



Bois Forte NEWS

VOL. 50 NUMBER 2

Save the date!

VIRGINIA— Bois Forte's Healthy Heart Conference will take place at the Iron Trail Event Center Friday, February 13th from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Registration starts at 9 a.m., or you can pre-register with Melissa Hawk, Julie Skoglund or David Morrison, Jr. by calling 218-757-3650 or 218-757-0087.

There will be several presentations, games and prizes, not to mention a delicious lunch!

Three tribal seats up for election this spring Geshick, Drift and Moyer hope to earn another term

NETT LAKE— 2025 was certainly a trying year for the Bois Forte Tribal Council, as it included the resignation of two council members, which

head to the polls on March 31st to decide who will be the next secretary-treasurer, along with District I (Nett Lake) and District II (Vermilion Sector) Rep-

going for their second term, while Drift will be going for his third term. Geshick and Moyer filed relatively early in the process, while Drift waited until the last day (January 20th) to announce his plans to run again.

•Peter "Chief" Boney, a former District II Representative, who now works at the Y Store.

•Carol Burr, a first-time candidate, who works as the Planning and Community Development Director for Bois Forte.

We're going to miss you, Chief!



CONGRATULATIONS!— BIA Assistant Special Agent in Charge Michael Potter, right, presents Chief of Police Jamie Burdick with a plaque at his retirement party. Please see page 12 for more on Burdick's retirement, as well as Donna Hoffer's retirement.

meant the need for two unexpected elections, followed by whisperings of "voter fatigue," as band members were asked to head to the polls two more times.

Fast forward to 2026, and voters will once again be busy doing their civic duty as they

representatives.

All three incumbents, Secretary-Treasurer Tara Geshick, District II Representative Shane Drift, and District I Representative Robert "Junior" Moyer, announced they will seek re-election.

Geshick and Moyer will be

Drift had announced on his Facebook page that he was not going to seek another term, but after some band members encouraged him to reconsider, he felt inclined to do so.

The challengers, who still need to be certified, which did not take place until after this issue of the Bois Forte News went to press, include:

District I Representative:

•Millie Holmes, who works for the Bois Forte Housing Department.

District II Representative:

•Alanna Sherman, who most recently worked as Fortune Bay Resort Casino's Director of Human Resources.

•Tim O'Leary, who has been a longtime table games employee at Fortune Bay Resort Casino.

Secretary-Treasurer:

•Jeff Mattson, who is currently the manager of the Nett Lake C Store.

•Dave Morrison, Sr., who held this seat for 32 years before losing a tight election to Geshick in 2022, now works for Bois Forte, driving band members to non-emergency medical appointments.

Leading up to the primary election, we asked the challengers some basic questions so voters could get a little background on the candidates, why they decided to run, and what they could bring to the table if elected. We'll run the challengers' responses first, then add the incumbent's thoughts on why they are seeking another term, their goals if re-elected, and what they are most proud of from their term in office.

First, we'll tackle the Dis-

trict I race in which Holmes faces off against Drift. Like Drift, Holmes was not sure she wanted to

seek a seat on the tribal council, but at quarter after 4 p.m. on January 20th, she clocked out at work and started the filing process.

"I thought of all the things going on in the country and knew there was going to be a bigger job than usual for the

See Election on page 8



Millie Holmes

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CAMBRIDGE, MN
PERMIT #92

Make plans to attend the 2026 State of the Band!

VERMILION SECTOR— The 2026 State of the Band is scheduled for Saturday, March 7 at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. Official invites should be arriving in your mailboxes later this month.

Registration and informational booths take place between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the resort lobby and pre-func-

tion area.

A special financial presentation takes place at noon in the executive boardroom. You must present an active Tribal ID to gain access to the presentation.

The formal program and dinner is from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in The Wood-

lands Ballroom. Seating begins at 2 p.m., but please be mindful so that our elders and those who have difficulty walking can be seated first.

Make sure to attend this annual event, which provides band members a chance to learn more about programs available to them, as well as updates

from your tribal council and other leaders.

The event will be live stream beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 7th. Please visit www.boisforte.com to tune in!

Important notice about your Bois Forte News subscription

Attention Bois Forte News subscribers:

Due to rising print costs and postal charges, we need to streamline our subscription list, effective with the March 2026 issue.

This means Bois Forte band member subscribers living outside St. Louis County will be required to either pay \$15 a year to continue receiving the mailed version or go to www.boisforte.com and click on Bois Forte News to read the digital version, free of charge.

The cost for a non-band member

subscription would be \$25 annually, regardless of where the paper is being sent in the continental United States. If you are living abroad, the only option will be to read the digital version, free of charge.

We will also be eliminating multiple copies being mailed to one address, as each copy is individually charged, meaning if one location gets 10 copies, we are charged for 10 individual mailings. If you are a location that receives multiple copies and would like

to continue receiving them, please see below for how we can set up multiple subscriptions for a single address.

We also need to make sure our subscription list is up to date, as we've noticed many subscriptions with a generic "Bois Forte Band Member" listed on the mailing label. If your mailing label does not include your actual name, we will halt those subscriptions, effective March 2026. Please review your mailing label and submit your name change to us by February 20th.

If you would like to update your mailing address for any other reason, please email bkanderson@fortunebay.com, or you can update your mailing address by visiting www.boisforte.com

and filling out a change of address form there.

If you would like to subscribe to the Bois Forte news, please send your payment to:

Bois Forte Tribal Government
Attn: Bois Forte News
5344 Lakeshore Drive
Nett Lake MN 55772

Thank you very much, and to reiterate, these changes go into effect with our March 2026 issue.

Sincerely,
Brian K. Anderson
Bois Forte News
218-753-7882
bkanderson@fortunebay.com

**Tribal Scholarships
Are Here!**

newrangecoppernickel.com

NEWRANGE
COPPER NICKEL

ELDERLY FIREWOOD

FOR NEXT FALL/WINTER 2026-2027

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE
TURN INTO ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM SITES

DUE FEBRUARY 27, 2026

ALSO FOR THOSE THAT ARE
PHYSICALLY DISABLED
MUST RESIDE WITHIN
RESERVATION BOUNDARIES



Please call (218)757-3790 to have
an application mailed to you

Warrington hosts elder abuse awareness events

Make sure to check in on elders to show them the respect they deserve!

NETT LAKE— Elder abuse are two words that create a mix of emotions as it pertains to the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa community.

However, betrayal is perhaps the best word that describes any situation where an elder, the most revered age demographic in our community, is mentally or physically abused. Sadly, there are many more examples that fall under the umbrella of elder abuse, including financial exploitation, neglect, emotional and yes, even sexual abuse.

By definition, elder abuse is any action or inaction that harms, endangers, or causes distress to a person over the age of 55+ and is done intentionally by someone who is known to the victim, and in a position of trust.

“There are other components to an elder’s life that are affected such as isolation, abandonment, physical deterioration, and chronic illness,” said Bois Forte Victim Service Advocate Charity Warrington, who recently put on two community events in recognition of January being Elder’s Abuse Awareness month.

She added that mistreatment of an elder has lasting effects on those abused and a caretaker who recognizes the abuse, who in turn may be scared or reluctant to report the abuse issues going on.

“Impacts of isolation can have detriments which might exacerbate depression, or cognitive decline,” said Warrington. “Communication is key within community, and those who are in helping capacities when it comes to reporting elder abuse and that constitutes action by an upstander not a bystander.”

As part of her community events, which included attendees filling out surveys and finding out more about Bois Forte Victim Service’s programs, Warrington’s goal was to raise awareness of this serious issue, especially as it relates to the Bois Forte community, both on our reservations and for those

living off the reservation.

While elder abuse on the Bois Forte reservations is not being widely reported, Warrington said that every case of abuse can have long-term consequences.

“Every abuse case is serious,” said Warrington, who added that resources suggest that adults who have been abused die earlier than those who have not been abused, even those experiencing chronic illnesses or life-threatening diseases. “Every Bois Forte band member should make a safety plan with their older loved ones and establish weekly check-ins.”

Warrington said that if an elder feels they are in danger, they should call 911 and report what is happening to them. They can also call Bois Forte Victim Services at 218-757-3295. This also applies to family members who cannot be with their elderly sibling, parent or grandparents.

“Talk to your elderly about any concerns they might be having and if they feel comfortable talking about them to you,” said Warrington. “Seeking supportive services helps the elderly manage emotional, spiritual, physical, mental, or financial needs.”

Questions an elder should ponder to determine whether they are being subject to any form of abuse include:

- Is my caretaker respectful and courteous to me?
- Am I able to communicate to whomever I’d like?
- Do I feel safe? Has my caretaker ever hit me?
- Are my medications being dispersed to me, and not stolen?
- Are my hygiene and continence needs met?
- Are my dietary needs taken care of?
- Are my possessions safe and not being taken without permission?

“Safeguarding and safety planning yourselves or your loved one involves your awareness and motivation to rec-

ognize, report and respond to these issues and how it affects their happiness,” explained Warrington.

Outside of abuse they may face at home, Warrington also reminded family members that elders are clearly susceptible to perpetrators who look to harm and take advantage of their situations—this includes being targeted by scammers over the phone.

“People need to be alert to what kind of marketers and swindling phone salespeople who are targeting their loved ones daily,” said Warrington.

Victoria “Wicko” Holmes stopped in to fill out the survey and to learn more about elder abuse in general.

“It’s important to attend these events,” said Villebrun. “I would hope more elders come out so they have an idea of what to watch out for and how to protect themselves.”

As for tips or advice in providing someone who may be initiating elder abuse, Warrington said the best route is to initiate dialogue with someone who may be the abuser to be mindful of how their interaction with their loved one is harmful and traumatic and must be stopped immediately.

“Zero tolerance of abuse is essential with a firm understanding that the authorities will be contacted,” said Warrington. “Elders are our wisdom keepers and must be protected as they are a part of the community circle.”

To take that one step

further, Warrington said we all need to remember that all of us will be an elderly person one day.

“How would you want to be treated?” asked Warrington. “By having conscious efforts toward the safe wellbeing of our elderly, we survive as a community that cares about the most treasured individuals, our wisdom keepers.”

All Nations Rise
indigenous



You are MORE than a babysitter.

When you care for the children of family, friends, or neighbors (FFN) while they work or go to school-- you are providing critical support in helping children, families, and the community thrive.



Family, Friend and Neighbor
minnesota



Please join our Indigenous FFN Childcare Network!

You may be eligible for a mini-grant of up to \$1,200! Scan QR code to register or call:

Jonee Vance, FFN Coordinator
763-923-5997
joneevance@allnationsrise.com

FUNDING PROVIDED BY A GRANT FROM:

 DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES



Geshick faces crowded field as she seeks a second term

NETT LAKE—Voters will have their work cut out for them in the Secretary-Treasurer race as incumbent Tara Geshick will face a formidable challenge, including the reemergence of former Secretary-Treasurer Dave Morrison, Sr.

Other challengers include Nett Lake C-Store Manager Jeff Mattson, Bois Forte Planning and Community Development Director Carol Burr, and former District II Representative Pete “Chief” Boney. All candidates will have a chance to make a pitch to voters in the March issue of the Bois Forte News, leading up to the March 31st primary so look in the March issue for their columns.

As for Morrison, who narrowly lost the 2022 election to Geshick, being away from the tribal council after 32 years of service reminded him about how much he missed serving the Bois Forte people.

“During my absence from politics, I have remained engaged with the community and tribal leaders through participation in various meetings, events, and activities,” said Morrison, who was married for 40 years to Terea Day Morrison, who passed away in 2017. “I have taken the time to talk to many of you on a one-on-one basis to learn of the grassroots issues that affect you and all band members.”

He said that his decision to run again was prompted by his concern for our future as Indigenous people and the uncertainty in the way of life as band members know it. He said his 32 years of serving as secretary-treasurer have given him the knowledge and experience on the operations of tribal government.

“The relationships I have established with other tribal leaders and representatives on a State and Federal level allow me to hit the ground running without the need for a transition period,” said Morrison, who has spent his entire life living and working on the reservation. “My experience provides strong leadership skills that are

progressive while providing for stability, calm, and confidence in your leadership to provide guidance that will allow the reservation to progress and expand services for the people.”

Morrison added that his proven track record of trust, fairness for all, and assurance that band members’ voices are heard on issues important to them will benefit band members as they work together to create a better way of life.

“You will be hearing more from me in the near future about my past achievements and vision for the future, such as the blood quantum issues, improved housing, communications, and economic development, to name a few,” said Morrison, who wished the other candidates’ good luck and thanked them for standing up to represent their people. “For now, I humbly request your support once again and look forward to speaking with many of you as I begin work on my campaign. I can be reached by email (dmlovestm1958@gmail.com) or by my cell phone number (218-348-9815).”

Political newcomer Jeff Mattson is hoping voters see his long-time employment with both the Y Store and now the C Store as a plus, as he has been making great strides in turning around the convenience store’s operations in Nett Lake.

“We have made vast improvements to its operations and financial situation during my time at this location,” said Mattson, who lives in the Vermilion Sector with his small family, and also had a brief stint working for the tribal government in maintenance. “I am hoping to make a lasting impact on our band for the future generations to see.”



Dave Morrison

Mattson said his decision to run for office was based on his care and compassion for the well-being of all band members, along with the band’s finances.

“I believe that my numbers in my current role speak for themselves, and I would like the opportunity to make those same changes that our band needs in order to reach financial independence and build up our self-governance,” said Mattson, who encouraged anyone to reach out to him via cell (218-780-7445 or email (jdm.mattson@gmail.com) to further discuss his ideas. “I am offering Bois Forte to be my determination; I can give one promise about this campaign, and it is that the band will see progress and changes that will leave us better off than we are now if I am elected.”



Jeff Mattson

Boney, a former District II Representative, has held several positions for Bois Forte and Fortune Bay. He believes that experience has helped him get a good understanding of what is needed to help Bois Forte move forward. He said he decided to run because he believes the tribe is in a financial crisis and is worried that funding for Bois Forte could get cut with the President Trump’s Administration.

“Our programs and people are going to suffer,” said Boney, who is the father of three children and lives on the Vermilion Sector of the Bois Forte Reservation. “I believe that we (tribal council) should be doing all we can to protect our people.”

He believes his previous experience on the tribal council has prepared him to serve the Bois Forte people again.

“I believe that working with the band and council that we can achieve a plan that will help us through the next

three years,” said Boney, who can be reached via cell (763-245-3325) or email (eatmac@yahoo.com). “Even if I am not elected, I will continue to work for the community and help it grow.”

Carol Burr is another political newcomer who believes her diverse work history can be a big advantage as she tries to win the secretary-treasurer’s race. She has worked for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the State of Minnesota through the Indian Scholarship Office and Mn DOT. She later moved to New Mexico with her husband, Tom, in 2017, where she spent three years serving as grants manager for the Navajo YouthBuild program.

“It was an experience I will always cherish,” said Burr, who has two children, Joshua and Bridgette. “In 2020, we moved again to North Dakota, where I worked for the three affiliated tribes while my husband served as Deputy Superintendent for the BIA. Today, I’m thankful to be back home in Nett Lake, working once again for the Bois Forte Band as Planning and Community Development Director. Being back where I belong, serving my community, truly fills my heart.”

Burr said she decided to run for office because she wanted to use her experience and knowledge to help Bois Forte continue moving forward to achieve its priorities. She believes it’s important that Bois Forte creates more opportunities for band members to be heard through regular community meetings—both in person and virtually—so everyone stays informed and has a voice in shaping our direction.

She added that listening to Bois Forte’s people and incorporating their



Pete Boney

See Crowded Field on page 5

Crowded Field from page 4

priorities into our mission is essential.

"I feel the current tribal council is making meaningful progress, and I would be honored to be part of that work and help build on the positive strides already being made," said Burr, who hopes to bring her life experience and professional background to assist the band in achieving its goals. "I am thoughtful, open minded, and willing to compromise when needed."



Carol Burr

She concluded by stressing the importance of taking a proactive approach to identify and address potential challenges before they become issues.

"I also hope to encourage greater diversification of our tribe's economic endeavors to create additional revenue streams and long term stability for the band," said Burr.

The latter comments are something Geshick has kept in mind and will continue to do so if voters give her another opportunity to serve them. As she has stressed in the past, Bois Forte must seek new opportunities to broaden its economic base. By doing so, Geshick believes Bois Forte won't

be so reliant on the distribution payments it takes from Fortune Bay Resort Casino to help run its vast number of services.

"We really need to help Fortune Bay—it's an aging property and has many needs," said Geshick of Fortune Bay's long list of capital improvements needed so that it can truly be a destination property. "I don't want us dipping into Fortune Bay more and more. If we don't have fiscal responsibility at the Reservation Tribal Government, we can't keep relying on Fortune Bay to help us out. We need to be fiscally responsible."

Geshick said she is hopeful that band members know she has worked hard on their behalf and will continue to do so as she finishes out her first term, while also keeping an eye on the long-term needs of the band.

"I have that insight, knowledge, and understanding of the fiscal responsibility we need to have," said Geshick.

She added that she's proud to have worked closely with the tribal council as they faced a turbulent 2025 together, including losing two members to resignations, not to mention the broader upheaval related to changes in leader-



Tara Geshick

ship statewide and nationally.

"It was a trying year, and I would like to believe that I helped keep people on track," said Geshick. "I was able to handle it with poise — I remained a constant by being poised, calm, cool, and collected."

Geshick added that she is proud of how she kept her promise to complete overdue audits by reaching out to staff to get a game plan in place to accomplish that goal.

"When I got in, they didn't have a plan for audits," said Geshick. "But now we are working together to get it done, and we're completing our annual audits on time—that means a lot to

me as we did it as a team by setting up realistic timelines and getting input from everyone so that we could strategically get it done.

Geshick wished other candidates well and looks forward to the challenges as she seeks a second term.

"I would hope band members know that I will always work hard for them and stand up for them," said Geshick, who can be reached via cell phone (218-750-1170) or email (tegeshick@yahoo.com). "I learned a lot in my first term, but I have a lot more to offer our band members, and I am hopeful they give me a chance to continue working on their behalf."

Emergency Warming Locations

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

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

Vermilion Family
Boys & Girls Club
1610 Farm Road
Tower Mn

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

Call Teresa Isham with questions at 218-750-7632

Bois Forte News Briefs

Volunteers needed at Vermilion Food Shelf!

VERMILION SECTOR— If you can help volunteer at The Vermilion Food Shelf, please call Terry Defoe at 218-248-0389.

The help needed includes stocking and cleaning every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Join Us on the Team Reach App (Code:VermFoodShelf1)

Join us for 477 Career Day and Minnesota North Program Fair!

NETT LAKE—Stop by the BF Government Building (Eagle room) on Wednesday, Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. for 477 Career Day and Minnesota North Program Fair!

This event is your chance to learn, network and plan your future and learn about opportunities working for Bois Forte as well!

Bois Forte Tribal Court gives thorough update about its department!

*From the desk of Judicial Services
Director Melissa Wright*

NETT LAKE— Court staff have been very busy working on many projects to enhance and improve organization of the Tribal Court as well as attending different training and conferences to enhance our knowledge and skills.

Many of our projects have involved enhancing the use of technology as well as file re-organization and updated procedures for handling files, new labeling processes, and cross-checking hard files vs. electronic files to ensure all court data history is accurate and stored consistently.

Our file room now has all fireproof cabinets to protect over 50 years of court data. Additionally, we have been working on implementing our software system, Full Court. You can also now pay your fines and bail payments online. You may also access the forms needed to file in the courts on the Bois Forte website as well. This has been a huge undertaking in getting all current/active court files data inputted into the system and ensuring all documents are scanned in. We have over 9,000 scans so far! I'd like to thank the 477 Program for assistance with getting the Judicial Data Entry position through their quest grant. Without this program, we would still be miles deep behind in our re-organization project.

We have also been working on finalizing our Tribal Justice Strategic

Plan and hope to submit our plan for approval soon. Once submitted and approved, we will be placed at priority funding with the Department of Justice (DOJ) which we plan to use to apply for grants and other funding resources to continue to enhance the Tribal Court System with one of our goals being a Wellness Treatment Court.

We have also utilized the Tribal Access Program (TAP) to gain access to National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for running criminal history reports, and entering protection orders, and Tribal warrants into the national system. In doing so, our protection orders and warrants are now known by outside jurisdictions.

Probation office has been busy with monitoring pre-trial and sentenced probation. We are working to secure funding through Minnesota Department of Corrections for Tribal Probation Services, and we will be looking to hire an additional officer once that is secured.

Probation office is responsible for ensuring compliance with court orders as well as sex offender registry within the reservation boundaries. The SORNA code was updated this year and there are several new changes to the code in regard to registry requirements. Check out our Tribal Codes on the Bois Forte Website under Judicial Department tab as well as our sex offender registry website, (www.boisforte.com). We have secured an online platform for court ordered intervention classes



MEET THE STAFF!— Pictured left to right are: Melissa Wright- Judicial Services Director, Megan Treuer- Chief Judge, Cecile Schauer- Court Clerk, Janell Smith- Probation and SORNA Compliance Officer, Maggie Milam- Judicial Data Entry Clerk. “These ladies have been hard at work, and I would like to say miigwech to them for all that they are doing to improve our court system,” said Wright. Submitted photo.

for areas such as but not limited to anger management, DUI/DWI, batterer intervention. This was a much-needed service for our court system as there not many options close to the reservation or there are long waiting lists and high costs. Defendants now can enroll in these classes and complete them virtually.

We have many more projects coming. One of those projects is that we are going to be partnering with UCLA Law Tribal Legal Development Clinic to assess our tribal codes to identify any gaps or inconsistencies. This proj-

ect is at no cost to the band and helps students in their program learn about tribal law. Many of the students are indigenous. We are looking forward to this partnership to enhance our Tribal Codes.

In September we will be going back to in person court. We are looking forward to having visitors back in the building. Since COVID, court has been virtual. We have been busy trying to get the equipment needed to ensure safety and meet our technological needs to host hybrid style court.

Updates from the Bois Forte Housing staff

Submitted by Millie Holmes

Ahniin! Greetings to everyone from all of us at Housing. Here's hoping ya'll had a happy Christmas and a good start to your New Year.

Bois Forte Housing Office Staff is still catching up with some of the unfinished business from 2025. Don't be surprised if you get letters from us.

These are not all bad news. We're being inundated with emergency calls regarding furnaces and water heaters. On that front, Housing Staff will be putting together some basic maintenance workshops and other topics to help you in setting up your household and take care of matters near and dear to all our hearts: our homes.

Once again, we will be in Vermilion 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on non-RTC paydays, and Nett Lake 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on RTC paydays. You can bring in your Recertification Applications, ask questions about your lease, and generally, get to know staff. We are asking you to come to the Vermilion Social Center as it will be easier to

carry forms and possibly other equipment. Same goes for Nett Lake; come to the office.

If you are unable to come into the office, please let us know and one of us can come pick up your completed application, including any items to be verified.

Giigawabamin noongom.

Isham gives update on possible Round About at Y Store intersection

Submitted by Doris Isham

Many residents from the Lake Vermilion Reservation travel on Highway 169 and Angus Road daily if not more often as they travel for business, pleasure or necessity. Many people frequent the Y Store for one or two convenience items or to get food from the deli. Each time they leave the reservation they must go through the Y Store intersection.

A recent Bois Forte Transportation Safety Action Plan was devel-

oped by the Bois Forte Public Works and Community Development and Planning Departments. Community input was an important part of this project, and the plan was approved by the Tribal Council. The Y Store intersection was identified in the Transportation Safety Action Plan as a safety concern for the Bois Forte Band.

Over the past year there has been an increase of traffic accident activity at this location which has prompt-

ed the Bois Forte Tribal Government and staff, MnDOT and the St. Louis County Highway Department to initiate a series of meetings to discuss the intersection which has been a concern of MnDOT for a few years. Various safety Improvements have been installed with little or no results; safety improvement techniques have now been exhausted. The construction of a Round About appears to be the long-term and preferred solution.

The Y Store Intersection Improve-

ment project won't happen overnight and will take a few years to plan, design, work on legalities and to develop funding resources. Community input will be a big part of the project as there are various cities, townships, counties and the Bois Forte Band who are stakeholders in this project.

We will keep you informed as this process moves forward.

Native America Calling

A live one-hour call-in talk show, Monday – Friday at 12:05pm CT. The program engages noted guests and listeners in a thought-provoking national conversation from a Native perspective, hosted by Shawn Spruce (Laguna Pueblo).



Airs **LIVE** at
12:05pm M - F



Bois Forte Tribal Government Office
5344 Lakeshore Drive
Nett Lake MN 55772
218-757-3261 Ext. 1162



The Bois Forte Tribal Identification Cards are legal forms of ID, to obtain a card the Band Member needs to present in person.

BOIS FORTE TRIBAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Monday-Friday
8:30-3:30

No Appointment Needed!

Please bring one of the following to receive a Tribal ID:

- Original Certified Birth Certificate
- State Issued Driver's License (Not Expired)
- State Issued Identification Card (Not Expired)
- Valid Passport

For replacement Tribal ID cards you will be allowed one (1) prior to expiration date!

If a Band Member would like to pay \$12.00 for a Tribal ID after the 2nd issued we will provide a ID.

Any questions, please contact Kathie Holman, Tribal Enrollment Coordinator, at (218) 757-3261, ext. 1162 or Kathie.holman@boisforte-nsn.gov



FREE HIV AND HEP C TESTING



Indigenous Peoples Task Force and Bois Forte will be providing Rapid Testing and a \$25 Visa Gift Card Incentive for community members who qualify 10am-2pm each location below

TESTING SERVICES ARE FIRST COME FIRST SERVE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, NETT LAKE RTG

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH, VERMILION B&G



Contact deonk@indigenouspeoplestf.org for more information

Election from page 1

Reservation Tribal Council. I'd been trying my best to keep people's spirits up on Facebook this past year. I began to worry more about the effects of more than just the tribe's well-being; the individual band member's well-being was just as important," said Holmes, who encouraged voters to reach out to her via her cell phone (218-290-8014) or via email (niiganab@yahoo.com). "Sides, I figured there's a chance we can shape our future as a band, a tribe, into something more stable along the lines of our cultural identity."

As for what she can bring to the table, she said she has a network of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to tap into for different issues.

"I've finally filed for my own LLC and have business plans set up for the direction I hope to grow in business-wise as well as personally. I've worked as a Delegate for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe since its inception in one capacity or another," said Holmes, who makes traditional regalia for family and, on occasion, friends. "I am able to teach some of the cultural ways I've grown up with to others in a manner that they can understand. I am working on projects that will benefit the younger generations, such as an Anishinabeg Calendar, an Anishinabemowin Planner, which are based mostly on our traditional seasons and lunar calendar."

As mentioned earlier, Drift was prepared to walk away from his seat on the council after two terms, but after he made that Facebook post, elders and other band members implored him to run again.

"The positive comments that elders and band members told me, comments such as 'You're doing such a good job' and 'You really look out for us as band members,' made me tear up big time," said Drift. "I'm not sharing this to brag or boast; I am only sharing these comments with you because it's nice to hear positive comments. It feels good know-



Shane Drift

ing that what I'm doing is making a positive impact on band members."

Drift added that if the Bois Forte Band Members put their trust in him and re-elect him as the District I Representative, he will continue to do business the same way that he has always done.

"I must mention that band members have always been and always will be at the heart of my decision-making process," added Drift.

Regarding some of the main goals he hopes to achieve if re-elected, Drift said he will continue to push for an increase in the 1854 payments and to make them permanent. He'll also stay on task for getting 1866 treaty rights established, as well as continuing his fight to get Bois Forte to have its own cannabis growing facility and to pursue off-reservation cannabis dispensaries once a grow facility becomes a reality.

"I will also push for cannabis payments for band members," said Drift.

Some of Drift's proudest accomplishments during his second term include the appreciation shown to him by elders and other band members, as well as putting our employees' suggestions into action.

"As an example, our CFO suggested that our Health and Human Services build a financial reserve. When the tribal council rewrote the job description for the Health and Human Services CEO, I added in, 'Building a financial reserve for Health and Human Services,'" explained Drift. "The Health and Human Services has a nice, healthy financial reserve. One of our employees from the Y store brought it to my attention that the Y store was losing thousands of dollars from drive-offs each year. So, I addressed it at the Bois Forte Development Corporation meeting, the Y store ended up putting in pay at the pumps."

Drift said he wanted to thank band members for their support during his first two terms in office and, hopefully, a third term.

"If the Bois Forte band members place their trust in me again by electing me as the District I Representative, I will continue doing business the same

way that I have been doing over the past eight years," said Drift, who added that he will continue to advocate for our language, culture and traditions, while keeping the goal of building a roundhouse in Nett Lake as some of his other goals. "I take my job duties and responsibilities very seriously. I would like to wish all the other candidates good luck and safe travels. Mii'iw miigwech!"

If either candidate receives 50% of the votes, plus one additional vote, in the primary, there will not be a need for a general election for this seat on June 9.

District II seat:

O'Leary, who is known to family and friends as "Woody," has been an employee for the last 13 years at Fortune Bay as a dual-rate Pitboss/Blackjack dealer and has worked for a total of 16 years at the Bay. He has over 30 years of experience in the gaming industry.

"I am a strong advocate for elder care, I also believe we can build a better home here for our elders," added O'Leary. "I have 20 years on and off in masonry, starting as a laborer, to a block layer and a cement finisher in Laborers 1091, and Local 1, in which I have learned a large variety of skills."

He said he decided to run for office again, after his bid four years ago was cut short, due to an illness that hospitalized him and he had to step aside.

"I have always felt that the District II Representative is, in many ways, the most crucial seat because it is the seat of our main business venture, Fortune Bay Resort Casino," said O'Leary. "It should have a person with an extensive knowledge of gaming operations, along with our band members, who work there on a very personal level. Someone knowing their needs as community members to keep them able to work and sustain their lives here on Vermilion Reservation."

As to what O'Leary feels he can bring to the tribal council, he pointed to his extensive frontline experience in the gaming industry.

"I am a very compassionate leader when it comes to employees working under me," said O'Leary, who can be reached via cell (218-780-7596) or email (chfwdnhd@yahoo.com). "I always take on the heavier workloads to lessen the burden of those under me. I will do the same while representing District II. Thank you for your time."

Meanwhile, Alanna Sherman believes her experience in both tribal government and tribal enterprises, including roles within Bois Forte Tribal Government and leadership positions at Fortune Bay Resort Casino, will be a strong selling point as to why band members should vote for her. She added that these roles have given her a strong understanding of tribal operations, employee relations, and how council decisions impact our people.

"I decided to run for tribal council because I believe our community has strong potential and deserves leadership that follows through, listens, and remains accountable to the people," said Sherman, who is married to Josh Sherman and is the proud mother of three children—Ellie, Dexter, and James. "I understand the challenges our band members face because I live them every day—as a band member, a parent, and a community member—and I am ready to serve with responsibility and transparency."

She added that she believes our tribal council should work as a team, grounded in strong communication among themselves and, most importantly, with you—the band members.

"Our voices matter, and when we work together, we are stronger. There is power in bringing different perspectives to the table and focusing them toward one shared goal—to grow, heal, and succeed together as Bois Forte," said Sherman, the daughter of Mark Drift, Sr., and Effie "Dolly" Villebrun, and the



Alanna Sherman



Tim O'Leary

See Election on page 9

Election from page 8

granddaughter of Lester Drift Sr., Karen Drift, and Jane Villebrun. “Miigwech!”

For the incumbent, Robert Moyer, Jr., seeking a second term was something he felt he needed to do as his first term laid the groundwork to ensure he was working diligently on behalf of all Bois Forte band members. He called his first term a challenge and admitted that there were times the pressure was pretty intense.

“It has been quite the learning process,” said Moyer. “We’ve had leadership changes on the council and different position changes within the organization, not to mention changes at the state and federal levels too. But I’ve learned a lot, and I will always do what’s best for the band.”

He said it was a challenge to keep making decisions when former Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers resigned in January of 2025, followed by District II Representative Perry Drift’s resignation in August of 2025.

“Even when it was down to three



Robert Moyer

of us, we were still getting things done to make sure things weren’t getting backlogged,” said Moyer, Jr. “It was stressful—it was hard, but we stayed the course, and I appreciate everybody who was part of the process.”

If he does get re-elected, Moyer, Jr. said he’ll continue to move the blood quantum issue forward because, according to a Wilder Foundation report, Bois Forte could be in dire straits regarding membership by 2095.

“I can see both sides of this issue, but at the rate we’re going, we’re going to be writing ourselves out of the books and be extinct within 100 years,” he said. “I think we need to include different blood, like members of the MCT, Red Lake, or any federally recognized tribe, including the First Nations blood from Canada. We were all one big country—borders were not there.”

Moyer, Jr. would also like to see a structural change to the tribal council, where instead of having two District II Representatives in the Nett Lake Village, there would be one, with an At-Large Representative located in either Nett Lake or the Vermilion Sector.

“It’s about equality for me,” said Moyer, Jr., about the proposed change that has yet to be presented. “That means something to me, but it has to be

a decision made by the band members or perhaps a council vote. I also think we should have an office in Vermilion for the tribal chair so that he has a place to call home instead of only having an office in Nett Lake.”

Another goal for Moyer, Jr. is to continue to make progress with cannabis. He said it was nice to get the Ishkode Dispensary off and running, but now is the time to take it a step further by getting a grow operation going.

“Paxton (Goodsky, the manager at Ishkode) and his staff have been great as the dispensary is something that means a lot to our band members,” said Moyer, Jr. “It’s doing well for the band—it’s making some money, but to make significant money we need a grow operation and to

start licensing off the reservation. We have to get on the ball with that. There are still opportunities out there, and we need to get moving as soon as possible.”

Moyer, Jr. said he pledges to be someone band members can count on as Bois Forte moves forward into its future, promising to ensure prosperity for the next 7 generations.

“I know I can’t please everybody, and I can’t fix everything, but I promise that I will work hard on behalf of all band members if I get re-elected to a second term,” said Moyer, who can be reached via cell (218-410-4008) or email (jrmoyer72@gmail.com). “Miigwech, and please reach out if you have any questions.”

Note: Please see page four for the

Here is the Elder Nutrition Program’s menu for the month of February. Services offered include nutritious meals served daily, Monday through Friday at the Nett Lake and Vermilion Community Centers from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with home-delivered meals available to Elders who are unable to get to the ENP sites. REMINDER: Beginning March 1, 2026 ENP Meals will be available ONLY to Elders!



Feb. 2: Stir Fry Chicken/Veggies, Rice, Egg roll, Fruit

Feb. 3: Lasagna Roll Ups, Italian Veggie Blend, Fruit, Garlic Bread

Feb. 4: Chicken Fajita/WW Tortilla, Spanish Rice/Black Beans, Sour Cream, Fruit

Feb. 5: Beef Meatloaf, Baked Squash, Veggie, Fruit

Feb. 6: Cream of Potato, Soup/Veggies, WW Roll, Fruit

Feb. 9: Beef Enchilada/Cheese/Sour cream, Refried beans, Fruit

Feb. 10: Porchetta/WW Bun, French Fries, Steamed Mixed Veggies, Fruit

Feb. 11: White Chicken Chili, Tortilla Chips, Veggies, Fruit

Feb. 12: Chicken Tenders, Mac & Cheese, Veggie, Fruit

Feb. 13: Sweet and Sour Meatballs, Rice, Broccoli Florets, Fruit

Feb. 16: Holiday

Feb. 17: Goulash/Pasta dish, Veggie, Apple/Peanut Butter

Feb. 18: Hot Turkey/Biscuit/Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Veggie

Feb. 19: Beef Ravioli, Italian Veggie Blend, Garlic Toast

Feb. 20: BBQ Pork Sandwich/WW Bun, Baked Beans, Veggie, Fruit

Feb. 23: Grilled Chicken Breast, Pasta Salad, Veggie, Fruit

Feb. 24: Wild Rice Meatballs, Baby Reds, Mixed Vegetable, WW Roll

Feb. 25: Cheeseburger/WW Bun, Fries, Pickles, Fruit

Feb. 26: Sausage Jambalaya, Steamed Corn, Fruit

Feb. 27: Chicken Pot Pie, Steamed Veggie, Fruit

Bois Forte Tribal Court is looking for the following individuals:

Defendant	DOB
Adams, Michael Lorne	05/08/1974
Buckanaga, Christopher Charles	06/26/1969
Burns, Riley William	08/25/1995
Butcher, Ryan Allen James	07/29/1986
Deegan, Peter James	08/21/1977
Drift, Mark Edward Jr.	10/10/1995
Goggeleye, Charles Victor III.	12/29/1980
Guenther 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 ac-

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
Littlewolf, Toni Lynn	01/21/1972
Nelson, Thomas Jr.	06/07/1990

tive 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.

Shelley Mae Strong



Shelley Mae Strong, 63, of Nett Lake, MN passed away on Tuesday, December 30, 2025. Shelley was born on June 11, 1962, in Cook, MN. She worked at the Nett Lake School as a Cook, and as a pharmacist aid.

Shelley enjoyed fishing, hunting, ricing and just being outdoors. She also enjoyed beading and doing crafts and cooking, which was a big part of her life. She was passionate about

volunteering in the community and was always happy to help. She loved to entertain her grandchildren, laughing, dancing and singing with them. Shelley was an outgoing, fun-loving free spirit. She loved to poke jabs and was always joking, laughing and smiling. She always brought "more" anywhere she went, making any gathering more fun and livelier. She will be dearly missed.

Shelley was preceded in

death by her husband Eric Strong; daughter Lindsey Quoetone; granddaughters: Camaira Villebrun and Nevaeh Villebrun; grandson Isiah Moon; brother Sam Villebrun; sister Mona Villebrun; grandparents: Vi and Bronco Villebrun; and several aunts and uncles.

She is survived by her parents: Eileen and Kenny Barney, and Father David (Guy) Connor; children: Brent (Danelle)

Villebrun, Ashley Goodsky, and Amanda Quoetone; brothers: Kenny Villebrun and Michael (Suzy) Villebrun; numerous grandchildren; and numerous aunts and uncles and nieces and nephews.

A wake was held Thursday, January 8, 2025 starting at 5:00pm at the Nett Lake Government and Services Center. The service took place Friday, January 9, 2026, at the center.

Shawn Robert Villebrun

Shawn Robert Villebrun, 52, of Mesa, Arizona (formerly of Eveleth, MN and Lake Vermilion, Bois Forte) passed away on January 10, 2026, surrounded by his loving family after battling cancer.

Shawn was born on Sept. 29, 1973, in Virginia, MN to Robert (Bobby) Villebrun and Rosemary King. He grew up and attended school in Eveleth and graduated high school from Orr, MN.

Shawn married Tara (Varani) Villebrun on April 12, 1995, and they proceeded to grow their family with three sons: Brendin, Jordan, and Dylan. Shawn was a proud member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. He received diplomas from Mesabi College (MN North) in Eveleth with diplomas in graphic arts and the mobile equipment service technician. Shawn worked at various jobs at Fortune Bay Resort Casino and The Wilderness at Fortune Bay golf course, as well as Intel and Arizona Commercial Truck and Sales. Shawn loved life, his family, his

friends, his wife, children, and above all, his prized possession was his grandchildren.

Shawn was preceded in death by his mother, Rosemary King; grandparents: LaVerne and Gwendolyn King and Earl and Alvina Villebrun; as well as his mother-in-law, Judy Varani.

He is survived by his dedicated and loving wife (and best friend), Tara; sons, Brendin (Char), Jordan (Mariah), and Dylan; grandchildren, Jayden, Jason, Brendin, Cameron, Sammijo, Olivia, Treyton, Jaidalynn, and Amelia; his father, Robert Villebrun; father-in-law, Robert Varani; sisters, Angela Villebrun and Crystal (James Ryan) Villebrun; sister-in-law, Tammy (Tom) Card; nieces and nephews; Victoria, James, Lora, Kristie, Molly, Magi and numerous great nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life was held Sunday, January 18, 2026, at Cron-Sheehy Funeral Home, Eveleth.

COMMUNITY EVENT PLANNING TEAM
PRESENTS

WINTER BLOCK PARTY

FRIDAY,
2.27.2026
10:00 AM
TO
12:00 PM

BOUNCY HOUSE FOR YOUNGER
& OLDER KIDS, OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES, ARTS & CRAFTS

MID-WINTER PICNIC &
GIFT BAGS FOR ALL
PARTICIPANTS

NETT LAKE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL (USE BACK DOORS)

VERMILION BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Now **HIRING**

Bois Forte always has job openings,
so make sure to check out
the Bois Forte website at www.boisforte.com



Position
Comptroller
Program Accountant
Early Childhood Program Teacher Substitute
Bus Driver

Department
Accounting
Accounting
477 Programs/Early Childhood Programs
Public Works/Transit

Location
Nett Lake
Nett Lake
NL & VM
Nett Lake

Tribal Council reminds band members to get their Tribal IDs

NETT LAKE— Given all of the tragic news coming out of Minneapolis, the Bois Forte Tribal Council is urging band members to be vigilant in protecting themselves should they ever face questioning from ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers.

This includes making sure you are carrying your Tribal ID and another form of ID in case you ever get questioned or illegally detained by an ICE officer.

In lieu of all the upheaval, Bois Forte set up emergency Tribal ID dates for band members after the first tragic death was reported on January 6th when a protestor was killed by ICE officers.

“We set up as soon as we got to the urban office and began providing IDs a little after 12 p.m. right up until 6 p.m.,” said Bois Forte Human Resources Director Simona Benner. “We had a little over 80 IDs done in Minneapolis.”

Benner said 30 band members came into the Duluth Urban office the following day for their Tribal IDs.

“Both locations had ages ranging from little ones to elders,” said Benner. “We would like to thank all the members who came in for their patience while waiting to receive their ID.”

The Bois Forte Tribal Council has set up additional dates for band members to get a Tribal ID done at the Minneapolis Urban Office on Tuesday, February 3rd, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Band members living in the Duluth area can get their Tribal ID at the Duluth Urban office the following day from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

If you can't make either of these dates, Bois Forte's Tribal Enrollment Coordinator Kathie Holman said there will be plenty of other dates to stop in during the coming months. Those dates include the following:

- March 7 at the State of the Band, Fortune Bay Resort Casino, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- April 8—Cass Lake MCT Office, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- April 9—Bemidji (site TBD)—9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- June 6— Sah Gi Bah Gah Powwow-Nett Lake—11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- June 27— Lake Vermilion Powwow—11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Urban Picnics in both Minneapolis and Duluth in August will be another opportunity to get your Tribal ID. Look for announcements on social media or the Bois Forte News at a later date for confirmed dates and times.

The Tribal Council will be waiving the fee for duplicate Tribal Identification Cards until July 31, 2026.

Please bring one of the following to receive a Tribal ID:

- Original Certified Birth Certificate (no photocopies accepted)
- Valid State Issued Driver's License or State ID (not expired)
- Valid State Issued Identification Card (not expired)

• Valid Passport

In the notice posted on the Bois Forte website, band members were reminded that they have the right to remain silent when questioned by law enforcement, including ICE, and can demand a valid judicial warrant before law enforcement enters their home.

Benner said it is sad that in this day and age, band members must prove they rightfully belong here.

“It is concerning that band members or any other individual must worry about the possibility of being detained by immigration authorities,” said Benner. “Situations like this can create unnecessary stress. I am glad our tribe was quick and efficient with sending our enrollment/HR department down to administer the IDs to our urban offices.”

Secretary-Treasurer Tara Geshick said the tribal council has discussed the situation in Minneapolis, but added they have chosen not to get too political due to potential repercussions related to the state and federal funding

Bois Forte receives.

“It is disheartening that we have to prove who we are when we are the original inhabitants of this land, and we belong here—this is our land,” said Geshick. “Let's just hope that better days are ahead because we've been living a nightmare for a while now.”

District II Representative Robert Moyer, Jr. agreed.

“I've been contemplating what my dad would think of this,” said Moyer, Jr. from his office recently. “He didn't show his political side, but I would be interested to see what his perspectives would be about all of this. Knowing him, he would be rolling over in his grave if he saw what was going on. We need to be better than this—it's not good.”

If you have information about ICE targeting band members, we encourage you to reach out to Miranda Lilya, Executive Director at (218) 404-6678, or mlilya@boisforte-nsn.gov.



Minute with Millie

Well, these past months have flown by. A lots been happening in this great state of ours. I've been watching the news and various videos on the internet especially since the week in January.

I'd barely gotten up from my sick bed, made plans to trek down to the cities for our usual Sunday Beading class when Boom. The world went spinning as news of the shooting of Renee Good spread on the Internet. Then last week the outright murder of Alex Pretti. And now the Minnesota National Guard has been activated.

AIM as well as the usual group are now patrolling in the Franklin area. I am having difficulty keeping things straight within my own life as I utilize our traditional manner of smudging, setting out tobacco and asking for guidance in these times.

I have been thinking of my parents, grandparents and aunties, uncles and all those who went through difficult times in their lives. They've set the example for us and I intend to follow in their footsteps as best I can.

Course, my paths always tend to be a bit wandering here and there which always earned me an eyeroll, an occasional ear beating or mostly, a word of praise or encouragement. Cause sometimes, I did something new that was easier and Mom and Auntie were proud.



National Native News

A five-minute, weekday newscast dedicated to Native issues, that compiles spot news reports from around the country, anchored by Antonia Gonzales (Navajo). National Native News provides listeners with relevant, timely coverage on Native American and Indigenous communities for listeners engaged in the world around them and who seek out a broader range of viewpoints.



Airs on KBFT at
Noon every M - F



Hoffer and Burdick celebrated for their service to the BIA

NETT LAKE— The tight-knit family that works in the Bois Forte Tribal Court and Police Department offices recently gathered to say goodbye to two key members of their team.

The staff was joined by family and friends of Law Enforcement Assistant Donna Hoffer and Chief of Police Jamie Burdick, both of whom officially retired Thursday, January 8th.

For Burdick, the day marked the end of a 34-year career in law enforcement, including the past 12-plus years with Bois Forte. Hoffer's retirement came after nearly 9 and a half years working at the Bois Forte Tribal Court, located on Palmquist Road, some six miles from Nett Lake village.

"I appreciate all of you for coming today," said BIA Assistant Special Agent in Charge Michael Potter at the roughly three dozen attendees gathered for the ceremony. "For me, personally, having to work with Donna and Chief Burdick these last few years, it's a sad, but also a happy day. Today, Bois Forte, OJS (Office of Justice Services), and Indian Country as a whole



CELEBRATING THEIR CAREERS—Chief of Police Jamie Burdick and Law Enforcement Assistant Donna Hoffer hold up their retirement cake as family and friends came out to celebrate the success they both had in their professional careers.

are losing, there's no better way to say, but two legends."

With that, Potter asked Hoffer to come forward to accept a plaque of appreciation, with heartfelt words that captured the essence of what Hoffer meant to the department over the past 9 and a half years. Those words included touting Hoffer's impact and commitment to supporting law enforcement operations with excellence, reliability, and compassion.

Potter said that reliability and compassion have been deeply valued by all who have had the privilege to work alongside Hoffer.

"As you retire, we honor your contributions and thank you for your steadfast support and integrity," said Potter. "Here's wishing you all the best in the next chapter of your life."

Hoffer thanked Potter and told those gathered that she would miss her job.

"I loved it," said Hoffer, who plans to stay active in retirement by continuing to work with the Orr Ambulance Service, plus travel to reconnect with foreign exchange students she and her

family hosted over the years. "I'll probably miss the lunches with the staff the most... I had great people to work with, so thank you. Miigwech."

Prior to the ceremony, Hoffer reminisced about all the good times she had with her fellow co-workers and encouraged whoever replaces her to have patience and to do the necessary research.

"If you don't find the answer in one area, you may find it in another area, but keep looking and work hard," said Hoffer, who added that she is going to miss the people she worked with, as they had so many fond memories of being that tight-knit "work" family. "There's a lot of background work you need to do to allow you to do your job better."

Potter also presented Burdick with a plaque filled with heartfelt words about all he meant to Bois Forte and its people. He touted Burdick's lengthy service to law enforcement with unwavering dedication to the BIA and OJS.

"Your leadership integrity and commitment to justice have left a

lasting legacy in the communities you served throughout Indian country and among the colleagues you've inspired," said Potter. "As you retire, we celebrate your remarkable career and thank you for your tireless efforts and for upholding the values of honor and respect in public service— congratulations on a well-earned retirement."

Burdick spoke fondly of his staff and knows they will be in good hands with the ones they left behind, including interim Chief of Police Joshua Cox and Officer Cory King. He recalled a time when Donna left her position and returned, which made him appreciate her even more because there was so much paperwork to do.

"I had a great staff, and everybody did what they needed to do to get things done, especially Cory. If I had three more Cory's, we wouldn't have had to worry about anything," said Burdick. "He was gung-ho, and he's still gung-ho. It was great being here because I met a lot of people. I'll keep in touch with everybody, thank you."

Burdick said he plans to return to his family in North Dakota but added that he may stick around until spring to tidy up some loose ends before moving on to his next chapter in life, which will include spending time with family and grandkids.

"There were a lot of good people here," said Burdick, who previously worked at other reservations before making a home with Bois Forte. "Everyone was so kind and respectful. They were also genuine just in the way they would talk to you—I didn't always get that in other areas, so I am very grateful for the way the Bois Forte people treated me."

As for words of advice for his predecessor, Burdick said for that person to be kind to the people they serve and protect.

"Talk to the people the way you want to be talked to," said Burdick. "Be fair and listen, too."

**LET'S GROW
YOUR BUSINESS.**

Contact us to unlock
funding and strategy.

DAWN
DRIVING ACCESS TO
WEALTH & NETWORKS

**BOIS FORTE BAND
OF CHIPPEWA**

DAWNMN.ORG

FORMING CONNECTIONS

BUILDING CAPACITY

ACCESSING CAPITAL

POWERED BY NORTHSPAN