



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 49 NUMBER 2

VERMILION PHARMACY REMINDER

TOWER— The Vermilion Pharmacy would like to remind patients that it is closed from noon to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday for lunch and that the direct line is 218-753-2180.

Thank you!

Bois Forte to work on game plan should programs ever get cut

LAKE VERMILION SECTOR—Despite a temporary reprieve from President Donald Trump freezing federal funding that would have enormous impacts on tribal nations, the Bois Forte Tribal Council called an emergency meeting Wednesday with its senior management team.

The focal point of the meeting was to develop an action plan in case funding for Bois Forte programming comes under attack.

“We never know what’s going to happen on a day-to-day basis with this administration,” said Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers to roughly 15 leaders in the Birch room at Fortune Bay, while another dozen leaders were logged in virtually. “That’s why we’re all here together to come up with a plan. It’s not just what happened yesterday, but what’s going to happen in the next four years.”

Before the court-ordered reprieve, President Trump announced that he would be freezing federal funding to a bevy of programs, and many of them were targeted at Native American Tribes.

The freeze would have stopped funding for education, food, tribal court, law enforcement, economic development, fire protection, public works, and other programs tribal nations rely on.



DEVELOPING A GAME PLAN— Members of the Bois Forte Tribal Council met with its senior management team Wednesday, January 29th, at Fortune Bay Resort Casino to go over a game plan should federal funding ever be compromised.

Chavers said the recent news reminded her of the government shutdown that had taken place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when the government categorized employees as essential or non-essential employees, which determined who would be staying on and who would be laid off. Chavers was adamant that all of Bois Forte’s employees are essential and that she did not want to hear those words of “essential employees” ever again.

While the temporary reprieve was good news, Chavers pointed out that news broke

Wednesday in which some federal employees were asked to quit or resign with the option of taking a buyout as part of the Trump’s administration to streamline its workforce.

“I know employees are worried too because you just don’t know...” said Chavers in response to cuts being made. “Who knows? That’s just it — the what’s normal is not normal anymore when it comes to this administration.”

District I Representative and Vice Chair Shane Drift also expressed concern with how things are playing out. He

said that when the government shutdown happened a few years ago, he was still new on the tribal council, and he wants to make sure that going forward, Bois Forte is prepared for any and all scenarios that would hinder the tribe’s ability to sustain programs and services.

“Moving forward, we cannot let our guard down,” said Drift, who added that it is imperative the band continues building our financial reserves for any emergencies that may arise. “We need to come up with a plan as we move forward and

See Game Plan page 3

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Chavers steps down as tribal chair

NETT LAKE— Citing a need to take care of her mental health, Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers announced her retirement on Thursday, January 2nd.

Chavers, who won her third term in June of 2024, will stay in her role as tribal chair until Friday, January 31st. A community luncheon was scheduled for that day, but the Bois Forte News went to press Thursday, January 30th.

Bois Forte Tribal Vice Chair Shane Drift will take over for Chavers until her seat is filled.

"I've worked for the Bois Forte Tribe for 47 years and have always told others to take care of themselves, but I never followed my own advice," said Chavers. "I'm just mentally exhausted—tribal government and politics are tough, and it was time for me to take care of myself."

Chavers said she started thinking about resigning in December but wanted to talk to her family first. Her biggest disappointment with her decision

was letting down her Uncle Bill King, who has been like a father to her over the years and was always there to lend advice when she needed it most.

"I also feel bad because I just won the election back in June and didn't want to let my supporters down, but I needed to do this," said Chavers, who served on many committees in her time as tribal chair, including a previous stint as President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT).

Chavers said she has no regrets about the work she did on behalf of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa and would like to be remembered as the "little engine" that could.

"From my perspective, anything is possible," said Chavers, who foresees a career outside of tribal politics once she gives up her role as tribal chair. "It's important to have a seat at the table and stand up for yourself. I'd like to think I always did that for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, and that's something that I'll always be proud of."

To show her appreciation for the staff at Fortune Bay Resort Casino, Chavers made the rounds to stop by offices after Wednesday's Gaming Commission meeting to give a heartfelt thank you to those she worked with over the years and a hug to let them know she appreciates all of their hard work and dedication. She planned to do the same to all employees working for Bois Forte and other Bois Forte Development Corporation businesses.

"You make us look good," said Chavers. "Thank you for everything and I will miss you all."

In accordance with the MCT Election Ordinance, a special election will be held at a later date to fulfill the remainder of her four-year term, which expires in June of 2028.

As of press day, January 30th, no date had been set for the special election to take place and no candidates had formally announced plans to seek Chavers' seat as tribal chair. Please visit www.boisforte.com to review the election calendar.



AT THE HELM— Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers gives her speech at the 2024 State of the Band, which took place in The Woodlands Ballroom. Chavers resigned in early January and her last day in office was January 31st. We'll have coverage in the March issue of the Bois Forte News as her farewell luncheon took place one day after the February issue of the *Bois Forte News* went to press.

Chairwoman Cathy Chavers



Boozhoo Ahneen

Well, this is my last article as Chairwoman of the Bois Forte Band. For some who are not aware, I have decided to retire from my position effective January 31, 2025. I had to make

a hard decision, but I had a situation that happened where I had somewhat of a minor mental health breakdown in mid-December. After thinking thoroughly about this and speaking with my family members after Christmas about my decision, I needed to take a step back and take care of myself mentally and physically. This decision was not made lightly. After a while, I realized that I had worked for the Bois Forte Band since graduating high school and had not worked off the reservation since I was 16. I have worked for Bois Forte for 47 years and will never regret it. I had the opportunity to help our people in various areas, such as healthcare, education, etc. I have also worked diligently in educating outside agencies, etc., on the importance of our history, culture, and language to us as Anishinaabe.

I have had the opportunity to represent Bois Forte on federal, state, and local levels, which I truly enjoyed. Building relationships off the reservation is essential and needs to be continued. I was also very honored to represent Bois Forte as the first female Minnesota Chippewa Tribe President.

I want to thank everyone for their support and guidance over the years. Being a tribal leader is not an easy job. It can be very stressful every day—your decisions impact friends and family at times in a negative way. No matter what you do, not everyone is happy. Decisions must be made regarding what is best for the band members, and the band and tribal leaders must put their personal views aside.

Regarding the future, I want to comment that we are now seeing our young people getting involved. A word

of advice from an elder, former tribal leader, and someone with years of management experience to please remember the seven grandfather teachings: listen and learn first, form your own opinion, and empower yourself with positivity.

There is too much infighting within tribes, including Bois Forte, and we must now concentrate our efforts on the new federal administration coming in. We tribes must come together and be prepared to address whatever comes our way in a joint effort.

It has been an honor, and I am humbled to have worked for Bois Forte all of these years. I will miss you all, but I will still be around, so give me a call if you would like. My telephone number is still the same: 218-780-2898. Take care and Gigawabimin.

Game Plan from page 1

try to be as best prepared as we can for any eventualities.”

Drift wanted to make sure Fortune Bay’s leadership team was involved because it channels monies to Bois Forte to supplement other funding it receives.

“They need to be at this table with us because if they don’t have the information, they could be blindsided,” said Drift in reference the Fortune Bay being asked to allocate more monies to programs should federal funding ever be trimmed.

Hence the reason Drift said that once the tribe’s Ishkode Dispensary starts making a profit, the council must not splurge.

“The council cannot, must not, create any unnecessary jobs with those profits,” said Drift. “The council must set aside monies from the dispensary to build a financial reserve.”

Chavers, who was just two days away from leaving office when the meeting was held, implored those at the table and those attending virtually, to start working together and put aside any differences.

“We need to concentrate on the outside, not on the inside, and that’s what was said at the TEC (Tribal Executive Committee) meeting yesterday,” said Chavers, who added that protecting employee jobs and programs should be the band’s priority. “We all need to come together because this is going to be a fight for the next four years. We have to put those internal fights aside because our fight is off the reservation with the administration, so we need to start working together and collaborating.”

Healthy Heart Conference

PRIZES

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Transportation provided by Big Woods Transit to and From Nett Lake and Vermilion. Please call 1-888-757-1540 to reserve your spot.



20 FEB 9:30-3:30
Iron Trail Event Center
Virginia, MN



Scan QR code to register for this event!!

May also RSVP to Melissa Hawk, Julie, Skoglund, or David Morrison Jr by email or by calling 218-757-0230

Fleece Jackets to all who attend!

****REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS****



To: Bois Forte Tribal Members
Bois Forte Tribal Government Departments
From: Bois Forte Reservation Energy Department
Re: Seeking Comments on Proposed site for a Solar Farm on Vermilion Sector
Date: January 21, 2025

The Bois Forte Energy Department is currently seeking comments from Bois Forte members and Bois Forte Tribal Government Departments and employees on the proposed site for a solar farm location in the Vermilion sector. **Please submit any comments or questions to Executive Assistant, Bois Forte Tribal Government, via email (executiveassistant@boisforte-nsn.gov) OR (<https://portal.laserfiche.com/u7744/forms/solarfarmproject>) or mail at 5344 Lakeshore Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772 no later than February 20, 2025.**



TO SUBMIT
COMMENT

Project Information:

In September 2024, The U.S. Department of Interior awarded Bois Forte funding for their grant application to build a solar farm to offset energy costs for Bois Forte members.

The project will require 8 to 14 acres of land to build the 2 MW solar farm project. The proposed project site has 28-acres that we would explore for feasibility and design of the solar farm project. Please see the proposed project site location with the Y-Store location as a reference point.

We welcome your comments and questions for the proposed project site.



Progress being made on Ishkode Dispensary's opening

LAKE VERMILION SECTOR—Frustrations have continued growing over concerns that the Ishkode Dispensary near Fortune Bay Resort Casino has not opened.

In the eyes of District I Representative Perry Drift, Bois Forte is sitting on a huge opportunity right now and can't afford to play the waiting game any longer.

"We need to really capitalize on this moment," said Drift during a recent Bois Forte Development Corporation meeting, which took place at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. "The state is in disarray for cannabis right now—we need to get off our asses and get this going."

Drift added that if the Ishkode Dispensary doesn't open in February, he believes some

internal sabotage is going on.

"This is the ugly side of politics," said Drift. "I get it; some people don't want certain leaders here. I get that, but at the end of the day, this is the people's money. We have a real golden opportunity or golden ticket here."

The Ishkode Dispensary has had several soft opening dates listed as to when it would open, dating back to last fall. However, due to licensing issues, not to mention waiting on products from other tribes, the facility has yet to open.

CEO Drew Ebert said he would also like to have Ishkode open but added that he and his small team are working as quickly as possible. He added that it has been a long process that has included presentations

to the council and the public on typical timeline costs and team sizes.

"We are not working with the benefit of that level of investment," said Ebert, who only came onboard this past April and hasn't had the luxury of time to make things happen at breakneck speed, after the meeting. "This project was approved to begin from scratch in August and compliance was hired in December. All things considered; we're progressing lightning fast."

Retail Manager Paxton Goodsky also stressed the urgency for Bois Forte to get its own growth operation going as soon as possible so they don't have to play the waiting game on products being delivered to the Ishkode Dispensary, which is located near the RV Park at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

"If we had our cultivation before our dispensary, we would have this thing up and running a lot sooner because we're running into the problem with product, and it's hard to set up with no (marijuana) product," said Goodsky.

All staffing is in place at the Ishkode Dispensary, including Goodsky, who has been busy preparing the floor plan, filling retail space with products from the former smoke shop, and training his staff. On a recent visit to the Dispensary, Goodsky was giving a tour of the operations when a would-be customer showed up wanting to buy some marijuana. That visit showed Goodsky that traffic would be brisk once Ishkode opened its doors.

Goodsky said he is also frustrated by the waiting game, but as Ebert alluded to, licensing and obtaining product is the current roadblock.

The licensing still required



LOOKING GOOD!— This photo shows part of the floor plan at the Ishkode Dispensary. There is also a seating area with a large flatscreen TV, plus an ATM, restrooms, office space and storage space.

not only relates to buying marijuana from another tribe but also a transportation license.

"We would need a transportation license, and you need a vehicle that has to fit the requirements for that," said Ebert in response to a question posed to him during the meeting. "We can't just grab somebody's van and go pick it up."

After the meeting, Shane Drift said it's time Bois Forte creates its own transportation policies.

"Let's create those policies and go and get the products ourselves," said Drift. "We need stop focusing on future cannabis businesses and get Ishkode open and selling products."

Goodsky said that as soon as the contract is finalized, things will start moving and the Ishkode Dispensary will open.

"As soon as we get a deal with another tribe, we can set that date. We were trying to get a deal done with Red Lake, but Red Lake does not have a transportation license, so they had no way to getting their product to us," said Goodsky, who added that he is also in conversation

with White Earth and Prairie Island. "So, we were trying to work with other tribes to see if they could run it for us. But that's the hold up with giving you a for sure date."

Furthermore, Ebert said the process has become more complicated as he and his team figure out how to launch this business.

"The state obviously can't figure it out, and they have how many hundreds of people working on their projects?" asked Ebert.

While Ebert's comments were well received, Bois Forte Tribal Council Vice Chair and District I Representative Shane Drift reiterated that a firm date still needs to be set.

"We don't have millions of dollars set aside to keep pushing that date back and back and back," emphasized Drift. "Like I was telling the council if we keep pushing it back, we won't have any money for the startup and all the products. It's plain and simple; we can't keep pushing it back."



AT THE HELM!— Ishkode Dispensary Retail Manager Paxton Goodsky stands behind one of the counters that was repurposed from the former Smoke Shop at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Spirited discussion takes place on making much-needed improvements at Fortune Bay

LAKE VERMILION SECTOR—With other Minnesota Tribes reinvesting in their hotels/resorts, a conversation regarding Fortune Bay Resort Casino took place Wednesday, January 22nd, to once again address the need for making significant improvements at Bois Forte's flagship company.

"We need to sit down and start developing a plan to build financial reserves for this place," said Bois Forte District I Representative Shane Drift during a discussion that centered around entering a contract for new slot machines, but also involved healthy talks on protecting the band's assets, namely the long-term success of the resort.

As it stands now, Fortune Bay's resort needs an estimated \$4 million in capital improvements. The list of improvements needed is plenty, including regular upkeep to give the rooms a modern look, but the big ticket item is replacing bathrooms in the original resort, which opened in 1996 with 114 rooms. Fifty-eight premium rooms were added in 2007.

"We are looking into this being spread out over a four-year span," said Fortune Bay's Director of Hospitality Rebecca Stahl after the meeting of capital improvements she previously brought forth. "We have listened to the guests over the years, and (once given the go ahead) we will be taking a section of the two queen rooms and making them more accessible with walk-in showers, higher toilets, etc."

Simple math shows that \$1 million would need to be set aside for each of the next four years; however, finding the money won't be that easy. Yes, the resort has added a \$15 resort fee per paid room rented, but that funding mechanism isn't enough.

Since the resort fees were rolled out in April 2022, Fortune Bay has collected \$280,171.80. However, \$146,602.31 has been used for various equipment purchases for the resort, marina and banquets.

As of January 23rd, that leaves the current balance at \$133,569.49, which is a far cry from the \$4 million needed to address all of the concerns.

After the meeting, Shane Drift wanted to make sure his message regarding building a reserve is not lost and highlighted comments he made when the re-

sort siding project was done several years ago.

"When the council approved the siding project. I asked how long the new siding is going to last. The council at that time was told the siding would last 25 years," said Drift after the meeting. "I told the council and Fortune Bay management team that we have 25 years to set aside monies for the next siding project. We should not be going to a bank for a loan. The monies we pay in interest could be put in a reserve."

General Manager Elizabeth Deegan is fully aware of the wholesale changes needed for the resort and casino.

"It's an aging building," said Deegan. "It's almost cheaper to build a brand-new casino (and resort) than fix what's wrong. Having a two-story casino is hard to maintain anyway."

She noted that casino games are getting larger and heavier, making it a balancing act of sorts to ensure not too much weight is placed on the floor, which can compromise the weight load the second floor can handle.

Deegan also added that the concept of building new is something she shared with managers and directors at the first meeting she called shortly after being hired in late August.

For the time being, Deegan said it's vitally important to start reinvesting in the resort sooner rather than later.

"Everything is getting old, and we need to start building up the reserves; that's where I'm trying to get us," said Deegan, who is not only serving as general manager for Fortune Bay Resort Casino but is also juggling gaming duties due to key job openings at the casino. "We're getting a lot of bad reviews online where people are saying how outdated our rooms are. That's why we need to build a reserve; we just don't have the funds (to make the necessary improvements)."

Another aspect Deegan would like to stay on top of is to make sure, no matter what improvements are made, that more of Bois Forte's history and culture are on display. It has long been said that more is needed to be done to let guests know that they are stepping foot inside a destination property owned and operated by the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa.

Presently, there is not enough décor

to let folks know much about Bois Forte. There may be some artwork hanging on the walls as well as two hutches in the resort lobby highlighting some items guests could purchase at the Bois Forte Heritage Center & Cultural Museum, but Deegan said much more is needed, which District I Representative Perry Drift was pleased to hear.

"I'm glad you brought that up," said Drift, who has been helping incorporate native language into the Ishkode Dispensary to create a luxury experience for our guests. "I think Cathy brought it up too... putting more indigenous or floral designs on our buildings. Because if you go to Red Lake or Leech Lake, they are proud of it..."

they flash it, and that's what I want to see here in my next three and a half years (in office)."

Further discussions will take place on finding a way to reinvest in the resort at a later date, which is something both Fortune Bay's leadership team and the Bois Forte Tribal Council agrees upon.

"If this place doesn't have a reserve, then my question is, 'Why?'" asked Shane Drift. "I've pushed for it ever since I got on the council. If we don't have a reserve, then what the hell?"

Deegan agreed.

"We should have been working on that years ago," said Deegan.



NETT LAKE MIDWINTER POWWOW
FEBRUARY 14, 15, & 16, 2025

HOST DRUM: GAA GI GAAIKWE
CO HOST DRUM: LAKE VERMILION
SPIRITUAL ADVISOR: DANNY GEYSHICK
ARENA DIRECTOR: NATE TIBBETTS
EMCEE: TERRY GOODSKY

Friday: 6PM Opening Ceremony
Soup and Sandwiches

Saturday: Breakfast 7 AM-9 AM
Registration: 12 PM
Grand Entry: 1 PM & 7 PM
Dinner: 5 PM

Sunday: Breakfast 7 AM-9 AM
Registration: 12 PM
Grand Entry: 1 PM
Dinner: 4 PM

WINNER TAKE ALL
Two step contest
\$200 & TROPHY

Ceremony Request Guidelines: As per the Spiritual Advisor, requests must be made on Friday night. Ceremonies will be conducted before noon on Saturday and Sunday.

FEAST Food Donation Contact: Tyla Adams 218-404-4502
Powwow Questions: Email
nettlakepowwowcommittee@gmail.com
Vendor Contact: Derek "Tiny" Morrison 218-994-9405

Reading really does rock for Nett Lake's Early Childhood program

NETT LAKE— If you ever wanted to experience an authentic family atmosphere, then you might want to check out the Early Childhood program nestled away in a spacious room at the Nett Lake Elementary School.

It's here where Christine Lundemo, Lori Hawk, and others do their best to impact Bois Forte's future positively. They also make sure to include parents and guardians of the youngsters and teach them many of life's essential lessons.

On this particular day, some 25 infants and toddlers gleefully listened as Wendy Deatherage rounded up some helpers to perform a puppet show while reading a couple of books to commemorate 15 years of Reading Rocks.

The program aims to raise awareness of the importance of reading to the very young and provide opportunities to participate in reading with infants and toddlers. Furthermore, the goal is to strengthen the parent/teacher relationship by working toward a common goal.

As Deatherage read the book, all of the youngsters were captivated by the excitement she lent to the book she was reading and the puppets' movements to keep the storyline moving. It was a sight to behold as the youngsters enjoyed and interacted with the show— so too did the parents and guardians of the children as the reading continued.

"Literacy is very important," said Lundemo, who is the Bois Forte Early Childhood Program Director, a few minutes before the event began on Thursday, January 23rd. "It's important for parents to read to their children because it helps with their cognitive skills and social development."

The way Lundemo sees it, reading helps children with their cognitive development. When you ask a child a question, their ability to answer that question is intertwined with the magic of reading.

"Reading books and fostering that connection is really important to help them with their language development,"

See Reading Rocks on page 8



GETTING READY FOR THE BIG EVENT!— These jovial kids were all excited for the start of the 15th anniversary of the Reading Rocks program. Pictured, left to right, are : Corey Connor, Elora Drift, Jeffery Harmon Jr., Klaus Harmon, Bryan Porter, and Celina Morrison, partially obscured. The two adults are Braeanne Porter (parent) and Jennalee Porter (aunt). Each month children are provided a reading log. The program challenge to parents is to read 15 times a month for five to 10 minutes with their child. Once the log is completed, the child is given a free book to keep.



CAPTIVATING THE KIDS— Wendy Deatherage reads popular children's book Tumble Bumble by author Felica Bond, at the Nett Lake Early Childhood program's 15th anniversary of Reading Rocks. To further enhance the experience Deatherage enlisted the help of local students to put on a puppet show while she read to the children. There are 14 infant/toddlers in the program and 11 other children, ages three to four, who partake in the Nett Lake Early Childhood program.



HELPING OUT!— This trio of Nett Lake students, Gabriel Buchholz, Kielyn Hill, and Leytyn Hill, helped out with the 15th anniversary of the Reading Rocks program. Their task was to be a puppeteer as Wendy Deatherage read two books to the children.

Chavers honored by St. Louis County Board

Reprinted with permission from Jodi Summit, The Timberjay

SUDAN- The St. Louis County Board opened their Jan. 14 regular meeting by paying homage to Cathy Chavers, who recently announced her retirement from her position as Bois Forte Tribal Chair.

Meeting at the Breitung Community Center, Commissioner Paul McDonald spoke of Chavers' 50 years of public service, with both the county and the band, culminating in her election as tribal chair in 2016.

"It says a lot for her leadership," he said. "She has given her heart and soul to what she has done. She has been a strong advocate for healthier outcomes," said McDonald, noting that Chavers has served on the county's public health advisory board.

Other commissioners commended Chavers for building a strong relationship

between the tribe and county government.

"Our relationship with the band went to a new level with Cathy," said Keith Nelson.

St. Louis County Sheriff Jason Akerson thanked Chavers for listening to concerns of the sheriff's department and helping to finally get a stalled aid agreement in place.

The board passed a proclamation, in appreciation of her service.

The proclamation discussed her earlier career in health care, as well as her prominent leadership role as President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and appointment by the Governor to the Minnesota Board on Aging's Public Policy Committee.

Chavers, for her part, thanked the county board for holding regular board meetings in both Nett Lake and Vermil-

ion, noting that the meetings gave county commissioners and their staff time to build personal relationships with tribal leaders.

Chavers told the board she is not retiring from public service completely and will be expanding her work outside of the reservation, hoping to work with industries like mining to bring a tribal perspective.

"There is a lot more to do," she said. Chavers' uncle Bill King also attended the meeting. King, now 94, was a longtime Orr Braves basketball coach and he had stories to share with McDonald, also a longtime basketball coach, now retired. McDonald said he also remembered watching Chavers when she was a cheerleader for the Orr Braves while she attended Orr High School.



BIG HONOR - Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers and her uncle Bill King hold up a proclamation Chavers received from the St. Louis County Board.

Lewis shares story of how the Mukwa lost its long tail

TOWER— On a cold yet beautiful Friday evening on January 10th, attendees gathered at the Bois Forte Heritage Center with Ojibwe Storyteller Char Lewis.

After an initial meet and greet with treats in the lobby, everyone moved into the center of the museum space under the lighted star ceiling in a circle for story time. Char shared the story of how the Mukwa (Bear in Anishinabemowin), used to have a long tail and how he lost it. Mukwa was being mean to Anishinabeg (the People) so Nanaboozhoo, a main Ojibwe folk hero and demigod, grabbed

him by the tail and threw Mukwa into the sky and his tail fell off. Thus, Mukwa has a short tail ever since.

Morgan Olson, Bois Forte Tribal Archivist, has displayed other stories as part of a series called Ojibwe Winter Stories. The three on display right now are: "How the Ojibwe Got Maple Sugar," "The Magic Pots," and "Nanaboozhoo Made a House for Turtle." To view these, the museum is open Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm, and is located at 1500 Bois Forte Road, Tower, MN 55790 just down the road from Fortune Bay Resort Casino.



ENTHRALLED AUDIENCE— Ojibwe Storyteller Char Lewis, seated to the far left, shares the story of how the Mukwa lost its long tail to those gathered at the Bois Forte Heritage Center. Submitted photo.



William M. Isham
'Four Wolves Howling at the Moon'
10.10.1946 - 11.25.2024

Chance Isham
'Mini-Moose'
1996 - 12.18.2024

Our father William began his new adventure in November and his best friend Chance joined him a month later. They are together again enjoying all the things they loved to do, driving, hunting, eating, taking four-wheeler rides, visiting friends, and spending time together.

With a humble and grateful heart, we would like to sincerely thank you for all you have done for dad, Chance, and us as we all go through this transition. It means more than you will ever know. We would like to thank everyone personally, however, there are so many kind souls we may miss a few of you – this is not intentional. Every day we send our gratitude out into the universe thanking everyone. Please know that your kindness and generosity does not go unnoticed.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Isham Louise Isham

Reading Rocks from page 6

explained Lundemo, who added that it's never too early to start reading to a child. "This reading program has really taken off since its inception here 15 years ago, and we're all very pleased with the program's growth."

Hawk, who is an Early Childhood teacher, has been equally impressed with the program and all the good that comes out of it.

"I have worked for the program for 38 years," said Hawk, who was running around helping with last-minute needs before the program started. "What keeps me motivated is I have always had a passion for working with children. I believe that early childhood is a crucial stage in their development. To see the excitement on a child's face when they learn a new skill is very rewarding!"

Hawk said it was fitting that Deatherage helped celebrate the 15th anniversary of Reading Rocks because she was the one who started the Reading Rocks program when she worked at the school.

"We're all so happy to see a great crowd," said Hawk of the room that was jampacked for the special occasion. "Seeing so many families here shows how much we care about our kid's future."

I'd like to thank everyone for coming out and making this event a huge success!"

When the program first started, Lundemo wasn't sure how it would evolve. There were some growing pains early on, but thanks to the dedication of the staff and involvement from the parents and kids, the program eventually flourished. The Vermilion Sector also has its Reading Rocks program, which is now in its 10th year.

She said the key to the program's success is consistency, which helps the children get into a pattern of learning the importance of reading and social development.

"It's great to have so much involvement from the parents because they are vital to their children's success," said Lundemo, who added that parents can also help improve a child's cognitive and social skills by telling stories. "Fostering good reading habits is so important. We are giving them the resources, including free books, to remind them why spending time reading to their child is so important."

And by the looks of it, Lundemo, Hawk, and the other staff members have been very effective in positively impacting the children they serve.



BUSY MAKING SNACKS— Racheal Howe, an Early Head Start teacher with Nett Lake's Early Childhood program, puts together snacks for those in attendance at the 15th anniversary of the Reading Rocks, which took place Thursday, January 23rd.

"I'm very proud of our staff for keeping this going and for their dedication to these children," said Lundemo as her staff worked feverishly to make the 15th anniversary of the Reading Rocks event

a rousing success. "They work extremely hard to make a difference, and I'm very grateful for their passion for keeping this program going."

Bois Forte Substance Use Program Services provided include:

Comprehensive Assessments (formerly Rule 25's)
Treatment Coordination including referrals into Inpatient
Phase I & II Outpatient Treatment
Individual Counseling • Relapse Prevention • Coping skills • Life Skills
Cultural Teachings • Grief Counseling
Historical Trauma • Community Gatherings
Sobriety Feasts • Outreach • Referrals
Prevention services and activities, referrals Mental Health Therapy

Contact: Heidi Hansen, Katherine Laitinen

Bois Forte Substance Use Program

1195 County Road 77

Tower, MN 55731

Phone: 218-753-2347

Fax: 218-753-3711

Bois Forte Substance Use Program

13071 Nett Lake Rd, Suite B

Nett Lake, MN 55772

Phone: 218-757-0233

Fax: 218-757-0109



MANNING THE AIRWAVES — Bois Forte's Marty Connor was busy at the KBFT studio last Thursday afternoon. Keep up the great work, Marty! We enjoy listening to you!

Peterson charged with two counts of involuntary manslaughter

DULUTH, Minn. – According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Minnesota, a Virginia man has been indicted for two counts of involuntary manslaughter after the death of a woman on the Bois Forte Reservation, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Lisa D. Kirkpatrick.

According to court documents, on December 17, 2024, the St. Louis County 911 Center received several calls regarding a woman walking on Reservation Road between Tibbetts Trail and Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Officers were dispatched to the scene and discovered an unconscious

woman lying in the snow. The victim, Amanda Boshey, was transported from the scene and pronounced dead. Vehicle debris at the scene included pieces from a dark blue vehicle and pieces of plastic that appeared to be headlights or turn signals.

Given this information and the location of the accident, law enforcement contacted the Fortune Bay Resort Casino for any surveillance footage that may show blue vehicles departing the casino around the time of the 911 calls. Casino staff was able to identify a dark blue Dodge Durango departing the casino.

Eric Scott Peterson, 50, was determined to be the registered owner of the vehicle. A search warrant was executed at his residence, where a blue Dodge Durango was found in the driveway with damage consistent with the debris collected from the accident scene.

Peterson was indicted on two counts of involuntary manslaughter. He was arraigned Wednesday, January 22nd

in U.S. District Court before Magistrate Judge Leo I. Brisbois.

This case is the result of an investigation conducted by Bois Forte Police Department, Minnesota State Patrol, and the FBI.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Nichole J. Carter is prosecuting the case.

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

February 3: Goulash, Peas, Bread Stick, Fruit

February 4: Beef Taco Pie with Corn, Chips, Whole Kernel Corn, Tossed Salad

February 5: Grilled Chicken Breast, Rice Pilaf, Chateau Vegetables, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 6: Breakfast Hotdish, Potato Wedges or Tots, Muffin, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 7: Beef Barley Vegetable Soup, Chef Salad, Whole Grain Dinner Roll, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 10: Breaded Chicken Patty, Poultry Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Peas, Fruit, Dinner Roll

February 11: Roast Beef, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Roasted Root Vegetables, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 12: BBQ Pulled Pork, Baked Beans, Coleslaw, Fruit

February 13: Stir Fry Chicken/Egg Roll, Stir Fry Vegetables, Steamed Brown Rice, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 14: Beef/Bison Stew, Seven



Grain Bun, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 17: HOLIDAY

February 18: Ham, Scalloped Potatoes with Cheese, Peas, Fruit

February 19: Wild Rice Meatballs, Rice Pilaf, Sliced Zucchini, Fruit

February 20: Chicken Wild Rice Soup or Hotdish, Garden Salad/Coleslaw, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 21: Bison/Beef Meatloaf, Baked Sweet Potato, Brussel Sprouts, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 24: Potato Soup, Chicken Salad Croissant, Fruit

February 25: Meatballs with Spaghetti, Green Beans, Garlic Toast, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 26: Roast Pork, Baby Baker Potatoes, Roasted Butternut Squash, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 27: Beef Lasagna, Green Beans, Garlic Toast, Chef's Choice of Fruit

February 28: Taco Salad/Chef Salad, Refried Beans with Chips, Chef's Choice of Fruit



Minute with Millie

Well, I did it. Dropped a size 12 short bead needle on a carpet. Spent the rest of the daylight hours checking my skirt, my socks, my shoes. Moved chairs, papers, and curtains. Used my handy, dandy flashlight on my phone, cause of course the carpets in my house are dark brown. Found a lot of beads I dropped and here I was, thinking I didn't drop any. I thought I caught all those that fell off my needle or got sent flying instead of sliding onto my needle.

And of course, I was a bit tentative, nay, downright hesitant about sliding my hand around the carpet. Naturally, one such as I who doesn't set up her beading section where there are no carpets, learns the hard way about dropping needles on those...carpets.

And nooo, I didn't luck out and have there be thread still in the needle. I was in the process of picking up that dratted needle to thread it when it refused to stay in my fingertips. Since I didn't want to get pricked, I slid it toward the edge of the table. I knew in an instant that pushing the thread out of the way simultaneously with the sliding needle meant I had a choice: either it was going to fall or get my hand under it fast enough to catch it. The needle bounced. Yepper, bounced right off my hand where I watched it fall out of sight before my very eyes. In slomo too mind you. I froze.

Took all of a good few minutes



before I got the energy to at least look, hoping against...well. There went my few precious moments of sun filled, blue sky in my search for that needle. Twas only after I got the nerve to gingerly drag my fingers across the carpet using the flashlight on my phone that I got the idea to use a bit of paper instead of my fingers. Did the happy dance when that needle bounced into view with a silvery reflection. Banged my head on the table in my dash to get that needle safely tucked into the fabric I was beading.

Why or why do I not use one of the several pin cushions in the house, in particular, the one I made specially for holding pins and needles? Tch, tch, tch.

Margaret Charlene Pete



Margaret Charlene Pete, “Wabiishkii Maiganikwe”, age 42 of Virginia died Sunday, January 12, 2025 at Essentia St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth.

She was born June 29, 1982 in Virginia, the daughter of Peter Pete, Jr. and Muriel Deegan and was a graduate of Tower-Soudan High School. Marge worked at various retail stores and was a security guard at Fortune Bay Casino. She loved her music, beach outings, followed the Lake Vermilion Drum Group, and cherished time with her children and family.

Marge is survived by her Mother:

Muriel Deegan; Children: Anissa Pete, Alexander (Ava Smith) Pete, Nevaeh Hartland, Nijjah Pete; Grandson: Alexander Pete, Jr.; Brothers: Peter Deegan and Tristan (Jasmine Gawboy) Day; Stepbrother: Bern Day; Sister: Juanita Deegan; Stepsisters: Stacy Day and Anne Isham; Numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her Father: Peter Pete, Jr.; sister: Anya Pete; Maternal Jeanette Deegan.

The Wake was held on Friday, January 17, 2025 at the Vermilion Wellness Center. Tribal Rites were held on Saturday, January 18, 2025. Tommy Councillor will be the Spiritual Advisor. Burial followed in the Bois Forte Vermilion Cemetery.

Family Services were provided by Bauman-Cron, A Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia. To share condolences online, please visit www.baumanfuneralhome.com.

Dennis V. Hilmas, Jr.



Dennis V. Hilmas Jr., age 57 of Tower, MN, passed away on January 3, 2025, at St. Mary’s Hospital, Duluth, MN. He was born on June 7, 1967, in Virginia, MN to Dennis V. Hilmas,

Sr., and Vivian M. (Chosa) Hilmas. He attended Virginia schools and served in the U. S. Army.

Dennis obtained a good solid work ethic by working alongside his father, in his father’s contracting business, starting at age 12. Through his ability to be a fast learner, he was unafraid of any mechanical challenge. He loved working on anything with an engine, whether it be cars, snow machines, lawn mowers, etc. He could repair most anything and welcomed the challenge.

His favorite pastime was dirt track racing. Dennis prepared his own cars, built the engines, and through his weld-

ing skills, he built his own safety equipment in first class fashion. He raced his car at the Hibbing Speedway Dirt Track, in Proctor, MN and in New Richmond, WI.

Dennis will be missed by many. He is survived by his father: Dennis, Hilmas, Sr. of New Auburn, WI; sons: Daniel (Lexi) Hilmas of Virginia and Darren (Victoria) Hilmas of South Range, WI; grandchildren: Kyler, Kinsley, Nova, Nina, and Rico; sister: Anita (Larry) Milbridge of Tower; nephews: Christopher Hunt and Chandler Brown; Dan and Darren’s Mother: Danyell Vesel; numerous extended family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother; daughter: Daisha, and sister: Lynette.

A Memorial Service was held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at the Bauman-Cron Funeral Home Chapel in Virginia.

Memorials are preferred and may be directed to Daniel Hilmas, 1021 South 5th Avenue, Virginia, MN 55792

Family services were provided by Bauman-Cron, A Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia. To share condolences online, please visit: www.baumanfuneralhome.com.

William Isham



William Merle Isham, 78, passed away peacefully on Monday, November 25, 2024, at St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth, Minnesota. He was born October 10, 1946, in Cloquet, Minnesota to William George Isham and Lillian Day.

William is a Combat Veteran, who served proudly in the Army, 1st Logistical Command from 1968 until he was honorably discharged in 1970. His talent and knowledge were vast. His career included but was not limited to; Law Enforcement Officer, Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Prison Guard - Stillwater, Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement Officer, Bois Forte Conservation Officer, Heavy Equipment Operator, Sawyer, Millwright, Logistic Specialist 92A, Teacher, and he attended college at Haskell in Kansas to study Welding.

William enjoyed spending time with friends and family, hunting, fishing, driving, motorcycling, martial arts, shooting, reloading, billiards, cooking, beadwork, collecting, and loved to explore new places, new restaurants, shopping, and he especially cherished spending time with his partner in crime and best friend, Chance ‘Mini-Moosh’ Isham. These two were inseparable, it was rare that you would see one without the other. Chance joined

his friend to continue their adventures together on December 17, 2024. William was always willing to lend a helping hand and cared deeply for animals. William often spoke about the heartbreak he had to endure as a conservation officer addressing unwanted pets. He was extremely resourceful and if he could not find something he needed, he would build it. Many would say he was a pretty good mechanic, although he would say he was only a mechanic because he had to be.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Grace Elizabeth Isham, his parents, and his siblings Clint, Ernie, Jake, Lee, Lois, Lazine, Zenobia, and Roberta.

William is survived by his son, William George Isham (Jannan); his two daughters, Louise Elizabeth Isham and Jennifer Loraine Isham; his grandchildren: Tyler Buchholz (Crystal), Nicolis Buchholz (Racheal), Shullon Isham/Strong (Kevin), Jake Isham, Alexander Isham; great grandchildren: Elius and Hazel Strong, Neko Buchholz, Boo Isham, Stella Isham, Molly Isham, Sally Isham, Grace Isham, Allyssa Isham, Graham Isham, Jazmin Buchholz, Gabryl Buchholz, and William Isham.

Pallbearers: Tyler Buchholz, Nicolis Buchholz, Jake Isham, Alexander Isham, Ernie Landgren Jr., Luke Landgren.

Honorary Pallbearers: William G. Isham, Shullon Isham, Kevin Strong, Pablo Gonzales, Jim Prepodnik, John Prepodnik, Elius Strong, Garret Landgren, Henry Thompson.

Visitation was held Sunday, December 1, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at the Bois Forte Government Community Building, Nett Lake and continued until the service commenced on Monday, December 2, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home, Virginia, Minnesota.

Obituary updated by his daughters, Jennifer Isham and Louise Isham.

**Now
HIRING**

For a list of current job opportunities,
go to: www.boisforte.com/jobs



Nathan Ray O’Leary



Nathan Ray O’Leary, 43, of Esko passed away on Dec. 29, 2024.

He is survived by the children he adored, Nicholas Ray O’Leary and Oliviana Christine O’Leary, as well as his parents, and stepparents, Marty (Michelle) O’Leary of Cloquet and Tamarra (Dan) Belich of Esko.

He also left behind his brothers, Andrew (Jeni) O’Leary of Esko and Benjamin (Jesse) O’Leary of Duluth.

He is missed by his stepbrothers, Jason O’Leary Belich and Alex Belich; stepsister, Natilie Belich; nephews, Evan,

Ashton and Nolan O’Leary; adoring niece, Ella O’Leary; and Maxx and Cruz Barnes.

He is also survived by numerous paternal aunts and uncles; one maternal aunt, Terri (Dennis) Madzgas and family; his partner, Nicole Adolfs, and her children, Alex and Jacob Adolfs, of Cloquet; numerous cousins and many friends; and four-legged companions, Shyann and Nora.

Nathan enjoyed fishing and hunting, spending time with his nieces and nephews, and fixing up older vehicles. He was always ready to help day or night and was loved by everyone.

Visitation took place on Saturday, Jan. 11 at Nelson Funeral Care in Cloquet.

Memorials for his children can be sent to P.O. Box 12, Esko MN 55733.

State of the Band postponed—
new date is Saturday, March 1st

LAKE VERMILION SECTOR— Due to a death in the community, the 2025 Bois Forte Band of Chippewa’s State of the Band (SOTB) was postponed this past month.

The new date will be Saturday, March 1st. A room block for Friday, February 28th and Saturday the 1st has been

set up at Fortune Bay. If you would like to reserve a room, please call 218-753-2611 and press one for the resort front desk.

In order to provide coverage of the event, the Bois Forte News will be coming out a week later so that we can include the story and photos of this annual event in the March issue.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE BOIS FORTE BAND OF CHIPPEWA TRIBAL CHILDREN’S COURT
MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE

In the Matter of the Welfare of: KAS DOB: 07/26/2020. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Department of Family Health Services, Petitioner, v. Storm Marine Santa, Eldon Cloud, Respondents. Court File No. CP-2025-0003

To: Eldon Cloud

It is Ordered and Notice is Hereby Given that a Children in Need of Protection or Services Petition was filed in the Bois Forte Tribal Court on January 15th, 2025. A hearing on the above petition will be held February 11th, 2025, at 1:20 PM Central Standard Time, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard via Zoom, at the Bois Forte Children’s Court, Bois Forte Reservation, 12907 Palmquist Road, Suite B, Orr, MN 55771. Please contact the Tribal Court at 218-757-3462 or via email at bfccourt@boisforte-nsn.gov for Zoom link hearing information.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED BY THIS SUMMONS AND NOTICE THAT YOU ARE REQUIRED TO APPEAR AT THIS HEARING AT THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE NOTED ABOVE. FAILURE TO ATTEND THIS HEARING MAY RESULT IN A DEFAULT JUDGEMENT BEING GRANTED FOR THE PETITIONER.

By the Court,

Megan Treuer, Chief Judge

Melissa Wright, Court Administrator

Attorney for the Petitioner, Joy Parker

12907 Palmquist Road, Suite B, Orr, MN 55771

(218) 757-3462

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE BOIS FORTE BAND OF CHIPPEWA TRIBAL CHILDREN’S COURT
MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE

In the Matter of the Welfare of: KNB DOB: 10/12/2021. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Department of Family Health Services, Petitioner, v. Storm Marine Santa, Riley William Burns, Respondents. Court File No. CP-2025-0002

To: Riley William Burns

It is Ordered and Notice is Hereby Given that a Children in Need of Protection or Services Petition was filed in the Bois Forte Tribal Court on January 6th, 2025. A hearing on the above petition will be held February 11th, 2025, at 1:00 PM Central Standard Time, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard via Zoom, at the Bois Forte Children’s Court, Bois Forte Reservation, 12907 Palmquist Road, Suite B, Orr, MN 55771. Please contact the Tribal Court at 218-757-3462 or via email at bfccourt@boisforte-nsn.gov for Zoom link hearing information.

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By the Court,

Megan Treuer, Chief Judge

Melissa Wright, Court Administrator

Attorney for the Petitioner, Joy Parker

12907 Palmquist Road, Suite B, Orr, MN 55771

(218) 757-3462

Emergency
Warming Locations

In the event of power outage or
natural emergencies leaving
residents without heat, the following
locations will be open .

Nett Lake Government Center
5344 Lakeshore Drive
Nett Lake, Mn.

Vermilion Family
Boys & Girls Club
1610 Farm Road
Tower Mn

If an emergency does take place, notification of these
Warming Locations will be sent out on the Bois Forte
community notification system.

Call Teresa Isham with questions at 218-750-7632

A large photograph of a smiling woman with dark hair wearing a mustard yellow top. In the background, to the right, five people wearing blue shirts with letters 'u', 'c', 'a', 'r', 'e' and helmets are standing on a long tandem bicycle. The background is light blue with abstract blue shapes in the top left corner.

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