



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 50 NUMBER 8

Attention band members or descendants!

If you would like your business information in a resource guide that will be shared with our band members and communities, please send your information to Vonda Carr at vcarr@boisforte-nsn.gov. The deadline to submit your information is August 31, 2026.

Per Capita update

The Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council approved the amount of the 2026 per capita payment. The amount is \$858.85 and the checks will be sent out August 14.

A new era begins for Bois Forte

Hernandez swears in Morrison Sr., Holmes and Moyer Jr.

VERMILION SECTOR—Bois Forte band members were given an up-close and personal look at the new makeup of the tribal council at the Tuesday, July 14, swearing-in ceremony.

The ceremony took place at The Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. It included roughly 100 attendees who came out to celebrate the swearing-in of new Secretary-Treasurer David Morrison Sr., new District I Representative Mildred Holmes and Robert Moyer Jr., who earned his second term as District II Representative.

There were plenty of dignitaries in attendance, including former tribal chair Cathy Chavers, former Chair and District I Rep. Doris Isham, former District II Rep. Kevin Strong, Bois Forte Executive Director Miranda Lilya, Fortune Bay General Manager Elizabeth Deegan, Fortune Bay Interim CEO Brad Anderson, former Fortune Bay General Manager and Bois Forte Executive Director Jenna Lehti and others.

For Morrison, it meant the return to office after a four-year hiatus when he lost to Tara Geshick in the 2022 election. Morrison's aggressive campaign, which included a lot of door-to-door visits with voters, propelled him to earn another term, after already



GOOD TIMES—The Bois Forte Swearing In Ceremony of District I Rep. Mildred Holmes, District II Rep. Robert Moyer Jr. and Secretary-Treasurer David Morrison Sr. took place Tuesday, July 14 in The Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. Holmes can be seen shaking the hand of a young Bois Forte band member, while Linda Manick waits to greet Moyer, who was given a hug by former Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers. Shown to the right is Morrison Sr. getting a hug from former Tribal Chair Doris Isham.

serving an unprecedented 32 years in office.

"I'm very honored to be here today and take the oath of office in the presence of everyone," said Morrison, Sr., who was joined by a large contingent of family members, including his young grandson, who was mesmerized by the Bois Forte singers and gave them a thumbs up after they performed a song. "I want to thank the people who voted for me and also the people that voted for the other two candidates that are here today that

were elected."

Morrison also thanked the other candidates that ran for office and thanked Geshick for her hard work these past four years as his predecessor. He also acknowledged former members of the council who were in attendance, including Cathy Chavers, Doris Isham and Kevin Strong.

"These are the kind of leaders that built the foundation for the tribal council to keep going forward," said Morrison Sr., who is also forever grateful to the love and support his wife,

Terese, provided to him and their family through nearly 40 years of marriage before she passed on in 2017. "And it's these kinds of leaders that built that foundation for us to stand upon high on and to keep moving forward."

He acknowledged his family for their unwavering support and encouragement as he decided to run for Secretary Treasurer.

"They spent many long hours contacting people, stuffing hundreds of envelopes, and *See New Era on page 10*

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Drift always stood up for our band members



IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE—Shane Drift extended a heartfelt thanks to his family and supporters during his eight years in office as one of Bois Forte’s District I Representatives.

NETT LAKE—No one could ever argue that Shane Drift wasn’t afraid to stand up for the common good of all band members.

It was something that Drift lived and breathed for the last eight years as the District I Representative for the Bois Forte Tribal Council and, at times, weighed heavily on him.

“It feels good when you have band members tell you thank you for things you pushed for and how you helped them,” said Drift as he took a break from cleaning out his office following his narrow loss to Mildred Holmes in the June election. “But it’s kind of disheartening when we don’t have programs that band members are looking for—I took it home at night when I couldn’t help a band member.”

Not being able to help out a band member was hard on Drift, and it became personal. It caused sleepless

nights and left him wondering if there was something more that he could have done.

“That was my biggest regret,” said Drift about those times that, despite his efforts, he could not help a band member with a problem that needed resolution.

And hence the reason, Drift implores the newest members of the Bois Forte Tribal Council to make sure they listen and take action if a band member brings forth a legitimate concern.

“I think that with any tribal council, our rules, policies and resolutions are only good as a tribal council that follows them, upholds them and enforces them,” said Drift, who added that when you hold people accountable, you lose votes. “If you don’t do all three, then what good are they? The tribal council sets the example—the tribal council sets the tone, period.”

He said that his advice for Holmes and all members of the tribal council is to make sure they listen to the people, but at the same time, know they aren’t always going to please everybody.

“There are going to be good times, bad times and hardships,” said Drift. “There’ll be times you will be on the hot seat. I would tell them to make the best decision they can—ask a lot of questions, gather information and facts. Being a tribal leader is all about serving our band members and our employees and protecting our future—that’s what a tribal leader is all about.”

Despite losing the seat he held for eight years, Drift said he was at peace with himself and is ready to move on to his next challenges in life, whether it be honing his skills as an author, songwriter or poet.

“One thing I’ve always stressed is

See Drift on page 6



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FireNet officials set up ICP at Fortune Bay

VERMILIONSECTOR—With wildfires wreaking havoc on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), not to mention devastating news from the First Nations Tribe in Canada, where two villages were wiped out by wildfires to the north, it has been all hands on deck to come up with a game plan to lessen future damages as Mother Nature continues to throw everything she has to test our will to survive.

Enter the professionals from FireNet.gov who have taken over The Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay and other conference space to lend assistance to an overstressed and over-manned Minnesota Division of Natural Resources and the Superior National Forest team for the fires in northeastern Minnesota.

FireNet facilitates intergovernmental teamwork by providing a collaborative workspace to message, schedule, share, review, develop, and store materials among federal, tribal, state, local, and territorial stakeholders in support of national wildland fire management.

"We're an incident management team, so our role is to provide overhead response to incidents such as fires and hurricanes when the incidents become too large for staff at the local jurisdiction to manage," said FireNet.gov Public Information Officer Catherine Hibbard. "Our team is made up of incident commanders, who have command staff, including liaison officers, safety officers and public information officers."

Fortune Bay's Director of Facilities and EMS Tony Yeley recently spent a fair amount of time in the Incident Command Post (ICP), with Hibbard's staff and he was impressed with how the entire operations moved like a well-oiled machine.

"It is of utmost importance to endure some inconveniences for the property saving, and potentially life-saving efforts being employed for the people of northeastern Minnesota," said Yeley of FirstNet utilizing Fortune Bay's

facilities as a base. "The people who chose these professions literally put their lives on the line for the safety and betterment of others."

Yeley added that he also had the privilege of discussing the processes and safety procedures with the Southern Area Incident Management Team's Safety Officer Michael Cook.

"While he spoke about fires, I spoke about facilities and EMS, and the common thread that we share is a safety philosophy of safety and welfare of people first and material things later," said Yeley of Cook. "I was impressed by Michael's detailed maps and the integration of logistics, staging, purchasing, accounting, safety, ground and air attack."

Hibbard's crew of 50 personnel works out of the Southern Area Complex Incident Management Team 1 based out of Atlanta, Georgia.

"You'll hear many southern accents as many of our team members are from the southeast, but we have

As of Thursday, July 30, the wildfires burning in and around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area have burned approximately 64,000 acres in Minnesota, with an estimated 9,000 acres burning just across the border in Ontario, Canada.

Wildfires continue to have a devastating impact on remote Indigenous communities in Ontario. On July 13, the community of Namaygoosisagagun First Nation, located north of Thunder Bay, was destroyed by fire. Residents evacuated by boat with only the belongings they could carry, escaping just ahead of the flames.

Although First Nations people make up about 5% of Canada's population, they account for approximately 42% of wildfire-related evacuations. So far in 2026, Canada has recorded more than 4,030 wildfires—roughly 500 more than at the same point in 2025. Ontario officials estimate that more than 1,600 First Nations residents have been displaced by wildfires this season.

The tragic fires that plagued First Nations served as a reminder for Bois Forte to come up with its own evacuation plan in case a fire ever overtakes the Nett Lake village, which currently only has one road in and one road out of the village.

"That growing concern about fire at Nett is what led us to plan to build an alternate evacuation route corridor," said DNR Director Chris Holm, who added that people in upper reaches of the Vermilion peninsula need something in place too. "The plan (for Nett Lake) is designed and in place, finding the money to do it is the next big hurdle. I don't know if Nett ever experienced a large wildfire but we want alternatives available to move people out of the area if that happens."

regular team members from all over the country," explained Hibbard. "In our Public Information office, we have people from Idaho, Massachusetts,

Georgia and Arkansas as well as those who live closer in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and one who lives in Ely."

Hibbard added that the incident commander also oversees general staff in four functional areas: planning, finance, logistics and operations.

Hibbard gave a rundown of what each function does every day out of the ICP, which was housed at Fortune Bay through the month of July, before being replaced by the Eastern Area Complex Management team for two weeks in August, if needed.

Planning: Responsible for developing an operational incident action plan each day that outlines incident objectives, where the operational people (firefighters) will work each day along with their tasks, weather, expected fire behavior, a communications plan, and any other messages we want to send to the boots on the ground. "Our Planning section has specialists such as a National Weather Service meteorologist (produces weather forecast), air quality specialists (produce air quality 'smoke' reports), and GIS specialists who make maps for the incident," said

See FireNet on page 8



BUSY, BUSY— Public Information Officer Gil Knight of Ely was working on sending out an update on the BWCA fires from the Incident Command Post, which is housed at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Home ownership is no longer a dream

Nine band members receive symbolic keys to celebrate their milestone

NETT LAKE— The American Dream recently became a reality for nine Bois Forte band members who became homeowners at a special ceremony that took place in the Bear room at the RTG Building in Nett Lake.

“Today is about something much bigger than the transfer of a deed,” said Bois Forte Tribal Chair Carlos Hernandez to the new homeowners. “Today is about hope. It’s about proving that homeownership is possible here at Bois Forte.”

Indeed, it was as Elizabeth Deegan, Muriel Deegan, Tara Geshick, Rhonda Hoagland, Edward Isham, Cheryl Jensen, Erynn Morrison, David Villebrun Jr. and Warren Villebrun officially became homeowners under the Bois Forte Housing Homeownership Program.

It was a long journey for all of them as each of them had to maintain 15 years of good standing with the Bois Forte Housing program while renting from Bois Forte. This includes remaining current on rent and utility payments, complying with lease requirements, and successfully completing all required annual recertification and compliance paperwork throughout the duration of their lease.

“I hope years from now people remember this day not because of speeches or ceremonies, but because it inspired them to believe that if they work hard, stay committed and take care of their home, they too can become homeowners,” said Hernandez.

Roughly three dozen family members, tribal leadership, dignitaries and members of the Bois Forte Housing program attended the ceremony.

“It was incredibly rewarding to witness these nine Band members achieve the dream of homeownership after years of dedication and commitment,” said Bois Forte Housing Office Support Specialist Tyla Adams. “Seeing their hard work, responsibility, and



HAPPY OCCASION— Bois Forte District II Representative Robert Moyer Jr. offered some encouraging words to nine band members who became homeowners at a special ceremony June 30th up in Nett Lake. Submitted photo.

perseverance recognized was a meaningful moment for everyone involved.”

Adams added the ceremony celebrated not only their accomplishments, but also served as a reminder of the lasting investment they have made in their families, their homes, and the Bois Forte community.

“Watching them receive the keys to homes they can now proudly call their own was a joyful and inspiring experience,” said Adams.

Seven of the tax credit homes are located in the Nett Lake Village, while the other two are located in the Vermilion Sector.

“The completion of these nine home purchases marks an important achievement for the families involved and represents continued progress in expanding homeownership opportunities within the Bois Forte community,” said Housing Director Terri Drift after the event. “Through the program, participating families tran-



CONGRATULATIONS!— Pictured here are seven of the nine Bois Forte band members who became new homeowners at a ceremony June 30th up in Nett Lake. Pictured, left to right, is Lance Kingbird, whose significant other, Erynn Morrison is a new homeowner; along with David Villebrun Jr., Warren Villebrun, Tara Geshick, Elizabeth “EJ” Deegan, Edward Isham and Muriel Deegan. Not pictured were Rhonda Hoagland and Cheryl Jensen. To find out more about the Bois Forte Housing Homeownership Program, please visit www.boisforte.com and then hit the departments tab and scroll down to Housing. Submitted photo.

sitioned from tenants to homeowners, strengthening long-term housing stability and investing in their future.”

Hernandez thanked the new homeowners for their perseverance throughout the process as he realized it was not an easy task by any means.

“I’ll admit, there was a time when some people wondered if this day would ever come,” said Hernandez. “I was one of them. Like many others, I had been told that if I paid rent for 15 years, the home would eventually become mine. When that date came and went, people naturally started asking, ‘Where’s my house?’”

However, shortly after he was elected as tribal chair, Hernandez paid a visit to then Bois Forte Housing Director Jeneal Goggleye, who is now serving as one of Bois Forte’s District I Representatives to see about conveying the homes for the aforementioned nine band members.

“She smiled and told me she was already working on it,” recalled Hernandez. “That was exciting to hear because

I wasn’t asking her to take on another project. I simply wanted to make sure this remained a priority.”

And thanks to Goggleye’s efforts, along with current Housing Director Terri Drift and her entire housing team, the wheels were put into motion. Hernandez said that they all deserve a great deal of credit for their dedication, persistence and hard work in making this event possible.

“Their efforts brought us to this moment, and our new homeowners are the ones who benefit from that commitment,” said Hernandez. “As we celebrate these new homeowners, I also want everyone to know that this can be the beginning, not the end.”

After all, each of the new homeowners paid their dues for the past 15 years showing Bois Forte and other agencies, that they were responsible and worthy of making the transition of renting a home to owning a home. He lauded them all for taking care of their homes and meeting all requirements

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Bois Forte News Briefs

Learn more about state voting process!

VERMILION SECTOR— If you would like to learn more about the state voting process, please stop by Pour A Vida Coffee, next to the Y Store on Highway 169 Monday, August 24.

The event, which is headed up by Bois Forte band members, Denise Pieratos, DeDe Drift and Pour A Vida Coffee owner Jessa Boyer, will take place from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Invited candidates Grant Hauschild, who represents District 3 in the Minnesota Senate and Aaron Kania, a retired U.S. Forest Service District Ranger, who is running for the District 3A House of Representative seat, are expected to stop by during the day to answer any questions voters may have.

Sobriety/Prevention Support Meeting

VERMILION SECTOR—Community

members are invited to attend a Sobriety/Prevention Support Meeting every Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Vermilion Social Center.

Coffee and treats will be provided, courtesy of the Bois Forte Substance Use Program and MCT Prevention Grant.

For more information, please contact Heidi or Amy at 218-753-2347.

Crafting/Beading Circle slated for August 9 and 16

NETTLAKE/VERMILION SECTOR— Just a reminder that the Crafting/Beading Circle schedule for August is Sunday, August 9 for the Vermilion Sector and Sunday, August 16 for Nett Lake.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

You must sign up with Cultural Healing Specialist Jennalee Porter via text (218-404-3059) or email (jporter@boisforte-nsn.gov). Ten participants are required for this event to be held, so make sure to take advantage of this great opportunity!

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as set forth in the Bois Forte Housing agreement.

In Hernandez's eyes, that commitment gives funding agencies and investors' confidence that their investment is making a difference.

"Those partnerships create opportunities to build more homes, expand qualifying programs and help even more Bois Forte families achieve the dream of homeownership," said Hernandez.

He reminded the new homeowners that the event wasn't just about receiving the keys to a house—it was about building stability for their families,

creating memories for your children and grandchildren and leaving behind something that can be passed on for generations.

"To our new homeowners, thank you for your commitment, your patience and your perseverance. You stayed the course, and today your hard work has been rewarded," said Hernandez. "I hope your success inspires others to begin their own journey. Because today we've proven that this path is real. Congratulations to each of you. May your homes always be filled with love, laughter, good health and happiness. Miigwech."

If you have any questions, please call Porter at 218-404-3059.

Special propane offer!

NETTLAKE/VERMILION SECTOR— Ferrellgas is pleased to announce a special Summer/Fall propane price of \$1.2999/gallon through September 30th.

You have to be a Bois Forte band member or an employee of Bois Forte and its related entities, to receive this offer. Proof of status may be required and there is a

minimum purchase of 200 gallons.

No money down and they are also offering a free tank switch out, along with a special \$99 furnace inspection and cleaning.

Ferrellgas is also offering winter propane pricing (October 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027) at \$1.549/gallon.

If you have any questions or need more information, please call 800-450-5701 and press 3.

Bois Forte Community Health Wants to Hear from You!

Bois Forte Community Health Department is looking for community members living on or near the reservation to provide some feedback on the work we are currently doing and future program planning. Any and all feedback is helpful.

To Help Please:

Respond to the Survey



Survey
Open
Until
August 20th,
2026

If you need assistance in completing the survey, would like a paper copy or have any questions, please contact Corinne Whiteman at corinne.whiteman@boisforte-nsn.gov or call 218-757-3790.

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218-753-2182

Drift from page 3

that my life doesn't revolve around being on the council," said Drift. "I don't need to be on the tribal council to make a difference. Don't get me wrong, I loved it—it has been great to try to do things for the band members, but I'm fine with where I am."

Even before leaving office in July, Drift had been busy writing books and most recently had his first children's book, *Spirit Quest*, picked up by the Iron Heart Book Store in Chisholm and will be heading to a large show in Chicago to publicize it as well.

He wrote the following songs, which are sung by Cedar Poet, "The Good & Pretty Song," which paid tribute to activists Renee Good and Alex Pretti, who were killed by ICE agents in Minneapolis, and "The Memorial Day Song," which Drift wrote in honor of veterans, including family members who had bravely fought for our country. He said the latter was first penned as a

poem, but he turned it into a song after attending the Memorial Day Services in Nett Lake this past May.

"I had been working on it for a while," said Drift, who is also working on a song that will keep Missing Murdered Indigenous Women in the spotlight. "I kept rewriting it, and that's what I came up with. We have a lot of veterans in our family—the Drifts, the Strongs, Goodskys, Geshicks, Beargrease and Farmers. I wrote that for all of our family members who went into the service and off to war. I love what they did, and I wrote the song with them in mind."

Aside from his writing, poetry and songwriting, Drift will remain active as an EMR for the Nett Lake Ambulance Service and a volunteer on the Nett Lake Volunteer Fire Department, which he has been doing for over 30 years. He will also seek employment, and if it takes him off the Nett Lake Reservation, he said he is ready for that

next chapter of life as well.

"Yes—I will miss it," said Drift about being on the tribal council. "When I am out and about, I would get phone calls or text messages from band members asking for my help...I even got those messages when I was down in Rochester getting treatment (for cancer), but I truly enjoyed helping band members—that's what I'll miss most."

As Drift prepared to close this chapter of his life, he thanked his family, including his son, Sean, and daughter, JessieAnne, for their undying support over the years as well as all of those band members who voted for him and supported him these past eight years.

He also expressed gratitude to some of his peers that he served with on the council, including former Secretary-Treasurer Tara Geshick, former District I Rep. Travis Morrison, former Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers, former District II Rep. Peter "Chief" Boney, newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Dave Morrison Sr., current Chair Carlos Hernandez, former District I Rep. Perry Drift, and current District I Rep. Jeneal Goggleye.

"The best ones I served with were Tara and Jeneal," said Drift. "They want to get stuff done. They don't sit there silently. They speak up—they notice things and put things out there (for discussion)."

He also gave a shoutout to his chum, Brandon Benner, a former District I Rep. himself, who was always there to give him advice—not to mention a heartfelt thanks to his father,

Gary Strong, his aunt, Karen Drift, former tribal representative Jerome Whiteman, and former Spiritual Advisor Gene Goodsky.

Drift fondly recalled the time Goodsky went to his office after a meeting, knocked on his door, and said: "Keep doing what you're doing."

Goodsky then proceeded to salute Drift, who, despite not being in the military himself, saluted Goodsky back.

"Any time I had a problem, I would go to him and ask for advice," said Drift. "After he passed away, I made the recommendation to change the name of the Eagle room to his name. He had such a huge impact on our tribe. He helped people in the traditional way or any way—I'm forever grateful for his teachings and his help."

As the interview closed, Drift thought for a few moments before answering a question posed to him about what he wanted his legacy to be.

"I just want to be remembered as the guy who tried to make the change that we needed for our band," said Drift. "We have a lot of problems and issues on the table, and I've always said this: 'Let's start clearing that table.' I never liked being bogged down with political games—that hindered the process. Playing these little games doesn't solve anything or fix anything. I dealt with many lies and hearsay, but time and time again—I blocked it out because I wanted to get things done. That's the legacy I want to be remembered by."



NOTICE OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON COURT APPEARANCES

IN BOIS FORTE TRIBAL COURT

Effective **SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2026**, the Court will return to a primarily in-person model for all court proceedings. Attendance at scheduled hearings, conferences, reviews, and other court appearances will be required in person unless otherwise authorized by the Court. The Court has determined that in-person proceedings promote effective communication, accountability, courtroom decorum, and the efficient administration of justice. Accordingly, virtual appearances will be limited to specific circumstances approved by the Court. Not having a ride will not be considered as a reason for virtual appearance requests. A request for a virtual appearance should be submitted in writing as soon as possible and no later than **10 business days** before the scheduled hearing whenever practicable.

Questions

Questions regarding scheduling or requests for virtual appearances contact the Tribal Court at 218-757-3462

Thank you for your cooperation as the Court returns to in-person proceedings.

If you have a news item or announcement for the Bois Forte News, please send it to:
bkanderson@fortunebay.com

New DNR building is getting closer to opening!



LOOKING GOOD!— The new Bois Forte DNR building located just outside the Nett Lake village is getting closer to completion. According to DNR Director Chris Holm there will be a punch list walkover in early August. Since this photo was taken, the pavement asphalt went into place and the exterior of the building is now done. “The interior is almost done and it looks nice,” said Holm. “Some outside electrical still being done (i.e. flagpole lights and solar panel interconnect).” He added that the fixtures, furnishings and equipment contract still needs to be completed. “We also still need to get the furniture we have in storage moved over to the building and installed,” said Holm. “The grand opening and open house have not been scheduled, but it could take place at some point in August.”

Bois Forte Tribal Court is looking for the following individuals:

If your name is on this list, Tribal Court is looking for you and needs your updated contact information in order to address your current past due court matters.

If you know someone on this list, please help us get the message to them!

Leon Eugene Chosa
Lisa Ann Goldsworthy
Ryan Scott Goggleye
Christopher Allen Hunt
Liberty Lynn Isham
Lisa Kay Kleven
Kane Charles Bonga
Angelique Jo Brown
Donovan Wade Moose

Jace Matthew Olson
Christopher Ellis Pearce
Brianna Patrice Lucille Sheffield
Gerald Lee Urban
Donald Lee Wiggins Jr.
Benjamin Thomas Spears
Brayden Bradly Shultz

Call the Tribal Court during business hours Monday- Friday 8-4:30 p.m. at 218-757-3462 to update your current mailing address and contact information or you can email us at bfcourt@boisforte-nsn.gov

WILL & ESTATE PLANNING INFORMATION SESSION **Hosted By Bois Forte Tribal Court**

Learn how to plan for the future with confidence. Presentation Topics include:

- Estate Planning Essentials
- Will Creation
- Probate vs. Trusts
- Understanding Estates with Trust Land
- Understanding the Probate Process at Bois Forte vs. off reservation
- Healthcare Directives
- Appointing a Personal Representative
- Group Discussion going through the process of estate planning or executing wishes of family members after their passing

All in attendance will receive the opportunity to work with a law clinic attorney to develop your Will and/or Estate Planning at NO COST.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Thursday August 6th, 2026 • Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Tribal Court Building 12907 Palmquist Road, Suite B Orr, MN 55771
Zoom Virtual Attendance Option Available --Zoom Meeting ID: 305 416 1983

Questions? Contact: Melissa Wright, Judicial Services Director
Phone: 218 757 3462

FireNet from page 3

Hibbard.

Logistics: We have Logistics experts based out of the ICP, but many of their personnel (such as Supply, Ground Support, Food Unit Leader, Security and Communications) are dispersed throughout the area. “They are responsible for ensuring that every incident employee has a safe place to work, eat, sleep, shower, and have a place to go to the bathroom,” explained Hibbard.

Finance: At the ICP, we have people who record personnel time so people get paid. They document/track

costs for the incident. “They also make contracts such as the use agreement here at Fortune Bay,” added Hibbard.

Operations: Operation Section Chiefs here at the ICP coordinate with their counterparts out in the field to develop a daily plan for firefighters out in the field. Hibbard added that their Air Operations Branch Directors, who have overall responsibility for the helicopters, planes and sometimes drones assigned to the incident.

She said that liaison officers work with local communities, businesses and governments who may be affected by the fire.

“Safety officers ensure the safety of

incident personnel. Many are out in the field, but the leads are based out of the ICP,” said Hibbard. “Most information officers like me are also based out of the ICP. We develop press releases, work with the media to give interviews, do the social media and talk face-to-face with the public at meetings we hold or on community contact routes.”

Indeed, walking through the ICP is at times like watching a busy newsroom at a daily newspaper. There is a lot of communicating and going over game plans as to what is next for their team. In Hibbard’s eyes, it’s all about being here to serve people being challenged by the wildfires in the BWCA.

She said her team doesn’t foresee any challenges given the distance they were from the epicenter of the fires.

“We often have ICPs away from the fire location,” said Hibbard. “Managing multiple fires spread across many miles is not new to us.”

She added that the “complex” in her team’s title means that they’ve achieved the highest level of experience and training to deal with large incidents, regardless of where they set up base.

“The number, size and distance of these fires certainly pose logistical challenges, but we’re up to the challenge,” said Hibbard.

And speaking of challenges, the sheer size of the numerous fires has caused many economic hardships for the community of Ely and the surrounding areas. The loss of summer tourism dollars, including the cancellation of the popular Blueberry/Art Festival, which brings in 30,000 people to Ely every July, has been extremely difficult on local businesses. Given the vast area of the BWCA, it has been a miracle that no lives have been lost, and not many structures have been claimed by the wildfires.

When asked if there were any silver linings from these devastating fires, Hibbard said that much of the work that firefighters are doing, such as fuel breaks around roads, will help protect communities from future wildfires. She added that incidents such as these also serve as “wake-up” calls, prompting people to take personal actions to prevent the spread of wildfire around their own homes and better prepare for emergencies.

“Another silver lining is that we make many new friends wherever we go, and some of those friendships last a lifetime,” said Hibbard. “We’re humbled by the kindness and hospitality shown to us, especially under the circumstances that brought us here to this beautiful area.”

It's Picnic Time!!

Please join us at the

Bois Forte Urban Picnic!!!

August 15, 2026

Saturday @ 4:00-8:30

Minnehaha Falls

Wabun Pavilion "C"

Contact Jacque Wilson @ 612-747-5247



4655 46th Ave So, Mpls, MN 55406
Parking in the Veterans Home lot on left side, nearest to "C".



Bois Forte Tribal Court is looking for the following individuals:

Defendant	DOB
Buckanaga, Christopher Charles	06/26/1969
Butcher, Ryan Allen James	07/29/1986
Deegan, Peter James	08/21/1977
Drift, Gregory Louis	04/04/1980
Drift, Mark Edward Jr.	10/10/1995
Goggleye, Charles Victor III.	12/29/1980
Guenthner Jr., Loren Bruce	10/23/1995

If your name is on this list, you have an active warrant for your arrest by our Court. Please contact the Tribal Court to get your criminal matter addressed. Failure to do so could result in your arrest. If you are reading this and know someone on this list, help them to get the information.

Bois Forte Tribal Court now inputs active

Defendant	DOB
Hartland, Rustin Kent Sr.	12/15/1976
Hughes, Dustin James Lee	06/16/1990
Isham, John Edward Sr.	04/24/1976
Jenkins, Robert Wayne	06/20/1960
Johnson, Robert Gerald Jr.	01/22/1996
Lightfeather, Gewedinodin	02/23/1985
Nelson, Thomas Jr.	06/07/1990

warrants into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.

To address your warrant, call the Tribal Court during business hours Monday- Friday 8:00-4:30 at 218-757-3462 and request to be placed on the docket to address your court matters.



Minute with Millie



August is upon us once again. Even though there is no holiday associated with it, here in the village, everyone starts getting busy, busy, busy. A general rush to buy school clothes, getting equipment ready for ricing. Checking that the annual per capita is on its way.

Those funds are earmarked for a lot of different items, bills, clothes and upon occasion, fun things. Least in my family it is.

Fun things, such as trips we don't normally do, visiting family in other states, or even buying a new electronic toy such as a new computer. I usually buy several items in bulk to last most of the winter case it becomes a hardship to travel.

I remember when my sons got one of their first checks and decided to attend a Con down to Iowa. Think it was a Magic the Gathering one. T'any rate, my

mom and I were at the Bear. I was playing this one machine. Was hitting pretty good, got a 5 of a kind. When it quit ringing up the total, it came to 800 coins. I played it down to 400 or so, cashed out, expecting to get \$40.00. Nope, the ticket said \$400. I went back to the machine and checked. I'd been playing a dollar machine.

Could be...yep, you probably already knew...or guessed it. I'll

be traveling to spend a couple days or four down to one or another of the casinos in the lower part of the state. Perhaps, I'll even venture down to the casino we discovered during our trip to the Senior Games in Iowa. Meskwaki, here I come. Or Mystic. Mayhap, I'll go north, over to Grand Portage. Depends on my inclination to drive far or further. Perhaps I'll just stay home. Or not. Hmmm. Choices, decisions. What to do?

BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

- ✓ **BAND MEMBERS OR DESCENDANTS OF BOIS FORTE**
- ✓ **GRADES 7-12TH**
- ✓ **STARTING AT 1-3 PM OR UNTIL SUPPLIES ARE GONE**
- ✓ **LIGHT SNACKS & BEVERAGES**
- ✓ **KIDS, PARENTS, & LEGAL GUARDIANS CAN PICK UP**

AUGUST 12, 2026

VERMILION SOCIAL CENTER

1610 FARM ROAD SOUTH
TOWER, MN 55790

Ganawenimaa Anishaanabeg

AUGUST 13, 2026

NETT LAKE RTG EAGLE ROOM

5344 LAKESHORE DRIVE
NETT LAKE, MN 55771

Here is the Elder Nutrition Program's menu for the month of August. 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.

NOTE: Menu is subject to change.

August 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

August 3: Meatloaf, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Whole Wheat Bun

August 4: Chicken Fajitas/Veg/ Rice & Black Beans, Sour Cream, Whole Wheat Tortilla

August 5: Cheese Ravioli, Meat Sauce, Italian Veggies, Breadstick

August 6: Big Mac Salad, Breadstick, Fruit

August 7: White Chicken Chili, Tortilla Chips, Fruit Cup

August 10: Hot Turkey Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Vegetable

August 11: Baked Chicken, Mac & Cheese, Apples & Peanut Butter
(Elder Meeting & Elder Bingo)

August 12: BBQ Pork on Whole Wheat Bun, Fries, Baked Beans, Cole-slaw

August 13: Taco Salad with Beef, Tortilla Chips, Fruit Cup

August 14: Tomato Soup, Chicken Salad Sandwich, Crackers, Fruit

August 17: Pork Loin, Rice Pilaf & Gravy, Italian Vegetables, Whole Wheat Bun

August 18: Beef Enchiladas, Re-fried Beans, Cheese, Sour Cream, Lettuce, Fruit

August 19: Chicken Wild Rice Soup, Crackers, Cheese Sticks, Fruit Cup

August 20: Italian Pasta Salad with Pepperoni, Fruit, Garlic Bread

August 21: Baked Ham, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Whole Wheat Bun

August 24: Chicken Tenders, Crispy Fries, Fresh Vegetables, Fruit Cup

August 25: Hamburger Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Corn, Fruit

August 26: Chicken Alfredo, Italian Vegetables, Breadstick, Fruit

August 27: Cobb Salad, Breadstick, Fruit

August 28: Red Chili with Beans, Crackers, Cheese Stick, Fruit Cup

August 31: Lasagna, Steamed Vegetables, Garlic Bread, Fruit

Menu subject to change.



BEST OF LUCK— Bois Forte Tribal Chair Carlos Hernandez wishes newly sworn in District II Representative Robert Moyer Jr. good luck as he begins his second term in office.



CONGRATULATIONS!—Bois Forte Tribal Chair Carlos Hernandez shakes the hand of newly sworn in Secretary-Treasurer David Morrison Sr. at the July 14 swearing in ceremony.



ALL SMILES— Bois Forte Tribal Chair Carlos Hernandez shakes the hand of newly sworn in District I Representative Mildred Holmes.

New Era from page 1

taking over tasks at home. I want to thank you, and you are very well appreciated,” said Morrison Sr., whose son, Dave “Squidg” Morrison Jr., was part of the Bois Forte Singers. “Finally, I want to acknowledge a very important person in my life who has been a mentor of mine for many years. He taught me his natural skills and what it takes to be a great tribal leader of our people. That was my uncle Gary Donald.”

Donald, a longtime tribal chair, used to be a staple at events like these, but sadly passed away before he was able to see his nephew regain his seat on the tribal council.

“I know in my heart that he’s now at peace, along with the love of his life, my auntie Joanne,” said Morrison Sr. of Donald and his longtime wife, Joanne, who passed away in 2015.

Morrison then thanked his supporters and reminded band members that his door will always be open to continue to listen to their concerns and ideas.

“I know that I wish that we could all have a magic wand to make these wishes come, but it takes a lot of hard work,” said Morrison Sr. “It will take work from our tribal council, with our people, with our directors and our staff for us to get to where we want... we have to move forward to get our business back on track.”

Meanwhile, Holmes finally broke through to win her election bid by narrowly defeating incumbent Shane Drift in the June 9 general election.

In her acceptance speech, Holmes said she was proud to be representing all of her family, friends, and fellow band members who had the faith and believed in her ability to serve on the tribal council and deal with the many issues facing us as a tribe, as clans, and as families.

She thanked two band members who did not want their names mentioned, but felt inclined to mention what they meant to her successful run for office. She gave much credit and respect to her family who have always supported her throughout her life. She reminded those in attendance that she will give updates on the work she is doing as District I Representative through her Facebook page (Holmes for Bois Forte). She added that she will continue writing her “Minute with Millie” column in the Bois Forte News.

She also implored band members to get involved in the discussions taking place with the MCT Constitutional Reform Committee.

“This is your chance,” said Holmes. “Speak up. Make your voice heard and promote change in our situation for the better and the good of all, including our future hopes, as well as the lessons our ancestors taught us.”

Holmes added that she takes her responsibilities and duties as a daughter, a mother, an aunt, and leader of the Bois Forte people very seriously, and she under-

stands the people will be watching and measuring her words and actions over the next four years.

For Moyer, earning a second consecutive term meant the world to him, as he gets a chance to continue working for the Bois Forte people. He became very emotional at times and had to pause a few times to regain his composure as he thanked his family for sticking by his side.

“As a voice for Lake Vermilion District II, I’m truly honored and grateful for the continued support and confidence,” said Moyer Jr. who thanked Spiritual Advisor Vern Adams Sr., Rose Berens and the Bois Forte Singers for making the ceremony a special day. “To my family, friends, all of you encouraged me through your love and your support through this journey; it has meant everything. I would not be here without all of you.”

He said it’s important to continue strengthening our tribal sovereignty as a team and added that by working together, we can continue to make progress. He also touted the recently opened Health and Human Services building in Virginia as a springboard for future opportunities for the band, plus the Ishkode Dispensary, plans for a grow facility and other projects, like the Carbon Credit program.

“It is also important that we maintain a strong presence in our schools by supporting our kids, our parents, our educators, so that our children receive a well-rounded education and have every opportunity to succeed,” said Moyer Jr. “At the same time, we must continue expanding services and opportunities for veterans.”

Before closing his remarks, Moyer Jr. paid tribute to the likes of Linda Barto-Tibbetts, who has been an invaluable source of support for his daughter, Hayden and himself.

“I am also deeply grateful to Mr. Bill Tibbetts, Ray Toutloff, Kevin Strong, Kristal Strong, Jeff Mattson, Elmer “Inky” Boshey, Joe Boshey, Stacey Boshey, and the late Gary Donald,” said Moyer Jr. “And special thanks to the two that deal with me the most —my daughter Hayden and my Sarah. Not mention numerous others like TC and all the kids around our family.”

He also took a moment to express his deep appreciation for all the employees who keep the Bois Forte band of Chippewa moving forward every single day.

“Thank you for all your dedication and professionalism,” said Moyer Jr., who thanked the staff at Fortune Bay Resort Casino, Ishkode Dispensary, the Y Store, the C Store, and KBFT Radio. “To all of our Bois Forte Tribal Government employees—you all make this work. Thank you, guys.”

Tribal Chair Carlos Hernandez gave opening remarks and offered plenty of sound advice to the trio sworn in. He also had the honor of performing the

See New Era on page 11

New Era from page 1

ceremony, which also included several songs by the Bois Forte singers, sage advice by Berens, and the invocation by Adams Sr.

"Serving our band is one of the greatest honors a person can receive," said Hernandez. "The people have placed their trust in you to represent them with integrity, to make difficult decisions, and to always keep the best interests of our members at the center of your work."

Hernandez told Morrison Sr., Holmes and Moyer Jr. that today marks a renewed commitment to the people of Bois Forte.

"Every leader brings unique experiences, ideas and strengths to the table," said Hernandez. "While we may not always agree on every issue, we will share the same responsibility to protect our sovereignty, strengthen our

communities and create opportunities for future generations."

Hernandez reminded the trio that leadership is not about titles. Rather, it is about showing up, listening with respect, working together, and making decisions that will stand the test of time. He added that the work ahead will require patience, collaboration, and the willingness to put our people before ourselves.

"I encourage each of you to lead with humility, courage, and compassion. Listen to those who support you. And those who challenge you. Some of the best ideas come from simply taking the time to hear one another," said Hernandez.

He reminded the families of the three council members that the job of a tribal council representative is not an easy job.

"Public service often requires long days, difficult conversations, and time

away from home. Your encouragement and support make this work possible, and we appreciate the sacrifice you make alongside your loved ones," he said.

Following the ceremony, a reception line was formed where the trio, along with Hernandez and District I Representative Jeneal Goggleye, shook hands, hugged and thanked the attendees for coming out. It gave the newly sworn in council members a chance to personally thank them for their support as they prepare to lead the Bois

Forte Band of Chippewa for the next four years.

"As we move forward together, let us remember that our ancestors endured great hardships so that we could continue to govern ourselves as a sovereign nation," said Hernandez. "We honor them by serving with honesty, respecting one another, and making decisions that leave our children and grandchildren with a stronger Bois Forte."

BEAR AWARENESS

STAY SAFE AROUND WILDLIFE

- DO NOT APPROACH OR FEED BEARS
- SECURE GARBAGE AND FOOD
- KEEP PETS AND CHILDREN CLOSE
- STAY CALM AND BACK AWAY SLOWLY IF YOU SEE A BEAR
- REPORT BEAR ACTIVITY TO THE DNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS OR CALL 911 TO DISPATCH TO NETT LAKE POLICE AND BOIS FORTE CONSERVATION



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OFFICERS**

**NICOLIS BUCCHOLZ
BRIANNA WHITEMAN**

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Deegan honors FBRC maintenance crew

VERMILION SECTOR—Showing appreciation with a simple thank you is nice but given the depth of work done to open two new dining establishments over the course of several months, Fortune Bay Resort Casino General Manager Elizabeth “EJ” Deegan became emotional when offering that thank you to the maintenance team at a luncheon in mid-June.

“This the fruit of your guys’ labor,” said Deegan while addressing the crew as they were getting ready to enjoy the former Sunset Steakhouse’s signature 40-ounce tomahawk steak with all the fixings. “It is beautiful—you guys did amazing work.”

Deegan’s address to the crew was classy and the gesture meant the world to the maintenance crew who worked so hard on flipping two restaurants in record time.

The work they did was nothing

short of remarkable as they tore down walls, built new ones, installed new electrical, took out flooring, tiles, pipes and anything else associated with a new build. Like any construction project, there were some unpleasant surprises along the way, but thanks to the expertise of the crew, those challenges were met head on and quickly overcome.

The crew was touched by Deegan’s kind words and thanked her for the recognition.

“We appreciate that, it’s nice to hear,” said Joe “Ziggy” Rutchasky as he and others were served their meal by Director of Hospitality Operations Nick Papadatos, Food and Beverage Director Kirstie Kern and longtime employee Tom Palo.

Since opening both restaurants, many compliments have been heard about the open floor plans and nod to

the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa’s past as depicted in photos that adorn the walls in the Mino Grill, as well as the tasteful artwork that fill the walls of the Aki Bistro.

Deegan said to change over two restaurants in such short order was nothing short of incredible. She added that the dining areas have not looked this beautiful since she started working at Fortune Bay many years ago.

“I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart,” said Deegan. “And for those of you who didn’t work on this project, thank you so much for picking up the slack in other areas while this work was being done—you really pulled together as a team.”

Deegan’s comments about pulling together as a team were echoed by Melissa Abts, who is transitioning into a new role in the maintenance department after serving as the retail sales

manager.

“The feedback has been absolutely positive and wonderful,” said Abts in regard to comments made by guests and staff. “You guys have always been amazing. You guys know how I feel about you and you’ve always had my heart. This honor is totally well deserved—great job to you all.”

Deegan said Director of Facilities Tony Yeley would have loved to have been there to celebrate with them, but unfortunately, he was on a pre-planned vacation.

“He would have shared the same sentiments because he is also very proud of you,” said Deegan, who also handed out personal thank you cards to the crew. “Again, thank you for your incredible teamwork that was on display from your entire team—it is truly amazing on what you accomplished.”



ALWAYS GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND!— Food and Beverage Director Kirstie Kern was busy handing out meals fit for a king at a thank you luncheon for our hard-working maintenance crew. Joe “Ziggy” Rutchasky, right, was so impressed with the 40 ounce Tomahawk steak that he took a picture of it before digging in. Pictured to the right of Kern is: Darius Goggleye, Dan “Jiggy” Jandrey, Andrew Zika, Dave Smrekar and Josh King. Pictured in the back is Tom Palo, who also helped serve the meals to the crew. Great job to you all!



WHAT A TEAM!— Here are some of the maintenance crew that took part in a luncheon that celebrated the hard work they’ve done in getting two restaurants opened in May and June. Pictured, left to right, in the front row are: Dave Smrekar, Joe “Ziggy” Rutchasky, Dan “Jiggy” Jandrey and Seth Riihiluoma. Pictured in the back row, left to right, are Josh King, Frank Debelak, Darius Goggleye, Andrew Zika, Steve Syverson, Matt Graham and Arnold Lundstrom.