

Covering the Ho-Chunk Nation



HOCAK WORAK

Vol. XXXIX, Issue 24

Ca He Waksu wira | Deer Antler Shedding Moon

December 26, 2025



Ho-Chunk Youth Leader Dexter Paasch Takes His Voice to the State Capitol

Kaili Berg

At just 17 years old, Dexter (Paasch) Carrimon is already doing the kind of work many people don't step into until much later in life, showing up in legislative spaces, speaking truth about Native history, and pushing for real change that impacts communities across Minnesota and beyond.

An enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, Paasch is a senior at Harding Senior High School in St. Paul and one of this year's recipients of the Optimist Club of St. Paul Youth Appreciation College Awards. Each of the 16 students selected received a \$3,000 scholarship.

Over the past year, he helped advance legislation requiring opioid and fentanyl awareness education in Minnesota high schools, a bill that was ultimately adopted into law. What began as a school opportunity quickly turned into something much bigger.

"I thought it was just a mock trial or a mock legislature," Paasch said. "But after I presented my stuff, they reached out again, saying that they wanted to keep pushing forward to make these bills a reality."

That moment opened the door to a deeper interest in politics and law through a program called Catalyst for System Change, also known as Changemakers. The work became real when he found himself giving testimony directly to lawmakers.

"When I gave my testimony in the House, where I was actually having to speak to the House of Representatives, getting to be in that environment, that's when it felt real," Paasch said.

While opioid awareness legislation is one milestone, Paasch is also focused on making sure Ho-Chunk history is taught accurately in Minnesota schools. He is currently working through a YMCA Youth in Government program to advance a bill addressing Indigenous history education and has already spoken with a state senator and the chief clerk at the Capitol.

"My biggest argument for it is, why shouldn't history in Minnesota be taught how the history of Minnesota happened?" Paasch said. "Ho-Chunks were here. Ho-Chunks were kicked out. Ho-Chunks are exiled. That's just Minnesota history. And it should be taught."

Paasch has largely navigated this work on his own, though he has received guidance from longtime Native radio host Robert Pilot. When asked what keeps him grounded while operating in adult spaces like government and media, Paasch pointed to his family.

"That would probably have to go to a few of my cookas," Paasch said. "Even if I'm doing all this stuff, they still keep me fairly humbled. They're proud of the work I do, but they make sure that I don't get too full of myself."

Looking back on the past year, Paasch says the opioid awareness bill stands out as what he's most proud of, especially given the disproportionate impact substance abuse has had in Indian Country.

"I gave my testimony to the Senate, and a big section of my testimony was about Native American statistics with substance abuse and overdose," Paasch said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, American Indian and Alaska Native people experience some of the highest overdose death rates of any racial or ethnic group in the United States.

In recent years, overdose death rates for Native communities have been two to three times higher than

Continued on Page 3



Photo Credit: Dexter (Paasch) Carrimon

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Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Fires Executives After ICE-Related Contract Sparks Outcry

By Levi Rickert

Reprint from Native News Online

December 10, 2025

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation on Tuesday terminated senior management of its economic development corporation after a tribal subsidiary secured a \$29.9 million federal contract to design potential U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities.

The prime contract, awarded by the Department of Homeland Security to KPB Services LLC, supports early-phase planning, including research, technical

assessments and concept designs for secure structures that meet ICE operating requirements. The award does not involve construction or the operation of detention centers, according to federal procurement documents.

In a joint statement, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and Prairie Band LLC acknowledged community concerns about the Homeland Security contract and the process that led to its approval.

"Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and Prairie Band LLC understand the concerns raised about a recently awarded Department of Homeland

Security planning contract that involves feasibility studies and technical assessments," the statement said. "As a sovereign Nation, our values guide the decisions we make, and we acknowledge that this contract does not align with those principles."

The Tribal Council and the board of Prairie Band LLC said they terminated senior members of the LLC's leadership team responsible for securing the award.

"Moving forward, we are also taking a closer look at the internal review and approval process for federal contracts," the statement

INSIDE SCOOP...

News.....	2-3
Announcements.....	2-6
Elders	3
Notices	6
Memorials	7
Health.....	7
Year in Review.....	8-13
Legislative Minutes.....	14-15
Ads.....	16

Want something special placed in the Hocak Worak? Limited space is available so send your request in early. Submissions will be handled on a first come first serve basis.

Jury Sides With NDN Collective: Grand Gateway To Pay \$1 in Damages

By NDN Collective

December 20, 2025

Rapid City, SD – Today, the trial resulting from the federal civil rights class action lawsuit filed by NDN Collective against the Retsel Corporation, owner of the Grand Gateway Hotel, in March 2022, resulted in the jury ruling in favor of NDN Collective and other individual plaintiffs. NDN Collective will be paid just \$1 for the unlawful and discriminatory actions of Retsel Corporation and its owners – a request made to the jury by NDN Collective itself.

"This case was never about money for NDN Collective – no amount of money will fix racism or make NDN Collective, and the people we stand for, whole," said Dr. Valeriah Big Eagle, Director of He Sapa Initiatives at NDN Collective. "Our relatives have fought against the weight of racism their entire lives. It is not just one moment, or one person, or one business where subtle and blatant discrimination has harmed Native people in Rapid City. Racism has been part of the undercurrent of the city for far too long – today's victory shows we're ready for something better."

"Many of our relatives organized against racism in Rapid City and passed on to the spirit world before they saw justice served," said Nick

Tilsen, founder and CEO of NDN Collective. "This fight is for our ancestors, for our sacred children and grandchildren, and for those whose voices and spirits have been silenced by those who dehumanize and attack Native people. We hope the outcome of this case makes it clear to the Retsel Corporation – and all businesses in Rapid City – that racism will always be bad for business, and that the Indigenous people in this community will never stop fighting for justice and equity."

Timeline of Events

As a reminder, here's what happened:

March 19, 2022: A shooting occurs at the Grand Gateway Hotel, and 19-year-old Myron "Blaine" Pourier Jr. is shot. 16 days later, he succumbed to his injuries on April 3, 2022.

March 20, 2022: Connie Uhre, the previous owner of the hotel who has since passed away, posts on social media stating her intent to ban all Natives from the Grand Gateway Hotel and the attached bar, Cheers Lounge.

March 21 -22, 2022: NDN Collective staff attempt to book rooms at the Grand Gateway Hotel – both as individuals and on behalf of the organization. They are denied service and kicked out of the hotel by the manager. On March 22, the entire staff at Cheers Lounge quit in

protest.

March 23, 2022: NDN Collective files a federal civil rights class action lawsuit against the Grand Gateway Hotel and hosts a march and rally.

April 20, 2022: NDN Collective holds an action at The Foothills Inn to kick off a boycott of all properties owned by the Uhre family.

May 27, 2022: Connie Uhre attacks community members picketing outside. She was subsequently convicted by a jury of two counts of simple assault.

July 2022: The boycotts end, after community members picket three days a week for three months.

October 19, 2022: The Department of Justice (DOJ)

files a lawsuit against the owners and operators of the Grand Gateway Hotel and the Cheers Sports Lounge and Casino – after conducting a months-long investigation sparked by NDN Collective's organizing, protesting, marching, and filing of a separate lawsuit.

October 31, 2023: Another lawsuit is filed against the Grand Gateway Hotel by a Wisconsin family alleging they were denied service based on the race of a Native family member.

November 13, 2023: A settlement agreement is reached between the Department of Justice and the family that owns the Grand Gateway Hotel and Cheers Lounge in Rapid City.

December 13, 2023: NDN Collective receives a court-ordered apology letter from the Grand Gateway Hotel and responds accordingly.

September 2024: Days before the scheduled start of the federal civil rights trial brought by NDN Collective, the owners of the Grand Gateway Hotel file for bankruptcy, forcing the pause of all other litigation. The bankruptcy case was dismissed two months later.

September 2025: Connie Uhre passes away at the age of 78.

December 15, 2025: Federal civil rights trial resulting from NDN Collective's 2022 lawsuit is set to begin.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HO-CHUNK NATION HOMELESS COALITION
(HCNHC)

Let's Make Everyone Count!

2026 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count

What is the PIT

The PIT Count is a one-day snapshot of the people experiencing homelessness in our communities.

Why do we do it?

Knowing the number of people facing homelessness in our communities can help us advocate for more local and federal funding. It also helps to raise awareness within our communities.

Wednesday, January 28-29, 2026

Available times between 11 PM – 6 AM

Survey Locations (Ho-Chunk Tribal Lands)

Counties Included:
Brown, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, La Crosse, Sauk, Shawano and Wood

Sign up to volunteer. No experience necessary. Training materials will be provided.

If you are experiencing homelessness contact HCNHC.

at this number →

email: lynnette.henryh@ho-chunk.com
Call: 715-284-7749

HO-CHUNK BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

HOUSE OF WELLNESS
Fitness | Aquatic Center

SINGLE ELIMINATION TOURNAMENT 1 DAY TOURNAMENT

JAN 10TH 2026

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED DEADLINE JANUARY 5TH
\$50 entry fee

CONTACT FITNESS CENTER FOR MORE INFO: 608.355.5155 EXT. 15506
S2845 WHITE EAGLE RD. BARABOO, WI. 53913
MANAGEMENT RESERVES RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES

Snowmobile Riders: Ride Safe And Sober This Holiday Season

MADISON, Wis. – As some snowmobile trails begin to open, the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds snowmobilers to stay sober on

the trails this season and be aware of unsafe ice.

Two of the most common off-highway vehicle (OHV) crash contributors around the holidays are weak ice and impaired operation. Both factors can be mitigated through planning and smart decision-making.

Often, when alcohol is

involved in a crash, it is the main contributing factor and can lead to tragedy. "Crashes that involve alcohol are preventable," said Lt. Jacob Holsclaw, DNR off-highway vehicle administrator.

Make a plan to get home safely by riding sober. Not only is it illegal to operate under the influence of drugs

or alcohol, but it also puts you, your passengers and other recreators at risk. Wisconsin has seen several alcohol-related deaths in 2025.

Additionally, monitor ice conditions by consulting with local experts, such as outfitters, bait shops and

Continued on Page 7



Two of the most common off-highway vehicle crash contributors are weak ice and impaired operation. / Photo Credit: Rachel Hershberger/Travel Wisconsin

January Elders Birthdays

1. Francis Decorah	19. Steven Cholka
Marlene Garrison	Rhonda Funmaker
Sarah Hernandez	Marlene Peterson
Marlene Huffman	Charlene Steele
Karen Johnson	
2. Tony Evans	20. Michael Goze
3. Shelby Grant	Mark Hellerud
Kearnes Denise	21. Cheryl Brinegar
Roger Schmitz, Jr.	22. David Mach
Algernon Wauqua I	Barbara Pierce
Frederick Zensen, Jr.	23. Michael Day
4. Kathleen Angel	Antoinette Horak
Steven Bell	Julie Rockman
David Radtke	Pamela Smith
5. Raena Funmaker	24. Karena Thundercloud
Joann Jones	25. Martin Cooper
Mark Thundercloud	Michael Gromoff
6. Roy Cassiman	Julia Little Wolf
Robert Funmaker, Jr.	Nela Stacy
Penny Lamere Smart	26. Wilbert Cleveland
Anita Prieur	Gary Hall
7. Phyllis Armendariz	Stewart Miller
Barbara Lowe	Melanie Sainz
Eunice Winneshiek	27. Tina Danielski
8. Ona Garvin	Jennifer Jones
Bonnie Hanson	Muriel Schauer
Mark Young	Raymond Sprosty
10. Melanie Bryant	28. Berna BigThunder-
Janice Goldman	Hindsley
Douglas Greengrass	Wade Blackdeer
Avery Lonetree	Joan Wilson
11. Wayne Blackdeer	Anthony Winneshiek
Patricia Filipowicz	29. Frisk Decorah
Deanna Penland	Cindy Funmaker
13. Carson West	John Houghton, Jr.
Wendy White Eagle	Faye Larson
14. Roberta Decorah	Eugene Notah
Marvin Leonard, Jr.	Rosalie Two Bulls
Susan Moore	30. Gregory Garvin
Gary Thundercloud	Irene Keenan, Jr.
Hattie Walker	Cecelia Rave
15. Joanne La Mere	Mercedes White Eagle
Rodney Young	31. Ethel Funmaker
16. Joyce White Eagle	Cynthia Holloway
Sharon Whitebear	Kathyleen Lone Tree-
17. Roberta Crowe	Whiterabbit
Velvet Cooper	Janice Rice
Stephanie Green	Estelle Whitewing
Roger Houghton, Sr.	
Sidney Lewis	
Kimberly Rowley	
Sherill Worthy	

Continued from Page 1
those of white populations in several Midwestern states, including Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Paasch hopes his story shows other young people what's possible. He's open about the fact that his path wasn't always clear.

"I wasn't the greatest student my freshman year of high school," Paasch said. "My freshman-year self would not, in a million years, see myself doing the stuff I'm doing right now. Anybody could do it. Anybody could make a change."

After graduation, Paasch

plans to attend college, major in political science, and eventually attend law school. His long-term goal is to become a Marine Corps Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer, and one day, to continue serving Native communities through law and policy.

"Mending Broken Hearts" Workshop

Healing from Unresolved Grief, Loss & Intergenerational Trauma

Workshop Dates and Times
January 5th through January 9th, 2026
10:00 AM- 3:30 PM

Participants must attend all 5 days of the workshop
Workshop is available up to 20 participants only, must register to attend.

E11046 N Reedsburg Rd. Baraboo, WI. 53913

- Limited transportation available.
- Lunch will be provided.
- Feel free to bring your own tools for healing (cedar, sage, etc.)
- Future workshops in other areas.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Behavioral Health division is facilitating this workshop for tribal members, offering culturally based ways of healing from unresolved feelings of loss and grief created by intergenerational and historical trauma.

SCAN TO REGISTER, OR VISIT:
<https://hcn-bh.typeform.com/MBH2026Jan>

Facilitators:
Menissa Powless
Travis Cloud

The Hocak Worak is a periodical published twice monthly by the Ho-Chunk Nation. Editorials and articles appearing in the Hocak Worak are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of the Hocak Worak staff or the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The Hocak Worak encourages the submission of letters to the Editor. All letters must include the signature, address and telephone number of the author. Letters are subject to editing for grammar, length, malicious and libelous content.

The Hocak Worak reserves the right to reject any advertising, material, or letters submitted for publication. The submission of articles, poetry, artwork and photos is encouraged. The Editor makes the sole decision of what is published in the Hocak Worak. The Hocak Worak will not assume any responsibility for unsolicited material.

Submissions deadlines for the Hocak Worak are by 4:30 PM. We cannot guarantee the publication of submissions meeting these deadlines if the space is not available. No part of this publication may be produced without express written consent from the Editor.

HOCAK WORAK NEWSLETTER

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www.hocakworak.com

The Hocak Worak is a member of:
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INDIGENOUS
Journalists Association

Attention: The Next Deadline of the Hocak Worak will be January 2nd which will be published on January 9th. Please contact Hocak Worak at ext. 11004 if you have a change of address or would like to be placed on the mailing list.

Twelve Clans Shareholder Newsletter

December 16, 2025 – On Saturday, December 6, we hosted the Annual Shareholder Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with some shareholders also joining virtually. This newsletter shares key highlights from the meeting, outlines what to expect moving forward, and welcomes our new Shareholder Portal users.

The Meeting

Shareholders joined us in person at the Potawatomi Casino Hotel and online for a hybrid meeting experience. Doors opened at 10:00 a.m. for registration, where attendees checked in and enjoyed breakfast and coffee prior to the start of the meeting.

At 10:30 a.m., CEO Brown Thunder formally welcomed shareholders and opened the Annual Meeting. He reviewed the meeting agenda and provided a company overview before inviting CFO Steve Baklund to present the financial update. CFO Baklund reviewed financial charts from the past fiscal year, highlighting a net growth position of \$2.5 million.

Thundermaker Wellness
Following the financial presentation, CEO Brown Thunder discussed current projects as well as projects that were declined during the past fiscal year. He highlighted a recent partnership with Thundermaker Wellness Center (TWC)—a Native American-owned behavioral health residential treatment center in Arizona, privately

founded by Ho-Chunk tribal member Hunter Thundercloud.

This partnership:

- Aligns with Twelve Clans' investment mission and benchmark
- Supports Native-owned businesses
- Advances mental and behavioral health initiatives in Indian Country

Board of Directors Election

As the meeting transitioned to the Board of Directors election, CEO Brown Thunder noted that a quorum of 60 shareholders was required but not met. A total of 31 shareholders participated both in person and online, which did not meet the quorum threshold. As a result, the Board of Directors election for Susan Waukon, MPA, and Joe Nayquonabe, MBA, who were seeking re-election, could not be conducted.

Notably, however, this meeting marked the first time online shareholders were able to participate in the Board of Directors election process. While the biennial election could not proceed, this year's meeting established a strong digital infrastructure that will support future elections as we introduced a new digital election framework.

Prize Drawing

The meeting concluded with a prize drawing featuring a variety of Native-made including:

- Eighth Generation gift cards
- Eighth Generation blankets, candles, mugs, and more
- A grand prize of Green

Bay Packet tickets

In closing, CEO Brown Thunder thanked shareholders for their participation, emphasizing that those who attend and engage demonstrate care for the future of the Ho-Chunk Nation. He noted that meaningful, lasting impact is achieved when we work together and expressed appreciation for continued shareholder engagement.

The Shareholder Portal

During the meeting, we announced the official launch of the Shareholder Portal, envisioned as a one-stop resource for shareholder engagement. Through the portal, shareholders can:

- Attend meetings online
- View past meeting materials
- Access financial information
- Receive timely updates and announcements

We successfully implemented and used the portal for this year's Annual Shareholder Meeting, and we would like to warmly welcome all new portal users. We encourage you to explore the portal throughout the year and return often for updates. When new content is posted, you will receive a push notification, no need to check repeatedly.

If you have not yet registered for the portal, we strongly encourage you to do so. Going forward, registration of the Shareholder Portal will be required for shareholder meeting attendance.

Shareholder Newsletters

Each quarter, Twelve Clans produces a newsletter to keep shareholders informed about company activity and upcoming events. These newsletters include:

- Quarterly highlights
- Insights from meetings with the Owner's



Photo Credits: Thundermaker Wellness Center

Representatives (the Legislature)

- Information on upcoming events

Newsletters are published in the Shareholder Portal, in Ho-Chunk Worak, and included in area packets for district meetings.

For the most immediate access, we encourage shareholders to view newsletters directly in the portal. You will need to register for the portal to receive quarterly newsletters.

Once a newsletter is published, you will receive an email notification. However, we will continue distributing newsletters via email while expanding access through the portal.

Looking to the Future
As we head into the holiday season, we reflect on how Twelve Clans began: with a

seedling of change rooted in the goal of diversifying the Nation's portfolio and revenue streams. From that seed, momentum has taken root.

That momentum includes:

- \$2.5 million in portfolio growth achieved in the past fiscal year

- Continued alignment with principled, mission-driven investment

This momentum must be sustained and protected. Your participation, your voice, and your presence matter. The future of Twelve Clans depends not only on principled leadership and strategic investments, but on shareholders who remain connected, informed, and involved. Together, we can continue to build upon this foundation and carry the momentum forward.



Attention Rental Management Applicants Reminder



All applicants with the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Housing – Rental Management Program are required to:

Resubmit a New Application Every Year

Applications do not automatically renew. To stay active on the housing waiting list, you must submit a new application annually.

Why this is important

- Keeps your information current
- Ensures we can contact you when a unit becomes available
- Prevents removal from the waiting list

If you have any questions, contact the Department of Housing Rental Management Office (608) 374-1225 or Housing@ho-chunk.com

Rental Management Office
27374 HWY 21 East Bldg. #5
P.O. Box 170, Tomah, WI 54660
Phone : (608) 374-1225 Fax: (608) 374-1233

Attention Tribal Members



The **Department of Housing** has recently made **policy changes**. We encourage all members to stay informed and review these updates at the Ho-Chunk Nation Website, ho-chunknation.com

This will help you understand how they may impact current and future housing opportunities.

Your voice matters – stay informed and involved in your community's housing future!



Department of Housing
608-374-1225
Housing@ho-chunk.com

Bet on Life. Roll Up Your Sleeve, Save up to 3 Lives!

DONATE BLOOD WITH THE  **American Red Cross**

MONDAY, JANUARY 5

11:30am - 5:30pm | Lower Dells Ballroom by Atrium

All presenting donors will receive \$15 Rewards Play, coupon for a pint of Culvers custard PLUS a delicious meal!

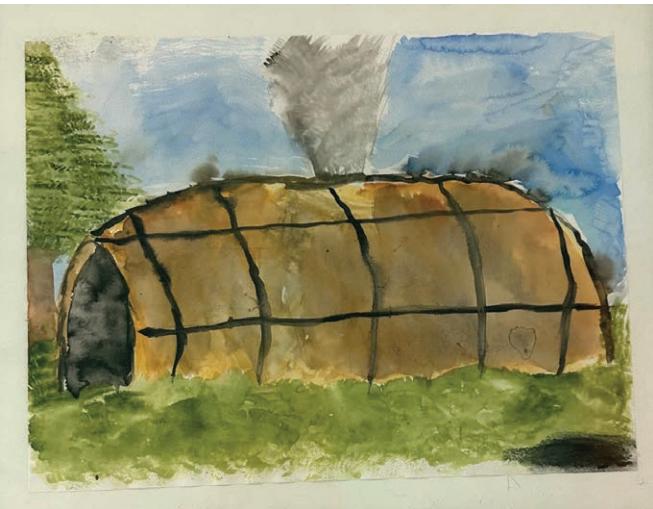
APPOINTMENTS PREFERRED

CALL **1-800-RED-CROSS**
(1-800-733-2767)

VISIT **RedCrossBlood.org**
Sponsor Code: Casino







Placement and Respite Homes Needed

Do you have room in your home for children? Are you currently not able to make a long-term commitment for placement of a child? Are you looking to make a difference in the life of a child? Here's your opportunity!

The Ho-Chunk Nation Child and Family Services is looking for respite care providers in all areas near Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, Nekoosa, La Crosse, Green Bay, Wittenberg and Black River Falls. Respite care is short-term care (one day to two weeks) provided to children who are in out-of-home placement. Respite providers are reimbursed \$50 per day per child and are also provided gift cards for food. For emergency respite, the respite rate may be increased. You do not have to be an enrolled tribal member to become a licensed Placement or Respite Home provider!

Respite providers are an integral part of a team of individuals who are looking out for the best interest of children. Relative Placements, Respite Providers and Placement Parents are required to have Federal Criminal Background Checks (fingerprints) (25 U.S.C. "Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act").

If you are interested in becoming a Respite Provider, Relative Placement or a Placement Parent, please contact the Ho-Chunk Nation Initial Response Program at: (715)-284-7749 for further details.

OPEN CALL FOR ART: *She Carried Us: Legacies of Labor, Love, and Liberation*

5th Annual Dzigbodi Akyea Art Show

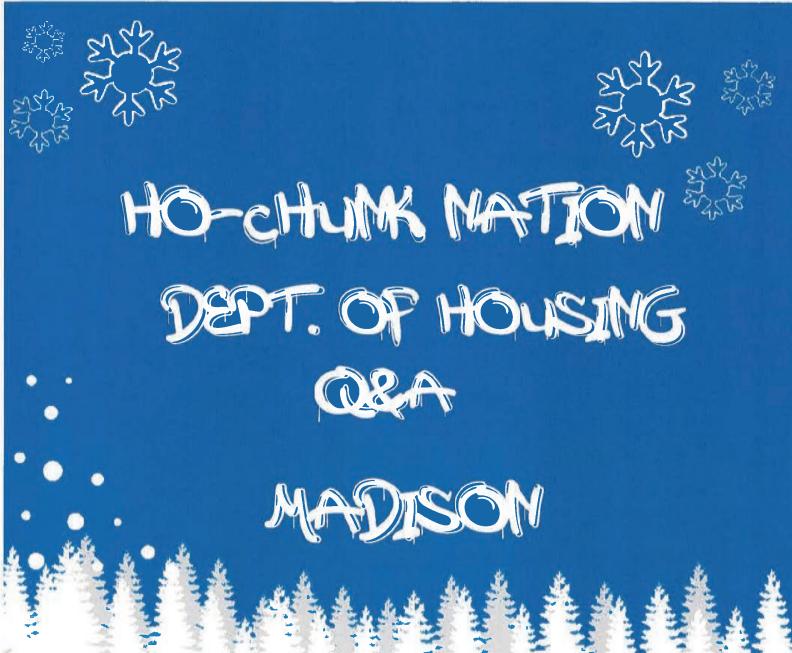


Sign up at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Feb2026Art or use QR code

Questions: email gallery@madisoncollege.edu

Indicate interest by 1/9/26.
Gallery show opens 2/2/26.





MONDAY, JANUARY 5TH

4pm-5pm CST

Location: Madison Branch office
4724 Tradewinds Pkwy.
Madison, WI 53718

Questions? Contact Kaleena Emery at Kaleenaemery@Ho-Chunk.com

Continued from Page 1
said, adding that new safeguards and reporting requirements will be implemented to prevent similar issues.

"We recognize the weight this news carries for so many, as well as the feelings of anger, confusion and disappointment it caused. We hear those concerns," the Nation said. "As a Nation, we take seriously our responsibility to ensure all future engagements align clearly with our values and mission."

KPB Services was registered in April by Prairie Band LLC Executive Vice President Ernest Woodward as part of the corporation's broader strategy to enter federal procurement markets. The firm had positioned itself to pursue planning and technical support contracts across multiple agencies, though the specific ICE-related work drew immediate backlash from tribal citizens once details became

public.

The Prairie Band contract reflects a broader pattern of Native entities securing federal immigration work. Alaska Native Corporations have held hundreds of millions of dollars in ICE contracts over the past decade, including detention facility operations, guard services and border patrol support.

NANA Regional Corporation, one of Alaska's largest Alaska Native Corporations, has faced criticism over its growing role in immigration enforcement operations under the Trump administration. Other Alaska Native Corporations, including subsidiaries of Bering Straits Native Corporation and Ahtna Inc., have operated ICE detention facilities in Texas and California. Doyon Ltd. previously held Homeland Security contracts but exited that work about a decade ago.

Prairie Band LLC, wholly

owned by the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, oversees businesses in construction, professional services and government contracting. The \$29.9 million award is among the largest federal contracts received by a Prairie Band enterprise and reflects a growing tribal presence in sectors historically dominated

by private firms.

Tribal officials said revenue from federal contracts supports government programs, economic development and long-term financial growth for the Nation, but emphasized that future opportunities must advance — not conflict with — the Nation's core values.



Photo/Levi Rickert

 Ho-Chunk Nation
Department of Health

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS



TRAVEL SAFELY

Plan your trip in advance, allowing extra time for potential delays. Ensure your vehicle is in good working condition. Pack coats, hats, mittens, boots and blankets in case you get stranded.



HOME SAFETY

Keep candles away from flammable objects. Be prepared for snowstorms and cold temps by checking your furnace and other heating sources.



FIRE SAFETY

Have a fire extinguisher ready in the kitchen, by the fire place, and by the tree. Double check that it's working by looking at the gauge. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips.



FOOD SAFETY

Wash your hands and surfaces often when preparing food. Cook food to the appropriate temperature, using a food thermometer to ensure it's safe to eat. Keep raw meat away from other foods.



PERSONAL SAFETY

Take care of your mind, body and spirit. Take time to relax and remember what we are celebrating. Avoid over-spending during the holidays by sticking to a pre-planned budget and shopping list.

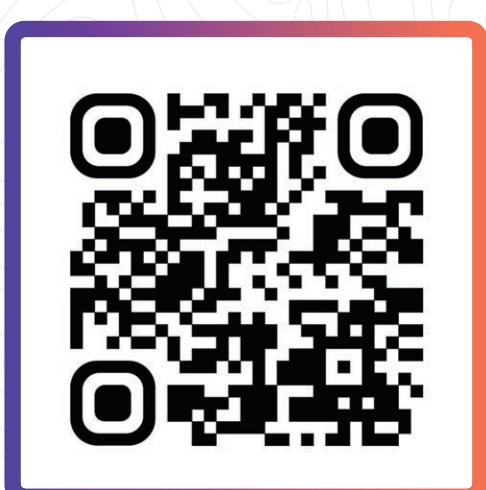


WWW.HEALTH.HO-CHUNK.COM

Created 12.18.23RM

 Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health
Public Health Division

PUBLIC HEALTH WORKER VIRTUAL SUGGESTION BOX



SCAN THIS CODE WITH YOUR SMART DEVICE TO PROVIDE INPUT ON FUTURE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKER SERVICES, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMMING IN YOUR AREA.

For more information on the PHW program:
 Jamie.Decorah@Ho-Chunk.com
 715-896-1126

Created 12.2.2025RM



DISTRICT 1 AREA MEETING NOTICE

BLACK RIVER FALLS AREA MEETING
Tribal Office Building
 W9814 Airport Road
 Black River Falls, WI 54615
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
IN PERSON/VIRTUAL

Twin Cities AREA MEETING
St. Paul Branch Office
 1724 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104
Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
IN PERSON/VIRTUAL

paul.fox@ho-chunk.com (715)896-6251
phyllis.smoke@ho-chunk.com (715)299-1016
tracythundercloud@ho-chunk.com (715)299-0576

For WebEx/e-packet, information please contact:
michelleramberg@ho-chunk.com
 (715)284-9343 Ext. 11250

Posted on: 12/15/25



HO-CHUNK NATION
PEOPLE OF THE BIG VOICE

DISTRICT 3 AREA MEETING NOTICE

MILWAUKEE | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 | 5:30 PM

WITTENBERG | MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 | 6:00 PM

GREEN BAY | TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 | 6:00 PM

MADISON | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 | 6:00 PM

WI RAPIDS | THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026 | 5:30 PM

FOR WEBEX INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

REP. LAMBERT CLEVELAND	lambertcleveland@ho-chunk.com	(715) 896-5166
REP. SARAH LEMIEUX	sarah.lemieux@ho-chunk.com	(715) 315-8071
REP. SHELBY VISINTIN	shelby.visintin@ho-chunk.com	(715) 896-9323
AIDE BELLA BLACKDEER	isabella.blackdeer@ho-chunk.com	(715) 284-9343 x11313



POSTED 12/23/25





Continued from Page 3
 fishing clubs. Remember that the DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Be aware that several factors determine ice

quality: follow ice-safety tips. Float coats, life jackets and rescue ropes can be lifesavers.

Snowmobile clubs work hard to ensure riders enjoy

a quality riding experience. Respect their work by staying on marked trails. Remember: Operation on closed snowmobile trails is illegal.

Visit the DNR's Ice Safety webpage for more information on staying safe on the ice, and refer to the Wisconsin snowmobile regulations and

Wisconsin ATV Regulations for laws for operational restrictions, safety tips and more.

TO ALL HO-CHUNK ELDERS:



Address Change

When you apply for Elder Insurance, please include an Email and Phone Number.

Please notify Gloria Ward or Sara Pomeroy in the insurance department with address changes.

If you changed it with Enrollment or Treasury you must also change with Insurance. This will allow Insurance to send notifications that are required.

We will be doing Medicare Reimbursement again for Elders 65 and older that pay for their Medicare B. if your address has changed, please call, mail or email us as soon as you can to change it.

You will get an application in January to send back before 3/31/26

Insurance Cards

If you utilize an ambulance, you must give them a copy of your Insurance and Medicare cards, the hospital does not share information with them.

Medicare Parts A and B

If you are working Part Time, LTE or an Elder worker for the Ho-Chunk Nation you carry both parts Medicare A and B.

If you are working for the Ho-Chunk Nation full time and your turning 65 you don't have to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B until you retire, resign or are working part-time.

Please supply us with a copy of your Medicare A and B card for our records.

Failure to sign up will result in consequences. The plan will only pay 20% of your bill and you will be responsible for 80%.

You do not need anything other than A and B, you don't need D it is for Prescriptions you have that coverage with your Elder Insurance.

If you need help signing up for Medicare A & B please contact Melissa Deloney (715-284-0811) at TAU or Gloria Ward in the insurance department.

If you're drawing Social Security your payment for Medicare B will come out of your check.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Insurance Division at 715-284-4361.



Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health Division of Public Health

Wažookj woo'ehi family conversations

We invite you to gather, learn, and share at our virtual education series on Ho-Chunk culture, resources, services, and connection to health.

Wednesdays 1pm-2pm

January 7th

New Year's Resolution Culture

Rachael Dozer; LCSW, CSAC, CS-IT

January 14th

Mending broken hearts: what's happening at the workshop?

Menissa Powless Substance Abuse Counselor - In training

January 28th

Hostopi Hoci and Wiinige "She Recovers" Support Day programming.

Karie Decorah and Hera Lonetree-Rindal

[JOIN NOW](#)



If you have a topic you'd like to learn about, a topic you'd like to present, and to learn more contact:

Jamie.Decorah@Ho-Chunk.com 715.896.1126
Rónelle.McKernan@Ho-Chunk.com 715.896.2570

Created 11.12.24RM

Noah Donald Logan-Cappo

August 6, 2012 - December 16, 2025

Chi-Nunk-Hamani-Ga (He who walks over the village)

Entered into Eternal Life on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at the age of 13. Cherished son of Denise Logan and Aaron Cappo. Fun brother of Daniel and Brooklyn. Caring grandson of Patricia and the late Herman Logan. God son of Eric Logan and Deanna Porter. Further survived by other relatives and friends.

Noah loved producing music and sharing it with everyone. He was a creative individual and an artist of many styles. Noah's unique sense of humor may not have been for everyone but it was distinctly his. His sense of style was one of a kind.

Visitation FRIDAY, December 19, 2025 at the Funeral Home from 9-12 Noon. Funeral Service at 12 Noon. Services will be led by Darwin DeCamp.



Annita Red Cloud

November 25, 1944 - November 30, 2025

Annita Red Cloud walked on to begin her next great adventure on November 30, 2025 at the age of 81, or as she would proudly say, "26 Forever".

Born on November 25, 1944, in Bloomington, Indiana to Mitchell Red Cloud Jr. and Doris Ferguson, Annita lived an extraordinary life marked by courage, faith, laughter, and boundless generosity. She had a calm, steady presence that felt like a clear blue sky, and those who knew her often felt comforted just being around her.

As a child, she was lovingly raised by George and Jenny Penrose, whom she called "Daddy" and "Mommy". At the age of 12, she was moved into the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home in Knightstown, Indiana, where the other children became her lifelong "Home brothers and sisters". Those early years, along with the care of her sponsors, Dow and Verna Sykes, shaped her adventurous spirit and deep compassion for others.

An extrovert who never met a stranger, Annita welcomed people into her life as family and made sure to stay connected with them, no matter how much time or distance came between them. She lived in Indiana, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Texas, and Wisconsin, and built a career working in customer service for cable companies where her warmth and charm turned coworkers and customers alike into lasting friendships.

She was immensely proud of her father, Medal of Honor recipient Mitchell Red Cloud Jr., and honored his legacy by sharing his story and participating in events such as the dedication of the U.S. Navy's USNS Red Cloud (T-AKR 313), and the rededication of Camp



Red Cloud in South Korea. She also maintained close connections with the Marines in the Mitchell Red Cloud Jr. Marine detachment and the Veterans in the American Legion Red Cloud Post 250.

Above all, Annita was proudest of her family. She is survived by her children Pam White (Jimmy), Tris Harris (Jonathon), Corinna Blaschke (David), and Mitchell Kamisato (Kari); her grandchildren Nick White, Tori White, Tristan Yellowcloud, Christina Blaschke, Jayda Harris, Nataley Harris, and Noah Blaschke; her great-grandchildren Arrayah, Mitchell, Aundre, Khashious, Kaden, Greyson, Little Bear, and Garrett; and her sister Nancy Rakes. She is preceded in death by her parents, her "Mommy and Daddy", her brothers and sisters Marsha, James, Rick, Kathryn, John, Tommy, Lora Jayne, and Mary; and her beloved grandson Mitchell "Baby" Link.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the Summer of 2026, where her family and friends will be able to celebrate and honor the woman who, in spirit, remained "26 Forever".



Year in Review for 2025

JANUARY

New Year's Eve Pow-Wow Encourages Sobriety

The Ho-Chunk Nation's 2025 New Year's Eve pow-wow took place on December 31, 2024, at the Tomah Community Center Gym in Tomah, WI. The pow-wow committee wanted to recognize, support, and encourage those living in recovery and those who want to.

The festivities began with a meal at 5:00 pm. Matt Mann was the master of ceremonies and Moses Cleveland was the arena director. The head lady dancer was Autumn White and the head man dancer was Junior Green. The invited drums were Bearheart, Little Thunder, and Eagle Feather. Grand Entry was at 7:00 pm. Merchant vendors were set up near the walls of the gymnasium.

Hocak Worak Seeks Freelance Writers

The Hocak Worak is currently seeking Ho-Chunk Nation freelance writers to contribute and become a part of solutions and inspirations that reach 4,000 plus readers across the United States.

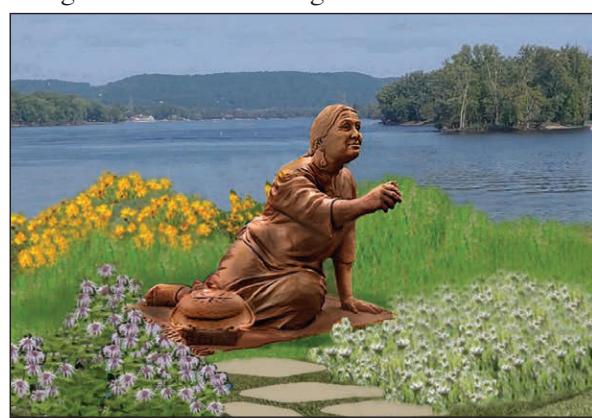
Ho-Chunk Garden Honors Culture and Betsy Thunder

The Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature is proud to support the creation of the Ho-Chunk Garden at the Riverside International Friendship Gardens near Riverside Park in La Crosse, WI. This garden is dedicated to Betsy Thunder, a respected Ho-Chunk healer with a legacy that continues to inspire. It is incredible to see her story and the beliefs of the Hoocak people brought to life in this meaningful space.

The garden will include native plants and the medicines that Betsy used in her healing practices. These medicines reflect her vast traditional knowledge. The garden will be a living reminder of her contributions and the connection the

Hoocak people have with the land we live on.

This project is made possible through the collaboration of the Ho-Chunk Nation, the Riverside International Friendship Gardens Board, the City of La Crosse Parks Department, and Bluff Country Master Gardeners, working together to honor Betsy Thunder and Ho-Chunk culture.



On This Day: A Ship Named for a Brave American Was Placed in Service

Submitted by James Heinz and the Wisconsin Marine Historical Society

There are soldiers, and there are warriors. This is the story of a true American warrior, and of the ship that is named for him.

On This Day in 2000, the U.S. Navy placed into service a ship named the USNS RED CLOUD (T-AKR 313). She displaces 62,970 tons, and is 951 feet long and 106 feet wide. Her two gas turbine engines can drive her at 24 knots for a distance of 12,000 miles. She is part of the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command.

Navsource.org describes her function as "A non-combatant Large, Medium-Speed, Roll-on/Roll-off (LMSR) vessel, Red Cloud and other ships of her class are used to pre-position tanks, trucks, various wheeled vehicles and supplies needed to support an army heavy brigade. She is assigned to Afloat Prepositioning Ship Squadron Four at Diego Garcia."

The man she is named after was a true American warrior.

Mitchell Red Cloud Jr. was born in 1925 in Hatfield, WI. He was a full blooded member of the Ho-Chunk Nation. He dropped out of high school at age 16 to join the U.S. Marine Corps.

Southland Center Operations to Cease as of January 20, 2025

Effective January 20, 2025, at 5 PM, operations the Southland Center, located in Lynwood, Illinois, will cease. The Southland Center is a sports and event facility managed through a limited liability company (LLC) wholly owned by the Ho-Chunk Nation.

This decision was made after careful consideration of financial factors and an in-depth exploration of options to sustain the facility's operations. Ultimately, the closure reflects the best interests of the Ho-Chunk Nation and its members.

FEBRUARY

Ho-Chunk Member Launches National News and Entertainment Radio Program

Ho-Chunk entrepreneur, Larry Knudsen has launched his second national radio show, his first "Indigenous in the Music with Larry K" heard on over 90 stations national and daily on Native Voice One, The Native American Radio Network.

And now we're thrilled to introduce Indigenous in the News, a dynamic new News and Entertainment podcast hosted by Larry K (Ho-Chunk) and co-hosted by Gary Wilcox (Powatan). Tune in weekly from our Two Buffalo Studios in Bradenton, Florida, as we bring you the stories and voices shaping Indian Country—from the Shakers to the Makers. Each 29-minute episode is packed with updates on the issues that matter most to our communities. And enjoy our five-minute newscast National Native News dedicated to Native issues, that compiles spot news reports from around the country, anchored by Antonia Gonzales (Navajo).

New Legislative Aide Rita McClure

We are excited to welcome Rita McClure as our new Legislative Aide assisting with budget analysis supporting the Finance Commission. She brings experience from the Department of Housing and a strong dedication to the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Ho-Chunk Nation Firefighters Ready to Assist in California

Ho-Chunk Nation firefighters Jamie Goodbear, Patrick Houghton Sr., and Stacy Yellowcloud were ready to assist in California, arriving at the incident command post before being sent to support the El Cariso forest. From there, they were redirected to Florida, where they helped the Seminole Tribe with prescribed burns.

Wisconsin Tribal Veterans Service Officers Quarterly Meeting at the Siga Funmaker Community Center

The Wisconsin Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVSO) held their quarterly meeting at the Siga Funmaker Community Center in Wittenberg on Thursday, February 20, 2025. The Ho-Chunk Nation Veterans Service Officer, Myra Jo Price, hosted a meaningful and quaint ceremony.

A new Eagle Staff was presented to the Wisconsin TVSO's and represents all 11 federally recognized tribes of Wisconsin.

MARCH

Gov. Evers' Biennial Budget Invests in Clean Water, Clean Energy, and Public Lands

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers' 2025-27 biennial budget makes historic investments in clean water, clean energy, and public lands, with significant benefits for Wisconsin's tribal nations.

The budget includes funding for State-Tribal conservation projects, supports efforts to combat PFAS contamination, and enhances access to clean drinking water.

"For too long, Wisconsin families have suffered the consequences of PFAS, lead, and nitrate contamination in their drinking water," said Government Affairs Manager Peter Burriss. "These toxic chemicals pose serious health risks, particularly to children. Gov. Evers' proposed budget takes long-overdue action to protect public health and ensure access to clean water."

One of the most significant components of the budget is the reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which now includes a \$3 million fund dedicated specifically to State-Tribal conservation projects.

Ho-Chunk March Madness Basketball Tournament

The 23rd Annual Ho-Chunk All-Native American Basketball Tournament started March 7 with games at the House of Wellness in Baraboo and Just A Game Fieldhouse in Wisconsin Dells. The Baraboo Middle School hosted some games on Saturday, March 8. All championship games were played at the House of Wellness on March 9.

WI Cannabis Industry and Policy Summit Brings Tribal Leaders Together

The Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association (ICIA) hosted its third annual Wisconsin Cannabis Industry and Policy Summit on February 27, at the Mole Lake Casino Lodge in Crandon.

With support from the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the event brought together tribal leaders, policymakers, and industry professionals to discuss the future of cannabis and hemp in Wisconsin.

The summit focused on topics such as industrial hemp, the Farm Bill, cannabis legalization, and the medical benefits of plant-based medicine.



Art, Identity, and Ash: Ho-Chunk Baskets on Display

The Paine Art Center and Gardens in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, is currently hosting "Weaving a Legacy: Ho-Chunk Black Ash Basketry," an exhibition showcasing basketmaking in Wisconsin.

Running from March 15 through June 29, 2025, this exhibit features over 100 works by Ho-Chunk artisans, spanning from the early 1900s to the present day.

The Ho-Chunk black ash basket-making tradition dates back to the 1820s. Initially, these baskets were utilitarian, crafted for everyday use without adornment.

Over time, as the tourist industry grew, especially along routes like Highway 12, the baskets evolved in design and function, reflecting both the makers' specialization and the increasing demand from collectors and tourists.

HCN DNR Stand Exams and Tree Risk Assessment News

The Ho-Chunk DNR is always making efforts to be aware of the health of our trees and forests. As such, all forests on trust lands and trees in human occupied areas on trust lands with over 50% control by the HCN are periodically inspected. Rural stand exams and urban tree risk assessment surveys have different emphases, but the same goal. To keep trees healthy and people safe. In either case, HCN DNR employees will sometimes be on allotment lands doing stand exams or near your home or workplace looking at trees without notice.

Every forest stand on HCN trust lands is expected to be inventoried every 10 years. This includes 100% Ho-Chunk Trust lands totally controlled by the Nation, and allotments that may be controlled by heirs or a combination of heirs and the Nation. What are we looking for? First, we want to know timber volume, tree species, and tree density. This can help us and the BIA make timber management decisions. We also look for signs and symptoms of diseases like oak wilt. This allows us to take actions to limit the effect of these problems, if at all possible.

HCN Tree Planting 2025

Spring is nearly upon us, and the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Natural Resources has big plans for planting trees. We have ordered 5500 seedlings for reforestation, 20 fruit trees and about 250 container trees for public areas and yards. We will need the community's help planting the forestry seedlings. We will also need help finding homes for the container trees. Perhaps most importantly, we will need help watering the trees planted in community areas or in yards.

Last year Ho-Chunk tribal members, Viroqua Youth Initiative High School students, and Alliant Energy employees, and HCN DNR employees helped plant over 2500 canopy and food forest trees. It went so well, that we decided to more than double our goal this year. We are planning major plantings in the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, in the old agricultural field across from the Nekoosa Casino, in the new walking track in Wittenberg, a community garden area near Dells Dam and in some of the wetland properties around Black River Falls. We have ordered a wide variety of trees including three kinds of oak, white cedar, shagbark hickory, black walnut, pine, wild plum and about 15 other species.

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

This is much different than the typical red pine plantation most organizations plant!

State Senator Patrick Testin and Secretary-designee Jeff Perl Visit Ahuco Head Start

On Monday, March 10th, the Ho-Chunk Nation had the honor of hosting State Senator Patrick Testin and Secretary-designee Jeff Perl for a special visit to Ahuco Head Start in Tomah, Wisc.

During their visit, they toured the Head Start center and participated in a meaningful roundtable discussion with our Legislative Representatives, the Department of Education, and parents of Ahuco Head Start. The conversation centered on the vital impact Head Start programs have within our tribe.

Tribal Chairman Fowler Delivers 2025 State of the Tribes Address

On March 18, 2025, tribal leaders from across Wisconsin gathered at the State Capitol for the annual State of the Tribes Address.

This year's speech was delivered by Chairman Thomas Fowler of the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin. It marked the 21st year this important event has taken place, giving Indigenous nations a platform to speak directly to state lawmakers.

Welcome Legislative Chief Financial Officer Crystal Deschinnny

The Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature is proud to welcome Crystal Deschinnny as our new Legislative Chief Financial Officer! With over 35 years of experience in finance, accounting, investments, economic and business development, policy, and strategy, she brings a wealth of expertise to this critical role. A dual master's degree holder (MBA & MA) with an AMP from Harvard Business School, Crystal has dedicated nearly 20 years to tribal government service, including previous work with HCN.

APRIL

100 years Celebration for Walter R. Whitehorse

On March 28, the community celebrated a truly remarkable milestone: Walter R. Whitehorse, a proud Ho-Chunk tribal member from Madison, WI, turned 100 years old!

Known by his Ho-Chunk name, Wii Wakšik Hirakaraga, meaning Takes Care of the Flag, Walter has dedicated his life to serving his community, veterans, and Indigenous peoples. His legacy of strength, perseverance, and unity is an inspiration to all.

The celebration took place at the Ho-Chunk Nation Madison Branch Office with Lance Long as Master of Ceremonies, the Wisconsin Dells Singers rendering appropriate songs, Paul Cloud as the Head Veterans Dancer, William Kemp II as the Head Male Dancer, Mya Estebo as the Head Female Dancer, and the Sanford WhiteEagle Legion Post 556 and VFW Post 7591 as the Color Guards.

Elk Relocation

Elk reintroduction efforts in Wisconsin's central forest region have played a key role in restoring the species to its historical range. The project began in August 2015 with the release of 23 elk from Kentucky, followed by an additional 50 elk the next year. These efforts have successfully established a growing population, with the herd expanding to over 125 individuals as of April 2023. While the reintroduction has enhanced local wildlife diversity and created new recreational opportunities, it has also led to challenges, including instances of elk causing damage to agricultural crops in the region.

To address this year's agricultural damage caused by elk near Millston and north of Black River Falls, the HCN DNR worked closely with the WI DNR on a targeted relocation effort. The process involved trapping and transporting the elk to mitigate crop losses while ensuring the animals' safety. This approach allowed for a controlled removal that balanced both landowner concerns and wildlife management objectives.

Ho-Chunk Gaming Wittenberg Honors Vietnam Veterans with Special Ceremony

Heartfelt event brings community together to pay tribute to veterans

Wittenberg, Wisconsin – On March 29, 2025, Ho-Chunk Gaming Wittenberg, a premier gaming and hotel facility in north-central Wisconsin, held a special ceremony to honor Vietnam veterans. The event featured a ceremonial flag raising and a heartfelt tribute with keynote speaker David Turney, a Vietnam veteran and tribal elder from the Menominee Nation.



Ho-Chunk Nation Healing to Wellness Court Celebrates Tasha King

On Thursday, April 3, the Ho-Chunk Nation Healing to Wellness Court (HTWC) held a graduation ceremony for Tasha M. King. The Healing to Wellness Program is an evidence-based treatment program that offers alcohol and/or drug addicted participants an alternative to extended incarceration and the standard probation model. The ceremony took place at the Wa Ehi Hoci Trial Court located on State Highway 54 in Black River Falls.

The Ho-Chunk Nation HTWC exists to address a pervasive illness affecting our community, alcohol and drug addiction and its associated consequences. The HTWC acts in partnership with several tribal and communal agencies and service providers to achieve the following goals: to create support systems and programs to foster employment, education, and communal, familial, and individual health and well-being, maintaining relationships and resources to continually assist program participation, and restore traditional values and languages.

Ho-Chunk Nation Interested in West Salem Land as County Reviews Proposals

The Ho-Chunk Nation is interested in part of the former county farm in West Salem, as La Crosse County leaders look at different ideas for how the land could be used.

At a County Board meeting on Monday, Ho-Chunk representatives joined local officials and community members to discuss several proposals for the 111-acre property.

One of them comes from the Country Boom music festival, which wants to buy 85 acres to build a concert venue and around 300 homes.

Ho-Chunk Leaders Join Tribal Delegation in Washington, D.C. for MAST Impact Week

Ho-Chunk Nation Representatives Stephanie Begay, Rodney Rave, Damian Thundercloud, and Lambert Cleveland Jr. traveled to Washington, D.C. to take part in the 2025 Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) Impact Week.

Held annually in the nation's capital, MAST Impact Week provides a platform for tribal governments to engage directly with federal policymakers on issues central to tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

During their visit, the Ho-Chunk delegation met with multiple congressional offices, including Wisconsin representatives whose districts overlap with Ho-Chunk communities.

Ho-Chunk Nation Veterans Affairs Hosts Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

On Friday, March 28, 2025, the Ho-Chunk Nation community gathered at the Tribal Office Building near Black River Falls to celebrate Vietnam Veterans Day, a moment to honor and thank the brave men and women who served during the Vietnam War.

This ceremony was part of the community's observance of National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

Inaugural State of the Ho-Chunk Nation Addresses Progress, Challenges, and Priorities

Ho-Chunk Nation President Jon Greendeer delivered a State of the Nation address on April 15, at Ho-Chunk Gaming Black River Falls, sharing updates on the Nation's progress, challenges, and priorities.

The night opened with a traditional lineup that honored veterans, language speakers, and tribal youth.

The Winnebago Sons drum group and Head Start students kicked off the event, and Chief Clayton Winneshiek offered an invocation before the President took the stage. Dr. Marcus Lewis was the Master of Ceremonies.

Greendeer opened by thanking elders, language speakers, cultural leaders, and the children who performed at the event. He also recognized the importance of spring ceremonies, traditional foods, and the Ho-Chunk way of life.

Sadie Garvin and Valerie Blackdeer Receive 2025 Secretary's Putting Families First Award

On Friday, April 18, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) hosted an awards ceremony and luncheon at the Pyle Center in Madison, WI. Sadie Garvin and Valerie Blackdeer were nominated and selected to receive a 2025 Secretary's Putting Families First Award.

They were chosen because of their exceptional and transformational efforts to support Wisconsin's children, families, and communities in thriving. Their work has been instrumental in transitioning the child welfare system to come more family-focused, collaborative, and in-home.

Nine individuals and teams received the awards during the celebration as part of Wisconsin's proclaimed month-long recognition of Family Strengthening Month.

MAY

Benefits of Ho-Chunk Nation Native Prairies and Prescribed Burning

Centuries ago, fire was a natural part of Mauna's (Mother Nature's) way of taking care of native prairies, forests and wetlands. Because of that, ecosystems across the landscape depended on periodic fire events to rejuvenate growth and ensure long-term survival. Throughout the 19th century fire suppression has drastically changed, mainly due to large wildland fire events that have destroyed homes, cities and have taken people's lives. Because of that human nature has turned to suppressing wildland fires which has allowed invasive plants (weeds) to out-compete native grasses and flowers, therefore greatly reducing native prairies across the U.S. However, if completed properly with safety as the focal point, fire is still one of the best management tools for continued invasive species control.

Throughout the past 15+ years, the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Natural Resources has restored over 1,850 acres of native prairies on various Ho-Chunk Nation lands. These prairies provide a much needed ecosystem that supports habitat for various native and often times rare species of birds, butterflies, insects, reptiles, and many other wildlife species. Prairies also help filter groundwater, sequester carbon and absorb a good amount of moisture during large rain events, which helps reduce flooding, erosion and unwanted runoff.

Community Gathers for Ceexhaci Planting Day in Nekoosa

Community members came together on Friday, April 25, 2025, to celebrate the start of planting season at the Ceexhaci Naqua Woožu Haap event held at the Nekoosa Branch Office.

The day-long gathering, which ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., brought families and volunteers out to help plant trees, marking the kickoff to the summer season.

Participants were encouraged to bring their own gloves and got their hands dirty while enjoying food, drinks, door prize drawings, and hands-on learning activities.

Ho-Chunk Nation Contributes Support to the Gold Family Care Center at Beloit Health System

On May 5, Ho-Chunk Nation District 3 Representatives Shelby Visintin and Lambert Cleveland Jr. presented a \$25,000 contribution to support the Gold Family Care Center at Beloit Health System.

This contribution helps strengthen access to high-quality primary care and essential services for families in the Beloit community, ensuring compassionate care close to home.

Ho-Chunk Nation Honors WWII Code Talkers with Newly Designated Memorial Highway

On Saturday, April 26, the Ho-Chunk Nation held a special ceremony to celebrate the official designation of a memorial highway honoring tribal

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

members who served as code talkers during World War II.

The event marked the culmination of years of research and advocacy to recognize these veterans whose contributions were once classified and largely unknown.

The newly designated "Ho-Chunk World War II Code Talkers Memorial Highway" spans Interstate 90 from the Minnesota-Wisconsin state line in La Crosse County to the intersection of I-90 and I-94 in Monroe County.

This corridor passes through the Ho-Chunk Nation's ancestral homelands and areas with significant tribal populations.

Our Relatives Are Never Forgotten

A Powerful Reminder at the Fourth Annual Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives 5K

On May 5, the community gathered at Nii Taani Hoocira and Burns Park in La Crosse, WI for the 4th Annual Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives (MMIW&R) 5K. The event raises awareness about the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples.

With strength, attendees walked and ran to honor those we've lost and to stand in solidarity for justice. Every step was a powerful reminder: our relatives are never forgotten.

Employees Post Signs Directing Trail Riders to Ho-Chunk Gaming and Hotel

Ho-Chunk Gaming Black River Falls was out on May 11 getting the trails ready for opening day! Our trail signs point you to even more fun!

The Jackson County Parks and Trails are located near Black River Falls and is home to some of the best ATV/UTV riding and camping in the state. The trails opened May 15 and close October 26.

Ho-Chunk Candidate Raises Concerns After Campaign Sign Removed by Police

A Ho-Chunk Nation candidate running for re-election says a tribal member was left confused and frustrated after one of her campaign signs was removed from their yard by a police officer in Black River Falls.

Phyllis Smoke, who is running to retain her seat as District 1 Seat 1 Legislator, shared the incident online that a tribal member found her campaign sign removed from their yard, with a handwritten note left behind citing a "state law" requiring signs be taken down within seven days after an election.

The note referenced Wisconsin's Trans 201.16, which governs the display of political signs related to state elections.

Skyline Golf Club Dedicates Plaque Recognizing Support from the Ho-Chunk Nation

A special moment at Skyline Golf Course on May 11 as Representatives Smoke and Rave joined Board President Derek Ahl and Course Manager Tyler Millis for the official plaque dedication. The plaque recognizes recent improvements to the driving range made possible in part through support from the Ho-Chunk Nation.

JUNE

Ho-Chunk Canoe Journey Highlights Sacred Sites and History in Milwaukee

On June 5, members of the Ho-Chunk Nation arrived by dugout canoe at the Milwaukee County Parks Riverboat Launch, completing a four-day journey along ancestral waterways.



The trip began in Green Bay and traveled through Door County before ending in Milwaukee, where tribal members visited Lake Park to honor ancestors buried at one of the city's last remaining Indigenous mounds.

The journey is part of an annual tradition that began in 2022, blending cultural revitalization with public education. Participants have previously paddled from Madison to Beloit.

Kristin White Eagle Sworn in as Vice President of the Ho Chunk Nation

The Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature has appointed Kristin White Eagle as the Nation's new Vice President, effective May 27, 2025.

A seasoned leader with years of legislative and community service, White Eagle brings a strong record of advocacy, sovereignty work, and cultural leadership to the role.

Waagax Hakiruxara Hosto Grows Amid Federal Funding Challenges

The Waagax Hakiruxara Hosto Library opened in September 2024 to serve as a space rooted in Indigenous knowledge, culture, and access to often-censored books.

Now, the library is navigating federal changes that could impact the funding it relies on.

Located at the District 1 Community Center in Black River Falls, the library uses a unique classification system that reflects community values.

Books are organized by themes like Ho-Chunk history, Indigenous authors, MMIWP, military service, and traditional foods. A red handprint sticker marks MMIWP titles, the Nation's seal indicates Ho-Chunk-specific works, and Indian corn highlights books on Indigenous foods.

Black River Falls Joins National "No Kings" Demonstrations

On June 14, a group of Black River Falls residents gathered to take part in the nationwide "No Kings" Day of Defiance, joining millions of Americans across the country in a coordinated stand for democracy.

The demonstration was one of more than 2,000 similar events held nationwide on June 14, a date that landed on Flag Day, President Trump's birthday, and the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army.

Organized by a coalition of grassroots groups including Indivisible, MoveOn, 50501, and the ACLU, the "No Kings" protests were designed as a response to what many see as growing authoritarian rhetoric and heavy use of military imagery in American politics.

Though Black River Falls is a small community, it was one of nearly 60 cities and towns across Wisconsin that participated.

UW Alumni Association recognizes two Ho-Chunk scholars

Janice Rice and Adrienne Thunder

Years after traversing the sprawling campus of UW-Madison as students, two

Ho-Chunk scholars were recognized for their contributions to their communities and their desire to advance UW-Madison's positive impact on the world.

Dozens of UW alumni and their families gathered at the Wisconsin Alumni Association Cooweeja Native and Indigenous Affinity Group's Summer Alumni Gathering held June 22 at Madison's Tenney Park.

Funding Renews for General Welfare Payments

During a Special Legislative Meeting on June 20, the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature passed Resolution 06-20-25J, titled '2025-2026 General Welfare Payment for Ho-Chunk Tribal Member Adults and Minors' by a vote of 12 members, zero opposed, and zero abstaining. The structure and amount remains the same with the previous year.

The Resolution's purpose is to promote the general welfare and provide a social benefit to all Tribal Members, ensuring appropriate access to food, clothing, housing/shelter, utilities, transportation, fuel, healthcare, elder and disabled care, and assistance to promote self-sufficiency.

Ho-Chunk Teen Publishes Short Story in Fright Club

Evelyn Wallace, a 14-year-old Ho-Chunk tribal member, has become a published author after her short story was selected for inclusion in Fright Club, a collection edited by Lynsey Evans.

Wallace, who is preparing to enter ninth grade at Central High School, submitted her story through Longfellow Middle School. The story follows a girl who is alone when a stranger begins following her, a concept Wallace developed after receiving a basic writing prompt.

JULY

Bipartisan Push Aims to Make Reservation Food Program Permanent

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is working to make permanent a federal program that provides healthier food options for low-income households on Native American reservations, a rare area of agreement across party lines.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, created as a pilot in the 2018 farm bill under the Trump administration, provides monthly USDA food boxes to income-eligible households as an alternative to SNAP.

It launched with the Cherokee and Chickasaw Nations and has grown to serve about 50,000 people per month as of 2023. The program allows participants to select from fruits, vegetables, proteins, and cooking staples.

Thank you for 25 Years Chris Seguin

On June 26, the Ho-Chunk Nation Health Department hosted a luncheon party celebrating Chris Seguin's retirement. The Family Nurse Practitioner served four generations of patients during her 25 years of service at the Ho-Chunk Health Care Center (HHCC).

Light snacks and cake were served in the HHCC Eileen Decorah classroom. Colleagues and friends shared expressions of gratitude and fare well wishes.

Ho-Chunk Nation CRC Supports Native Tourism in Wisconsin

Unified Front Collaborated to Strengthen Community and Cultural Connections

Lac du Flambeau, WI – June 16-17, 2025 - The Ho-Chunk Nation Community Relations Committee (CRC) proudly sponsored and recently participated in the Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW) conference, hosted at the scenic Lake of the Torches Resort & Casino in Lac du Flambeau. The event gathered Native communities, artists, tourism professionals, and leaders to celebrate and promote Indigenous tourism across Wisconsin.

The Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW) conference is an annual gathering that brings together leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and tourism professionals from across the state's Native communities. Hosted this year at Lake of the Torches Resort & Casino, the conference serves as a platform to showcase Indigenous culture, promote sustainable tourism, and foster collaboration.

The Fox of Sandpillow

As we transition from spring into summer, many of us are spending more time outdoors. This is also the time of year when people are more likely to encounter young wild animals across the landscape.

While it may appear that these animals are abandoned or in distress, that's usually not the case. In most situations, the mother is nearby foraging or intentionally keeping her distance to avoid drawing predators to her young. Minimal contact is a natural survival strategy in the wild.

Inaugural Cpl. Mitchell Redcloud Jr. Day Parade and Activities Brings Festivities to Ho-Chunk Community

July 4, 2025, marks the 75th Year of Remembrance honoring the legacy of Corporal Mitchell Redcloud Jr. Activities for the day included a vibrant parade, lunch, games, raising of Cpl. Mitchell Redcloud Jr.'s flag, a princess and brave competition, and a social dance. All festivities began at the baseball field parking lot in Sand Pillow and concluded by the District One Community Center near Black River Falls.

Madison Moves Forward with Vilas Park Overhaul, Prioritizing Ho-Chunk Burial Mounds

Madison's Vilas Park is finally ready for a much-needed transformation, and this time, the city is making sure the Ho-Chunk Nation's sacred burial mounds are protected.

The city is moving ahead with a multimillion-dollar redevelopment of the Near West Side Park, working closely with the Ho-Chunk Nation and cultural experts to ensure ancient Native American burial mounds scattered throughout the site are respected.

The redevelopment comes after years of planning and growing urgency to repair the park's aging infrastructure, much of it dating back to the 1960s.

Plans call for upgraded playgrounds, modern basketball, tennis and pickleball courts, redesigned roads and parking, ecological restoration, a new shelter near the "Old Woman in a Shoe" slide, and repairs to the sediment-filled lagoon.

Swearing In of Newly Elected Representatives

On July 2, the Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board gathered newly elected Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature Representatives and Judiciary Branch Justices for a swearing in ceremony at Ho-Chunk Gaming Wisconsin Dells. These leaders carry the responsibility of representing our Ho-Chunk people with accountability, forethought, and reverence for tribal sovereignty and tradition.

Those members sworn into office are Rodney Rave, District 1; Phyllis Smoke, District 1; Paul Fox, District 1; Stephanie Begay, District 2; Damian

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

Thundercloud, District 2; Kyle White Eagle, District 2; Lambert Cleveland, Jr., District 3; Shelby Visintin, District 3; Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle, District 3; David Greendeer, District 4; Sandra Whitewing, District 4; Ed Mullen, District 4; Todd R. Matha, Supreme Court Chief Justice; and Tricia Zunker, Supreme Court Associate Justice 1.



Ho-Chunk Nation Employees Celebrated at Annual Appreciation Picnic in Tomah

Ho-Chunk Nation employees came together under sunny skies on Friday, July 18, for the Nation's annual Employee Appreciation Picnic at Winnebago Park in Tomah, WI.

The event, organized to recognize and celebrate the hard work of Ho-Chunk non-gaming employees throughout the year, featured food, games, prizes, and plenty of camaraderie.

New Election Process Brings Greater Access and Transparency to Upcoming General Election

The Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board is rolling out a new voting process this year, designed to increase participation and transparency in a key constitutional amendment vote during the annual General Council meeting in September.

This special edition of the Hocak Worak is meant to ensure that all tribal members are aware of the upcoming vote, which focuses on an amendment that would allow individuals who were enrolled in other tribes as minors, but who meet Ho-Chunk descendants requirements, to enroll in the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The vote will take place at General Council, and for the first time, members will also have the option to vote by mail.

William Gardner, Attorney General, said the board wanted to get this information out as widely as possible.

Susan Waukon Appointed CEO of Bois Forte Development Corporation

Susan Waukon has officially stepped into her new role as CEO of the Bois Forte Development Corporation, bringing a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to Native communities to the organization's leadership.

A member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and originally from Black River Falls, Wisconsin, Waukon has already begun meeting with staff and Tribal leadership to set the tone for her tenure.

Since her appointment, Waukon has been splitting her time between her office at Fortune Bay Resort Casino and the Nett Lake Village, where she's been connecting with members of the Reservation Tribal Government Management team and employees.

Thank You, Representative Rodney Rave

On July 11, the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature recognized Representative Rodney Rave for his service to the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature and the people of District 1.

A lifelong resident of the Indian Mission area, Representative Rave brought decades of real-world experience and community focus to his role in office. During his time as a legislature, he remained deeply committed to improving public safety, addressing substance abuse, and advocating for a stable and healthy future for our Nation.

Rodney recently announced his resignation from the Legislature, and while the staff will miss his presence in the workplace, all wish him the best in the next chapter of life.

AUGUST

Bonnie Clairmont Receives 2025 Tillie Black Bear Women Are Sacred Award for Groundbreaking Advocacy

Bonnie Clairmont (Ho-Chunk) of the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI) has been honored with the prestigious 2025 Tillie Black Bear Women Are Sacred Award during this year's Women Are Sacred (WAS) Conference in Milwaukee.

The award celebrates Clairmont's decades-long, grassroots dedication to ending violence against Indigenous women and supporting survivors with compassion, sovereignty, and cultural grounding.

The Women Are Sacred Conference, hosted every two years by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, is one of the most significant gatherings of Native advocates, survivors, tribal leaders, law enforcement, and community-based programs committed to ending domestic and sexual violence in tribal communities.

For more than 25 years, Clairmont has been at the forefront of efforts to support Native survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse.

Call for Native Artists to Join Madison's Lab 4 Project

The Arts & Literature Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin is gearing up for a new community-curated project set to launch in summer 2026, and Indigenous artists are being invited to take part.

Adriana Peguero, a Menominee artist and one of the community curators for the Lab 4 project, is calling on Native artists, poets, and musicians, especially those who may not have had access to gallery spaces or mainstream recognition, to showcase their work.

Funded through a grant received by the Arts & Literature Laboratory, Lab 4 brings together four curator teams made up of community members, including youth, tasked with creating a series of gallery exhibitions, readings, and events.

Ho-Chunk Gaming Wittenberg Holds Annual Fireworks Celebration

Annual Fireworks Offers a Sparkling Opportunity to Support the Community

Wittenberg, WI – July 12, 2025 – Ho-Chunk Gaming Wittenberg successfully hosted its annual fireworks celebration on July 12, after rescheduling from the original date of July 11 due to inclement weather. The postponement turned out to be a blessing in disguise, drawing an even larger crowd who enjoyed the dazzling display under clear skies.

The event brought together community members, families, and visitors for an evening of festive fun, incredible fireworks, and a shared sense of community pride.

Lifeline for our Veterans

On July 30, the Ho-Chunk Nation welcomed a brand new van dedicated to our Veteran's Supportive Housing facility. This van plays a vital role in helping our Veterans get to medical appointments, run errands, and stay connected with the community through events and outings.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature's commitment and continued support and funding makes a difference in the lives of those who served. The team at the Veterans Affairs office is deeply appreciative.

Matthew Mullen Honored with a Legislative Recognition Citation

At the July 2 swearing-in ceremony, the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature honored the life and legacy of Matthew "Matt" Mullen with an official Legislative Recognition Citation.

The citation was signed by President Jon Greendeer and Vice President Lambert Cleveland Jr., and presented to Matt's family just before the new legislative body's first legislative meeting. His wife, children, and mother were there to accept the framed recognition in his honor, alongside his brother Ed — who now serves as a Representative for District 4.

Matt was a former Legislator and committed public servant whose work helped shape the future of the Ho-Chunk Nation. He played a leading role in efforts to strengthen self-governance and was active in constitutional reform throughout his career.

Families Gather for Cultural Wisdom and Personal Growth at Ho-Chunk Nation's Fifth Annual Family Healing Camp

Despite the August heat, families from across the Ho-Chunk Nation came together August 5–7 at the Andrew Blackhawk Memorial Pow-Wow Grounds for the Fifth Annual Family Healing Camp.

This year's theme, Holistic Healing Through Generations, guided the three-day gathering that blended workshops, cultural teachings, entertainment, and family time in a safe, alcohol- and drug-free space.



Line 5 Contested Case Hearing Draws Hundreds to Ashland

On August 12, nearly 200 people crowded into the conference room at Northwood Technical College as the contested case hearing over Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline reroute began.

The opening day featured hours of legal arguments and public testimony, setting the tone for a high-stakes battle over Wisconsin's wetlands, waterways, and tribal sovereignty.

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, joined by Clean Wisconsin and several environmental organizations, is challenging permits issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

They argue the DNR's approvals for the 41-mile reroute fail to comply with state law and ignore the environmental and cultural risks tied to the project.

Honoring Myrtle "Hiyugewiga" Long

Myrtle Long retires after 47 years of dedicated service to the Ho-Chunk Nation. Her legacy of compassion, cultural preservation, and strength was celebrated at different events.

On August 7, 2025, at the Fifth Annual Family Healing Camp near Black River Falls, Myrtle Long was presented with a Recognition Citation from the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislative Branch — a well-deserved tribute to her decades of service and commitment.

Myrtle's journey began in September 1978 with the Wisconsin Winnebago Business Committee (WWBC). Over 47 years, she served in Social Services, Labor, and Health, always bringing her heart, wisdom, and leadership to the Ho-Chunk Nation.

In January 2001, she founded the Clan Mothers, a program that uplifts young Ho-Chunk women through mentorship, cultural knowledge, guidance, and belonging. She invited a representative from each of our 12 clans to join her — ensuring that all voices were heard and honored.

On August 10, a surprise retirement devotional prayer services and dinner took place at the Fairchild Community Center Building in Fairchild, WI.

Best Wishes Sarah Skrzypczak

On August 13, the Legislature celebrated the last day with their legal intern, Sarah Skrzypczak.

Thank you for all your great legal research. Enjoy your next school year at the University of Wisconsin -Madison Law.

Secretarial Election Offers Voting Options

The Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board is calling an election to amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Constitution. The secretarial election is scheduled for Saturday, September 20.

There are mail and in-person procedure options for eligible voters. Any enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation who is at least eighteen years old and who has resided in their respective district for at least three months is an eligible voter.

The Election Board mailed ballots on July 28 to eligible voters. The voter completes their vote and follows the instructions provided with the ballot.

SEPTEMBER

Ahuco Head Start Celebrates Grand Opening of New Playground

On August 25, the Tomah community celebrated the grand opening of a brand new playground with a special ribbon cutting ceremony at the head start in Blue Wing! The event was filled with gratitude and excitement as the students took their first steps into a space designed just for them to grow, explore, and play.

Continued on Page 12

Continued from Page 11

Speakers at the ceremony included Laurel Meek, Head Start Director; Ryan Crain Sr., Executive Director of Education; and Stephanie Begay, District 2 Legislator.

Bronson Koenig Inducted Into Aquinas High School Wall of Fame

Former Wisconsin Badgers basketball standout Bronson Koenig was officially inducted into the Aquinas High School Athletics Wall of Fame on Saturday, August 30, as part of the Class of 2025.

Koenig, a 2013 Aquinas graduate, joined eight other individuals and two football teams in this year's class, which was introduced Friday night during the Blugolds' football game against Columbus at UW-La Crosse. The induction ceremony and dinner followed on Saturday at the Aquinas High School gym.

Ho-Chunk Nation Sues Online Betting Platform Kalshi Over Alleged Illegal Gambling

The Ho-Chunk Nation has filed a federal lawsuit against Kalshi, an online prediction market, arguing that the company is running an illegal sports-betting business that violates state, federal, and tribal law.

The case, filed last month in U.S. District Court, centers on Kalshi's platform, which lets users wager money on the outcome of real-world events through an app and website accessible nationwide, including within Ho-Chunk tribal lands.

While Kalshi markets itself as a regulated financial exchange, the Ho-Chunk Nation officials say the system is nothing more than unlicensed sports gambling that siphons revenue from tribal casinos.

In Wisconsin, sports betting is tightly restricted. Under state compacts, only tribal nations may operate sports books, and only within their casinos.

The Ho-Chunk Nation operates several gaming facilities across the state and argues that Kalshi's activities directly cut into tribal revenues.

The lawsuit also highlights what the Nation calls deceptive advertising, pointing to Kalshi's promotional claims that it is the "first nationwide legal sports betting platform" and that "sports betting [is] legal in all 50 states."

Ho-Chunk Youth Attend Basketball Academy with Bronson Koenig

Ho-Chunk youth filled the District 1 Community Center on September 7 for the Hoocak Manape Mind, Body & Spirit Basketball Academy, led by professional basketball player Bronson Koenig.

Koenig, a former Wisconsin Badger standout who went on to play with the Milwaukee Bucks and Chicago Bulls, returned home to inspire the next generation of Ho-Chunk athletes.

Legislature Supports the Tiger Youth Basketball Association with Contribution

The Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature is proud to support the Tiger Youth Basketball Association (TYBA) with a \$10,000 contribution to help fund programming for local youth in grades K-8.

TYBA has organized youth basketball in the Black River Falls area for eleven years and continues to serve as a foundational program for student athletes, many of whom go on to compete at the varsity level. This contribution covers fees, uniforms, equipment, tournaments, camps, and more, ensuring all Ho-Chunk youth can participate.

Snapshots of Neesh-La Powwow

The Ho-Chunk Nation hosted the Neesh-La Powwow from August 22 until August 24 near Baraboo, WI.

The weekend festivities were filled with singing, dancing, craft vendors, and delicious food.

Ho-Chunk Nation Launches First-Ever National Treasure Awards

The Ho-Chunk Nation is introducing a new way to honor cultural leaders and tradition keepers with the first-ever National Treasure Awards.

The awards will highlight individuals who safeguard practices at risk of being lost, from storytelling and language preservation to traditional arts and lifeways.

Nominations are now open for Ho-Chunk citizens who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to cultural preservation. Nominees must be at least 50 years old or have made significant contributions for at least 20 years toward perpetuating Ho-Chunk culture.

No New Policy Set at the 2025 Ho-Chunk Nation General Council Annual Meeting

The Ho-Chunk Nation Annual Meeting of the General Council convened on September 20 at the Kalahari Convention Center near Wisconsin Dells, WI. The General Council branch of government retains the power to set policy for the Ho-Chunk Nation. All eligible voters of the Ho-Chunk Nation are entitled to participate in General Council. The quorum requirement was 1,290 tribal members. Quorum is twenty percent of the eligible voters of the Nation.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board rolled out a new voting process this year, designed to increase participation in a key constitutional amendment vote. The vote took place at this Annual Meeting of the General Council and, for the first time, members also had the option to vote by mail.

The amendment, Resolution 09.21.2025-G, that was being voted on would have allowed individuals who were enrolled in other tribes as minors, but who are meeting Ho-Chunk descendants requirements, to enroll in the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The Election Board held the polling stations open at the General Council meeting from 8:00 am until two hours after the adjournment.

However, the amendment did not meet the thirty percent threshold and was therefore defeated.

Veterans Powwow Returns to Volk Field to Honor Service and Sacrifice

The Veterans D.O.R.A. Powwow will return to Volk Field on Saturday, November 8, in honor of Native and non-Native veterans whose service has left a lasting legacy for their families and communities.

The event, sponsored by Descendants of Red Arrow (D.O.R.A.) and Friends, pays tribute to the 128th Infantry Company D of the 32nd "Red Arrow Division" and the many Ho-Chunk and Wisconsin veterans who served in World War I and beyond.

October

Green Corn Event 2025 – A Day to Remember in Galena, IL

On Thursday, September 25, representatives from the Ho-Chunk Nation gathered in Galena, IL for the Green Corn Event — a day filled with celebration, community, and connection. This year held special meaning because of a naming ceremony, officially naming this cultural site, MaaPii, which means "good earth" in the Ho-Chunk language.

The ceremony was deeply moving, with heartfelt words from speakers who

shared the powerful history of the land and how it continues to unite us in positivity and respect.

Ho-Chunk Cinema Open House Highlights Updates and Amenities

On Tuesday, October 7, the Ho-Chunk Cinema in Tomah held an open house. An estimated 1,000 or more visitors toured the updated facility. The updates and amenities will make Ho-Chunk Cinema a premier choice for movie theater entertainment.

Representatives from the City of Tomah and the Ho-Chunk Nation experienced different movie theaters and what they offered. The Ho-Chunk Cinema staff welcomed the public free of charge. The community was treated to a tour, free popcorn, and free cotton candy.

The comfort seating was the hot topic of the tour. The new recliners in all six auditoriums feature a swivel tray, anti-gravity component, and an optional heated back.

There is new flooring throughout the building. The walls have been restored. Walkways and hallways are all equipped with safety illumination. The electrical has been updated.



Ho-Chunk Nation Honors the Life and Legacy of Ernie Stevens Jr.

Ernest "Ernie" L. "Big Cat" Stevens Jr., a prominent figure in Indian Country, passed away on September 26, 2025, at the age of 66.

He leaves behind a legacy of advocacy, leadership, and service that transformed the landscape of Indigenous sovereignty and tribal governance.

A citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Stevens rose to national prominence as Chairman of the Indian Gaming Association (IGA), a position he held for more than 25 years.

Throughout his tenure, he worked to defend and expand the rights of tribal governments through gaming, protecting sovereignty, strengthening economies, and advancing intertribal collaboration.

Ho-Chunk Nation Kicks Off Domestic Violence Awareness Month with 5K Color Fun Run/Walk

The Ho-Chunk Nation came together on Saturday, October 4, for the annual 5K Color Fun Run/Walk at the Chak Ha Chee Community Center for the observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM).

Participants walked and ran along the colorful route to the theme "Every1KnowsSome1," a campaign slogan emphasizing that domestic violence affects people across all communities and backgrounds.

Ho-Chunk Nation Observes Orange Shirt Day

Members of the Ho-Chunk Nation came together on September 30 to recognize Orange Shirt Day, a day of remembrance and reflection for the Indigenous children who were taken from their families and forced into boarding schools.

Staff and community members wore bright orange shirts to honor survivors and remember those who never made it home.

Observed annually on September 30, Orange Shirt Day, also known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, began in 2013 after residential school survivor Phyllis Jack Webstad shared her story.

Tracy Thundercloud Takes Oath of Office

Wednesday, October 8, the Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board hosted an Oath of Office Ceremony for the newly elected Tracy Thundercloud at the Tribal Office Building near Black River Falls, WI. Mr. Thundercloud brings a wealth of knowledge and history of the Ho-Chunk Nation with him.

Mr. Thundercloud was a former Legislator and Executive Director of multiple departments of the Ho-Chunk Nation. He is now the Representative for the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature District 1, Seat 2.

Ho-Chunk Nation Celebrates Major Milestone with Topping-Off Ceremony in Beloit

October 16, 2025 marked a historic moment for the Ho-Chunk Nation as leaders, workers, and community members gathered to celebrate the Topping-Off Ceremony for Ho-Chunk Gaming Beloit, the placement of the final steel beam that brings the structure one step closer to completion.

The event celebrated years of planning, collaboration, and determination that have gone into making this long-awaited project a reality. Attendees from across the Nation joined representatives from the City of Beloit, law enforcement, construction crews, and architectural teams.

Gov. Evers Urges Trump Administration to Protect Food Assistance for Nearly 700,000 Wisconsinites

On October 22, Gov. Tony Evers called upon the Trump Administration to take immediate action to prevent nearly 700,000 Wisconsinites from losing access to food assistance through the state's FoodShare program as the federal government shutdown continues.

With federal funds set to run out in just nine days, Evers sent a letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins urging the agency to use existing authority under federal law to extend Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits into November. The USDA has previously used similar authority to sustain other nutrition programs during funding lapses, such as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

Celebrating Green Corn and the Fall Harvest

The Ho-Chunk Nation came together on October 9 for the annual Green Corn Celebration held behind the Tribal Office Building.

The event brought community members together to celebrate the year's harvest and give thanks for the foods and medicines that continue to sustain the

Continued on Page 13

Continued from Page 12

people. The celebration included traditional dishes, games, social dances, and demonstrations.

Community members brought traditional dishes such as corn soup, venison, and squash. The event reminded people about the value of traditional foods and how they connect to health and identity.

Keya Luta Win Hunt Leads St. Thomas Volleyball Into a New Era

Keya Luta Win Hunt, a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, has earned a spot on the NCAA Division I University of St. Thomas volleyball team in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Hunt is the daughter of Shawnee Hunt and Aquila Tapio-Hunt, and the granddaughter of Rosetta and Melvin Hunt. She is also Leech Lake Ojibwe and Oglala Lakota.

Under the steady leadership of longtime head coach Thanh Pham, now in his 23rd season, the Tommies continue to climb the ranks of Division I competition. There are only two NCAA Division I volleyball programs in Minnesota, one at the University of Minnesota and the other at the University of St. Thomas.

Ho-Chunk Community Honors Chief Blue Wing on Indigenous Peoples Day

On Monday, October 13, Ho-Chunk families and community members came together in Reedsburg to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day and honor Chief Aahucooga (Blue Wing) and the enduring Ho-Chunk presence in Sauk County.

The event featured a walking path lined with interpretive signs sharing the story of Chief Blue Wing and the history of the Ho-Chunk Nation in the area. Attendees also visited a nearby creek where Aahucooga's camp once stood, providing a moment to connect physically and spiritually with the land their ancestors once called home.



Veterans Powwow Moves to Ho-Chunk Casino in Baraboo

Due to the ongoing government shutdown, the annual Veterans D.O.R.A. Powwow will no longer be held at Volk Field. Instead, the event will take place at Ho-Chunk Gaming Wisconsin Dells in Baraboo on Saturday, November 15, starting at 11 a.m.

The powwow, sponsored by Descendants of Red Arrow (D.O.R.A.) and Friends, continues its longstanding mission to honor Native and non-Native veterans whose service has left a lasting legacy for their families and communities.

The event pays tribute to the 128th Infantry Company D of the 32nd "Red Arrow Division" and the many Ho-Chunk and Wisconsin veterans who served in World War I and beyond.

The powwow traces back to the sacrifices made by 25 Ho-Chunk men who joined the Red Arrow Division during World War I. Their names, histories, and flags remain at the heart of the gathering each year.

NOVEMBER

Ho-Chunk Nation Celebrates Veterans Day

The Ho-Chunk Nation celebrated Veterans Day this week with ceremonies that honored tribal members who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The event brought together Veterans, families, and community members to recognize the courage, sacrifice, and enduring spirit of Native warriors.

Across Indian Country, Veterans Day carries deep meaning. Native people have served in every major U.S. conflict, often at higher rates than any other group. The Nation's celebrations included Ho-Chunk color guards, the sound of the drum echoing, and songs dedicated to Veterans.

Ho-Chunk Nation Launches Emergency Food Program as SNAP Funding Stalls Amid Federal Shutdown

The Ho-Chunk Nation has declared an emergency to ensure tribal members relying on federal food assistance don't go hungry during the ongoing government shutdown.

President Jon Greendeer issued an Executive Order on November 7, 2025, creating a temporary food-assistance program after the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in Wisconsin as FoodShare, was disrupted by the shutdown.

The move allows the Nation to use its own emergency reserve funds to provide direct grocery support for enrolled members currently on SNAP/FoodShare.

Reclaiming Wellness the Native Way

ThunderMaker Wellness, founded by Ho-Chunk tribal member Hunter Thundercloud, is helping to reshape the way recovery and mental health care are delivered in Indian Country.

Based in Arizona, ThunderMaker Wellness focuses on substance use and mental health healing through a holistic lens. The program ranges from six months to two years, beginning with a stabilization phase before transitioning into apprenticeships that teach life and vocational skills.

Congratulations to the Wisconsin Dells High School Girls Golf Teams!

Both Varsity and JV went undefeated in conference this season. Not only that, but the Varsity team made school history as Regional Champs and qualified for State as a team, which was held October 13 and 14 at University Ridge in Verona, WI. The Varsity team was led by head coach, Moses Alvarez, and the JV team was led by his younger sister, Maura Alvarez, both Ho-Chunk tribal members.

HCN Donates to Alaska Native Communities Impacted by Typhoon

Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) Vice President Lambert Cleveland and Representative Stephanie Begay met with Kendra Kloster, Director of Government Relations for the Alaska Federation of Natives, at the National Congress of American Indians 82nd Annual Convention in Seattle, WA to deliver a \$10,000 donation from the Ho-Chunk Nation in support of Alaska Native communities impacted by recent Typhoon Halong's damage.

HCN Welcomes 2025 Miss Indian World

Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) communities were honored to welcome the last Miss

Indian World, Dania Wahwasuck, for meet and greet events on Wednesday, November 12 at the District 1 Community Center and Thursday, November 13 at the Ho-Chunk House of Wellness.

Dania graciously shared her travels, education, and background. She left our youth and families inspired and uplifted.

A heartfelt thank you to the HCN Youth Services and the Education Department for providing delicious meals each night. The gatherings were intimate, meaningful, and a beautiful opportunity not only for us to learn about Miss Indian World, but also for her to learn about our Ho-Chunk Nation with a special interest in the Ho-Chunk Agriculture Department.



Ho-Chunk Cinema Opens in Tomah to Serve as a Premier Destination for Movie Enthusiasts

The Ho-Chunk Nation opened Ho-Chunk Cinema, its first independently owned and operated movie theater, on Friday, November 21, in Tomah, WI. A small ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on November 20. The theater, located at 135 Wittig Road, features six screens with laser projection, surround sound speakers, and zero gravity recliner chairs.

The state-of-the-art cinema features the latest in film entertainment, and the remodeled facility is designed to become a premier destination for movie lovers.

The six-screen theater features laser projection, Dolby surround sound, and 364 zero gravity recliner seats with heated backs and swivel tray tables.

New Year's Eve Sobriety Powwow Returns to Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Intertribal Circle (MIC) is bringing back the New Year's Eve Sobriety Powwow, set for Wednesday, December 31, Tthigwe Gymnasium on the Wgema Campus.

For decades, the sobriety powwow has served as a safe, alcohol-free celebration for Milwaukee's Native American families. When the gathering disappeared, community members voiced how much they missed having a place to come together in a sober, supportive environment. MIC responded by reviving the powwow this year.

Representatives Attend the Red Shawl Gala

Ho-Chunk Nation was proud to be represented on November 15, at the 18th Annual Red Shawl Gala at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, WI by Representatives Lambert Cleveland Jr., Shelby Visintin, and Kyle White Eagle.

Proceeds support the Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center (GLIHC) and its critical health and wellness services for Native families in Milwaukee.

Tomah Area School District Celebrates Native American Heritage Month

On Tuesday, November 18, the Tomah Area School District honored Native American Heritage Month with a series of one-hour dance performances at the high school.

Bonnie Bird, Stormy Perry, and Haas coordinated this special day. A sincere appreciation to the Bearheart Drum for singing, all the dancers from Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, and Black River Falls, and Corey Hindsley for serving as the emcee.

Veterans Day Powwow Highlights

The Ho-Chunk veterans, families, and community members gathered on Saturday, November 15, for the Veterans Powwow, an annual tribute to the men and women of the Ho-Chunk Nation who have served in the United States military.

This year's event added significance as Chet Faith, 7th Wisconsin District Commander of the American Legion, delivered a speech honoring more than a century of Ho-Chunk military service and sacrifice.

Faith, who has long worked alongside Native veterans across Wisconsin, centered his speech on the role Ho-Chunk warriors have played in U.S. history, from World War I to today's National Guard deployments.

Many Ho-Chunk men volunteered for military service long before the federal government acknowledged them as U.S. citizens.

DECEMBER

Jackson County Sheriff's Office Conveys 'No threats have been found' After Active Shooter Report

Sheriff Duane Waldera, Jackson County Sheriff's Office

On December 9, 2025, at about 10:35 AM, the Jackson County Communications Center received unconfirmed, third-hand information that there was a possible active shooter at the Family Health Center (Black River Falls Dental Center), N6571 Lumberjack Guy Rd., Town of Brockway.

Law enforcement officers from the Sheriff's Office and the Ho-Chunk Police Department responded to the area and checked all surrounding businesses. No threats have been found at this time and there is no danger to the community. Further information gained indicated that a neighboring law enforcement agency was conducting a training exercise using a similar scenario. Steps to notify the public prior to the training were taken by that agency.

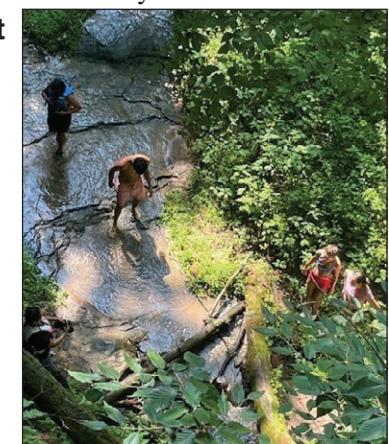
Ho-Chunk Nation Celebrates New Dual-Language Highway Signs

The Ho-Chunk Nation, state leaders, and community members gathered at the House of Wellness in Baraboo to unveil new dual-language highway signs.

The signs feature both Ho-Chunk and English place names, marking an important step in restoring Ho-Chunk language and visibility across the state.

Tribal Youth Initiative Makes Strong Start

The Ho-Chunk Nation received a BIA grant last summer to create the Ho Chunk Tribal Youth Initiative, which is intended to introduce tribal youth of high School age to careers in natural resources. This includes wildlife management, forestry, fisheries, soil science and other industries which are important in Wisconsin. The Ho Chunk Departments of Natural Resources, Education (Cultural and Community Education) and Social Services (Youth Services) have combined forces to bring this program to fruition. Three events have already occurred and they were rather stunning successes.





**HO-CHUNK NATION
LEGISLATURE
REGULAR MEETING
EXECUTIVE OFFICES
BLACK RIVER FALLS, WI
DECEMBER 9, 2025**

Call to Order: Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.'

Roll Call:

President Jon Greendeer-EX
Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr.-P
Rep. Phyllis Smoke-P Rep. Tracy Thundercloud-P
Rep. Paul Fox-P
Rep. Damian Thundercloud-P
Rep. Stephanie Begay-P
Rep. Kyle White Eagle-P
Rep. Shelby Visintin-VC
Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle-P
Rep. Edward Mullen-VC
Rep. David Greendeer-VC
Rep. Sandra Whitewing-VC

VC-Video Conference

Determination of Quorum: Quorum is established at 10:01 a.m.

Opening Prayer: Rep. Paul Fox offered a word of prayer.

Approval of Agenda:
MOTION by Rep. Paul Fox to approve the agenda ADDING under New Business R. Resolution-Authorization for the Department of Social Services to Apply for the 2026 Tribal Elderly Transportation Program, and moving New Business Q. Letter to Kijire Nagu Board until after Executive Session. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:
Legislative Meeting
November 18, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve the November 18, 2025 Legislative Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Commission Reports:
Health, Insurance, Education and Social Services Commission-November 24, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to approve the November 24, 2025 Health, Insurance,

Education and Social Services Commission Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with School District of Baraboo

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 A**, Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with School District of Baraboo. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Field Education Affiliation Agreement with the Chippewa Valley Technical College

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 B**, Field Education Affiliation Agreement with the Chippewa Valley Technical College. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Support to Apply for National Science Foundation Grant for the Earth Partnership Indigenous Arts and Sciences Initiative in Collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Earth Partnership

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 C**, Support to Apply for National Science Foundation Grant for the Earth Partnership Indigenous Arts and Sciences Initiative in Collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Earth Partnership. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorization for the Department of Health to Enter into an Affiliation Agreement with the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 D**, Authorization for the Department of Health to Enter into an Affiliation Agreement with the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Development Commission- November 25, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to approve the November 25, 2025 Development Commission Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorization to Place Proposed Amendments to Ho-Chunk Nation Occupational Safety and Health Program Act and Subsections 6 HCC § 8-1 through § 8-19 out for Public Comment

MOTION by Rep. Tracy Thundercloud to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 E**, Authorization to Place Proposed Amendments to Ho-Chunk Nation Occupational Safety and Health Program Act and Subsections 6 HCC § 8-1 through § 8-19 out for Public Comment. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Finance Commission- December 4, 2025

MOTION by Rep. David Greendeer to approve the December 4, 2025 Finance Commission Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

401K NFP Assignment of Advisory Agreement Change to Madison Dearborn Partners

It was mentioned that Trust and Investment Commission brought forward a recommendation of change as Madison Dearborn Partners was acquired by FNP.

MOTION by Rep. Tracy Thundercloud to approve the assignment of advisory agreement change to Madison Dearborn Partners. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. MOTION IS AMENDED to approve the consent to assignment form and authorize the Vice President to sign. Second concurs. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Unfinished Business: No agenda items.

New Business:

Presentation: *National Museum of the American Indian, Truman Lowe*

National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Director Dr. Cynthia Lamar was present via video conference to overview the Museum's presentation. NMAI shared two proposals: 1) an endowment in honor of Truman Lowe and the Cultural Legacy of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and 2) an educational resource celebrating the art and life of Truman Lowe.

MOTION by Rep. Edward Mullen to refer the National Museum of the American Indian request to the Finance Commission. Second by Rep. Shelby Visintin. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Recess:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to recess the meeting for 15 minutes. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting recessed at 10:29 a.m. Recess due to an outside incident. The Tribal Office Building is on lock down.

Call to Order: Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. called the meeting to order at 10:49 a.m.

Roll Call:

President Jon Greendeer-EX
Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr.-P
Rep. Phyllis Smoke-P Rep. Tracy Thundercloud-P
Rep. Paul Fox-P

Rep. Damian Thundercloud-P
Rep. Stephanie Begay-P
Rep. Kyle White Eagle-P
Rep. Shelby Visintin-VC
Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle-P
Rep. Edward Mullen-VC
Rep. David Greendeer-VC
Rep. Sandra Whitewing-VC

VC-Video Conference

Determination of Quorum: Quorum is established at 10:50 a.m.

Recess:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to recess the meeting until further notice. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting recessed at 10:52 a.m. The Tribal Office Building

is still on lock down.

Call to Order: Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

Roll Call:

President Jon Greendeer-EX
Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr.-P
Rep. Phyllis Smoke-P
Rep. Tracy Thundercloud-P
Rep. Paul Fox-P
Rep. Damian Thundercloud-P
Rep. Stephanie Begay-P
Rep. Kyle White Eagle-P
Rep. Shelby Visintin-VC
Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle-P
Rep. Edward Mullen-VC
Rep. David Greendeer-VC
Rep. Sandra Whitewing-VC

VC-Video Conference

Determination of Quorum: Quorum is established at 11:11 a.m.

New Business (Continued):

Resolution-Enactment of the Ho-Chunk Land Planning Commission Establishment and Organization Act (1 HCC § 21)

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 F**, Enactment of the Ho-Chunk Land Planning Commission Establishment and Organization Act (1 HCC § 21). Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Confirmation of Myra Jo Price to the Election Board as the District 2 Tomah Member

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 G**, Confirmation of Myra Jo Price to the Election Board as the District 2 Tomah Member. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Confirmation of Deana Mitch to the Election Board as the District 2 Tomah Alternate

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 H**, Confirmation of Deana Mitch to the Election Board as the District 2 Tomah Alternate. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Continued on Page 15



Continued from Page 14
Resolution-Confirmation of Weeta Montelongo to the Election Board as the District 2 Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo Member

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 I**, Confirmation of Weeta Montelongo to the Election Board as the District 2 Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo Member. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Confirmation of Barb Funmaker to the Election Board as the District 2 Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo Alternate

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 J**, Confirmation of Barb Funmaker to the Election Board as the District 2 Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo Alternate. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Cedar Growth

Rep. Stephanie Begay stated that the Executive Director of Cedar Growth has been working with Legislative Legal on a resolution for an MOU. There are items that still need to be ironed out.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to TABLE Resolution-Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Cedar Growth until next session. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with Wisconsin Indigenous Economic Development Corporation

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt Resolution **12-09-25 K**, Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with Wisconsin Indigenous Economic Development Corporation, changing the title to Wisconsin Indigenous Housing Economic Development Corporation. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Support for the Health Department to Apply for the Climate Ready Tribes Initiative with the National Indian Health Board

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 L**, Support for the Health Department to Apply for the Climate Ready Tribes Initiative with the National Indian Health Board. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Adoption of Amendments to the Ho-Chunk Housing and Community Development Agency Charter

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 M**, Adoption of Amendments to the Ho-Chunk Housing and Community Development Agency Charter. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 3-9(Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr., Rep. Phyllis Smoke, Rep. Tracy Thundercloud, Rep. Paul Fox, Rep. Shelby Visintin, Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle, Rep. Edward Mullen, Rep. David Greendeer, Rep. Sandra Whitewing)-0 **MOTION DEFEATED**.

Resolution-Authorization for the Ho-Chunk Nation Head Start to Apply for the Head Start Federal Grant

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 N**, Authorization for the Ho-Chunk Nation Head Start to Apply for the Head Start Federal Grant. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Support to Apply for Spencer Foundation Grant for the Earth Partnership Indigenous Arts and Sciences Initiative in Collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Earth Partnership

MOTION by Rep. Tracy Thundercloud to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 O**, Support to Apply for Spencer Foundation Grant for the Earth Partnership Indigenous Arts and Sciences Initiative in Collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Earth Partnership.

Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Repeal of Ho-Chunk Insurance Review Commission Establishment and Organization Act (1 HCC § 13)

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 P**, Repeal of Ho-Chunk Insurance Review Commission Establishment and Organization Act (1 HCC § 13). Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Ho-Chunk Transportation Authority Town of Brockway, Jackson County, WI Paul Road Shouldering Project Cooperative Agreement

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 Q**, Ho-Chunk Transportation Authority Town of Brockway, Jackson County, WI Paul Road Shouldering Project Cooperative Agreement. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Ho-Chunk Transportation Authority Wood County, WI County Highway F Construction Project

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 R**, Ho-Chunk Transportation Authority Wood County, WI County Highway F Construction Project. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Confirmation of Ron Perry to the Election Board as the District 4 Chicago Alternate

MOTION by Rep. Edward Mullen to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 S**, Confirmation of Ron Perry to the Election Board as the District 4 Chicago Alternate. Second by Rep. Sandra Whitewing. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Letter to Kijire Nagu Board-Moved to after Executive Session.

Resolution-Authorization

for the Department of Social Services to Apply for the 2026 Tribal Elderly Transportation Program

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to adopt **Resolution 12-09-25 T**, Authorization for the Department of Social Services to Apply for the 2026 Tribal Elderly Transportation Program. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 11-0-1(Rep. Edward Mullen) **MOTION CARRIED**.

Executive Session (Business Matters, Criminal Matters, Inter-governmental Relations, Land, Law Enforcement, Legal Advice, Personnel Matters, Public Safety or Well-Being:

MOTION by Rep. Rep. Paul Fox to move to Executive Session for Business Matters, Criminal Matters, Inter-governmental Relations, Land, Law Enforcement, Legal Advice, Personnel Matters, Public Safety or Well-Being. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

The meeting moved to Executive Session at 11:55 a.m.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to return to Open Session. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 3:52 p.m.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to ratify all action taken in Executive Session. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Release to Open Session:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to authorize legislative legal to post the federal lobbying RFP and release to Open Session. Second by Rep. David Greendeer. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

MOTION by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. to refer Consideration of Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1), and place it out for forty-five day public comment. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

New Business (Re-visited): Letter to Kijire Nagu Board

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to TABLE Letter to Kijire Nagu Board. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Amendment to the Agenda:
MOTION by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. to add Consideration of Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1) and Resolution-Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1) to the agenda. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Consideration of Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1)

MOTION by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. to consider the Quick Passage Procedure to the Gaming Ordinance and place it out for forty-five day public comment. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Resolution-Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1)

MOTION by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. to adopt Resolution 12-09-25 U, Quick Passage Procedure to Amend the Ho-Chunk Nation Gaming Ordinance (5 HCC §1), and place it out for forty-five day public comment. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adjourn the Legislative Meeting to December 23, 2025 at the Tribal Office Building in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED**.

The Legislative Meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Rep. Stephanie Begay, Tribal Secretary

OUR PEOPLE, OUR RECOVERY

THUNDERMAKER

CULTURE * HEALING * SUBSTANCE USE & MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS*

A SOLUTION AS BIG AS THE PROBLEM

Culture is Healing

In a time when mainstream behavioral health systems have failed to reflect our cultural ways, Thundermaker Wellness rises as a powerful force for change, challenging the norms and reshaping the care our people deserve.

Rooted in the belief that healing must honor tradition, identity, and experience, Thundermaker Wellness offers behavioral health services specifically designed for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) individuals. Their approach blends contemporary clinical practices with ancestral wisdom, where Indigenous values—storytelling, language, food sovereignty, and ceremony—are not just included, but foundational.

Thundermaker isn't just a name, it's a powerful vision of two Ho-Chunk changemakers: Hunter Thundercloud and Arrow Funmaker. The creation of Thundermaker emerged from a serendipitous meeting and discovery that they shared a deeply aligned vision of changing the landscape of treatment for our people. Taking action on their vision, Thundermaker Wellness was created, honoring their names, strength, and hope for the future of care.

"We know that our culture is healing," says Hunter Thundercloud, Founder and longtime advocate for culturally informed behavioral health systems. "We're not just treating symptoms—we're building leaders through cultural identity." Thundermaker supports individuals with substance use and mental health challenges through a holistic lens. Every relative who walks through their doors is met with dignity, respect, and support for their cultural integration. Healing is defined by the individual, and Thundermaker provides the tools and guidance to help each person reach their full potential in recovery.

"We know what it's like to carry the weight of intergenerational trauma," shares Arrow Funmaker, Co-Founder and Chief Cultural Integration Officer. "But we also know the power of becoming living examples of intergenerational healing and knowledge."

Thundermaker Wellness remains steadfast in its mission, serving tribal nations as a resource for culturally grounded care. As behavioral health systems grow, and cases of substance use and mental health issues continue to rise, Thundermaker offers a solution as big as the problem.

"It is time to stop talking about the problem & start working towards a solution."



The road to healing begins now and you deserve to define what healing means to you. If you or someone you love is struggling with substance use or mental health issues, Thundermaker is here to help.

For more information or to connect with Thundermaker Wellness, tribal members and providers are encouraged to reach out directly to the contact information below.
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 (928) 493-4300