



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 50 NUMBER 9

Help needed on oral history project

The Band needs your help! The Band is developing an oral history archive of Band member harvesting practices in the 1866 Treaty ceded territory. We want to gather family histories surrounding harvesting natural resources, including fish, game, plants, medicines, berries, roots, and others.

If you can help, please contact Jaylen Strong (jaylen.strong@boisforte-nsn.gov; 218-753-6017) or Tadd Johnson (tjohnson@thejacobsonlawgroup.com). We are organizing meetings at Atisokanigamig (Legend House), Vermilion Reservation, 1500 Bois Forte Road, Tower, MN 55790, but we can come to you if that makes it easier for you to participate in this important and historic effort.

Hernandez stands behind Walz's plan to protect the BWCA

ELY— Bois Forte Tribal Chairman Carlos Hernandez recently lent his support to Governor Tim Walz's executive order to halt all future plans to open non-ferrous mining near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

More specifically, the order was intended to ensure that Twin Metals Minnesota

would not proceed with its plan to build and operate an underground copper, nickel, cobalt, and platinum-group metals mine located roughly nine miles southeast of Ely.

"As far as my administration is concerned, the fight for the future of the Boundary Waters is over—the verdict is in," said Walz at one of two

press conferences August 18 announcing his plans to issue the executive order. "The decision is made. We will protect this place forever."

For Hernandez, the risk to the environment of opening such a mine is too great, and he believes the BWCA, which spans 1.1 million acres in northeastern Minnesota,

should never be subjected to future mining.

"For the Bois Forte Band and our Anishinaabe people, protecting these waters is about much more than protecting a beautiful place," said Hernandez. "These are our homelands. Our ancestors hunted, fished, and gathered throughout this region long before Minnesota became a state."

Hernandez told those gathered that he understands the importance of jobs and economic development in northern Minnesota.

"But," stressed Hernandez, "economic development cannot come at the expense of clean water and treaty rights. Water does not recognize a property line, a permit boundary or a political boundary. What happens upstream eventually makes its way downstream. That is why protecting the Boundary Waters means protecting the watershed that feeds it."

The issue has the town of Ely somewhat divided as supporters feel the economic boom is just what the struggling tourist town needs, while opponents feel it could forever alter the pristine wilderness that draws up to 250,000 visitors from far and near every year.

"There are definitely two sides to this issue in Ely, and it falls along the pro-development versus don't change any-

See Hernandez on page 4

Vikings' great made plenty of friends at the ISC!



ENJOYING THE DAY!— Minnesota Vikings' great Daunte Culpepper took time to have his picture taken with staff members of the Bois Forte Boys and Girls Clubs of Nett Lake and Vermilion during the 22nd annual Indian Summer Classic. Pictured left to right, are: Shullon Isham, Jessi Lambert, Culpepper, Danelle Porter and Ashtyn Villebrun. Please see page 7 for more photos and a story recapping the event.

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Bois Forte News Briefs

Wild rice season looks promising

NETT LAKE— Wild rice on Nett Lake continues to develop on a schedule that places opening harvest within the first few weeks of September.

According to Bois Forte DNR Director Chris Holm, a firm day for opening for harvest depends on weather conditions leading up to mature rice, and so cannot be determined yet.

“More condition updates will be posted as rice development continues,” wrote Holm on Bois Forte’s website. “The Rice Committee is watching development closely and will determine the opening date as new rice development information is collected over the next weeks.”

Holm wrote that rice development is currently good. He added that plants have passed the flower/pollination stage and are developing kernel.

“Kernels are in early milk stage. Rice beds currently extend over 4,600 acres, and density of beds is largely uniform and thick across the lake,” added Holm.

Bois Forte offices closed for Labor Day

NETTLAKE/VERMILIONSECTOR— All Bois Forte RTG offices, including the clinics in Nett Lake, Vermilion and Virginia, will be closed Monday, September 7 for Labor Day.

Jobs posted for anticipated grow facility

NETT LAKE/VERMILION SECTOR— Bois Forte recently announced it has openings for a part-time Director of Cannabis Regulatory Commission that will pay \$55,224 annually and a Commissioner of Cannabis Regulatory Commission that will pay \$18.03 per hour.

Both of these positions are Tribal Council appointments and are being posted in anticipation of Bois Forte moving ahead with a grow facility. No updates have been given since a June community meeting, but news should be forthcoming soon outlining plans for a grow facility.

For more information on these po-

sitions and other jobs currently open at Bois Forte, please visit www.boisforte.com/jobs

Crafting/Beading Circle meetings set

NETTLAKE/VERMILIONSECTOR— The Crafting/Beading Circle schedule for September is Sunday, September 13 for the Vermilion Sector and Sunday, September 20 for Nett Lake.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ten participants are required for each session to be held, so make sure to take advantage of this great opportunity!

You must sign up with Cultural Healing Specialist Jennalee Porter via text (218-404-3059) or email (jporter@bois-

forte-nsn.gov).

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

Special propane offer!

NETT LAKE/VERMILION SECTOR— The deadline to lock in to Ferrellgas’ special Summer/Fall propane price of \$1.2999/gallon is September 30.

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.



Bois Forte

2026 Annual Sobriety Feast

Thursday, October 22, 2026

Vendor Booths 9-12

1:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Fortune Bay Resort and Casino

1430 Bois Forte Road

Tower, MN 55790

Free Transportation Available from

Nett Lake, Cook, Virginia & Vermilion & Back

Please Call Big Woods Transit to reserve your seat

1-888-757-1540



CLIP & SAVE CLIP & SAVE CLIP & SAVE

TRACEY’S SCHEDULE

ENERGY ASSISTANCE, LICENCE PLATES, CSBG/MCAG

Do you need a title transfer, license plates, tab renewal?
Would you like to apply for Energy Assistance?

TRACEY’S SCHEDULE:

MONDAY- Vermilion Office

TUESDAY- Nett Lake Office

WEDNESDAY- Nett Lake Office

THURSDAY- Nett Lake Office

FRIDAY (non-payday)- Nett Lake Office

FRIDAY (payday)- Vermilion Office

You may contact Tracey at 218-757-3261 ext. 1197

Superintendent Hardy welcomes back students and staff to the 2026- 2027 school year

*Submitted by Nett Lake Elementary
School Superintendent Peter Hardy*

NETT LAKE —Welcome to the 2026-27 school year! We are excited to welcome our students and families back to Nett Lake Elementary School.



As we begin another year together, we remain focused on providing a safe, supportive, culturally responsive learning environment where every student can learn, grow, and succeed.

Lake Elementary will continue our 4-day school week, with classes held Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Fridays will remain available for enrichment opportunities, cultural activities, Boys & Girls Club programming, and other community opportunities.

We will continue to monitor student attendance, academic progress, and family feedback as we work to make our four-day school week as successful as possible for our students and families.

Please check with Jeanine Whiteman in the school office to make sure your address, phone number, and emergency contacts are up to date. Thank you!

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

Get Ready for Your 2027 Medical Assistance Renewal

New federal work requirements and six-month renewals for Medical Assistance start on January 1, 2027, for some adults.



If you are an American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) adult, you **ARE NOT** subject to these new requirements.

You must report your AI/AN status to be exempt from work requirements and six-month renewals.

Make sure to report your AI/AN status so you receive your exemption.

If you currently have Medical Assistance:

- Use the [Renewal Lookup Tool](#) to tell us you are American Indian or Alaska Native.
- The tool will only ask you about work or community engagement exemptions if:
 - You are age 21-64,
 - You are not a parent or caretaker of children under age 19 living with you,
 - You are not pregnant, and
 - You do not receive Medical Assistance because of a disability.

If you apply for Medical Assistance:

- Be sure to answer “**Yes**” to the question on your online or paper application: “**Are you or is anyone in your family American Indian or Alaska Native?**”
- Check the box for American Indian or Alaska Native if you are asked about work or community engagement exemptions.



Scan the QR code or visit
[mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges/
renewal-lookup](https://mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges/renewal-lookup) for info and
instructions on using the tool.

Hernandez from page 1

thing division,” said Ely Echo Publisher Nick Wognum in the days that followed Walz’s press conference. “Most of our locally elected officials have opposed the governor’s decision. It is bound to be an election topic in this area come November.”

District 3 Democratic Senator Grant Hauschild broke away from party lines by writing in a social media post that he disagreed with Walz’s executive order. He contended that Walz should not have gone forth with the executive order just a few months before he leaves office.

“My constituents are tired of executive overreach by politicians who no longer feel accountable to the voters or the legislative process, whether that’s in St. Paul or in Washington,” wrote Hauschild in a Facebook post after Walz’s announcement. “The truth is, no one can honestly say whether they support a mining project before it has

gone through the full environmental review and permitting process.”

He added that Northern Minnesota deserves both a strong economy and clean water.

“Those values do not have to be in conflict,” wrote Hauschild. “Most importantly, the people who live in our region deserve a meaningful voice in decisions that directly affect our communities, our environment and our economic future.”

According to the Twin Metals website, once the mine is operational, there would be an influx of 750 direct full-time jobs and 1,500 new spinoff jobs for the residents of northeast Minnesota. Not surprisingly, Walz’s executive order did not sit well with company officials.

This was the statement Twin Metals Minnesota officials shared with the Bois Forte News.

“As an April 2026 legal decision by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) makes clear, our

state’s existing environmental laws are strong enough to protect the waters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and the Rainy River Headwaters Watershed from pollution, impairment or destruction. This decision was reached through a process that included expert testimony, opportunities for public comments, and review by an administrative judge. This morning’s executive order by the Walz administration directly contradicts these independent findings and unnecessarily hinders the responsible development of Minnesota’s natural resources. Minnesota’s regulatory framework already requires proposed mining projects to prove they can meet some of the world’s most rigorous environmental and labor standards before they are allowed to proceed.”

Twin Metals officials also wrote that the executive order is harmful to the communities in northeast Minnesota that want to see proposed projects be given a fair shot at moving forward through a neutral and science-driven environmental review and permitting process.

“This action contradicts this long-standing framework and delays development of our state’s critical minerals,” continued the Twin Metals Minnesota statement. “The Twin Metals

project has yet to be evaluated through that framework, but it will be required of us before any permits can be issued. We remain committed to moving toward that process in the future and to bringing forward a project that will bring tremendous opportunities for our communities, our state and our nation.”

Meanwhile, Hernandez told those gathered at the press conference in Ely that people have heard promises that copper-nickel mining can be done safely.

“But when we’re talking about water that our people have depended on for generations, we cannot afford to find out after the fact that those promises were wrong,” said Hernandez. “Once that water is contaminated, we cannot simply replace it.”

With that, Hernandez thanked Walz for standing up to protect the pristine waters of the BWCA and asked for state and federal leaders to work with tribal nations to make these protections permanent.

“Because someday our grandchildren will ask what we did when these waters needed us,” said Hernandez. “And I want to be able to tell them— we stood together. We protected our treaty rights. We protected the water. And we protected it for you.”



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.

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
Goggleye, Charles Victor III.	12/29/1980
Guenthner Jr., Loren Bruce	10/23/1995
Hartland, Rustin Kent Sr.	12/15/1976

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
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.

Bois Forte's 477 program had a busy summer!

*Submitted by Vondalee Carr
477 Director*

477 NETT LAKE— The 477 Department has been busy this summer, and we couldn't be more excited about the community's participation in our events and programs!

Summer kicked off with eight of our band member youth beginning summer employment through our Summer Youth Program. Throughout the nine-week program, youth gained valuable work experience in departments and

organizations including the DNR, Boys & Girls Club, Early Childhood, Big Woods Transit, Housing, and the 477 Department. Education days also provided opportunities for youth to receive financial education and gun safety certificates.

Our second annual Readers of the North Program was held throughout the summer and wrapped up with nine successful readers from area schools. A celebration was held in August, complete with prizes and ice cream. Great

Bois Forte Purchased/Referred Care Re-Enrollment

WARNING
DUE DATES ARE CLOSER
THAN THEY APPEAR

Open Enrollment ends September 30th

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

Applications can also be found on boisforte.com

If you have any questions, please contact Ellen or Kristal.

Nett Lake Clinic

5219 St. John Drive

Nett Lake, MN 55772

(218)757-3650

ellen.little@boisforte-nsn.gov

Vermilion Clinic

1613 Farm Road South

Tower, MN 55790

(218)753-2182

kristal.strong@boisforte-nsn.gov



ATTENTIVE CLASS—Northern Communities Credit Union staff recently put on an informative financial education workshop at the RTG Building in Nett Lake. Submitted photo.

job to everyone who participated—we look forward to seeing you again next year!

In July, David Hawk shared a wealth of resources and guidance on home buying at both Vermilion and Nett Lake. The department also welcomed Northern Communities Credit Union back for a financial education workshop. Individuals from the Public Defender's office was available in Nett Lake to meet with band members that wanted to meet with them. Leanne and Vonda provided a brief presentation about the 477 Program to urban band members during the Urban Office

meetings. Tracey Dagen will present her program at the September meetings.

In August, the 477 Department partnered with the Behavioral Health Program for our annual backpack giveaway. Eighty backpacks, along with plenty of school supplies, were distributed to community members grades 7-12 at the event.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our summer programs and events! Please watch for future events and opportunities from the 477 Department.

NETT LAKE
PHARMACY
218-757-0230

VERMILION
PHARMACY
218-753-2182

Dredging project at Fortune Bay hailed as a success

VERMILION SECTOR— Fortune Bay has long boasted its 80 slip dock system as a selling point for our guests, but in recent years, heavy buildup of

sediment and weeds in Everett Bay near the dock made parking quite a chore and basically eliminated the ability to park in some of the spots.



FUN JOB!— FBRC Marina/RV Park Manager Chad Reichensperger, right, has been very pleased with the dredging project at our marina. Pictured with Chad is Ethan from Organic Sediment Removal Systems, LLC, which is the company heading up the project.



IT'S GETTING THERE!—Much progress has been made in getting rid of sediment and debris near Fortune Bay's dock system.

Not only did guests bottom out due to the heavy sediment, but the weeds were also problematic as it made motors work that much hard navigating the area surrounding the dock system.

However, thanks to a game plan put into motion by Director of Hospitality Operations Nick Papadatos and Director of Facilities Tony Yeley, those problems will soon be a thing of the past.

The project, which is being completed by Organic Sediment Removal Systems, LLC, which is a dredging company located in the Twin Cities, has been difficult as it entailed running flexible pipes under water from the marina's dock system through Everett Bay and into Bois Forte's pond system nearly a mile away.

"We had to clear a path behind the Bois Forte Heritage Center to place a booster pump," explained Yeley of the work his outdoor and indoor maintenance team did in preparation for the sediment and other debris to be pumped. "From there it goes another 1,500 feet over toward the settling ponds for the septic system."

All told, Yeley said his team had to clear a little over a quarter of a mile of trail through the woods to run the contractor's pipe for the sediment to be pumped out to the holding ponds to dry out before being hauled away at a later date.

"I would definitely like to give our maintenance crew a shoutout for the prep work they did," said Yeley. "They had to fight the heat, humidity, wood ticks and mosquitoes while cutting a path through the woods to run these pipes for the contractor."

When the work is complete, it will

not only make parking at our expansive dock easier, but there are also benefits to the lake.

According to experts, dredging significantly improves water quality restores aquatic ecosystems, prevents flooding, and enhances recreational usability by removing accumulated muck, debris, and toxic sediments. Over time, lakes naturally collect runoff, decaying plants, and silt, which shallow out the water and fuel toxic ecological cycles. Dredging reverses this degradation to reset a waterbody's lifespan.

Guests pulling into our docks have already noticed a big difference as the dredging project has literally increased the depth of the water by several feet after the silt and other debris have been vacuumed out of the area.

The dredging project will also mean our guests using our complimentary paddleboards, kayaks and canoes can enjoy parts of Everett Bay even more.

"There are many benefits to this project," said Papadatos. "Not only does it open up dock space for us, but it will also result in a more appealing marina for us as removing the sediment has definitely improved the water clarity and quality near the dock system."

While not guaranteed, Papadatos said there have been talks of doing even more dredging in the months ahead so that a swimming beach can be added next year.

"That would be a great amenity to have for our guests," said Papadatos of a potential swimming beach. "Anything that we can do to improve our guests' experience is a big win for us."

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

Memories abound from the 2026 Indian Summer Classic!

VERMILION SECTOR— Although the final financial tally is still being tabulated, it's safe to say the 22nd annual Indian Summer Classic was a resounding success as 156 golfers teed it up to support the Bois Forte Boys and Girls Clubs of Nett Lake and Vermilion.

Bois Forte Tribal Chairman Carlos Hernandez gave the opening remarks and thanked all of the sponsors for coming out to raise money for the local Boys and Girls Clubs at the event, which took place Thursday, August 20 at The Wilderness at Fortune Bay.

"Thanks to your generous donations, this event provides our area children with important programming that makes a huge difference in shaping their futures," said Hernandez, who also welcomed special guest and Minnesota Vikings great Daunte Culpepper. "On behalf of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, I'd just like to say miigwech —thank you— for your support!"

Culpepper, a quarterback drafted out of Central Florida, had an outstanding career with the Vikings as its starting quarterback and was a three-time pro bowler during his 11 year career. He led his team to two playoff runs, one division title and an NFC Championship game where the Vikings fell short to the New York Giants to earn a Super Bowl berth.

On this particular day, Culpepper, who played with the Capitol Hill Associates team, alongside the Boys and Girls Club team, was overly generous in taking countless photo ops with those playing in the event and staff members working the event. That same generosity was on display later on that evening in the casino and resort where fans asked if it was OK to have their photo taken together.

While Culpepper was a key figure at the ISC, it was the sponsors who were the true heroes of the event.

There were 10 title sponsors, including:

- Safelite Auto Glass
- NewRange Copper Nickel
- Suntory Global Spirits

- Park State Bank
- The Jacobson Law Group
- Pepsi
- Dynamic Gaming
- U.S. Steel
- Blue Link
- Performance Foods

There were four event sponsors, Imagine This, Aristocrat, and Park State Bank, which helps Bois Forte with financing several of its businesses under the Bois Forte Development Corporation. The fourth event team sponsor was Brodeen Paulson Indian Law, which is owned by Bois Forte band member Phil Brodeen, who is always giving back to his tribe.

"On behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bois Forte, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to every sponsor, supporter, golfer, and volunteer who makes the Indian Summer Classic Golf Scramble such a tremendous success," said Bois Forte Boys and Girls Club CEO Travis Vake after the event. "Your continued generosity has a meaningful impact on the youth, families, and communities we serve."

The 2026 ISC also had plenty of corporate sponsors as well, including:

- Nordic Group
- RSM
- Cleveland Cliffs
- Delta Dental
- Twin Metals
- CTC
- Banker's Equipment
- KBFT Radio
- Alpha
- Boys and Girls Club
- Pavilion Pay
- Capitol Hill Associates
- Leech Lake Gaming
- Light & Wonder
- Avigilon

Dinners sponsors included Howard Pitch Entertainment, plus Fortune Bay Resort Casino and Nordic Group, who donated the walleye for the dinner that followed the golf tournament.

Lunch sponsors were ADP and the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, which works closely with Bois

Forte on a variety of endeavors.

Beverage cart sponsors were NRT Technology, The Wilderness at Fortune Bay, Agilysys, and DSGW.

Additional hole sponsors were Range Reliable Agency and Capitol Hill Associates.

Vake said the funds raised through this event help offset the costs of providing Boys & Girls Club programming while also supporting many important local programs and cultural events

See ISC page 8



SINCERE THANK YOU— Bois Forte Tribal Chairman Carlos Hernandez gave the opening remarks at the 22nd annual Indian Summer Classic, which took place at The Wilderness at Fortune Bay on Thursday, August 20. Pictured to the left is The Wilderness at Fortune Bay's Al Gibson, who along with the rest of the staff, did a great job coordinating the day's events.



HELPING OUT— Bois Forte band member Lisa Carlson, who works in Fortune Bay Resort Casino's Marketing department, volunteered to help out at the 22nd annual Indian Summer Classic. Pictured in the background is Fortune Bay's Accountant KJ Bay, who was also giving out free 196 samples, which were provided by Suntory Global Spirits.

NICE SWING!—Capitol Hills Associate Reid LeBeau, who is also a lobbyist for Bois Forte, hits his tee-shot on the par 3, 12th hole at The Wilderness at Fortune Bay. Thank you for your continued support to the Indian Summer Classic Reid!



ISC from page 7

throughout our communities.

“Your support allows us to continue creating opportunities, building connections, celebrating culture, and providing positive experiences for our young people,” said Vake. “We are incredibly grateful for the partnerships that make this event possible year after year. Thank you for believing in our mission, investing in our youth, and continuing to support the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bois Forte.”

Fortune Bay General Manager

Elizabeth “EJ” Deegan was equally impressed by the support given to this year’s event.

“We can’t thank our sponsors enough for showing their support year after year to causes dear to our hearts,” said Deegan of the event, which rotates in raising money for the Boys and Girls Club and the Bois Forte Scholarship program. “Not only is this a great day of networking on one of Minnesota’s best golf courses, but it is also a day that we all give back to support the youth of our communities.”



SPIRITCARE
SERVICES



3rd Annual
**NATIVE AMERICAN
ELDERS DAY**



Lunch, Bingo,
Door Prizes, lots
of resources.
Back by popular
demand, Elvis!



10am to 4pm
Wed. Sept. 16th, 2026



Veterans Memorial Park
Richfield, MN



For tabling or more information please contact
Maren @ 612-448-4455
email info@spiritcareservices.com

This event is made possible by our community.
If you would like to support our efforts, please
visit our website to make a donation,
spiritcareservices.com



➤ HONORING OUR ELDERS.

• CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE. ◀



Leadership gathering slated for September 16 at Fortune Bay

VERMILION SECTOR— In an effort to better serve band members who work at Fortune Bay Resort Casino, a leadership gathering meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 16.

The event, which is titled “Leading Our Future: Band Member Leadership Gathering,” is only open to band members currently working at Fortune Bay.

Fortune Bay’s General Manager Elizabeth Deegan said the event will be like a town hall meeting where attendees can have an open conversation about leadership, growth and the future of Fortune Bay, which will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in October.

While there could be some additional items, Deegan said some of the discussions will entail going over the following bullet points:

- What tools you will need to be successful
- Available training and resources
- Developing future band member leaders
- Pride, ownership and representing Fortune Bay
- Leadership and accountability
- Your goals and future opportunities

What we can do better—together
The leadership gathering will be a rebirth of sorts as a similar endeavor had previously taken place to get the pulse of how band members felt about working at Fortune Bay, including the positives and negatives; the challenges and concerns they had.

The task force that was set up at the time also worked on behalf of band member employees to resolve any issues they had encountered so those employees not only felt heard, but also

valued and appreciated.

A July 2026 report compiled by Fortune Bay’s Payroll and HRIS Manager Dan Keller indicated that out of 338 employees working at Fortune Bay, 76 were band members, seven were enrolled in other tribes and 20 employees were descendants.

By comparison, those working for other Bois Forte Development Corporation (BFDC) businesses totaling 136 employees included 40 band members, 15 enrollees from other tribes and nine

descendants. That equates to 24.47% band members working for all BFDC businesses and 22.49% for Fortune Bay, which is Bois Forte’s flagship business.

“Fortune Bay was built to create opportunity and growth for band members for generations to come,” said Deegan, who has worked at Fortune Bay for over 25 years. “As leaders we have an important role in making sure that continues.”

Band members working at Fortune Bay Resort Casino must RSVP by Friday,

September 11. You can email Deegan at edeegan@fortunebay.com or call her office at 218-753-7701.

“Come ready to share your ideas, challenges and goals as we move forward in getting a better understanding of how we can meet the needs of our band members,” said Deegan. “We’re looking for honest feedback in how we can improve our operations and truly listen to the concerns our band members have.”

Hernandez shows appreciation to our veterans



GIVING APPRECIATION AND RESPECT— Bois Forte Tribal Chairman Carlos Hernandez welcomed over 100 veterans to Fortune Bay Resort Casino as part of the 2026 Take A Vet Fishing event, which took place Thursday, August 20. Pictured in the background is Garrett Ashburn, who is the secretary/treasurer of the Lake Vermilion Guides League. Hernandez thanked all of the volunteers and guides from the Lake Vermilion Guides League Association for putting on another awesome event. “I just want to extend a thank you to our veterans,” said Hernandez as he looked out into the crowd. “You are the reason why we are here today—we want to celebrate you and the sacrifices you have given to our communities and our country—thank you.”

REMINDER

All Bois Forte offices and clinics are closed on Monday, September 7 for Labor Day.

Bois Forte Obituaries

Gene Peter Hanks



Gene Peter Hanks, age 80, of Tower, died Friday, August 7, 2026 at Essentia, St. Mary's in Duluth. He was born on Aug. 14, 1945 in Cass Lake, the son of Frederick and Margaret Hanks. He was a U.S. Army Veteran, and was a Security Guard at Fortune Bay. He enjoyed watching sports, gambling, and going on Elder trips.

Gene is survived by his

daughter: Naomi Hanks of Tower; grandson: Brandon Hanks of Tower; granddaughter: Sophia Hanks of Tower; great-grandchildren: Ava and Everly Hanks of St. Cloud; and siblings: Charles Hanks of the Twin Cities; Lawrence Hanks of Cass Lake, and Calvin Day of Onigum, Minnesota.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Frederick and

Margaret Hanks; wife: Geraldine (Dupree) Hanks; and siblings: JoAnn Hanks, Betty White, and Donald Day.

The wake was held Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026 at the Nett Lake Tribal Government Center. Visitation continued until the 10:00 a.m. service of Tribal Rites on Friday, Aug. 14, 2026 at the Government Center. Vern Adams was the Spiritual Advi-

sor, with Clint Miller as the assistant. Interment will be at the new Nett Lake Cemetery.

Family Services provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower. To leave a remembrance online, see www.baumanfuneralhome.com.



Minute with Millie



around to her chair.

My sister and I set our paddles down, grab the handles of the pan and lift to swing it over to the ground. We both pick up our paddles and pick up the rhythm right where we left off. We do this for several turns until the rice quits popping and slides easily. We set our paddles on the ground.

Then we pick up the pan. We swing it over to the plywood box built especially for cooling rice. We drop it on its side near the edge, lean the pan over to tip it the rest of the way upside down. After giving it a shake to get all the rice kernels out, we set the pan on the ground. We quickly take the paddles and spread the rice out to fill the bottom of the box.

We set the paddles against the tree, take a breath and sit. I watch Mom kneel by the box and continue to swirl the rice until it is cool enough not to sweat in the cooling evening air. We all sit around the dying fire, and roast hot dogs or marshmallows. After the rice cools enough, we pack it in bags and take it into the house.

All of us settle happily in our beds, snuggling under the blankets, with the smell of the parched rice waiting to be thrashed swirling in the air as the breeze flows through the open window.

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

NOTE: Menu is subject to change.

- Sept. 1: Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup, Biscuit, Apple
- Sept. 2: Wild Rice Saus/Spinach Quiche, Breakfast Potato, Orange
- Sept. 3: Chicken Bacon Ranch Salad, Breadstick, Fruit
- Sept. 4: Spaghetti/Meatballs, Italian Vegetables, Fruit
- Sept. 7: HOLIDAY
- Sept. 8: Baked Chicken Breast, Rice Pilaf, Cucumber Salad, WW Roll
- Sept. 9: Wild Rice Meatballs, Gravy/Baby reds, Green beans, WW Roll
- Sept. 10: Beef Taco Salad, Tortilla Chips, Salsa, Fruit
- Sept. 11: Pork Loin, Mac & Cheese, Steamed Veggies, Fruit
- Sept. 14: Chicken Alfredo, Cucumbers, WW Roll, Fruit
- Sept. 15: BBQ Pork/WW Bun, Potato salad, Cole slaw, Fruit
- Sept. 16: Ravioli/Meat Sauce, Italian Veggies, Fruit
- Sept. 17: Italian Pasta Salad/Pep, Breadstick, Fruit
- Sept. 18: Chicken Tenders, Potato Wedges, Fresh Veggie, Fruit
- Sept. 21: Chicken WR Soup, Ham & Cheese Slider, Banana
- Sept. 22: Beef Stroganoff, Egg Noodles, Peas & Carrots, Orange
- Sept. 23: Tomato Basil Soup, Grilled Cheese, Saltines, Pears
- Sept. 24: Chicken Caesar Salad, Breadstick, Whole Fruit
- Sept. 25: Cookout Theme, Brats/Potato Salad/Baked Beans/Slaw
- Sept. 28: Hamburger Gravy, Mashed Pots, Corn, Fruit
- Sept. 29: Red Chili w/Beans, Cornbread, Cheese Stick, Whole Fruit
- Sept. 30: Baked Ham, Macaroni & Cheese, Glazed carrots

September 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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	30	1	2	3

Bois Forte Obituaries

Joshua Dean Villebrun-Burr



He continued answering the call to help those in need for many years and remained committed to serving others until medical challenges made it no longer possible.

Following his work as an EMT, Josh pursued a career in law enforcement. After completing training at the U.S. Indian Police Academy, he became a police officer with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He was known as a friendly, compassionate, and fair officer who genuinely cared about the people he served. Through his dedication and hard work, Josh achieved the milestone of becoming a lieutenant with the Bureau of Indian Affairs before retiring due to medical reasons.

Although Josh loved his career and took great pride in serving his community, his passions extended far beyond his profession. He had an incredible interest in vehicles and could tell you just about anything there was to know about a car. He also loved airplanes and enjoyed watching videos of them taking off and landing. More than anything, Josh treasured making memories with the people he loved. He had a wealth of knowledge on countless subjects, especially the law, and was always willing to share what he knew.

Above all else, Josh's greatest joy

was his family. He cherished every opportunity to spend time with his mom, dad, sisters, and loved ones. He had an infectious smile, an unmistakable laugh, and a kind heart that left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him. Throughout his health challenges, Josh remained a fighter. Even in the face of adversity, he showed remarkable strength, courage, and resilience.

Josh is survived by his loving mother, Carol Burr; his father, Thomas Burr; his younger sisters, Bridgette

Burr and Serena King; his siblings, Kayla Reyes, Shileen Kingbird, and Brandon Stevens; along with several aunts, uncles, cousins, extended family members, and many dear friends.

A wake was held on Monday, August 10, 2026, followed by funeral services on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at the Bois Forte Tribal Government Building.

To plant a memorial tree in memory, please visit our tree store.

Joshua Dean Villebrun-Burr, of Tower, Minnesota, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones, on August 5, 2026.

Josh was born on May 24, 1986, in Virginia, Minnesota. He attended Central Elementary School, Bemidji Middle School, and Bemidji High School before transferring to Orr High School, where he graduated in 2005.

From a young age, Josh dedicated his life to helping others. He became an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) early in his adult life and took great pride in serving his community.

Check out the Ishkode Dispensary website!

Visit ish-kode.com to pre-order to save you time and make sure to visit the website in the coming weeks for the team's 420 plan!

For more information, call 218-696-1060.

Ishkode Dispensary, which is located next to Fortune Bay Resort Casino's RV Park, is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. They even have EV chargers available to its guests!

Thank you for your continued support!

Miigwech Manoomin

Pow Wow

September 25 - 27, 2026

Host Drum - Gaagigaaikwe	Nett Lake Pow Wow Grounds
Co-Host Drum - Lake Vermillion	5344 Lakeshore Drive
	Nett Lake, Mn. 55772
Spiritual Advisor - Dan Geshick	Vendor Info -
MC - Terry Goodsky	Teresa Isham
Arena Director - Nate Tibbetts	218-750-7632
Friday	General Info -
*5pm - Opening Ceremony	Ashley Goodsky
*6pm - Welcome Feast	218-248-0780
Saturday	Big Auntie Earring Contest -
*Breakfast 7-9 am	Do you have what it takes to
*Grand Entry 1pm	make the deadliest Big Antie
*Dinner - 5pm	Earrings? Let's find out! For
*WILD RICE COOKING CONTEST	more info contact Mari at 218-
*Walk/Run during dinner break	780-3796
*Grand Entry 7pm	
*Youth Special - 17 yrs & under,	Wild Rice Contest - share your
all regalia welcome	favorite wild rice dish for your
*Big Auntie Earring Contest	chance to win a prize!! All dishes
	are due in the kitchen by 2pm
Sunday	Saturday. For more info call
*Breakfast 7-9am	Ashley @ 218-248-0780
*Grand Entry 1pm	Camping Available
*Dinner 5pm	
	Drug and Alcohol - Free Event



Request for Proposal (RFP) for New Gas-Fired Hot Water Boiler, Thermostats, and Dual Boiler Evaluation at Vermilion Wellness Center 1615 Farm Rd S, Tower, Mn 55790.

ISSUE DATE: 8/13/2026 DUE DATE: 9/11/2026
SUBMIT TO: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Attn: Jim Barto 5344 Lakeshore Drive Nett Lake, Mn 55772

Email: jim.barto@boisforte-nsn.gov cc. wking@boisforte-nsn.gov

Overview of Need:

The Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council, herein-after referred to as the "Band," is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to provide evaluation, removal, replacement, installation, startup, commissioning, and warranty services for a new LP gas-fired hot water boiler and associated thermostats and controls. The Band also requests that proposers evaluate and provide alternate pricing for a possible dual-boiler system to improve redundancy, serviceability, and system performance if feasible for the facility.

Background:

The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa is a federally recognized tribe situated in northern Minnesota. The Band's governing body is comprised of a five-member Council. The Band delivers government services to over 3,600 enrolled members who are located on-reservation, across the United States, and abroad. Currently the Band has over 400 grants/ programs on its accounting software to support the operations of the Government. The Band provides government services through a variety of departments, including Bois Forte Health Clinic, Human Services, Police Department, DNR, Tribal Court System, Realty, Housing, Enrollment, Public Works, IT services, Accounting, Education and Human Resources. As the owner and operator of the Boys and Girls Club, Fortune Bay Resort Casino, the Y-Store, and the Nett Lake C-Store, the Band is one of the largest employers within its region. You can learn more about the Band by visiting our website at: <http://www.boisforte.com/>.

Scope of Services:

Provide all labor, materials, equipment, supervision, inspection, disposal, startup, commissioning, owner training, warranties, and incidentals, necessary to complete the boiler replacement and thermostat/ control work. The scope shall include the following:

- Conduct a site review of the existing boiler room, boiler, pumps, hydronic piping, expansion tank, air separator, fill/backflow system, valves, insulation, venting, combustion air, LP Gas piping, controls, electrical connections, thermostats, zones, and related components.
- Verify existing boiler capacity and determine whether the existing size is appropriate for the current building heating load. If a heating load calculation, design professional review, or engineering support is required, clearly identify the cost and responsibility for such work the submitted proposal.
- Disconnect, remove, and legally dispose of the existing Lochinvar CBL1256 boiler and related components identified for replacement.
- Furnish and install new commercial-grade LP gas-

fired hot water boiler system sized for verified building requirements and compatible with existing hydronic heating systems unless modifications are specifically included in the proposal.

- Provide required boiler trim and accessories, including safety relief valves, low-water cutoff, temperature and pressure gauges, controls, isolation valves, drain valves, union/flanges, condensate handling if applicable, and manufacturer-required accessories.

- Reconnect or modify hydronic piping, gas piping, venting, combustion air, electrical service, control wiring, insulation, and related components as required for complete and code-compliant installation.

- Inspect existing thermostats and controls and provide/install new commercial-grade programmable thermostats or approved equivalent controls. Identify each zone served and confirm proper operation after installation.

- Program thermostats and controls as directed by the Band and provide basic training on use and operation of equipment to designated staff.

- Provide alternate pricing and recommendations for a possible dual boiler system, including number and size of boiler, lead/lag sequencing, outdoor reset capability, staging controls, redundancy benefits, piping changes, venting/combustion air needs, gas and electrical impacts, space/clearance requirements, warranty, information, owner training, as built notes, operation and maintenance manuals, and recommended maintenance schedule before final payment.

- Coordinate all shutdowns with the Band and maintain safe access and protection of surrounding facility area during work.

- Pressure test, leak test, purge, start up reports, inspection approvals, product data, warranty information, owner training, as-built notes, operation and maintenance manuals, and recommended maintenance schedule before final payment.

- Provide a minimum one-year workmanship warranty and identify all manufacturer warranties and extended warranty options.

Proposal Requirements:

Interested Firms shall submit the following:

A Technical Proposal addressing the following:

- o A description of the scope of work consistent with the scope identified above;
- o The name, address, phone and email addresses contact information of the contractor;
- o The name, office location, qualifications (brief bio), and experience of the contractor;
- o Proposals must address contractor's project approach, existing conditions review, sizing verification, code compliance, equipment recommendation, installation plan, control/ thermostat plan, startup/commissioning process, safety plan, and schedule.

Cost Proposal. The Proposal should address the following information about costs:

- The contractor shall provide a complete base bid for the boiler replacement and thermostat/ control scope and a separate alternate price for a possible dual-boiler system Cost proposal. The bid should itemize equipment, labor, demolition/disposal, hydronic piping, gas piping, venting/ combustion air, electrical/ control work, thermostat, permits, inspections, start-up/ commissioning, owner training, warranty options, and any allowances or unit prices.
- The Contractor shall clearly identify exclusions, assumptions, long-lead equipment, required shutdowns, and work that would require an approved change order.

Certifications

- The vendor shall certify in its response to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals/

employees:

- o Are presently not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by and Federal, State, Local or Tribal department or agency.

- o Have not within a five-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, Local or Tribal) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.

- o Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, Local or Tribal).

- o Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal State, Local or Tribal) terminated for cause or default.

Native Preference (if applicable) –

This RFP is not restricted to companies owned by Native persons. However, preference will be given to Native and Alaska Native consultant/ contractors ("Native Consultant/Contractor") that submit responses that are substantially equal to responses submitted by a non-Native consultant/contractor. Native Consultant/ Contractor or "Indian-Owned Economic Enterprise" means any Indian-owned commercial, industrial, or business concern established or organized for the purpose of profit, provided that such Indian ownership shall constitute not less than 51 percent of the enterprise, and that ownership shall encompass active operation and control of the enterprise on a continuing basis for the duration of the project. A consultant/contractor claiming Native Preference may be required to submit evidence demonstrating qualification for that preference.

Selection Criteria:

The evaluation of each proposal will be based on the content of the proposals. The proposal with the highest number of points awarded will be the selected proposal for the services (subject to meeting all other qualifications/requirements). Each proposal can receive a maximum of 100 points. The proposals will be ranked based on the following areas with the maximum number of points for each area designated below:

- Assessment of contractor's qualifications, licensing, certifications, and similar commercial boilers experience (25 points);
- Ability to provide a complete, code compliant, and practical boiler replacement approach with proper field verification and commissioning (25 points);
- Competitiveness of cost proposal (15 points);
- Project schedule, ability to minimize facility disruption, references, and warranty/closeout approach (20 points); and
- Native preference (15 points).

Submission Details:

Proposals may be submitted by mail, by facsimile, or by email. The Band may deem a proposal that fails to address content that is applicable to the company as non-responsive and ineligible for consideration.

Due date: 09/11/26/1:00 PM, Central Time.

Submit to: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Attn: Jim Barto Project Manager 5344 Lake Shore Drive Nett Lake, MN 55710 Email: @boisforte-nsn.gov Fax: 218-757-3312

Inquiries:

Questions about this RFP may be directed via email to Jim Barto, Project Manager, Bois Forte Tribal Government, at jim.barto@boisforte-nsn.gov In the subject line for the inquiry, please reference: RFP - VERMILION

FITNESS; HOT WATER BOILER.

General Terms, Limitations, Reservation of Rights

The following terms, limitations, and reservation of rights apply to this RFP:

The selected contractor will be required to comply with all applicable requirements set forth in the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa TERO Ordinance, including the required TERO Fee (4% of the total contract amount). A copy of the Band's TERO Ordinance is attached hereto as Exhibit A. The contractor's proposal should reflect this requirement.

- The selected contractor will be required to comply with the Davis Bacon Act and must pay their laborers and mechanics no less than the locally prevailing wages and fringe benefits for corresponding work on similar projects in the area, as per applicable Department of Labor wage determinations. The contractor's proposal should reflect this requirement.

- The selected contractor may be required to comply with the Copeland Anti-Kickback Act. The Act provides that each contractor must be prohibited from inducing any person employed in the construction, completion or repair of public work, to give up any part of the compensation to which he or she is otherwise entitled.

- The Band reserves the right to review any proposal in full or in part and to accept or reject any or all proposals.

- If necessary, contract negotiations related to the timeline may proceed following selection of the successful proposal.

- The Band reserves the right to select the successful vendor on the basis of proposals received, without seeking further information.

- Any award granted pursuant to this RFP shall be subject to the terms and conditions of a written contract between the Band and the contractor/consultant selected, which may include certain required contract terms depending on the funding source for the work.

- The Band reserves the right to:

- Modify or otherwise alter any or all requirements herein. If the Band modifies, consultant/contractor's will be given an equal opportunity to modify their proposals as identified in writing by the Band.
- Reject any proposals received for whatever reason.
- Terminate this RFP at any time, without cause or reason.

- The Band shall not be responsible for any expenses incurred by the applicant to prepare or deliver a response to this RFP, or to attend a virtual pre-award conference with the Band.

- The Band's determination on whether to make this award will be based solely on the Band's best interests as understood by the Band.

- Prior to any award and upon the Band's request, the apparent successful proposer must provide the information required of any consultant/contractor who does business with the Band, including the consultant/contractor's legal name, address, federal tax identification number, and evidence of insurance policies that meet minimum insurance specifications for the award.

- The consultant/contractor must disclose to the Band the use and identity of all subcontractors it uses in carrying out the requirements herein. The Band reserves the right to approve all subcontractors chosen (in its sole discretion). The consultant/contractor shall be solely responsible for the satisfactory performance of and compensation to all subcontractors.

- The laws and procedures of the Band shall govern all rights and duties under any contract that may result from the RFP.

- In the event of bankruptcy or receivership of any consultant/contractor, the applicable contract is null and void, and is terminated without further notice.

- This RFP shall not be construed as a waiver of the Band's sovereign immunity.