



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 46 NUMBER 12

SAVE THE DATE!

Please mark your calendars and save the date for the 2023 State of the Band (SOTB), which will take place on Thursday, January 19th at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Look for the official invitation in your mail as well as more details about the SOTB in the January 2023 issue of the Bois Forte News.

EARLY HOLIDAY DEADLINE REMINDER

Please note that the deadline for the January 2023 Bois Forte News has been moved up to December 15th.

Thank you! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

Don't ignore the warning signs of diabetes

Former Bois Forte Lt. Villebrun shares his heart-wrenching story

As a youth growing up in the city of Bemidji, Josh Villebrun thought he was invincible. After all, he was just 14 and had his whole life ahead of him.

"It was at that time I was told I had diabetes, but I didn't change anything," said Villebrun as he recounted his story to the 100 or so in attendance at the Bois Forte Diabetes Conference at Fortune Bay in mid-November. "I would say, I'll worry about it in a couple of weeks. Then it was a couple of months, and then it was a couple of years."

This continued for the next 15 years, and by the time he was 29, his Type II Diabetes had started to take over his body in the five years that followed. First, it was a little toe that had to be amputated, then it became his entire foot, and then the other foot, and then his leg and then the other leg. Within another year, his left hand had to be amputated as well.

After Villebrun spoke, a lady in the audience thanked him for sharing his story and told of her daughter being diagnosed as a person with diabetes when she turned 10. She is 30 now and is dealing with her condition the best way she can, but you could tell Villebrun's story touched her.

"My heart goes out to you,"



TELLING HIS STORY— Josh Villebrun, far left, answers a question after giving a presentation at the Diabetes Conference which took place at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. Also pictured, are Dr. Ray Hawk, Terry Defoe and Emcee David "Squidgy" Morrison, Jr.

she said. "I will keep you in my thoughts —That is a lot on a person's shoulders to deal with."

Villebrun thanked the woman and said his battle with diabetes, especially with how much it has altered his life, has been extremely sad for him.

"I suffer from major depression and anxiety," said Villebrun, a 2004 graduate of Orr High School and the son of Tom and Carol Burr. "I am not sure how much time I have left."

He urged those in attendance to pay attention to their

health and to get their numbers checked regularly, especially if they have already been diagnosed with diabetes.

"Do everything you can to keep it in check because I did not do that," said Villebrun in reference to what he is going through now.

Villebrun said his blood sugar numbers range from 400-500, and as a result, he has also experienced liver, eye, and kidney problems. Sadly, Josh said that when he needs a new kidney, his doctors have already told him he will not get one because he is essentially already living on borrowed

time.

"They will not waste a kidney on me because of my body," said Villebrun.

Following the conference, Villebrun took the time to answer some follow-up questions to discuss his ongoing battle with diabetes. He feels sharing his story is therapeutic because it allows him to help others. His way of helping others could be seen while he was a police officer and then lieutenant for the Bois Forte Police Department and eventually an Emergency Medical Technician as well.

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Villebrun from page 1

“A consequence I forgot to share at the conference is that the damage from diabetes not only took my limbs and happiness,” said Villebrun, “but it took away the ability to work and help others.”

Villebrun said the only treatment he continues to receive is dialysis as he can't live without it. He recalled two years ago when he missed two treatments in a row because he was stuck at home due to a heavy snowstorm.

“By the time I finally made it to dialysis, I had a heart attack and was flown by helicopter to Duluth,” said Villebrun. “The heart attack was caused by high potassium levels in my blood caused by missing dialysis.”

When asked how he gets through his day-to-day life and faces the challenges with such bravery, he replied he has always been one to adapt to almost anything thrown at him. That includes learning to walk again after being wheelchair-bound for two years. It also meant learning how to cook with one hand after the other was lost to the disease. One freedom that has not been taken away from Villebrun is his ability to drive so that he can head out onto the road whenever the mood strikes him.

“I try to live every day the best I can, and I hope that being out and about shows people that even though someone can have so much taken from them, that life is still worth fighting for,” said Villebrun.

He added that he is hopeful his story encourages people to appreciate what they have and make sure they are choosing to live healthier lives as opposed to what he is thankful for—just being grateful for waking up every day.

He said that the best piece of advice he can give is to let yourself be educated about this disease. He added that people need to adapt to a new way of life to stay healthy as soon as they can once they are diagnosed with diabetes.

“If you don't, it will eventually take over everything,” said Villebrun, whose sister, Bridgette Burr, is his caretaker. “One of the hardest things I have to live with my current deteriorating condition is that I did this to myself.”

Vermilion Community Health Nurse Terry Defoe, who also spoke on the panel along with Dr. Ray Hawk, said she was proud of Josh sharing his story and being so open about his struggles.

She was moved by Villebrun candidly describing his struggles from

being overwhelmed about managing his blood sugars and his eating habits, which led to his inability to achieve therapeutic range with his blood sugars.

“I hope that others will learn from his advice,” said Defoe, who has struggled with diabetes herself but is managing it as best she can.

She added that being so young made it challenging for Villebrun to fathom what he was doing to his body by not adhering to what his doctors had said and therefore created long-term struggles for the rest of his life.

Defoe said as a Public Health Nurse, she feels the need to improve the support system to those who are newly diagnosed with diabetes. That entails things such as assisting with a food diary, sharing recipes, discussing meal planning, and information on how to avoid poor food choices while eating out.

“There are many changes that can be made that make life easier for those that are newly diagnosed,” she explained while adding how important it is to talk to someone to help make the positive lifestyle changes. “It will make a big difference.”

Dr. Hawk, who also gave an excellent presentation, talked about getting

checked for his heart and blood sugar, and it was determined that he had diabetes. Like many others, he took the attitude of— I didn't go checked out because I didn't want to know.

“Well,” he stated, “not knowing will kill you.”

And one line that stayed with the audience was when he deadpanned that he was surprised he had lived this long.

“If I knew I would have lived this long, I would have taken better care of myself,” he said.

And Defoe is hopeful people will listen to Hawk's words of wisdom when it comes to their own health or the health of a loved one.

“Some people stated that the presentations were easily relatable and very informative,” said Defoe of the Diabetes Conference. “I had positive feedback about the panel discussion as well, and someone stated they learned how much more could go wrong if you do not take care of your diabetes when you first get it.”

For more information on diabetes, please visit www.diabetes.org or reach out to Bois Forte's Health and Human Services Department (www.boisforte.com)

Chairwoman Cathy Chavers



Boozhoo:

I want to take this opportunity to welcome Luke Warnsholz as our new Executive Director. Luke started his position with us on November 21,

2022. He is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, and we look forward to his leadership as our Executive Director.

There are many issues and meetings that continue to happen here at Bois Forte. I am very hopeful that we will soon have a jail agreement between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and St. Louis County to house our prisoners in either Virginia or Hibbing jail facilities for the short term until they can be arraigned. Currently, those that have to be jailed are brought to Sherburne County, which is four hours away, one way. Bois Forte has been working on this since 2016 with both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and St. Louis County, and six years later, we will finally have an agreement. It

should not have taken this long, but it is now completed.

Bois Forte is also a part of a pilot project with Native Governance along with two other tribes, Yankton Sioux and Cheyenne River, to look at tribal finance (accounting) departments. They are doing an excellent and in-depth view of these three tribes' accounting systems and have interviewed Bois Forte's staff to present us with a draft tribal finance assessment. This project will be extremely helpful in assisting us with knowing our strengths and weaknesses, areas of improvement, staffing and training, etc. This whole pilot project is at no cost to the Bois Forte Band! We are incredibly fortunate to have been asked to participate in this project. We will keep you

updated as this moves along.

At the end of November and beginning of December, there will be a Tribal Leaders White House Summit in Washington, DC, that I will be attending on behalf of Bois Forte. There was a limit of one tribal leader to attend, and the last Tribal Leaders White House Summit was held with President Obama. This opportunity is very exciting for all tribes.

Again, remember that we will have an in-person State of the Band this year on January 19, 2023, at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. Mark your calendars.

I would like to say “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” to you all, and please be safe.

Miigwech!

2022 Veterans Day celebration pays tribute to our Ogichidaas

Veterans Day is always an emotional day for veterans and their families as they remember the hardships serving our great country caused for those no longer with us and those who carry the burden of the time spent defending the United States of America.

So it was fitting Bois Forte's Ogichidaas (warriors) were honored with a special program and dinner in The Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay. The program included a roll call of all Bois Forte veterans read off by Bois Forte Tribal Council members, including Robert Moyer, Jr., Travis Morrison, Tara Geshick, and Shane Drift.

Meanwhile, Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers did an admirable job paying tribute to our veterans. Her speech was only trumped by guest speaker Larry Herke, who is the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

The event meant a lot to Herke, who spoke about how honored he was that Bois Forte was the first tribe to ask him to participate in a Veterans program. His speech was far-reaching as he told of programs available for veterans but also recounted the work being done to end homelessness for veterans and to curb suicides.

"You may not know this, but we lose about 100 veterans to suicide every year," said Herke. "I can tell you the trend is going down, but one suicide is too many. We are accelerating our education and training... but everyone plays a role in identifying those needing our assistance."

He said the number of veterans who are homeless in Minnesota is also going down, but he added that more needs to be done. In 2014, Herke said the number of homeless vets was 600, but that number is currently 271 in 2022.

"The challenge is that it is not the same 271," explained Herke. "We have 400 to 500 vets that become homeless every year, so we must find homes for them...my goal, and the governor's goal, is to make Minnesota the fourth



PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION— Bois Forte Tribal District II Representative Robert Moyer, Jr. reads names of Bois Forte Veterans during a special Vets Day program in The Woodlands Ballroom.

state in the nation to declare an end of homelessness for our vets."

By ending homelessness, Herke said the stint must be brief, rare, and doesn't happen more than once.

"I am dedicated to ensuring we meet that goal for our veterans," said Herke. "We owe it to our veterans to have a place they can call home."

Herke also talked about listening to an interview on KBFT Radio with Bois Forte Veteran and Spiritual Advisor Gene Goodsky, who passed away earlier this year. Herke recounted how Goodsky spoke of coming back from Vietnam and being approached by two individuals who asked where he had been and then asked Goodsky why he had gone to Vietnam.

"He could have responded a lot of ways, like, 'I was ordered to do it,' or 'It was my duty,' or something like that," said Herke, who surmised that the two asking the questions of Goodsky were not upstanding citizens. "But his response was, 'I went there to ensure your freedom.' That was an extraordi-

nary response, especially for such a young man."

Herke, who served 30 years in the Armed Forces, said he was impressed by how Goodsky understood the importance of his duty to others.

"I think if there were more people in this world like Gene, we would have a much safer and much better world to live in," said Herke.

While Herke spotlighted Goodsky, he also paid respects to all Bois Forte Veterans, many of whom had their picture shown in the background as the program continued. He told those gathered how impressed he was with Native Americans answering the call of duty. He explained that it is essential to note that Native Americans serve at a much higher rate, which is 25%, compared to the general population, which is 3%.

"We owe a round of applause for that—that is extraordinary," said Herke as the crowd clapped, and a Bois Forte Drum group member gave a quick thump to his drum to pay his respects

to veterans. "You have answered the call to help our nation and defend our freedom."

Chavers also spoke about how proud she was of Bois Forte's warriors and praised the spouses of those who served.

"The vets went to war, did their time and service, but that service impacted their families," said Chavers. "We know the hardship that caused, and they accepted it and dealt with it. For that, we say thank you to them as well."

Chavers said that whenever she sees a veteran, she takes the time to thank them and shake their hand. However, she feels their pain when she sees or hears of a veteran who has not adjusted to civilian life once their service time is done.

"A lot of our vets today have difficulty with the events of what happened in the war, and some of them can't handle it," said Chavers. "Some have committed suicide, while others are

Vets continued on page 4

New owners found to run WELY-End of the Road Radio

Zoe Communications, Inc. to take over ownership of radio station in early 2023

ELY—December 1st marked the end of an era for Bois Forte operating WELY as the station went silent to begin the transition to a new owner, Zoe Communications, Inc.

Once the sale is finalized and approved by the FCC, it will end months of behind-the-scenes work by Bois Forte Business Development CEO Mayan Beltran and Bois Forte's legal team to find a buyer for the station. Plans had initially been called for the station to shut down June 1st, but an outpouring of community support and potential buyers resulted in that deadline being extended until September 1st and subsequently to December 1st.

Zoe Communications, Inc. owns seven FM and four AM stations in Northwest Wisconsin. The new owners are still determining where they will set up its new studio in Ely and are actively looking at spaces to lease.

The purchase price was \$130,000 and will include all of WELY's equipment, tower, and the transfer of the

FCC licenses.

"Although Bois Forte regrets not being able to continue ownership, we are grateful a buyer emerged to keep WELY—End of the Road radio on the air for years to come," said Beltran.

Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers also expressed sadness that the tribe could no longer retain ownership of the station.

"We tried our best to keep it going, but we just couldn't keep putting money into it every month without a return on our investment," she said. "We are hopeful Zoe Communications can keep this tradition alive for the hard-working residents of Ely and the surrounding communities that WELY serves."

WELY was first broadcast in October 1954. It remained on the air until 1987 but closed due to financial struggles. New life was pumped into the station when famous CBS Broadcaster Charles Kuralt bought the station in 1995 and operated it until he died in

1997. Bois Forte eventually purchased the station in 2005 and has run it for the past 17 years. The AM station is broadcast at 1450 AM, while the FM station is on 94.5 FM.

Bois Forte will retain ownership of the WELY building, including the spacious upstairs apartment that had been turned into office space.

The downstairs studio and offices may be repurposed for a future business that would be owned and operated by Bois Forte.

In the meantime, the upstairs offices will be taken out, and some updates will be made to the apartment to prepare it for a future renter.

Most of WELY's staff found new employment when the June 1st deadline was announced. However, a few staff remained behind, including longtime employee and current GM Brett Ross and a remote office employee, who took care of billing. It remains unknown if they continue employment with Zoe Communications, Inc., which is located in Shell Lake, Wisconsin.

While the sale ensures Ely will continue to have its own radio station, the station is currently off the air pending the FCC's approval of the sale to Zoe

Communications, Inc.

"The FCC makes it complicated to keep the station on the air during a sale," said Zoe Communications, Inc. GM Mike Oberg. "We will return WELY to operation when the FCC grants the transfer, and that normally takes about 90 days."

Oberg said he is concerned that WELY will be off the air, but he is hopeful listeners will tune in once they are back on the air from a location yet to be determined.

"We are looking for a space that is better sized for the operation of the station in town," said Oberg, who added he doesn't expect any major changes of the popular programming WELY currently provides.

Oberg, a Minnesota native, said WELY has a lot of history that he'd like to preserve, and given that he already owns several small-town stations, he feels he can make this latest business venture succeed.

"We believe radio is still very important to a local community, and we hope to continue the tradition of keeping the local feel of Ely radio alive," said Oberg.



PAYING TRIBUTE— District I Representative Travis Morrison read the names of Bois Forte Veterans, while Secretary-Treasurer Tara Geshick waits to read her list. District I Representative Shane Drift also read names of veterans, while Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers emceed the event.

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now homeless because they just can't deal with what they went through."

While Veterans Day is a nationally recognized holiday, Chavers said many veterans don't view it as such and, in some cases, want to forget about it.

"It's so hard on them emotionally and mentally," said Chavers. "Chi-miigwech to all of our veterans, male and female, and their families that endured that time with them, and chi-miigwech to all of our veterans who are no longer with us. They are looking upon us now with a good heart."

Herke agreed and said he would like to conclude his speech by thanking vets for their service and to remind them that there is help out there for them and their families.

"As a 30-year veteran of the Army, my wife, who was my favorite vet, left me just a little over a week ago," said Herke, his voice cracking with emotion. "I got to bury her at the Little Falls Cemetery. I can tell you that we have some of the best support out there for veterans. We're here to serve you as veterans and veterans' families."

And as a nod to Goodsky, Herke closed his comments by reminding those in attendance what Goodsky said in his interview with KBFT Radio.

"As Gene said, 'We are the home of the free only because of the brave veterans that put their hands up to serve this great nation,'" said Herke. "I thank you very much for having me here this evening."

Christmas comes early for Bois Forte

As a longtime employee of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, IT Director Randy Long has secured many grants to help better the Information Superhighway for the tribe.

However, he never imagined his efforts would result in Bois Forte receiving a nearly 20 million dollar grant to expand its broadband capabilities. The grant was awarded to Bois Forte from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

"This grant will be a great asset for Bois Forte; owning approximately 20 million in telecommunication infrastructure with no cash matching is hard to fathom," said Long of the grant. "This project's vision was to support the local communities, teleworkers, and general public that support the reservation, its programs and services."

The project will entail more than 375 miles of fiber optic cable buried throughout the Nett Lake and Vermilion Reservations and surrounding areas. Those areas include Orr and up to Cusson, while the Vermilion Sector will consist of most areas of the lake and the outskirts of Tower.

Long said the application process was quite competitive and credited business partner Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC) for doing the engineering work for the grant.

"Their assistance really helped me to write and submit a successful application," said Long of CTC, which is located in Brainerd, but has staff working remotely on the Iron Range.

Long said he expects the project to get underway this winter once the documentation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and National Environmental Policy Act is completed to make sure the project is compliant.

Following that, Long said that a yet-to-be-determined engineering company would be awarded the project to ensure all necessary aspects of

the grant are completed and the scope of the work being done is in compliance before the actual construction.

"At some point next summer, we anticipate boring will commence throughout multiple regions of the project as it has a large footprint," said Long. "CTC will be looked at to provide the services over this network. Our existing work with CTC has proven beneficial to the tribe, and I hope to continue with them throughout this project."

Long said he envisions the overall project to take two to three years, depending on how difficult of a process it will be to bury the fiber optic cable that essentially covers a round trip from Nett Lake to Hinckley.

"It will depend on the rock content and obstacles the construction crew runs into for this area," said Long. "Boring and installation of electronic boxes on houses will typically be conducted first, followed by trenching of fiber throughout the innerduct to the homes."

He said the final step is to install the necessary electronic equipment within every household and termination the fiber, the latter of which means connecting the cable to a device or transceiver.

While much work is still to be done before the project is completed, Long's journey is now in his rearview mirror. That includes his involvement with the Fiber to Home Engineering Study, which began seven years ago. He said that the project laid the groundwork and provided the necessary certifications that he needed to obtain grant funding for a project of this magnitude.

"Once that original project was approved, and funding was found from the Minnesota Border to Border, Shakopee, and IRRRB, everything fell into place," said Long. "The road map we developed allowed us to design the blueprint to apply for the NTIA \$19.8 million grant we were awarded."

Long said he anticipates Bois

Forte charging anywhere from \$60 to \$100 per month for broadband service, depending on the type of speed a customer would sign up for.

"The basic service will be 250mg for the \$60 going up to 1GB for \$99/month," said Long. "Anyone that lives within the boundaries of the reservation and qualifies and is considered low income will qualify for a \$75 discount on their internet access per month through a federal program, <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov>"

Long said that this latest project, coupled with the existing fiber-to-the-home project, has been a long process involving a lot of behind-the-scenes work, often while not even in the of-

rice.

"It took approximately three months of nighttime and weekend work to make this grant application possible," said Long in addition to hours he worked in the office to see it through to fruition.

Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers said Long deserves a lot of credit for his effort.

"He worked tirelessly on behalf of Bois Forte to see this through," said Chavers. "We're very fortunate to have someone like Randy going to bat for us to receive grant monies to better our reservation."

Editor's note: We will run a story on other grants Bois Forte has recently received in next month's paper.

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

Catching up with George Mihelich

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

My name is George Robert Mihelich. I am the son of the late George and Beverly Mihelich, the grandson of the late George and Nona Hackey Mihelich.

I am the third oldest of five boys. I was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota in May of 1957. I lived there until 1968. We then moved to Grafton,

North Dakota and then lived there until the fall of 1977.

I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in October of 1977. I attended basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California. Rifle Marksmanship and Basic Infantry Training was done at Camp Pendleton in California. My first duty station was in Okinawa, Japan with the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines 3d Marine Division Fleet Marine Force MOS0341 81mm Motor Man, with de-

ployment to South Korea with the 81's Platoon H&S Company 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines 3d Marine Division as a forward observer for the 81mm Motor Platoon. My last duty station was with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine, 1st Division Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, California. I obtained the rank of E3 Lance Corporal, Good Conduct Medal, Rifle Sharpshooter Badge and received an Honorable Discharge in December 1980.

I attended Vermilion Community College in Ely from 1999-2002. I graduated with a degree in Associate in Science: Water Quality Science.

What was the U.S. Marine Corps experience like and how did it prepare you for your life after the service?

A marine is taught how to battle the external forces as well as internal forces that tests the mental and physical limits. It is those who have the authentic fighting spirit that are able to overcome all challenges like chaos, doubt, fear and exhaustion. Marine training separates those who can rise above the suffering and those who are consumed by it. This training gave me a code to live by for the rest of my life. Semper fidelis: Always faithful.

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

I've worked as an Apprentice Electrician for five years; six years as a farm hand, seven years as a Conservation Officer for the 1854 Authority and the last 20 years as a Water/

Waste Water Technician for the Bois Forte Tribal Government. I am also a member of the Bois Forte Honor Guard. I would like to ask for others to consider being a member of the Bois Forte Honor Guard as our active membership is less than three.

Why is that so important for you to continue to serve and to ask others to join you as a member of the Bois Forte Honor Guard?

A primary purpose for the honor guard is to provide funeral honors for fallen comrades and to guard National Monuments. An honor guard may also serve as the "Guardian of the Colors," by displaying and escorting the national flag on ceremonial occasions at official state and tribal functions. You may contact me for all inquiries regarding the Bois Forte Honor Guard by calling me at 218-750-7354.

What does a typical workday consist of for you and what projects are you currently working on to improve the infrastructure on the reservation?

My typical workday consists of the following tasks starting at the Water Filter Plant:

- Reading and recording the 24-hour water meter flow for each of the four wells that supply water to the community.

- Perform free and total chlorine tests of the water that has been treated.

- Check the chemical room and record the chemical levels in each tank.

- Check the chemical pumps and hoses for any leaks, repair and replace as needed.

- Check the well pump-house. Record the well run times for the wells and the PSI

readings for each well.

I then move onto the daily checks of the 18 lift stations on the wastewater system that serves the Vermilion Reservation. I also record the run times of each of the two pumps per lift station. Once these tasks are completed, I can start working on the other tasks that need to be done during the week, month, and year, such as the following:

- Collecting monthly bacteriological sampling, check and record residual chlorine per sample; disinfection by products sampling; nitrate sampling, lead and copper sampling, radionuclides sampling, Inorganic Contaminants sampling, Synthetic Organic Contaminants sampling, Volatile Organic Contaminants sampling; TTHM & HAA5 sampling, Radium 226/228 sampling, and Gross Alpha and Uranium sampling. All these sample results are used to generate the yearly Consumer Confidence Report that is sent to each of the consumers of the Bois Forte Lake Vermilion Reservation Public Water System. Uni-directional flushing of the entire water system is done once a year. This is just for the water system. The wastewater system has its own set of sampling requirements and tasks that I could fill another page with all the U.S. EPA requirements for our wastewater permit.

How much longer do you anticipate working and what do you think you'll miss most when that day comes to bid farewell to your career?

I plan on working another two years. When that day does come, I'll miss serving the community members of the Vermilion Reservation.



BUSY GUY!— George Mihelich is a man always on the go when it comes to serving the residents of the Bois Forte community on the Lake Vermilion Reservation.



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)



Bois Forte Native Names Map unveiled



CHECKING IT OVER— Ely Folk School Board members Rick Anderson, far right, and Paul Schurke, second from left, along with Bois Forte Tribal Council District II Representative Robert Moyer, Jr., far left, and Bois Forte Heritage Center & Cultural Museum Executive Director Jaylen Strong, second from right, look over a rough draft of a map that was unveiled Wednesday, November 30th at the Bois Forte Heritage Center & Cultural Museum.

TOWER— Mesaba, Biwabik, Kawishiwi, Saganaga—these northern Minnesota place names are among many easily recognized as having native origins associated with the region's indigenous Ojibwe residents.

Many other original names are lost to history. However, thanks to 19th-century archives, one of the nation's most significant concentrations of original names and meanings exist for this area—and those names are going back on the map.

In collaboration with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, the non-profit Ely Folk School (EFS) & volunteer artists have completed a two-year project to create a map of the band's traditional realm. This includes a 100-mile expanse of boreal forest from Lake Vermilion to Nett Lake and entails over 100 original names and meanings.

The map was designed by Bois Forte artist Louise Isham and crafted on a hand-painted historic template by artisanal map maker Keith Myrmel.

It was unveiled at the Bois Forte

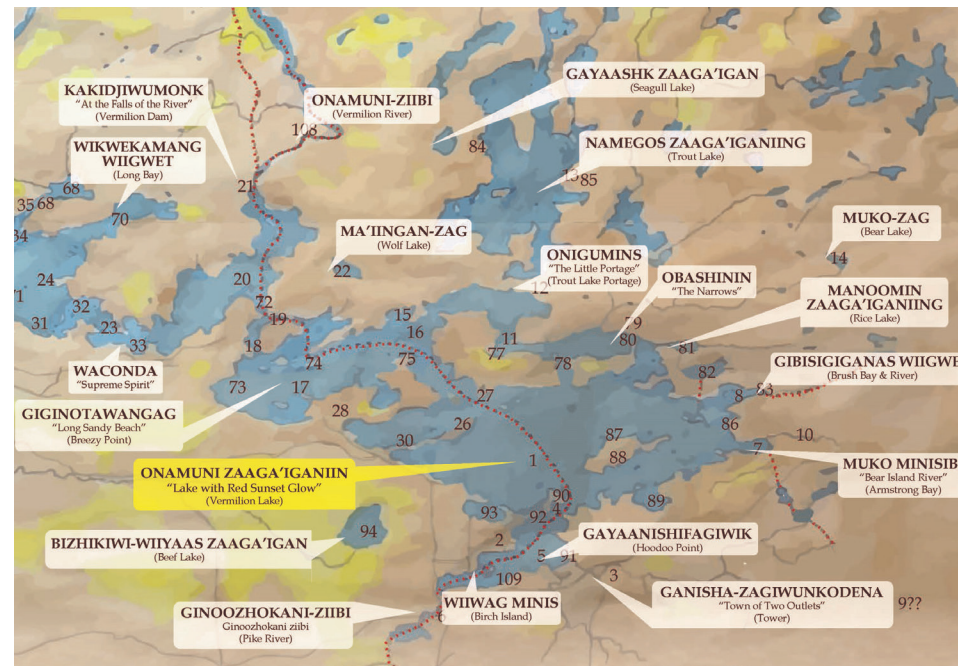
Heritage Center & Cultural Museum near Fortune Bay Resort Casino on Wednesday, November 30th. The event took place in conjunction with Native American Heritage Month and an intertribal gathering at Fortune Bay. Center Director Jaylen Strong had invited the public to attend the free event and to view the center's many exhibits on Bois Forte's history.

"We're pleased to introduce people to the colorful and descriptive names provided by our ancestors," said Bois Forte Tribal Council District II Representative Robert Moyer, Jr.

EFS board member and Bois Forte band member Rick Anderson said this project was a natural extension of the school's mission to serve as a bridge between the region's native and non-native residents.

"This map highlights our region's native heritage and our Ojibwe ancestors who have lived here for hundreds of years," he said.

Anderson noted that the map includes sidebars with historical infor-



IT'S GETTING THERE— Pictured here is an excerpt of the map showing native names and meanings on the eastern end of Lake Vermilion.

mation about the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, their chiefs, and their traditions. It also includes the migration story that led them here from the eastern seaboard 600 years ago following a dream vision about a place where food grew in great abundance on the water. That proved to be wild rice or "manomin," which remains a central source of their physical and spiritual sustenance.

Anderson noted that copies of the map's first limited edition printing would be available through an Ely Folk School fundraiser. He added that contributors of \$250 or more would receive a photographic quality heritage print suitable for framing.

Isham noted discussions are in the works with area print shops to produce mass quantities of the map, which will then be sold at the Bois Forte Heritage Center & Cultural Museum, area businesses, and possibly online.

"We want to be able to reach a broad audience with this project," said Isham. "A lot of hard work has gone into this project, and we want to ensure its long-term success as it will

help the public better understand Bois Forte's history and the lakes that are so important to our people."

A grant from the Iron Range Resource and Rehabilitation Board will cover map printing and the production of large weatherproof map panels for display at area schools and information kiosks.

Anderson added that an online version of the map is also being considered, including links to native pronunciations of the Ojibwe names and traditional stories about the places. For example, Anderson noted that the Ojibwe name for Vermilion (Onamani) means "lake with red sunset glow" and for Bystrom Bay (Gagons-ibi-madage-winik) means "place where the young porcupines swim."

The project was prompted by summer programs at EFS for crafting traditional Ojibwa birchbark. That led to group canoe trips to Pow Wows at Ontario's Lac La Croix village, where they learned the residents had researched and mapped native place names for Quetico Park.

Map continued on page 9

Map from page 8

"We wondered if something similar could be done for our area and, sure enough, we found the names," said EFS board member Paul Schurke.

He said sources included diaries of anthropologists and missionaries from Smithsonian archives, a 1922 roadless recreation area proposal (that led to today's Boundary Waters) by landscape planner Arthur Carhart and his Bois Forte colleague Leo Chosa, and geologist Warren Upham's "Minnesota Geographic Names." This 800-page tome from 1920 is considered the premier collection of historical names found in any of the 50 states.

"This project is a Minnesota first," said Schurke. He noted it might prompt other tribal communities among Minnesota's 11 sovereign native nations (seven Ojibwe and four Sioux) to produce similar maps. The EFS research found several hundred additional native names and meanings through the Quetico-Superior region.

"Perhaps someday we'll extend this map to include much of the Arrowhead and the Boundary Waters," said Schurke. "Too many original descriptive lake names were replaced with names of lumberjacks' love interests."

Anderson said he hopes the map's unveiling on will bolster pride among area residents and visitors alike about native history. He notes the map's inscription, which concludes: "The vast maize of lakes and forest is honored by our rich Ojibwe cultural heritage and the means our ancestors created to travel it: jii mani (canoe), aagim-ag (snowshoe) and biboondaaban (sled). For that, we say "Miigwech" (thank you)."

Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers lauded the efforts of the Ely Folk School for taking on this project and praised Isham and Myrmel for their work.

"This project underscores our voice and our history in the region," said Chavers. "This map will serve as a tribute to all who came before us and to the future generations as well."

Minute with Millie

Editor's note: Millie Holmes has decided to start writing her "Minute with Millie" column again. She asked that we leave her writing style intact as that is the way she wants it—thank you and thank you Millie for bringing back your column.

Once again, I am sitting here contemplating life since the Pandemic ended sometime during the past year. Take for instance, the day last month when a simple little project ended up involving three-fourths of the nearest family, siblings, cousins and elders included.

Perhaps, I should begin it with the day the ice storm hit whilst everyone was getting ready to celebrate Veteran's Day. I ended up standing outside in the cold waiting for son 1 to come get me after I'd put in my eight hours serving the elders in my capacity as the current insurer that Elders can continue to enjoy their daily meal. "Why is this?" you're thinking to yourself.

Why, it's the day I made the mistake of trying to tighten the little lug nut type doohickey on the drain pipe. I could hear this "drip," long pause, "drip" of the water which I thought was the faucet. So I goes over and make sure it is off. I starts to do my usual routine of trying to declutter, ahhh, finish my latest sewing project whilst completely ignoring the fact that I had supper to cook.

"Drip," "plop" long pause, "drip" "plop."

I check the sink once again. No water dripping there. I head into the laundry room. Why? Well, years ago when the weatherization people were fixing my house, they'd hooked up the drain line to go into the laundry sink tub that my mom thought we'd use when the house was built. It occasionally drains water and... turns out it (the furnace) wasn't even on.

Hmmm. Checked the other sources of water dripping in the house. No such phenomenon was taking place in those areas. Puzzled for only a couple minutes more, I then decides to cook supper.

Yep.

"Drip" pause, "plop" pause...light bulb explodes into being above my head as I dive for the doors covering the sink innards within.

Sure nuff, pipe was wet and so, I turn the little lug nut thing holding the whole apparatus together. Water quit dripping. Yay!

Til the next morning when I wake up at the usual

two hours before the sun wakes up. Water was dripping again. Was a bit apprehensive as I checked the water level in the bucket under there. Not sure how that came to be there even. Mustah been from when we worked on the sink that last time some years ago whilst we tried to have a family dinner at the house.



Well, you guessed it. That resulted in the gathering of the various personnel required to complete any such undertaking here on the rez.

Yep, one simple glue to fix the pipe went to needing a slightly longer piece of piping to the obligatory trip to town to purchase a needed part (which at this point I don't even remember) to my nephew coming back in triumph with a whole section including the drain and cover.

Yep, this is what necessitated the assembling of the crew for the finishing of the repair the next day. Of course, we couldn't get the drain unhooked in one simple maneuver. Required the application of the ubiquitous WD40. Plans also included the gathering of additional tools. As if the obligatory three trips we'd already had wasn't enough.

T'any rate, I'd had the vague feeling I should know something of this particular predicament. After my niece and nephew left, a neon colored bulb lit. Ahhh, this particular predicament came up that last time cause we couldn't get it off then. Course the cousin and his trusty sidekick made obligatory trips and the usual assorted findings and when that drain fitting turned out to be a bigger project then we had time for, it was decided to let someone else deal with the jury rigging we'd accomplished at that time which included the setting of the pail under that particular pipe.

Obituary



Bois Forte Tribal Member PHYLLIS MAE (STRONG) BOSHEY, (May-may-skoo-waa-bec Bois Forte Tribal Member Phyllis Mae (Strong) Boshey, (May-may-skoo-waa-beck / Yellow Butterfly), was born on April 7, 1937 on the Nett Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota to Mary (Boness) Chicag and Albert Strong. She passed away on November 4, 2022 peacefully at her home on the Lake Vermilion Reservation.

Dearly loved by so many in her community at the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa for her leadership as a Tribal Council Member, family member and friend as everyone's Grandma and Auntie. One word can describe her: generosity. She was generous with her time, resources, and love. Everyone has a story of how she helped them.

In her youth, she lived with her grandparents Rosie Beargrease Strong (descendent of famous dog-sledder John Beargrease) and George John Strong at historical "Strongville" in the Nett Lake Village and was the

longest living of former Strongville residents.

In her 19 years as District II Lake Vermilion Bois Forte Tribal Council Representative, Phyllis was instrumental in Vermilion's first tribal government office and first medical clinic, the development of Fortune Bay Resort Casino, the Wilderness Golf Course, and conceived the idea of the Bois Forte Heritage Center Museum to come to life, and for her service on the Bois Forte Housing Authority Board. Her early work history included flagging for road construction and skillfully loading taconite pellets into train cars at Minntac.

She enjoyed carrying on cultural traditions such as Jingle Dress dancing at pow wows, beadwork, berry picking, wild ricing, netting, and gardening. She really enjoyed living near the water on the lakeshore and being on the water.

Phyllis was a lifelong learner and loved her studies of maps and reading literature on Ojibwe peoples' history and culture to enhance her knowledge of and advocacy for treaty rights.

She was preceded in death by husband Robert Boshey; sisters: Mary Strong and Sara Kochie; brothers: Gerald Chicag, Sr., Faron Chicag, Kenneth Strong Sr, Gaynard Strong; and nephew Carl Dagen.

Phyllis is survived by her brother Rodney Strong; daughters: Denise Pieratos, Lake Vermilion, MN; Carrie Strong, Lake Vermilion, MN; and Cheryl Milbridge, Roseau, MN; 7 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren; and 33 nieces and nephews.

A Traditional Wake was held on Monday, November 7 at the Vermilion Wellness Center. The Traditional Service was held on Tuesday, November 8 also at the Vermilion Wellness Center.

NEWSLETTER BOIS FORTE MEDICAL CLINICS NETT LAKE & VERMILION | DECEMBER 2022 |



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

Vermilion Clinic (218)753-2182
1613 Farm Road So
Tower MN 55790

FACTS ON RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

RSV is a common respiratory virus that often results in mild, cold-like symptoms, but can lead to serious illness, bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and PNEUMONIA (lung infection).

RSV infects the nose, throat, lungs, and breathing passages and is spread through contact with an infected person, or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

RSV typically circulates with other seasonal respiratory viruses, and it can be hard to tell the difference between RSV, COVID-19, and flu. Nearly all children will have an RSV infection before their 2nd birthday, but RSV can affect people of all ages. **Most people infected are contagious for 3 to 8 days with mild symptoms, which may include:**

- Coughing, Sneezing, Runny nose, & Fever

Certain groups are at greater risk for RSV-related complications, including:

- Premature infants, Infants aged 6 months and younger
- Individuals with chronic heart or lung disease
- Individuals with compromised immune systems
- Older adults (65+)

HELP PREVENT RSV, INFLUENZA & COVID-19

5 WAYS TO PREVENT RSV, FLU & COVID-19

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Stay away from sick people, avoid crowded spaces and family/friends who may be ill.
- Get **VACCINATED**
- **Get TESTED, the clinics can test for all 3 of these viruses on one machine.**
- Create a germ-free home, clean well with soap and water. Do laundry often. Remove shoes and change clothes when you get home.

INFLUENZA VACCINES AVAILABLE

Mon – Fri at each clinic location.

COVID-19 BIVALENT BOOSTERS & VACCINES AVAILABLE

Nett Lake Tues & Wed
Vermilion Thurs & Fri

**Flu shots & COVID
Vaccines**
can be given at the same time

THE RISKS OF RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

RSV is the leading cause of **infant** hospitalizations. Estimated at approximately **58,000** each year in the US among children **5 years and younger**.

RSV is also a major cause of hospitalizations and mortality for **adults 65+** with an estimated **177,000 hospitalizations** and **14,000 deaths** annually in the US.

In addition to lung infections in infants & young children, severe RSV can lead to:

**Congestive heart failure
Hospitalization & Death**

MERRY
Christmas

HAPPY NEW YEAR

From the Bois Forte Tribal Council

News for Bois Forte Elders

By Millie Holmes

Ahniin! Boozhoo! How's everyone doing these days? This column aims to inform the Elders of happenings in and around Nett Lake, Vermilion, and Indian Point. Sometimes this affects Virginia and other urban areas. Most times, not.

The important news is that the Elder Committee is being reconvened in January. This column will mainly concern what this Elder Committee is planning for the month.

Now for a bit of history, please don't glaze over with boredom. Everyone must understand what the Elder Activity Committee was established for in the first place. In the 80s and 90s, Elders in Nett Lake and Tower got together and decided to raise funds for essential activities. Among these were activities centered around things Elders had problems doing for themselves: i.e., Lawnmowing and shoveling snow from driveways and roofs. Garden chores for those who had gardens. Odd jobs not covered by Housing and other programs that were difficult for homeowners to perform: gutter cleaning, leaf collecting, minor repairs such as fixing steps, fence mending, and chopping/cutting wood.

The Elder Nutrition Program sites were selected as the common meeting ground as Elder congregated there already for meals. Elders were given a stipend of \$25 to help pay for gas to attend these meetings. Fundraising activities determined for the month generally consisted of contributing ingredients for and cooking Indian tacos. Politically correct? I am owning this term as my elders thought it up in the first place. T'any rate, Elders who chose not to help with ingredients or cooking, contributed \$10 per month as the funds to pay for these activities came from this fund.

The "fun" activities, which is what

most people thought was the sole purpose of the Elder Activity Committee, were to fulfill the "social aspect" of our lives and to fill the Elder's traditional roles of teaching, guiding, and supporting the young and adults. There were sewing classes, moccasin making, gardening, and other classes that various elders who knew these things would teach. They were given a stipend to hold a class or two.

A sewing project get-together was held for all ages to finish their projects. Back in the day, elders got together and made things, especially during the winter months, and food was a potluck affair.

Those national trips that became the focus were financed by the RTC, and the only activity the Elder Committee had a part in was giving spending money to elders out of the Activity fund. Fortune Bay contributed a set amount to help pay for all the activities, not just the "fun" part or stipends to attend meetings elsewhere.

The trips to concerts were for those elders who didn't attend powwows or ceremonies, and these were only in state activities, mostly other reservations.

Meetings were only held at Nett Lake, or Tower, and stipends paid to officers of the Committee were to be approved by the Elders who attended the monthly meeting.

The first meeting will be held on the second Wednesday of the month, January 11, 2023 at the Nett Lake ENP/Community Building. Lunch is served at 11:00 a.m., with the meeting itself at noon. The meeting should be over by 1:00 p.m. at the latest.

The topic for discussion will be adopting policies and procedures to govern the Committee. Initial minute-taking and filing will be provided by Elder Nutrition staff.

December

Here is the Elder Nutrition Program's (ENP) menu for the month of December. 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.

December 1: Split Pea Soup, Country Ham, Sweet & Sour Red Cabbage, Wheat Roll, Fruit

December 2: Pork Loin, Garden Blend Rice, Diced Beets, Fruit

December 5: Teriyaki Grilled Chicken, Brown Rice, Oriental Vegetables, Green Beans, Fruit

December 6: Pork Roast, Baby Bakers Potatoes, Roasted Squash, Fruit

December 7: Beef Pot Pie, Tossed Garden Salad, Fruit

December 8: Grilled Chicken Breast, Spanish Rice, Sliced Zucchini, Fruit

December 9: BBQ Pork Ribette, Au-Gratin Potatoes, Broccoli Slaw, Fruit

December 12: Elder Holiday Meal

December 13: Beef Lasagna, Green Beans, Garlic Toast, Fruit

December 14: Cabbage Beef and Bean Soup, Cut Raw Vegetables, Fruit

December 15: Stir Fry Chicken, Steamed Brown Rice, Stir Fry Vege-

tables, Fruit

December 16: Closed

December 19: Shepherd's Pie, Biscuit, Steamed Broccoli, Fruit

December 20: White Chicken Chili with Beans, Cornbread, Fruit

December 21: Ham, Ham Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Stuffing, French Cut Green Beans, Apple Pie

December 22: Chicken and Wild Rice Soup, Tossed Garden Salad, Fruit

December 23: Closed

December 26: Closed

December 27: Beef Barley Vegetable Soup, Chef Salad, Dinner Roll, Fruit

December 28: BBQ Pulled Pork, Baked Beans, Coleslaw, Fruit

December 29: Ham, Baked Acorn Squash, Cauliflower, Berry Yogurt Parfait

December 30: Spaghetti and Meatballs, Green Beans, Garlic Toast, Fruit

A Winter of Energy Saving Tips

By Terry Webster, Office of Energy Security, MN Department of Commerce

- Get an energy audit.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Examine your lighting. We use lighting most in winter, and it is a good time to really look at how we use lights.
- Keep snowdrifts at bay. If snow blocks the intake or exhaust of furnaces, water heaters, air-exchangers, or other equipment, it can lead to problems ranging from inefficient to dangerous. After each storm, do a quick check to make sure everything is clear.
- Wrap leaky windows.
- Take advantage of the sun. In winter, allowing the sun in during the day reduces the need for heating—and it doesn't cost a penny! Close blinds and drapes at night to limit heat loss.
- Give energy for the holidays. Paying a utility bill for a relative or friend or donating to the Salvation Army's HeatShare program could help someone stay warm this winter.



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 Jan. 2023 issue is Dec. 15, 2022.

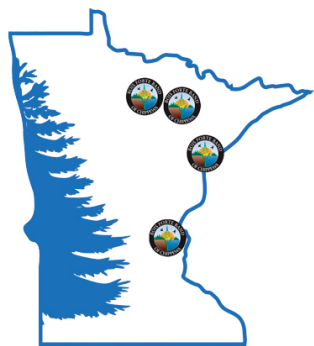
Blue Stone Strategy Group is hosting a Bois Forte Community Meeting

To discuss the Community Survey, Economical Development, and Visions for the Bois Forte Reservation
The Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay Resort Casino
Tuesday, December 13, 2022
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Light dinner will be provided

If you would like to attend virtually the Zoom link is:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89637773553?pwd=Ly9LMXVReUh4c3ZBMjgrSmM5Rkxkdz09>

Or contact Darlene Johnson at 218-410-7906 or djohnson@boisforte-nsn.gov
 Minneapolis - Jacque Wilson at 612-747-5247 or urbanoffice@boisforte-nsn.gov
 Duluth - Wendy Drift at 218-206-5629 or wdrift@boisforte-nsn.gov
 for a Zoom link to be emailed to you.

Transportation will be provided by Big Woods Transit from Nett Lake and Virginia. Departure times are Nett Lake 3:30 and Virginia 4:00
 There is limited seating on the bus.
 Call 888-757-1540 to reserve your seat.



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 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
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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