. Rice is sparse, but there is some out there if storms don't take it down first."

Holm added that the rice is still milky and chalky.

"And it's been cold so that will slow it down," said Holm. "We are supposed to get another two inch rainfall starting tonight (Wednesday, August 28th), so that won't help."

Holm said the rice will be checked again Friday, August 30th, and they will report rice conditions back to the Committee.

"So, no official opening date is set yet but it is imminent," said Holm.

Bois Forte Purchased/Referred Care Re-Enrollment

WARNING
DUE DATES ARE CLOSER
THAN THEY APPEAR

Open Enrollment is August 12th through September 30th

Applications will be sent in the mail shortly. In order to get your card before the new fiscal year starting October 1st, please have your application turned in as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristal Strong.

Nett Lake Clinic

5219 St. John Drive
Nett Lake, MN 55772
(218)757-3650

patientbenefits@boisforte-nsn.gov

Vermilion Clinic

1613 Farm Road South
Tower, MN 55790
(218)753-2182

Kristal.strong@boisforte-nsn.gov

ATTENTION BF SOLID WASTE CUSTOMERS

Fall and Winter will soon be upon us and here are a few reminders for your Trash Bin

- Make sure your bin is placed in the right position for pick up, ALL bins have instruction stickers on the front for proper placement.
- Remember that there can be **NO** obstructions at least 5 feet around the trash bin, no snowbanks, mailboxes, vehicles, trees, misc. trash, toys etc.

Solid Waste Pick Up Schedule

Nett Lake, Palmquist, Hwy 65, Indian Point & Sugarbush – **Every TUESDAY**

Vermilion Sector – **Every THURSDAY**

*Occasionally we need to reschedule due to holiday closures, inclement weather etc, these will be immediately posted to BF social media and signs posted in public buildings as soon as possible

WRONG Bin placement

This bin cannot be disposed of, as objects are too close to the bin

If you have any questions, contact Public Works at (218) 757-0193



DNR expecting fall spike in calls about nuisance bears

NETT LAKE—With food sources not readily abundant for the black bear population, Bois Forte DNR Programs Director Chris Holm is expecting his office to be fielding more calls about nuisance bears in the coming weeks.

“There are two peaks of bear activity and this spring we received 75 calls about nuisance bears,” said Holm in an

interview in late August. “Given the fact that it wasn’t a good year for berries or forage, we are expecting another big bump in the fall.”

Holm is hopeful Nett Lake residents are patient with the DNR as they deal with the problematic bears and he also wanted to send a message that his department will do everything possible to

remove bears via live traps, as opposed to taking down any bears.

This comes on the heels of an incident in late June where a conservation officer had to kill a bear, which prompted concerned band members to stage a protest in the village.

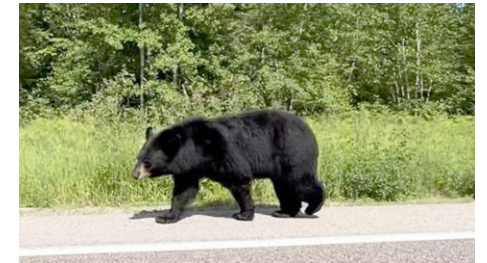
Local media, namely The Timberjay newspaper, were called to cover the protest as band members were upset that killing the bear was the only option.

According to The Timberjay article, activists took their concern to the internet in a Change.org petition on June 28, which has surpassed the original goal of 200 signatures with a count of 239.

“To us, bears are not just animals. They hold deep cultural significance — they are Spiritual Guides, Protectors, and extended family in our cultural context,” the petition reads. “It is unjustifiable to allow this senseless killing to continue without regards to the traditions of the tribal members who have lived in harmony with these bears for generations. It’s time for our voices, the voices of those that respect and live by the old ways, to be heard.”

This petition resulted in a group of protesters gathered in the early morning hours of July 2nd armed with signs waved at passing motorists with slogans such as “End the Murder of Our Bears” and “Save Our Bears.” The protestors were upset with the killing of the bear as it was left behind for a short period of time.

According to Holm, the officer in-



MILLING AROUND— This photo was taken a couple miles outside the Nett Lake Village earlier this summer. The bear slowly walked alongside the road minding its own business, but other bears have been causing problems in the village as of late and those problems could increase this fall.

tended to remove the bear after it was euthanized, but got called away at that time to address yet another bear call.

“The officer arranged help and came back as soon as possible and removed the bear. One person alone can’t just typically pick up a bear and put in a pickup truck. Heavy equipment must be brought in to lift and transport the animal,” said Holm.

Holm said it’s important to also recognize that this method for management has been carried out in Nett Lake for a long time.

“It is not a new thing, it is not unique, and for this DNR it is frankly a very rare situation whereby this is done,” he said. Officers do not want to take this

See Bears page 7

Ganawenimaa Anishaanabeg



Bois Forte 477



Adult Basic Education

Online & in-person classes are available

- GED study & prepare
- Pre-college prep
- English Language Learners
- Basic Computer skills



Call Melissa @ 218-750-2606
To make an appointment



For a list of current job opportunities,

go to: www.boisforte.com/jobs

Bears from page 6

action and euthanizing is a last resort when the resident feels particularly threatened or the animal is persistently causing damage to property.”

Now that fall is fast approaching, Holm believes that the DNR will likely start receiving more calls and he is hopeful that alternative options being developed come into play soon to reduce incidence of bear-human interaction.

“Euthanizing is very much a last resort,” said Holm. “Conservation Officers don’t want to do this, and much prefer to live trap. But live trap is not always a fast resolution. When a trap is set, the Officer has then to wait for the bear. Bear doesn’t always go in the trap. With few traps, and a wait time for capture

at each location, people calling for assistance should expect that some time may have to pass before a trap is available to be placed at their location.”

Some consideration should also be given to the fact that removing and transporting a bear via a live trap for release elsewhere means the problematic bear can become someone else’s problem. And bears often find their way back.

DNR suggests that residents not to leave out their trash cans every day and instead just leave it out on the morning of the weekly pick up and then put it in a garage or some other enclosed or secured area. Even if the garbage can is empty, it can carry scents long after the can is emptied.

Residents should also consider

putting BBQ units in a garage or an enclosed area when not in use.

Holm encourages residents to call conservation officers immediately if they feel personally threatened by a bear, or observe bear acting strangely or aggressively, and added that while banging on pots and pans may help scare it away—it’s not a sure remedy. Bears habituated by feeding are used to seeing people and are not immediately frightened by people.

“Please be situationally-aware and take special care not to get between a female bear and its cubs,” said Holm, who added that DNR and community persons are seeing more females with three, four and even five cubs, so the population is definitely well-fed, and growing.

If you are encountering bear and have safety concerns and/or property damage problems, please call Conservation Officers Tony Mason (218) 404-3955 or Brian Whiteman Jr. (218) 404-5761.



Minute with Millie

On one of our many trips to town, Sister and I were talking about different happenings down memory lane. She asked me if I remembered chasing bats around the house with a broom. I gave her the “look” as I tried hard to remember this particular event in the many that had been stored in my “little bird brain” as my father used to tell me. Vague images sprung forth into the bare edges of my mind’s eye view.

Apparently, our middle sister and I had disliked the idea of bats flying around our room and promptly got the broom and proceeded to chase it around the dimly lit room. Little sis was laughing just hard at the memory.

I, of course, was driving and, thankfully, had to concentrate on the road conditions, the state of the car and traffic or the lack of it, and perhaps check for the occasional animal that likes to befuddle (test) the reactions of various drivers of the vehicles passing through their trails. Ya know, the ones that come to the edge of the road, stop and stare at the driver flying down the road towards them like a bat out of H..l.

Perhaps they, like Sister and I grabbing brooms, are looking for their own versions of brooms to chase us out of their way. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I’ve gone down another path in my memory whilst trying to search for the one that Sister spent miles laughing at the faintly



visible images of me and middle sis running around the room, barely dodging as the broom swept the bat towards some opening that never quite comes into my mind’s eye.

Do I check with Sister to find out if we ever got it out or did we give up? Did we clunk each other with the broom? Did Mom or Dad ever come to find out what we were doing?

Hmm, think I’ll just let Sister keep her memory. Not sure if I really want to remember and will just let the vague images rustle around in my mind’s eye. Perhaps I’ll finally get the whole image and laugh out loud at a memory belatedly shared.



NEWS

COMMUNITY EVENTS

NATIVE MUSIC

**Tribally Owned and
Operated**

14th annual Take A Vet Fishing event creates lasting memories

TOWER—As a youngster growing up in Tower, Todd Beifhoffer spent countless lazy summer days enjoying Lake Vermilion. Fast forward some 50 years, and the Navy Veteran was once again reconnecting to the lake that had brought him so much joy over the years.

“It’s awesome to be back,” said Beifhoffer as he grabbed his fishing gear from his boat prior to the start of the 14th annual Take A Vet Fishing event. “I had to miss last year because I had open heart surgery, but I am so glad to be back. I love the camaraderie. It’s just a great fellowship.”

Beifhoffer, a 1982 Tower-Soudan graduate, served in the Navy from 1983 to 1987. He was stationed in Maryland and Maine, and his sea time included stints in Iceland and Greenland.

“It was pretty rough last year as my heart was only functioning at 15%, but now it’s up to 26%—I can even make it to

my mailbox now,” he said with a faint laugh. “I’m hoping to get better, but days like these are just very special to me. We appreciate all of the guides who help out and the other volunteers too—it’s great, and we appreciate all the effort put into this event.”

Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers had similar praise for the guides and volunteers who make the Take A Vet Fishing event so meaningful.

“I am really impressed and very honored to be here today,” said Chavers as she gave the welcome at Fortune Bay’s lake-side tent in front of 100 veterans and roughly 85 boat operators, guides, and other volunteers. “My parents were veterans of the Navy in World War II, and they are no longer with us, just as many other veterans are no longer with us. I just want to thank them all and you all for your service.”

The veterans in attendance included Bois Forte band mem-

bers Ron Geshick and legendary Orr Braves basketball coach Bill King, who missed the fishing portion of the event, but made it to the fish fry in The Woodlands Ballroom later in the day.

Chavers said it is of the utmost importance to educate our younger people about our veterans. She said we must not forget our past because our veterans gave up so much of their lives so that we could have the freedoms we have today.

“I always say that whenever you see a veteran, please tell them thank you for their service because they took the time away from their families and their loved ones,” said Chavers, who was recently elected to her third consecutive term for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. “They fought for this country. They fought for democracy and our freedom.”

Chavers said she relished visiting with the veterans, who were enjoying a cup of coffee, doughnuts, and fresh fruit be-



WARM WELCOME— Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers gave the welcome at the 14th annual Take A Vet Fishing event, which was hosted by Fortune Bay Resort Casino. Looking on is Phil Bakken, who plays an instrumental part in the event, which provides veterans with an opportunity to spend a day on Lake Vermilion fishing and enjoying the company of their fellow veterans and area guides.

fore going out with a guide from the Lake Vermilion Guide’s League or a boat operator. She told those gathered that within tribes, they are known as very communal people, and she saw that same connection today.

“It’s a special thing you have,” said Chavers to the veterans. “I’m very pleased to be a part of this, and I enjoy seeing that connection you have with one another. Like I said last year, we call our veterans our Ojichidaas—that means warriors, and you are our warriors... Chi Miigwech (thank you) to you all.”

After Chavers’ welcome, Take A Vet Chair Phil Bakken also recognized the volunteers for all their hard work in making the event a success. He said it’s not easy for the volunteers, many of whom are retired, to continue planning and executing such a large event. It not only entails working on the logistics of the event, but it also

includes securing sponsorships and many other tedious tasks.

“Cathy Rouleau and her crew put in countless hours,” said Bakken of Rouleau, Jean Wagenbach, Sue Van De Line, and Patti Papin. “We were helping them last night, and I said, ‘You know, we’re getting too old for this.’”

While the gesture was somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Bakken, Roleau, and others will continue to work on behalf of the veterans and show them admiration and respect for everything they have done for our country.

“This is such a wonderful event,” said Larry “Skip” Murray, who lives in Mt. Iron and served two years in Vietnam. “It is so well organized, and we appreciate everything they do for us.”

Meanwhile, Papin gets to look at the event from a unique perspective. She first got involved with it when she took **Take A Vet Fishing page 11**



READY TO CATCH SOME FISH!— Bois Forte’s Ron Geshick, second from left, Robert Maturi, far left, and Ron Radotich, second from right, were anxious to get onto the lake with some of his fellow veterans and Lake Vermilion Guide League’s member Alan Wagenbach, far right.

The Bay won't be the same without Vern and Cindi Adams!

TOWER—It's not very often that Fortune Bay Resort Casino loses a husband-wife combo to retirement, but it happened this past month when both Vern and Cindi Adams called it a career.

"We're going to miss them both because they were such valued employees," said Director of Public Relations Brian K. Anderson. "Vern was always quick to help us out whenever we needed something done at the resort or at the lakeside tent where we hosted special events and weddings. Cindi had very good customer service skills and took the time to patiently answer any questions a guest may have had."

Prior to the Adams' retiring, the last time a husband-wife combo retired was when Bob and Sally Bergquist called it quits 9+ years ago. The Bergquist's ran the RV Park and Marina roughly eight months out of the year and then spent the winters working in maintenance and housekeeping, respectively.

Vern was a mainstay in the maintenance department, and he always busied himself by looking for projects to do, whether that be keeping up with plowing in the winter or tending to the grounds of Fortune Bay in the spring and summer. During the fall months he worked on cutting wood and then restocking the wood pile for Fortune Bay's expansive fireplace that greets guests on cold, winter days.

"I'm going to miss the people I worked with, but it was time for me to get out," said Vern, who worked at Fortune Bay for 22 years.

For those who knew Adams, they will certainly recall his former partner in crime,

Dennis "Poofy" Pulford, who passed away in December of 2017. This duo worked closely together and enjoyed each other's company in a big way. One time they were tasked with clearing large snowdrifts above the patio to the Sunset Steakhouse, so they decided to build a snow fort out of the drifts—it was a classic Vern and Poofy moment forever etched in our memories.

Meanwhile, Cindi was a constant figure at the resort front desk as she held court at

the far east portion of the reservation desk. She enjoyed helping guests with the check in process and was always quick to help out any of her co-workers in the tight knit department, which is now headed up by Bridgette Burr.

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank Cindi Adams for everything that she has done for the Resort Front Desk and Fortune Bay Resort Casino," wrote Burr in an email announcing Adams last day. "She has been a crucial member of

this team, and her commitment and teamwork have been priceless. We will truly miss her within RFD and at Fortune Bay, but we wish her nothing but happiness on this next adventure."

Cindi said now that she and Vern are retired, they will simply enjoy this next chapter by slowing down, spending time with their kids and grandkids, and perhaps do some traveling.

Like Vern, she too said it was time to call it a career

as she spent the past 16 years working at Fortune Bay.

"I'm going to miss some of the customers and my co-workers," said Cindi Adams.

While Vern has retired from Fortune Bay, he will still keep himself busy as Bois Forte's Spiritual Advisor.

"I'm going to miss them both — It just won't be the same without them here," said Director of Facilities Charlie Riihiluoma. "We all wish them a long and happy retirement!"



WONDERFUL LADY!— Longtime Fortune Bay Resort Casino Front Desk employee Cindi Adams retired this past month. She was joined in retirement by her husband, Vern Adams, who was a standout employee in our maintenance department. Both Cindi and Vern were nominated for a Pathway this past month by Charlie Riihiluoma, who thanked them both for their dedication and years of employment for Fortune Bay. Submitted photo by Bridgette Burr.



CONTAGIOUS SMILE!—Vern Adams always had a contagious smile and hearty laugh that followed! Vern, who spent 22 years working at the Bay, retired this past month. Best of luck Vern—we're going to miss you!

Dispensary at Fortune Bay could be open by the end of September

Seeing the opportunity tribes have in the cannabis industry, the Bois Forte Tribal Council gave the green light to a marijuana dispensary site near the RV Park at Fortune Bay Resort Casino and set the stage for a future grow operation.

The business venture's official entity name will be Bois Forte Cannabis Corporation, while the brand will be Ishkode, pronounced 'Ish-ka-day,' which means fire in Ojibwe.

"There was a list of about 40 names that I was trying to come up with," said Director of Marketing Hannah Lehti at a meeting in Nett Lake in early August. "Some of it was gimmicky, but since it's going to be a tribally owned business, why not use our language in some of our businesses—words that make sense. It's easy enough for everyone to say, so I think we hit that mark."

The Tribal Council agreed, and they also approved BFDC CEO Drew Ebert's recommendation to bring in a pre-fab building from Mississippi that carries a price tag of \$318,000. The building will be located at the old frontage road past the RV Park leading to the resort and could be opened by the end of September.

As reported in the August issue of The Bois Forte News, Ebert has been working closely with Minnesota Roots to glean their expertise and guidance



NEW BUSINESS VENTURE— This photo shows where the new marijuana dispensary will be located on the old frontage road just north of Fortune Bay's RV Park. If everything goes as planned, the business could be open by the end of September.

into this type of business. Minnesota Roots officials believe Bois Forte will experience impressive gross profits at the Fortune Bay site.

Ebert also headed Minnesota Roots'

advice in hand-picking Bois Forte Band Member Taneesha Dupree to serve as the Interim Retail Manager of the Bois Forte Cannabis Corporation. Dupree has been working under Ebert as part of a fellowship program that he started. In this role, Dupree has been shadowing Ebert on a daily basis to learn the ins and outs of what a CEO does.

Ebert said the added bonus of bringing on Dupree is tapping into her Human Resources background to bring on and train the additional three to four employees needed to work at the new venture. Once Dupree gets the dispensary up and running, Ebert said the plan will be for her to return her attention back to the fellowship program.

The estimated 2,000-square-foot building will have an office, bathroom, ample storage for products, and retail counter space where guests can purchase items such as real cannabis flower, pre-rolls, gummies, drinks, legal mushroom options, and more. Guests can also use a pavilion near the building to try out the products.

Minnesota Roots officials estimat-

ed that Bois Forte could be looking at monthly gross profits of \$90,000 to \$100,000 at the Fortune Bay site. Plans to open a second dispensary at the Nett Lake C Store have been put on hold so that the Fortune Bay location could be given top priority given its prime location to draw in customers from the Iron Range area, not to mention all of the daily traffic at Fortune Bay in general.

While the high volume of traffic coming into Fortune Bay is factual, District I Representative Shane Drift said it is not a guarantee that the venture will be successful. He cited failed examples of the Tim Horton's coffee shop at both Fortune Bay and the Y Store, plus the failed Smoke Shop at Fortune Bay that did not even last a year before the doors were shut.

Ebert was not around for any of the aforementioned ventures, but he feels strongly that the new dispensary will be successful because of the products that will be sold.

"Minnesota Roots has many success stories," said Ebert of the company, which is currently involved with 67 other dispensaries. "...Fortune Bay is already a destination location for winter or summer activities, plus the casino. Now people coming up have access to real weed because of this new amenity that we have."

Meanwhile, Ebert and Minnesota Roots will continue looking into a grow operation so that Bois Forte will not have to rely on other tribes to provide marijuana to our tribe. Several sites have been discussed, but no decision has been made, nor is a decision expected anytime soon.

Instead, the focus will be to get the dispensary up and running so that revenue will be coming in for Bois Forte so the trend of failed business trends can be reversed.

"I'm excited about the real potential our dispensary will have," said Ebert after the meeting. "I understand the concerns that have been raised, but given the expertise Minnesota Roots brings to the table, and growing market demands I am confident the dispensary will be a win for us and the future grow operation will be an even bigger win for us."

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FAST FRIENDS—Volunteer Patti Papin, left, smiles while enjoying the company of Larry “Skip” Murray prior to the sendoff at the 14th annual Take A Vet Fishing event.

Take A Vet Fishing from page 8
her father, David Tibbetts, to the 9th annual Take a Vet Fishing event. She found the day extra special because it gave her a chance to spend her 45th birthday with her father, who was a Vietnam Veteran. He was battling cancer at the time and unfortunately passed away just a couple of months after the 2019 event.

Five years later, the personable Papin was working the registration table

as a volunteer. She smiled and thanked the veterans who would soon be hitting Lake Vermilion for another day of memories with their fellow brothers and sisters from the Armed Forces.

However, it was somewhat somber as Papin noticed the absence of veterans who had been at previous events but were no longer around.

“It’s tough not seeing the same ones come through,” said Papin. “But each

year, I see new veterans taking part in this event, and that’s special because they are carrying on this tradition.”

Speaking of traditions, the 2024 event marked another milestone for Papin, one that Murray wasn’t about to let slip away.

“It’s her 50th birthday today,” said Murray to a Fortune Bay employee who was talking to Papin. “Here, let me take a picture of you two— you can hold up a five, and she can put up a zero.”

With that, Murray took out his phone and snapped a couple of pictures. The smile on his face was contagious and the gesture put an even bigger smile on Papin’s face.

“This is an event I look forward to because of the people I get to meet,” said Papin. “It continues to grow every year, and I am very lucky to be a part of something so special.”

Here is the Elder Nutrition Program’s (ENP) menu for the month of September. 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.



September 2: Bison/Beef Chili, Corn Bread, Whole Fruit

September 3: Grilled Chicken Breast, Yellow Rice, Sliced Zucchini, Fruit

September 4: Taco Salad with Chips, Refried Beans, Lettuce, Tomato, Onions, Cheese, Black Olives, Whole Apple with Caramel

September 5: Chicken Penne Alfredo, Broccoli, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 6: Split Pea Soup, Country Ham, Red Cabbage Salad, Wheat Roll, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 9: Honey Glazed Chicken, Rice Pilaf, Squash Medley, Fruit

September 10: Beef Frito Pie with Corn Chips, Whole Kernel Corn, Tossed Salad

September 11: Wild Rice Meatballs, Sweet Potato Fries, Chef’s Choice of Fruit, Fruit Parfait

September 12: Breakfast Hotdish, Potato Wedges or Tots, Muffin, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 13: BBQ Pork Riblette, AuGratin Potatoes, Broccoli Slaw, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 16: Pulled Pork, Macaroni & Cheese, Mixed Vegetables, Fruit

September 17: Roast Beef, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Roasted Root Vegetables, Garden Salad, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 18: Spaghetti & Meatballs, Garlic Bread, Green Beans, Fruit

September 19: Stir Fry Chicken/Egg Roll, Stir Fry Vegetables, Steamed Brown Rice, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 20: Beef/Bison Stew, 7-Grain Bun, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 23: Chicken Pot Pie, Biscuit, Steamed Broccoli, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 24: Roast Pork, Baby Baker Potatoes, Roasted Butternut Squash, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 25: Tuna or Chicken Pasta, Salad, Capri Vegetable Blend, Corn Muffin, Fruit

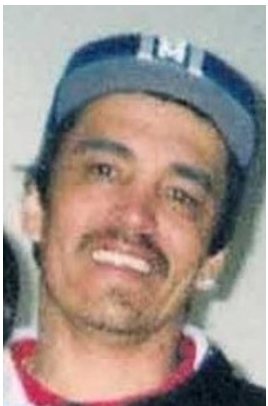
September 26: Chicken Wild Rice Soup or Hotdish, Garden Salad/Cole Slaw, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 27: Bison/Beef Meatloaf, Baked Sweet Potato, Brussel Sprouts, Chef’s Choice of Fruit

September 30: Garden Vegetable Soup, Chicken Salad Croissant, Fruit

Rodney Lee Villebrun

Rodney Lee Villebrun Sr., 60, of Minneapolis, formerly of Nett Lake, passed away on July 16, 2024, at his home.



Rodney was born in Cook, MN on May 26, 1964, and grew up in Minneapolis until moving to Orr, where he attended high school.

While in high school, he enjoyed hunting and fishing. He moved to Superior where he worked as an auto mechanic. He also worked

for Day by Day Labor as a roofer. After a time, he moved back to Minneapolis.

Rodney enjoyed hanging out with his longtime girlfriend Brenda and giving his cats crazy names.

Rodney is survived by his son Rodney Villebrun Jr.; mother Eileen (Kenneth) Villebrun Barney; his father David (Dorothy) Connor; his sister Shelley Strong; his brothers: Michael Villebrun and Ken (Jessica) Villebrun; girlfriend Brenda Burns; along with many other relatives and friends.

Rodney is preceded in death by his twin sister Ramona Barto; grandparents: Viola and Frank Villebrun and Lawrence and Ida Connor.

A Celebration of Life was held on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at the Bois Forte Government and Services Center.

Ebert rolls out Fellowship program

TOWER— Along with sweeping management changes at Fortune Bay, one additional move Bois Forte Business Development Corporation CEO Drew Ebert made a few months ago entailed taking Taneesha Dupree under his wing with a new fellowship program he introduced.

At the time, Dupree was transferring to a new job at Fortune Bay in the Human Resources Department. She already had a wealth of experience in the department, so Ebert felt the time was right to give her another challenge by naming her the Innovation Manager for the BFDC.

Since bringing Dupree on board, Ebert has involved her with anything and everything he's working on, on behalf of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. Alongside her Innovation Manager title, she was also recently named the Interim Retail Manager of the new marijuana dispensary, which will be located near the RV Park at Fortune Bay Resort Casino and could open by the end of this month.

However, that job is not the long-term goal Ebert has in mind for Dupree.

"It is my intention to offer Taneesha the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) position in 2-3 years, or to become the Chief Innovation Officer, or another C-suite position (i.e., Chief Information Officer) for the corporation in that same time frame," said Ebert. "The choice is hers because, in a short time, she has shown integrity, courage, and honor at a level beyond the minimum required to be responsible for what is essentially the economic arm of the tribe."

This enormous amount of respect and trust Ebert has means Dupree will continue to shadow him as he conducts his job duties as CEO. In Ebert's eyes, the BFDC is still quite new and needs a lot of attention.

"We need help—we need more people working through functions and discovering operational needs that align with future objectives that include marketing, tourism, energy, contracting, and leveraging business designations like Tribal 8A," said Ebert of the program that helps small businesses owned by tribes to grow and compete in the government contracting marketplace.

As a result, Ebert said he believes the BFDC will continue to grow, and thus, having the right people in place is of great importance to the long-

term success of the Bois Forte Band.

"That is where band members come into play, and in this case, specifically Taneesha," explained Ebert, who has a tireless work ethic and instills that trait in others. "Her background includes extensive training in Human Resources, which will allow for us to scale up operations of new businesses with her experience. She is organized, articulate, and perhaps most importantly driven with an intense thirst to learn because she loves her tribe."

For Dupree, the opportunity presented to her was one she was willing and able to accept.

"I'm really excited about the fellowship program that Drew has started here. This program is a great way for our tribe to develop native leaders, and I'm so thankful to be a part of it," said Dupree. "Through this experience, I've had the chance to meet and work with tribal leaders, state legislators, and business development boards, which will help me make a positive impact and bring about real change in our community. This is definitely a step forward for building up our tribal members and encouraging growth."

Ebert said the end goal he has in mind for the Fellowship program is to have other band members prepared for a C-suite level position in the BFDC, focusing on operations and expansion over two to three years. The other option, and one that would take place one year into the program, would be for those band members to start working on an approved business passion project that they will launch in the BFDC and run as the CEO focusing on vertical growth.

"I have my eyes on two additional band members although I believe current funding will only support one more," said Ebert, who added that he will also roll out an innovation training series that includes strategy and operations lectures, readings, and performance objectives including final presentations on real world business deliverables. "I fully anticipate funding levels to increase to a point where I can have three members in the program who will assist in training additional members when they are at least past year one."

If you would like more information about the Fellowship Program, please reach out to Ebert via email at Drew.Ebert@boisforte-nsn.gov



BRAVING THE ELEMENTS! — BFDC CEO Drew Ebert holds an umbrella for Innovation Manager Taneesha Dupree, who was giving the opening remarks at the 20th annual Indian Summer Classic. The event went on as planned despite torrential rains that hampered the area on Thursday, August 15th.



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