



### White Earth Nation RBC passes resolution to support inclusion of Red Lake Nation Blood in Enrollment Eligibility Criteria

The White Earth Nation Reservation Business Committee (RBC) has passed a resolution in support of amending the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) Enrollment Ordinance to align with what is written in the MCT Constitution. This would be beneficial in recognition of the inclusion of the Red Lake Nation Ojibwe blood in determining enrollment eligibility. This resolution reflects the RBC's commitment to advocating for the many children who are descendants of White Earth Nation and Red Lake Nation but currently do not meet the current enrollment criteria for White Earth Nation.

Red Lake Nation, which is geographically close to White Earth Nation, has a unique history, including its decision not to join the MCT due to opposition to the federal allotment policy. Recognizing Red Lake Nation's ancestry for enrollment would strengthen ties between descendants of the two Nations while ensuring fairness for families with dual heritage.

"Supporting this amendment is about fairness and honoring the shared lineage of our communities," said Chairman Michael Fairbanks. "It is our duty to ensure that children with both White Earth and Red Lake ancestry have the opportunity to connect with their tribal roots and identity, even if they don't meet current criteria."

This resolution aligns with sentiments expressed by the White Earth constitutional delegates, who have long supported updates to the MCT Constitution to better reflect modern realities and the needs of tribal citizens. The delegates, who are White Earth Band members tasked with recommending constitutional amendments, see this as a necessary step toward addressing enrollment challenges.

Enrollment continues to be a point of debate across the MCT. While individual reservations, including Leech Lake, have supported similar changes, the broader decision rests with the TEC. This process underscores the need for a collective, updated approach to enrollment, reflecting the interconnected histories and families within and beyond MCT member reservations.

The RBC will continue to advocate for this change and encourage dialogue across the MCT to ensure that enrollment policies reflect tribal citizens' lived experiences and shared heritage.

### Overdose Recovery Support Officer honored with Life Saving Award for dedication to sobriety and community

By Cortney Pemberton, MHA  
White Earth Behavioral Health Assistant Director

Justin "Judd" Brown was recently honored with the Life Saving Award, presented by the White Earth Police Department and White Behavioral Health. This award recognizes Judd's unwavering commitment to his own sobriety and his extraordinary efforts to help others on the White Earth Reservation overcome addiction and reclaim their lives.

Judd's journey has been one of resilience, transformation, and service. After achieving sobriety himself, he made it his mission to guide others on the

same path. His dedication doesn't stop there; Judd has immersed himself in his culture, using it as a foundation for healing and growth. His work extends to all corners of the reservation, where he tirelessly assists communities in need.

In his role with Behavioral Health as an Overdose Recovery Support Officer, Judd has become a beacon of hope, offering life-saving support and encouragement to individuals and families impacted by addiction.

The White Earth Police Department echoed this

[See Award Page 19](#)



Submitted photo

From left are District 3 Rep. Laura Lee Erickson, Jordan McArthur - Behavioral Health Administrator, Justin "Judd" Brown, Ralph Goodman - Access to Recovery Manager, and District 2 Rep. Eugene Sommers.

### White Earth Police visit local students

The White Earth Police Department recently held a Donut with a Cop event at Ogema Elementary School. Officers brought donuts and spent time talking with the students. In addition to Ogema, the officers also visited the Circle of Life Academy. More events will be held in the future.



Submitted photo

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## Anishinaabeg Today

The *Anishinaabeg Today* (AT) is the official publication of White Earth Nation and is published once a month. Editorials and articles appearing in the AT are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of the AT staff or the White Earth Reservation Business Committee.

The AT reserves the right to reject any advertising or materials submitted for publication. The submission of articles and photos is encouraged, however, they are subject to editing for grammar, length, and malicious/libelous content. The Editor makes the sole decision of what is published in the AT and will not assume any responsibility for unsolicited material nor will the AT guarantee publication upon submission. **Deadlines are strictly enforced!** Deadline dates are printed below in each issue.

The AT is distributed at no charge to all postal patrons living on White Earth Reservation and by mail to White Earth Nation members (who request the newspaper) living within the United States. One per household. The cost of a newspaper subscription is \$12 per year for non-members (including descendants) living off the reservation. **Current and past issues of the AT can be read online for free at [www.whiteearth.com](http://www.whiteearth.com).**

For more information call 218-935-3569, email: [today@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:today@whiteearth-nsn.gov), fax: 833-607-0776, or write to:

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### Memberships

- ◆ Indigenous Journalist Association
- ◆ Minnesota Newspaper Association

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## Editor

Gary W. Padrta

## Future Issues \*

Deadline	Issue Date
December 23	January 1
January 29	February 5
February 26	March 5
March 26	April 2
April 30	May 7

\* Deadline and issue dates subject to change

# Honoring the men and women from White Earth who served during World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam eras

By **Budd Parker**  
White Earth Community Member and Navy Veteran

## France's highest honor for non-French citizens awarded for gallantry and heroism

**Charles "Big Chiggah" Bellecourt** served in 20th Co., 5th Reg't U.S. Marines, 2nd Division during World War I - the most highly decorated regiment in the USMC. Because of their performance in the fierce battle of Belleau Wood, the regiment earned the nickname "Devil Dogs." Bellecourt's bravery during the campaigns in France at Bouresches, Belleau Wood and Soissons earned him three distinct citations from the French government. After the war, the government of France awarded his regiment the highest honor they could bestow on non-French citizens - the Croix de Guerre fourragere:



"In 1918, Marines of the 5th and 6th Regiments by their heroic deeds of valor inscribed the names of momentous and brilliant battles on the pages of Marine Corps history as well as on their own regimental flags. They have the signal honor of being the only two regiments in the AEF to receive three citations—two in the orders of the army and one in the orders of the corps—the fourragère and Croix de Guerre with two palms and one gilt star."

To this day, the 5th Marine Regiment is one of only two Marine Corps regiments authorized to wear the French Fourragere due to the Fighting 5th's heroic actions during World War I. For the rest of his life, Big Chiggah suffered from the effects of being exposed to the chemical weapons the Germans deployed in clouds of disabling and lethal gasses.

## Two are awarded the Nation's 2nd highest medals for Extraordinary Heroism

### Lawrence A. Vizenor

Private First Class, U.S. Army  
Company I, 132d Infantry Regiment, 33d Division, A.E.F.

Date of Action: October 8, 1918

Citation: The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Lawrence A. Vizenor, Private First Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in action in the Bois-du-Fays, France, Oct. 8, 1918. Private Vizenor was a member of a reconnaissance patrol which encountered such intense fire from an enemy machine-gun nest that part of the patrol was driven back. Despite the heavy fire, he and another soldier, with an officer, continued forward and secured the information for which they were sent. The officer was mortally wounded, but Private Vizenor and his comrade silenced the machine-gun nest by effective rifle fire, carried the wounded officer to the rear, and reported their valuable information concerning the enemy's position.

General Orders 98, W.D., 1919  
Home Town: Richwood, Minn.

### Leo Vernon Beaulieu

Citation: The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Leo Vernon Beaulieu (2162804), Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism as a machine gunner serving with Company E, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, FIRST Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in action near Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam,



on 16 May 1966. Private Beaulieu's squad was engaged in search and destroy operations against Communist insurgent forces when it was ambushed by a Viet Cong force of sixty men. Heavy machine gun and automatic rifle fire from three sides pinned down the squad in an area offering little or no protection. Private Beaulieu was hit in the first volley of fire and knocked away from his machine gun. Although critically wounded in the chest, he crawled back to his gun and put it into action, delivering heavy, accurate fire on the enemy. He refused to take advantage of the limited cover available in order to bring punishing fire on the ambushing force, and as a result he was hit a second time as the machine gun malfunctioned. Still disregarding his own personal safety, he worked desperately to clear the weapon, and while doing so he received a third wound, which was fatal. Through his extraordinary initiative and inspiring valor in the face of almost certain death, he kept the enemy at a distance until reinforcements arrived, and enabled most of the members of his squad to be rescued. Private Beaulieu's calm and courageous actions under hostile fire upheld the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom.

Authority: Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals

Home Town: Lengby, Minn.

## World War II Prisoners of War

**William A. Belland**, PFC, Co. B, 23rd Inf. Reg't, 2nd Division, US Army. Wm Belland was taken prisoner on Aug. 13, 1944 near Tinchebray in Normandy, France and held a Prisoner of War in Stalag 7A Moosburg Bavaria 48-12 (Work Camps 3324-46 Krumbachstrasse 48011, Work Camp 3368 Munich 48-11). He was liberated in June 1945. Belland died Nov. 25, 1968 and is buried in Hoyt Lakes Memorial Cemetery, Hoyt Lakes, Minn.

**Albert Jugg**, PFC, HQ Co., 3rd Battalion, 423rd Infantry Regiment, 106 Division, US Army - known as Golden Lions. From Pine Point, Albert enlisted in the US Army Feb. 13, 1943. He was captured at the Battle of the Bulge and taken as a POW to the notorious Stalag IX-B, aka Bad Orb. Stalag IX-B is known as one of, if not the, worst and most brutal of the German prison camps where American and allied soldiers were imprisoned.

It took only five days to transport the 15,000 men of the 106th Infantry Division from New Jersey to Glasgow, Scotland, making port Nov. 17, 1944. The troops boarded trains to Portsmouth, England then shipped across a storm-tossed English Channel to France where they were loaded into hundreds of unheated trucks and hauled eastward, crossing into Belgium on Dec. 10.

Albert's 106th Division was positioned in the Schnee Eifel region of the Ardennes Forest.

Through no fault of its own, the 106th, freshly arrived with absolutely no previous combat experience, was about as ill-prepared for combat as any division that America ever put into the field. The buildup of panzers and infantry forces sheltered under the tall pines a few miles to the east were unknown to American intelligence. This German



See Veterans Page 28

**ELDER  
WINTERIZATION  
2024-2025**

**To Apply:**

- Fill out the application/release form to update your address and phone number at your ENP sites/delivery drivers or RBC front desk or fax to 218-935-0480.
  - Call 218-936-2444 Workforce Center Front Desk,
  - Darrel Bellanger, Day Labor Supervisor 218-935-3702
- Must reside within the White Earth Reservation Boundaries.
- Must be an enrolled Tribal elder, or disabled, and Own your home.
- Not live in White Earth Housing properties/residences.

**Supplies provided**

- Inside or outside plastic for windows
  - Weatherstripping for doors
- Outside Plastic will be installed by Day Laborers

- Day Labor workers can not enter homes, or accept money or gifts.
- Shoveling of roofs/walkways depending upon snow fall amounts



White Earth Education Division

# Winter Gear Drive



**December 2 - January 8**

Help support children and families in need of warm winter gear this season.

**Collecting All Sizes – Infant to Adult**  
**NEW or GENTLY USED**

Winter Coats, Snowpants, Hats, Gloves, & Snowboots

**DROP OFF at the WHITE EARTH RBC FRONT LOBBY**

## HOUSING AVAILABLE IN CITY OF MAHNOMEN

### For Rent & For Sale Homes

218-847-5641  
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www.mmcdc.com

**Midwest Minnesota**  
Community Development Corporation  
*Blending Capital With Innovation For Successful Community Development*

**NeighborWorks**  
CHARTERED MEMBER

MMCDC is an equal opportunity employer, provider and lender.

## News From Chairman Michael Fairbanks

Aaniin Boozhoo Gaa-waabaabiganikaag  
Niminwendam Waabaminaan!

Manidoo-Giizisoons

Aaniish inaa akawe ninga-gaagiizomaag aadi-zookaanag.

Weweni-sago-na

Greetings White Earth Nation I am Happy to See You!

It is December, Little Spirit Moon.

Everyone Be Safe.

The December moon is called Manidoo-giizisoons, meaning the “Little Spirit Moon.” This moon usually starts with large rings around Nookomis, Grandmother Moon, and carries a special story of reflection, wisdom, and quiet strength.

As winter’s chill settled over the land, the trees lost their leaves, the rivers froze, and animals prepared for the long, cold months. The people gathered by their fires, sensing the quiet of the season, and felt the call of Gichimanidoo, the Great Spirit. This moon held a special message for our tribal nations—it was time to reflect on the year that had passed and prepare for the renewal to come.

During Manidoo-giizisoons, the elders asked the Anishinaabe to pause, look inward, and listen closely. It was a time for the people to reflect on their actions, their choices, and their relationship with the world around them. In the stillness of winter, the elders spirits of the past and present could be felt the most during biboon. The cold of the season reminded the people to slow down, rest, and miigwechwendam, giving thanks for all the experience over the year.

One year, a young girl named Aki-Ikwe felt troubled as the Little Spirit Moon arrived. She had made many mistakes that year—arguing with friends, being careless, and losing sight of what mattered. As she sat with her grandmother by the fire, she felt uncertain about what the Little Spirit Moon meant for her.

Her grandmother, noticing Aki’s sadness, spoke kindly. “Listen to the wind, little one,” she said. “Manidoo-giizisoons teaches us that even in our mistakes, we can find peace. The winter stillness helps us grow. The cold reminds us that we can always begin again.”

Aki listened closely, and as she gazed up at the faintly glowing moon, she realized her grandmother was right. She didn’t have to be perfect, but she needed to learn and try again. The Little Spirit Moon taught her that even in darkness and cold, there is room for forgiveness and growth.

From that day on, Aki remembered the lessons of Manidoo-giizisoons. Each December, the people honored the Little Spirit Moon, knowing that it was a time to pause, reflect, and embrace new beginnings. The quiet of winter, with its cold and stillness, brought clarity, peace, and the chance for renewal.

### White Earth Land Office Dept. Update:

Our White Earth Land Office plays a critical role in managing approximately 85,765 acres on the White Earth Reservation, expertly balancing development with preservation to ensure the sustainability of our invaluable resources for future generations. Land is not merely a commodity for our people; it is the heartbeat of our cultural identity, intimately connected to our practices of hunting, gathering, and community development. It represents the very foundation of our prosperity and existence.

In the 2024 fiscal year, we made remarkable progress in expanding our land holdings, acquiring nearly 1,870 acres and two key commercial proper-



ties. Since October 2024, we have continued this momentum, adding an additional 346 acres, with 402 acres and one commercial property currently under contract. Once these transactions are concluded, we will have acquired over 3,020 acres since Oct. 1, 2023. This impressive growth is instrumental in advancing economic development, supporting village expansion, and preserving our cultural heritage, while simultaneously creating vital opportunities for wellness and harvesting initiatives.

Our collaborative efforts with programs such as the White Earth Land Recovery Program have yielded successful agreements for the transfer of over 121 acres. Additionally, our recent purchase of a cell tower site in Naytahwaush ensures that our community now has access to essential telecommunications services. These strategic acquisitions highlight our unwavering commitment to meeting immediate community needs while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, they oversee more than 1,000 leases on tribal land, encompassing homesites, business leases, and various permits. With the support of the Reservation Business Committee, they have initiated cleanup efforts for hazardous homesites that endanger our community. A recently hired realty technician has conducted 150 compliance inspections to address site issues, such as debris and unpermitted structures. Though these inspections have slightly delayed the opening of new homesites, we are dedicated and optimistic about making them available by spring 2025.

The White Earth Land Office is resolute in its mission to preserve and expand our land base, cultivate economic opportunities, and ensure responsible stewardship of our resources. By artfully combining tradition with progressive growth, we are inspired to forge a sustainable legacy that meets the evolving needs of our community, securing a bright future for generations to come

### Looking Ahead: A Strong Future for White Earth Nation

As we reflect on the successes of 2024, we also look ahead to a future full of promise and potential. We remain focused on strengthening our tribal sovereignty, expanding economic opportunities, and ensuring that future generations inherit a White Earth Nation that is resilient, prosperous, and deeply connected to its roots.

We will continue to advocate for our rights to manage our lands, natural resources, and cultural heritage, and we will remain at the forefront of opportunities that enhance our ability to provide for our peo-

**See Chairman Page 19**

## News From Secretary-Treasurer Michael J. LaRoque

Aanin Boozhoo,

Greeting White Earth Members, I have the honor of providing you with the monthly report of the Secretary/Treasurer position for the White Earth Tribal Council. This monthly report will consist of a Self-Governance, and a Travel Report.

### Self-Governance Report

The White Earth Nation is a Public Law 280 and a Self-Governance Tribe and receive funds under the Self-Governance Compact. FY2024 Self-Governance funds for our Compact Divisions was \$3,327,277 and these funds supported the following divisions, Tribal Court, Education Scholarships, Adult Basic Education, Direct Employment, Human Services, Indian Child Welfare, Dove Program, Natural Resources, Conservation, Forestry, Water Resources, Fisheries, and JOM.

The Self-Governance funds for the Non-Compact Divisions were \$3,547,187.31 and these funds covered these divisions: Contract Support, Litigation, Forestry Development, Wildland Fire Prevention, Facilities and Administration, Public Safety, Roads Maintenance, and Construction, Planning, and White Earth Land Settlement Act. These Self-Governance funds are distributed throughout these divisions, but some funds are specific to each of their divisions and can only be distributed to these divisions.

### Travel Update

On Oct. 15-16, I attended the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes meeting in Green Bay, Wis. Topics included the Tiwahe Initiative and the BIA Roads Maintenance and Construction Formula, with other important issues amongst all the Midwest Tribes.

On Oct. 22-23, I attended the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe/Tribal Executive Committee meeting at the Northern Lights Casino in Walker, Minn. On Oct. 22, Tribal leaders attended all subcommittees and on Oct. 23 the full TEC meeting. One topic that was discussed was an Amendment to the MCT Enrollment Ordinance to align with the MCT Constitution. This would allow all Minnesota Chippewa blood to be recognized by the MCT Tribes. This will take a vote by the TEC to amend the enrollment ordinance. There will be a Special TEC meeting on Dec. 12 at 3 p.m. in Hinkley, Minn.

On Oct. 27-Nov. 1, I attended the 81st Annual National Congress of American Indian Convention and Market place in Las Vegas. I attended all General Assembly and NCAI Midwest Regional Caucuses, Task Force meetings, subcommittee meetings.

There were two important resolutions that were passed during the Final Assembly by the NCAI board. The first resolution was the Red Lake Resolution that allowed the Federal Government to return all lands surrounding upper Red Lake to the Red Lake Band through Treaty. The second resolution was the Tiwahe funding resolution making Tiwahe funds move from Discretionary funding to Direct full funding for all Tribes that are currently receiving the funding. Both these resolutions passed at the final assembly. There was also a long discussion on co-stewardship of Federal Forestry lands within the reservation boundaries in the Alaska region that would affect the lower 48 states.

On Nov. 18-22, I traveled to Washington, D.C., with Self Governance Coordinator Nakoa Graff to the in-person Tribal/Interior Budget meeting. We attended all subcommittee meetings on Nov. 18-20, these committees were Public Safety and Justice, Data Management, Education, Transportation, Budget, Land, Water and Natural Resources, and Economic Development.

On Nov. 21-22, we attended the TBIC Main



Session, where there were several resolutions passed by the TBIC Council. At the Transportation subcommittee a resolution calling on the BIA Division of Transportation to Conduct a Third-Party Review of the Tribal Transportation Program Funding Distribution Formula. The Midwest Region is being under funded in the road maintenance and Construction areas and this resolution would examine the short falls in funding in these areas.

There were also discussions about the Tiwahe Initiative of which White Earth Nation is an incubator Tribe and receives \$100,000 and are seeking to become a full Tiwahe Initiative Tribe to receive full funding. The Tiwahe Initiative provides Tribes with the opportunity and funding to assess their own needs and design their own models to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of families. This funding is direct funding to the Tribes.

All Resolutions passed by both the NCAI and TBIC Committee are Legislative fixes and will have to be passed by the Federal Government during legislation.

I hope everyone had a great time at the Veterans Day Pow Wow at the Shooting Star Casino and had a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In closing I want to thank the members of the White Earth Nation for giving me this opportunity to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer for this great nation. I look forward to moving forward with great progress and optimism and I hope we can work together for a brighter future. Miigwech!

**Michael J. LaRoque**  
Secretary-Treasurer



**WAABIGWAN**  
• MASHKIKI •

**Waabigwan Mashkiki's Dispensary is now open at our new location at in Mahnomen**

Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Friday-Saturday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Phone: 218-936-1801**

**WHITE EARTH ELDERS  
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Hosted by White Earth ENP

**Tuesday, Dec 10th 2024  
10am-2pm**

Lunch will be served at 11:30 am

Shooting Star Event Center, Mahnomen, Mn.

Elders, ages 55+ & their spouse/caregiver

**LET'S ENJOY CHRISTMAS TIME WITH GOOD FRIENDS,  
GREAT FOOD, GAMES, & HOLIDAY CHEER!**

Come dressed for the Ugly Sweater Contest!  
1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place prizes for men and women

For questions, contact:  
Katherine (Kat) Thompson or Danielle Sutherland Uran 218-983-3286

Transportation as follows:

Bus #1 Pine Point: 7:40-7:50	Bus #2
Congregate Housing: 8:45-8:55	Rice Lake 8:50-9:00
Round House: 9:00-9:10	Naytahwaush: 9:20-9:30
Biimadaziwin: 9:15-9:25	
Ogema: 9:30-9:35	Reach out to the Elder Advocates
Evergreen Appts: 9:45-9:50	Program for additional
	transportation requests
	218-204-0464

**Santa Days**

- Face Paintings
- Hot Cocoa Bar with cookies
- Candy
- Picture with Santa

**10 A.M - NOON**  
**@ OGEMA COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Saturday, December 7th**

## IN NEED OF SEPTIC PUMPING

If you need your sewer system pumped call the White Earth Water and Sewer Department at 218-983-3202.

**Tribal Enrolled Elder** (55 years of age or older) - \$25

**Tribal Enrolled Member** (54 years or younger) - \$80

**White Earth Business** - \$115

**Non-enrollee** (any age) - \$185

**Businesses** - \$225

*(You must reside on the White Earth Reservation)*

## News From District 2 Rep. Eugene Sommers

### Boozhoo Anishinaabe

November was filled with lots of events. I had a great time working with the Mahnomen-Waubun Thunderbirds Football team, it was so fun to watch as they battled for the State Championship at the US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. I also had the privilege of attending the Veterans Powwow and the Round Dance at the Shooting Star Casino. Miigwech to all the dancers, singers, and guests who helped make these celebrations so special.

### MCT Enrollment Ordinance

On Nov. 25, White Earth RBC passed a resolution supporting an amendment to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) Enrollment Ordinance to clarify the definition of “Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood” as referenced in the MCT Constitution.

Currently, the Enrollment Ordinance defines “Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Indian Blood” as blood derived exclusively from the six bands of the MCT: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and White Earth. However, the MCT Constitution states that enrollment eligibility requires a person to have at least 25% “Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood,” which historically has been interpreted to include Red Lake Nation blood.

This clarification is crucial as it would impact enrollment eligibility and can be decided solely by the Tribal Executive Committee (TEC) without the need for a Constitutional Amendment or referendum vote. Amending the Enrollment Ordinance would require only a vote by the TEC, making this an essential and timely issue for discussion and decision-making.

### Minnesota Grand Council Subcommittee

Tribal Nations across Minnesota have recently established a Grand Council to have direct consultation and collaboration, independent of State or Federal Government facilitation. This initiative aims to address shared challenges while strengthening Nation-to-Nation relationships among the Tribes.

As part of this effort, subcommittees have been formed to focus on specific issues facing Tribal Nations. Notably, committees on Wild Rice and Cannabis have been created. White Earth Nation has taken the lead in facilitating discussions and is working toward developing intertribal commerce in these areas, promoting economic growth and self-determination among the Tribal Nations.

### Bureau of Indian Affairs Consultation

On Nov. 8, the RBC met with Superintendent Heidi Gordon to discuss potential changes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as we anticipate a new United States President. The discussions focused on Trust Lands and Funding, critical areas for our Nation.

I raised specific concerns regarding non-Indians abusing our lands and engaging in fraudulent activities. While no immediate solutions or remedies were provided during the meeting, I felt it was essential to bring these issues forward, ensuring they are acknowledged, documented, and remain a priority for future action.

### Minn. Department of Education Consultation

On Nov. 13, the RBC met with the Minnesota Department of Education to address critical topics impacting our Nation. A primary focus of the discussion was the circulating rumors about potential Federal cuts to Education Funding and their possible impacts on our schools and students.

Another key topic was Indian Education for All, where we emphasized the importance of protecting and ensuring access to meaningful and accurate curriculum that reflects the history, culture, and contribu-



tions of Native Nations. These discussions are vital as we work to safeguard educational opportunities and cultural representation for future generations.

### Highway 113 Project

Highway 113, which serves as the western border of District 2, is renowned for its winding roads and scenic beauty. However, it also poses significant safety risks for Tribal Members traveling by foot to access hunting and fishing areas. In response, the White Earth Roads Department conducted a study and recommended constructing a walking path, similar to the one built last year along Highway 200 near Roy Lake.

Representative Erickson and I have committed to pursuing a project to create multiple walking paths near the Waubun School Forest to the Elbow Lake Village. The project is projected for completion by 2030, with funding options already identified. Once finished, these paths will provide safe pedestrian access, enhancing community safety and recreational opportunities.

### Contacts

#### Eugene Sommers

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Office Phone: 218-935-6250

Cell Phone: 218-396-9502

#### Christopher Vanwert Jr

Christopher.Vanwert@whiteearth-nsn.gov

Cell Phone: 218-850-2533

## Rez Briefs

### RBC offices closed for holidays

White Earth RBC offices will be closed Dec. 24-26 for the Christmas holiday and will reopen on Dec. 27 at 8 a.m. They will also be closed Dec. 31-Jan. 1 for the New Year’s Day holiday. Modified services will still be open.

### Upcoming Twin Lakes Township meeting

The next Twin Lakes Township meeting is Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. in the Pinehurst Resort dining room.

### Wreaths Across America

On Dec. 14 at 11 a.m., Wreaths Across America will be at Detroit Lakes Veterans Memorial Park to remember and honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country’s fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud. Following the ceremony visits will be made to other cemeteries in Detroit Lakes.

### Waubun School Forest Information

The Waubun School Forest Ski Hut will be open all of Christmas vacation and then weekends. The sledding hill and trails are always open. Located at 2541 Hwy 113 in rural Waubun. Updated information will be on the Waubun School Forest Information Facebook page.

### AA meeting times and locations

**Thursday night** - Shooting Star AA meeting, Mahnomen - 7 p.m. (The room will be listed on the event center teleprompter.)

**Friday night** - Rising Sun AA meeting, Circles of Faith Church, Waubun - 7 p.m., **also the last Friday of the month.** Features a potluck at 6 p.m. followed by a speaker meeting.

### White Earth Urban Office

White Earth Urban Office is located at 1730 Clifton Place, Suite 100, in Minneapolis. The phone number is 612-813-1590 and the office is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## SAVE THE DATE

# Men’s Night Out

February 5, 2025

5 pm – 8 pm

Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen

*(More information will be published in January AT)*

# Valleyview Commons

Valleyview Commons in Mahnomen has immediate openings for 1 bedroom units for persons 62 and older or with a verified disability.

Rent is based on 30% of your adjusted monthly income calculated per HUD guidelines up to a contract rent of \$615 and includes water, sewer and garbage.

*Tenant is responsible for electric and heat.*

*For more information contact DW Jones Management. 218-547-3307 or apply at www.dwjonesmanagement.com*



CREATING BETTER LIVING  
Equal Housing Opportunity

TTY711



## SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS

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**Warning Signs of Suicide:**

- The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

<p><b>TALKING ABOUT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanting to die</li> <li>• Great guilt or shame</li> <li>• Being a “burden” to others</li> </ul>	<p><b>FEELING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live</li> <li>• Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage</li> <li>• Unbearable emotional or physical pain</li> </ul>
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**CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a plan or researching ways to die</li> <li>• Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast</li> <li>• Displaying extreme mood swings</li> <li>• Eating or sleeping more or less</li> <li>• Using drugs or alcohol more often</li> </ul>
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# White Earth tribal offices closed for the holidays

White Earth RBC offices will be closed Dec. 24-26 for the **Christmas** holiday and will reopen on Friday, Dec. 27 at 8 a.m. They will also be closed Dec. 31-Jan. 1 for the **New Year's Day** holiday and will reopen on Thursday, Jan. 2 at 8 a.m. Modified services will still be available.

## Notice to White Earth Elders

The deadline for sign up has been extended to Jan. 1

In order to provide information and possible services to White Earth Reservation enrolled elders (age 55 & up) living on or near the reservation your assistance is needed. Please complete the following data form and return. If information is different from previously submitted form, please resubmit with updated information. The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used to identify services and events from which you may benefit. (Example: Elder Christmas Cards).

I understand that the information I am providing on this form is for registration purposes. The information will be used by the White Earth Tribal Council to create statistical reports and may be used by service providers to help identify other services from which I may benefit. This information will not be released to anyone other than the above-mentioned parties in a way that will identify me as an individual unless I sign a separate consent for that purpose. I understand that I do not have to sign for release of information but will still receive services for which I am eligible.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### White Earth Reservation Elder Data Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Enrollment No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact Nicole Kent at 218-401-1551 for an application. If you have been on in the past, you do not have to re-apply. If you have moved, you will need to reapply with your new address. **I will be taking applications through January 1.**

## News From District 3 Rep. Laura Lee Erickson

Aaniin Anishinaabe. I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits. As December arrives, the crisp air settles in, I hope this month is filled with warmth, hope, and remembrance. Winter is a time when people come together to support one another, especially during the cold harsh months.

### November Updates

**11-1** I had the opportunity to visit the Behavioral Health staff at the Strawberry Lake Retreat to tour the remodeled building and the new family treatment duplexes. I vividly remember the Tribe's discussions about whether to purchase this property over eight years ago, and it's truly rewarding to see the original vision now come to life. This space is becoming a safe and supportive environment for our families as they walk the red road.

**11-7** Tribal leaders and staff welcomed Becker County Commissioners and their team to the Shooting Star Casino for a dinner meeting to discuss ongoing collaborative efforts. Topics included the solid waste assessment, forestry, comprehensive plan, the near-completion of the cell phone tower near the Bad Medicine area, and a proposed new cell tower near Rat Lake Trail. The Becker County Comprehensive Plan will be approved soon.

White Earth Tribal leaders honored the Mahnomen/Waubun Thunderbird football team by having a meal at the Shooting Star Casino to celebrate their Section 8A Championship.

**11-10** Attended the Veterans Day Powwow at the Shooting Star Casino.

**11-12** I attended the Native Boys and Girls Summit with our staff in Chandler, Ariz.

Topics discussed: Trauma Informed Specialist Training rolling out in 2025. A new initiative is being developed to adapt trauma-informed specialist training. This training aims to empower clubs by offering specialist training to train all staff members. Technology and Community Safety, advocacy, influence, empowering our young people, academic success programs, resource development. This was a great opportunity to network with other Tribes, staff and tribal leaders.

**11-13** Tribal leaders/staff held consultation with Minnesota Department of Education discussing permanent school fund, American Indian Education Aid, Standards and Curriculum, Indigenous Education for All, Financial Aid Offices.

**11-15** Tribal leaders joined a call with Senator Tina Smith's staff regarding her initiative on Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction and the PROTECT ACT that is aimed at restoring tribal jurisdiction over drug related and gun related crimes. The proposed bill builds on the special tribal criminal jurisdiction program making an opt-in for Tribes. Tribal leaders are reviewing the pros and cons of this bill.

**11-15** White Earth Nation received 13 additional bison that are located at the Spence farm on County Road 4 between Naytahwaush and Makonce.

**11-19** Tribal Leaders met with Senator Jordan Rasmussen to discuss legislative priorities including, sports betting, wild rice harvesting issues including economic impacts, legal and enforcement challenges and collaborative efforts, cannabis industry, bonding bills and funding, emergency medical services and rural ambulance concerns, water management,

**11-20** I had the honor of attending a luncheon where our White Earth Police Department and



Behavioral Health presented the Life Saver Award to Justin "Judd" Brown. You are living proof recovery can work-we see you and are proud of you! We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your commitment to supporting individuals in recovery. Your work has transformed lives and strengthened our community by providing hope, guidance, and encouragement to those on their journey to healing. We are incredibly fortunate to have someone like you making such a meaningful difference on our Reservation. Miigwech for all your commitment and hard work Judd.

**11-21** Tribal leaders/staff attended a meeting with MNDOT and SRF Consulting about Minnesota State Highway 113 safety and pedestrian project. Currently, Highway 113 does not have shoulders making it very dangerous for pedestrians walking on the highway. Discussion included: preliminary designs, environmental assessments, grant application and project timelines. The project area covers a segment of approximately 40 miles from US 59 to the intersection of US 71. Target areas extend from Waubun School Forest west of McCraney Lake to the east side of Elbow Lake Village. Options to have some areas to have paved shoulders, shared use path separated from the road. White Earth will be applying for Federal Discretionary Grant

**11-26** Tribal leaders held consultation with Commissioner Paul Schnell and Wendy Spry, Tribal Liaison from Minnesota Department of Corrections. Discussion about tribal probation, DOC legislative initiatives, Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act, local correctional facilities/Rule making process.

### Toys for Tots

A heartfelt thank you to our Community Councils and Administration staff for their dedicated efforts in gathering family names for our annual Toys for Tots gift program. We recognize the tremendous amount of work this involves, and we appreciate your commitment and hard work.

### Mahnomen/Waubun Thunderbird Football

Congratulations to our Mahnomen/Waubun Thunderbird football team on an incredible season and winning the Section 8A Championship. Many kids dream to accomplish what you've done. It has been fun watching these young men grow throughout the years, I have watched many of them since kindergarten days. I can say these young men are dedicated, love the game and have fun. You have been outstanding role models, showing our youth that anything is

**See Erickson Page 19**



**WHITE EARTH CALLAWAY Community Council**

**Join the White Earth Callaway Community Council.**  
Are you passionate about making a difference in your community? We are excited to announce the formation of the White Earth Callaway Community Council and we need your voice!

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING**

Contact:  
Laura.erickson@whiteearth-nsn.gov  
218-401-1153  
tiffany.swiers@whiteearth-nsn.gov  
218-935-6235

**Miigwech**

**Must Live 2 Miles From City Limits Within the Reservation Boundaries**

## News From District 1 Rep. Henry George Fox

Boo-zhoo,  
Hope all is well with our people of the White Earth Nation

### Elder Homeless Tiny Homes

We have 10 homes - five of them are for ages 55 and over and five are for 65 and over. We do have the applications and they are being turned into our Property Management Optima and they will process them and start to move people in. It's all coming together.

### Tamarac and State Forest Land

Tamarac Refuge is still moving forward as is the State Forest with a lot of the county commissioners not wanting it at all, even our enrolled members in those positions are against it. I say you all need to look at the history - we can do our own management of the State Forest. What it comes down to is it's ours.

### Housing

Working with our District 1 Housing Board member James Hvezda Sr.

### Chemical Health

Let's talk treatment how do we get there years ago it was called the Jellinick Chart where you could see where you were in your addiction everyone is different in their addiction some are courts, some realize there addiction is no longer manageable in their life so get out and ask for the help 218-983-3286 ask or the Chemical Dependency.

### Pow-wow Grounds

We have had some vandalism on the new addition to our concession stand and have cameras installed now.

### Water and Sewer

Water and sewer in Rice Lake have cleaned the water tower and have been figuring out the pressure system.

### Education

Schools are in full swing and all schools around the area Bagley, Circle of Life Academy, Mahnomen, Clearbrook/Gonvick, Fosston, Park Rapids. And the White Earth Tribal and Community College in Mahnomen is doing good things with the communities also.

### Day Labor and TERO

We have Day Labor in Naytahwaush that goes



throughout the reservation so get signed up.

### Boys & Girls Club

It is always good seeing the kids in all communities attending club here in Rice Lake and all the other clubs though out the reservation the staff do good things with our youth especially the trips too baseball games, zoos, etc....

### Forestry

Our firefighters are busy! Some are out in Washington fighting fires. They also help with a lot of our community projects like clearing brush and collecting Spirit Firewood for loss of our loved ones that have passed on to the Spirit World.

### Urban Communities

Recently attended the Native American Indian Center Grand Re-opening in Minneapolis. We work closely with the Urban Office as they offer a lot of services off the reservation for our members.

### Elder Advocates, Elder Commission, Elder Council and Elder Repair

We have a voice with our Elders in different capacities for their needs and the Elder repair is in Phase 2. All applications go to White Earth Builders. Our Elder Advocates are a big help with our Elder members

### Henry G. Fox

District 1 Representative  
White Earth Nation  
218-407-2729 or 218-850-0753

## Native American and Alaska Native interesting facts

The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. The event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who rode across the United States on horseback seeking approval from 24 state governments to designate a day to honor American Indians.

In 1990, more than seven decades later, then-President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating the month of November National American Indian Heritage Month. Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994 to recognize what is now called National Native American Heritage Month.

The following facts are possible thanks to responses to the U.S. Census Bureau's surveys.

### Did You Know?

#### 7.4 million

The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups in 2023. Source: Vintage 2023 Population Estimates

#### 9.0 million

The projected American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups on July 1, 2060. They would constitute 2.5% of the total population. Source: 2023 National Population Projections

#### 325

The number of distinct, federally recognized American Indian reservations in 2024, including federal reservations and off-reservation trust lands. Source: American Indian Reservations, Trust Lands, and Native Hawaiian Home Lands

#### 574

The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2024. Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

#### 120,476

The number of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native veterans of the U.S. armed forces in 2023. Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates.

## White Earth Council of Elders

By Tim Rindahl, Chairman

White Earth Nation Council of Elders

Boozhoo,

I hope everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday and had plenty of food and visitors. This time of year a lot goes on so remember to be careful when traveling and walking around, it is slippery out there and dress for the weather to stay warm.

We had our last meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 3 at the Naytahwaush Complex. Brent Gish gave information on what the difference is between Dementia and Alzheimers. He has a group from Duluth, Minn., that would like to come and talk about this around Dec. 16 for a listening session. We will pass along more information as it comes available.

The Veterans Powwow was well attended on Nov. 9-10 at the Shooting Star Casino. There was a lot of people and I really enjoyed visiting with everyone. A table that was set up for the Elders Council and Elders Commission and had a lot of information being passed out. Thanks to all that were involved into putting this together, it's only going to get better as time goes on.

Rice Lake hosted a Diabetic Health Fair on Nov. 13. From what I heard this was a well-attended event. People like to visit these fairs - a lot of great information gets passed out.

I am getting excited about the food co-op that is being planned with lots of fresh produce and vegetables that are local. Everyone knows that the best food for you comes from our own backyard, also now we have a local meat market, B&T Meats located in Waubun on Highway 59. They say all their meat is local and that again makes it even better and healthier for all.

I would also like to announce that I will be MC at the Men's Night Out conference on Feb. 5 at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen. Sorry ladies this is for men only - lol. The guest speaker will be Dr Michael Bishop from the White Earth IHS. Topics will include prostate, issues diabetes, and what to expect while we age. I am looking forward to this event so make sure you guys come out for a great dinner and take home a groovy swag bag, plus other cool stuff, woohoo! Registration for the event will be in the January paper.

We have people that are not aware of Medicare benefits like help with lights or heating, a little extra money every month, and also for groceries. There is so much more that we are not taking advantage of and I would like to look into getting a speaker to sit down with us and explain all the deals that we are entitled to as seniors. We struggle enough and if we can get a little extra help that's always nice.

We have a lot happening in December like the Elders Christmas Party on Dec. 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Shooting Star Casino. Don't forget your ugly sweater - I'm not sure what the prize will be but I want to see some really ugly sweaters out there and remember a lot goes into putting this on for us so please remember to thank the staff for all their hard work and dedication. We are truly blessed with having staff that work in our elder programs! Most, if not all of the workers, have a lot of compassion and really enjoy working with and for us so hats off to all you fantastic employees that take extra time and care of us.

Remember to check in on family and friends during the cold months ahead just to make sure everyone stays warm and safe. I hope that you all have a great Christmas and take the time to really enjoy being with family and friends because that's what it is all about, the good times that make awesome memories for both the young and the old. Stay safe my friends and thank you to all that take the time to read this article.

Sincerely,

Tim Rindahl (Chairperson) 218-261-0182  
Sam Crowell (Vice Chair) 218-252-9390  
Colleen Blattenbauer (Treasurer) 218-204-0134  
Missy Fairbanks (Secretary) 218-401-0553

## Attention all White Earth Wisdom Steps members

By Lucille Silk

Wisdom Steps Board Member for White Earth

This is to remind each one of you that both your Health Card and your Walk Card must be completed and turned in to the White Earth Wisdom Steps Program by **Dec. 31**. This makes you eligible for the annual conference that will be held in June 2025.

The location of next years conference will be at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen. The exact dates will be posted later on. We need all the information by the end of the year in order to make the arrangements for the conference. There is a lot of work to set up the conference and make sure that members are adequately assigned the right year of membership, their charm earned, and or other incentives. We are working with our Tribal government to meet the needs of the 400 plus that attend the two or three-day conference, plus the Shooting Star and their staff.

The Wisdom Steps Program is a health and exercise motivation for Native Elders that are 55 and over in Minnesota. There are 11 Tribes which include Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Bemidji urban areas. Wisdom Steps has been in existence for 25 years of which we will be celebrating next year. We are proud to note that only six members are in the 25 year category and two are from White Earth.

In order to qualify for the Wisdom Steps Program, you must have your Health Card filled out

by your medical provider with four required needs which are: Blood glucose, weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure. However, we ask that an annual physical be done which will provide more information and we greatly encourage all aspects of care that's received during the past year be marked.

The Walk Card is for any physical activity that you have done throughout the year. We have suggested to mark your calendar on a weekly basis and each month total up your steps or miles. We have given out materials at our local health fairs and other programs that can give you ways to count steps or miles, which is called a conversion chart. Or, you can purchase a pedometer which will count your steps for you. Also, a cell phone often has attachments to count steps or miles.

If you should have any questions about either the Health or Walk Card, you may call me at the number at the end of this article. Your cards can either be mailed to my address or left at your local Elder Nutrition site.

Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and have a blessed Christmas. Take care of your health, try to exercise as best you can and be safe.

Gii gaa waa ba min,

Lucille Silk  
38703 Co. Highway 34  
Ogema, MN 56569  
218-983-3768

## Let the sun shine - Pine Point solar project

In mid-November, Federal representatives from Sandia Laboratory, solar developer 10Power, installer Ziegler Energy Solutions, and Minnesota-based panel manufacturer Heliene came to the village of Pine Point on the White Earth Reservation. Their goal, discuss a "Pine Point Community Resilience Hub," that will generate 809,068 kilowatt hours of energy per year in a village well below the poverty level, at a community school which is 100% electric. The school's current utility bills average \$71,000 a year, paid to Itasca Mantrap Cooperative. The back up batteries included in the project will also enable the village to continue to have power during grid outages - a first step to protect communities from blackouts during extreme weather events, which are increasing in frequency and severity.

The project is poised to launch. 10Power and community sponsor 8th Fire Solar have raised most of the money for the project. In June 2024, Minnesota U.S. Senator Tina Smith announced that the project received \$1.75 million in Federal funding from the DOE Energy Storage for Social Equity program. That funding, along with almost \$2 million from other grant sources, including the Minnesota Department of Commerce's Solar for Schools program, Grid Alternatives Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund, the Verizon Climate Resilience Prize and Hammond Climate Solutions Foundation, and \$1.4 million in tax credits, leaves just under \$1 million to raise from other funders in order to replace the school's currently leaking roof, before groundbreaking the spring 2025.

Unique aspects of the project include the use of Minnesota made solar panels from Heliene, in the Iron Range, and a commitment to train tribal members for the installation and the maintenance.

The White Earth Nation faces much higher residential energy and economic burdens than much of the rest of Minnesota — some of the worst in the country at the 97th percentile nationwide. White Earth

tribal members face disconnections from local rural cooperatives at a high rate, and energy security is important to the community. While the project is set to power the elementary school, it's hoped that this will be expanded to a microgrid for the village itself. The community is considering a larger plan of energy resilience to tackle heat, backup power, and residential uses.

"Indigenous communities need to create energy security through owning their energy and the means of production," says Sandra Kwak, founder and CEO of 10Power. "Besides providing greater energy security, this funding will also be used as an educational opportunity for students through curriculum integration. There will be a monitoring interface in the classroom, allowing students to see real-time data from the solar panels installed at the school and incorporate the Ojibwe language. Integrating the Ojibwe language into a renewable energy curriculum will hopefully inspire students to work in the renewable energy industry."

Gwe Gasco, Program Coordinator for 8th Fire Solar attended this elementary school, and today directs a small Indigenous workforce that manufactures, markets, and installs thermal solar panels — Made in Native America. "This project overall will give the White Earth community at Pine Point energy security so that residents can have peace of mind when the grid goes down; they will be all right, not the first to lose power and the last to get it back. With Pine Point School as a hub and an expansion of the already existing solar array with additional panels and a solar battery system to back it up, this timely project will ensure at least one day of comfort and security if the grid fails."

Big questions are being asked by the community in terms of siting and how the village itself, may have

See Solar Page 20

P-town  
Rapid Response  
Roundy



December 14, 2024  
4pm Feast - 5pm Dance  
Pine Point Old School

Best Ribbon Skirt; Couples Dance; Potato Dance;  
Musical Chairs

Invited Singers; Dayton Jones, Ant Buck Jr, Dominic  
Bellanger, Jerritt Caldwell Jr, Cheedo Desjarlait Sr.

MC: Gitigaan ; Whip man: Waabino ; Stickman: Frank  
Stech

3 youth groups

Access to Recovery

Questions; Tricia Jones 218-401-4695

## Valley View Manor

Valley View Manor in Ada has 1  
bedroom units for rent.

Rent is based on 30% of your adjusted monthly  
income calculated per HUD guidelines up to a  
contract rent of \$750 and includes: Water, Sewer,  
Garbage and Heat.

For more information contact DW Jones Management.  
218-547-3307 or apply at [www.dwjonesmanagement.com](http://www.dwjonesmanagement.com)



CREATING BETTER LIVING  
Equal Housing Opportunity

TTY711



Save the Date

## 5th Annual White Nation Earth Fishing Derby

February 8, 2025

More information to come!  
(White Earth Natural Resources)



# Program offers advice on quitting smoking

**Quitting commercial tobacco can help you save money**

- Cigarettes and other tobacco products are expensive. At about \$8 per pack of cigarettes, smoking a pack a day costs you about \$2,900 in a year.
- Quitting lowers your risk of getting colds and other respiratory problems. This means fewer doctor visits, less money spent on medicines, and fewer sick days off work.

**Make the decision to quit tobacco**

The decision to quit smoking commercial tobacco or using smokeless tobacco is one that only you can make. Others may want you to quit, but you must make the commitment.

**Think about why you want to quit**

- Are you worried you could get a tobacco-related disease?
- Do you believe the benefits of quitting outweigh the benefits of continuing to use tobacco?
- Do you know someone who has had health problems because of using tobacco or being around it a lot?
- Are you interested in saving the money you now spend on cigarettes, cigars, vapes, chew, dip, or

snuff?

- Are you hoping to improve your health and have more energy for upcoming events, like a family wedding?
- Are you ready to make a serious try at quitting?

Write down your reasons so you can look at them every time you want to smoke or dip.

**Where to start**

It's best to talk with your doctor about a plan that's right for you. Talking to a pharmacist might be helpful, too.

**Set a date for your Quit Day**

After you make the decision to quit tobacco, the next step is picking a date for your Quit Day.

More information can be found at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Support with medication is available though the state of Minnesota. For more information on the MN Quit Partner and to obtain FREE medications, texts or emails call 1-800-784-8669.

For more information about the White Earth IHS Tobacco Cessation Program please call 218-983-6383.

## THE DOCTOR'S CORNER

### The Importance of Men's Health: Focusing on Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Mental Health

By Michael Bishop DC, MPAS, MBA, PA-C  
White Earth Health Center

Men's health is a vital part of building strong communities in the White Earth Nation. Unfortunately, men often delay seeking medical care or don't know how to address common health risks. By learning about specific health conditions and how to prevent them, we can make informed decisions to live healthier, longer lives.

**Understanding Diabetes**

Diabetes is one of the most common health issues among Native American men. The condition happens when your body has trouble controlling blood sugar levels, leading to serious problems like heart disease, kidney failure, and nerve damage if left untreated.

Many men in our community are at higher risk for diabetes due to genetics, diet, and lifestyle. Signs of diabetes include frequent thirst, tiredness, blurry vision, and slow-healing wounds. However, not everyone shows symptoms, so regular blood sugar tests are crucial.

To lower your risk, focus on eating healthy. Traditional foods such as wild rice, fish, and berries can help maintain balanced blood sugar levels. Avoid sugary drinks like soda and limit processed foods, which can spike your blood sugar. Exercise, even something as simple as a daily 30-minute walk, can also improve how your body uses insulin.

If you have already been diagnosed with diabetes, managing it well is key. This includes taking any prescribed medications, checking your blood sugar regularly, and seeing your doctor for checkups.

**Tackling Heart Disease**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among men in the United States, including Native American men. High blood pressure and high cholesterol are common culprits, often developing silently over time. If untreated, they can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and other serious conditions.

One of the simplest ways to protect your heart is by eating healthier fats. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, like fish, are excellent choices. Limit unhealthy fats found in fried and fast foods. Maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, and staying active are other important steps.

Men should also have their blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked regularly. These screenings can catch problems early, before they become life-threatening. If you have high blood pressure or cholesterol, medications and lifestyle changes can significantly lower your risk of complications.

**Addressing Mental Health**

Mental health is often overlooked but just as important as physical health. Depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders are common challenges for Native American men, often worsened by stress, stigma, or past trauma.

It's critical to break the cycle of silence. Talking to a trusted friend, elder, or healthcare provider can be a powerful first step. Taking part in cultural practices, ceremonies, or spending time outdoors can also provide comfort and healing. If you're struggling, know that seeking help shows strength, not weakness.

Substance use, such as alcohol and drug misuse, is sometimes a way to cope with untreated mental health issues. However, this can lead to serious consequences, including liver disease, accidents, and strained relationships. If substance use has become a problem, resources like counseling and treatment programs are available to help.

**Be Proactive About Your Health**

Whether you're managing diabetes, preventing heart disease,

See Health Page 19

# DECEMBER

# 2024

## Cultural Calendar

### Manidoo giizisoons

White Earth Cultural Activities  
Monthly Schedule



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 DOVE Sweat @ noon Mahnomon Cultural 10-12pm	4 WE Wesa AFT 4 10-12pm WE Mpls. Sweat @ NTW @ noon	5 Bagley Sch. Cedar Healing 1pm Acute Care 1-3 RL/NTW Women's Sweat-NTW 4:30pm	6	7
8	9 OMC Tobacco ceremony 9am	10 ICW 11am NTW Moms Ceremony 10-12pm	11 NTW Staff Sweat @ Noon WE Mat 10-12 Gwayako AFT 5 10-12pm	12 Pine Pint Women's Sweat 4:30pm Circle Back 4-6:30pm	13 Closing @ 12:00 RBC X-mas Party 1pm	14
15	16 WE Women's Sweat 4:30 & Full Moon	17 Mahnomon Cultural 10-12pm	18 NTW School Moccasin games WE Wesa AFT 5 10-12pm WE Men's Sweat 4:30pm	19 OMC Culture Talking Circle 9-11am Acute Care 1-3 NTW/RL Men's Sweat 4:30pm	20 NTW staff xmas 1pm	21 Gimikwenimin "I Remember You" ceremony WECC 6-10pm
22	23 PP Men's Sweat 4:30pm	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 MERRY CHRISTMAS!				

You can reach the Anishinaabeg Today at [today@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:today@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

## WE Tribal and Community College shines spotlight on students with exceptional qualities

White Earth Tribal and Community College honors a student each month that exemplifies academic excellence, resilience, and personal growth. The student is nominated by staff that recognize the unique and exceptional qualities of our students. The student becomes our Student Spotlight for the month. Our Student Spotlight for the month for October is Jesse Giard-Lang and November is Bruce Turner.

### Jesse Giard-Lang

Jesse was nominated in his first semester at WETCC for many reasons. The staff that nominated Jesse pointed out that he is helpful to his fellow students, participates actively in class, and has a great sense of humor. After a college class was cancelled, Jesse stayed late just to assist his classmates. Staff feels that Jesse has acclimated quickly to college life and has the qualities for future academic success.

Here is Jesse's story in his own words.

"The greatest obstacle that I have overcome, and my proudest moment was graduating high school. At the age of 18, it has been my biggest achievement. The secret to my college success is doing what works for me. I learned early in the semester that I had to do college in my own way. I have found that making a schedule and sticking to it has helped me stay on track with my assignments and family obligations.

I define my future success as living comfortably and by providing for myself and others. I place a huge value on my ability to help those around me, not monetary achievements. I feel that success is not about how much money I have in the bank.

There are many reasons that I am glad that I chose to attend White Earth Tribal and Community College. As a local student, I attend classes with people that I have known, and I have also been able to meet new people. Since WETCC is a small college, the staff know me by name and care for me way more than I thought possible. College is also way more fun than I thought it would be.

White Earth Tribal and Community College is preparing me for college and career success in many ways. Currently, I am in a First-Year College Experience course that is helping me adjust to college. It covers different aspects of becoming a successful college student. I also feel that the staff is approachable and willing to answer any questions that I may have. The environment has aided my success so far.

I am still unsure as to what my future holds. I am considering attending a four-year university after receiving my Associate of Arts Degree at WETCC. I have also considered getting certified in a trade, like roofing, carpentry, or as an electrician. As of right now, I plan to just continue my education and see where that leads me.

### Bruce Turner

The November Student Spotlight is Bruce Turner Jr. He was nominated by staff that commented, "Bruce is always willing to help a fellow student with supplies or expertise, taking time out of his schedule to go above and beyond to help others. I believe this epitomizes the spirit of White Earth Tribal and Community College."

Here is Bruce's story.

One of the greatest obstacles that I have overcome is changing my attitude and how I think. I have started taking the negatives and turning them into positives. I feel that a change of mind set is huge for my education and my life.

The happiest moment of my life must have been



Bruce Turner

the birth of my daughter. Seeing her for the first time and holding her for the first time has been a highlight. The proudest moment of my life was graduating from treatment. I was also able to get a job at the place that helped me in my recovery. Now I am working on obtaining my license.

The secret to my college success is having support from work and my friends. I hold myself accountable for my actions and for being to class on time. I do what I need to do to better my life for me and my daughter. I define success simply by finding happiness in what I do in life.

The main reason that I am glad that I chose to attend White Earth Tribal and Community College is the ability to have culture around me every day. The support from peers helps and the college also has a supportive staff.

White Earth Tribal and Community College has prepared me for college and career success by helping me to set and obtain my goals, mainly through holding me accountable for my actions. They have shown me that it is possible to continue my higher education.

My main goal after I graduate from WETCC is to continue working in the Substance Abuse field. I am considering continuing my education at Bemidji State University and earning my bachelor's degree.

Congratulations, Jesse and Bruce on your success! WETCC is excited to see your future takes you!



Your job search ends here  
[www.whiteearth.com](http://www.whiteearth.com)

GAA-WAABAABIGANIKAAG

WHITE EARTH TRIBAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 21, 2024  
6:00 - 10:00 PM

# GIMIKWENIMIN "I REMEMBER YOU"

FEASTING OUR LOVED ONES  
\*PLEASE BRING THEIR FAVORITE FOOD\*

HEALING SONGS \* HEALING MEDICINES

EVERYONE WELCOME

WHITE EARTH COMMUNITY CENTER  
WHITE EARTH, MN.

MASHKIKI MAAMIGINIM

SAVE THE DATE.  
Friday January 24th

White Earth Tribal and Community College

Medica

1.24.2025 9:30am-2pm

A Second event held for White Earth Nation youth interested in a Health or Science Career. A partnership with The White Earth Tribal Community College, Medica Foundation, The University Of Minnesota Medical School and the Center of American Indian and Minority Health.

### Energy Assistance Program Notice

The 2025 Energy Assistance Program will be accepting applications the first part of September, please call for an application at that time. You can also pick one up at the office in Waubun or watch and they will be on the White Earth webpage. For those of you that have applied last heating season, you will receive an application in the mail in September.

Please keep in mind to fill out your application clearly and completely with all necessary documentation, this will make for a faster process. Homeowners, please call if you are having furnace problems, we may be able to help you. Please remember to change your filters once a month for adequate maintenance.

Always keep in mind to check your tanks, running out will adhere to more problems. Summer prices are at low this time of year, call your company to set up payment plans or arrangements if suitable.

No funds available until around the first week in November.

Any questions on the program or need to fax any information, please call the number or fax below. Hope everyone had a great summer!

Physical address: 3303 US Hwy 59, Waubun, MN 56589

Mailing Address: PO Box 418, White Earth, MN 56591

Phone#: 218/473-2711 Fax#: 218/473-2719 Toll Free#: 1-866-885-7656

Visit us at [www.whiteearth.com](http://www.whiteearth.com) Energy Assistance Program



## Things you can do to reduce holiday stress

By Lisa Braun, RN  
White Earth Nation Tribal Public Health

We are all entering into a very stressful time of year. The holidays bring joy and lots of extra stress. If you are diabetic, stress is another thing that can mess with your blood sugar.

Increased stress increases your blood sugar. High blood sugar can affect us by making us extra cranky (some of us don't need that!), and it can also make you tired and low on energy. That, in turn, can cause more stress (not getting things done, worries about your health).

It is a vicious cycle. But low blood sugars are also a problem. If they get too low, you may be unable to think clearly, be nervous or jittery and need someone to help you get something to eat. You got it MORE STRESS! Here are 10 things everyone can do to decrease stress during the holidays or any time of year.

1. Take deep breaths, or do a breathing exercise.
2. Set limits. On what you can do and what you cannot do.
3. Think of happy memories. This can boost endorphins in your brain.



4. Allow time to meditate or pray. Give yourself some quiet time for this.
5. Stay active, dance around the house, do yoga.
6. Laugh-spend time with people you enjoy and laugh!
7. Do what you love, a hobby or activity.
8. Ask for help, instead of doing everything yourself. Assign duties or recipes to guests coming to your home.
9. Change the way you look at things. Try looking from someone else's perspective.
10. Spend time in nature. Go for a walk, sit and watch birds at the feeder, or take a drive in the country. Sometimes fresh, cold, clean air does wonders, along with the stillness of new fallen snow and the beauty surrounding us. Take time to appreciate it!

## Attention WE Elders living in Mahnomen

We are forming a messaging group for White Earth Enrolled Elders living in Mahnomen.

In the past, our group has missed important messages or have been omitted from fun gatherings, simply because our contact information was not readily available.

Our idea is to have a phone list, email addresses, or FB messaging, some way to reach out to each other as WE Elders in Mahnomen.

If you would like to have your name on this list, please provide a valid phone number for us to contact you. That way we can share the activities or special events happening on the reservation. Remember, we are just getting started and want feedback and ideas. Miigwech!

Please contact Pam Aspinwall at 612-250-1171 or email pamroseasp@hotmail.com or Pauline Vizenor 218-261-0814 or email paulav3754@gmail.com

**Give yourself  
the gift of  
EDUCATION**

**Apply Online: [www.wetcc.edu/apply](http://www.wetcc.edu/apply)**  
**Deadline to Register: December 13**  
**Classes Begin: January 13, 2025**

**WHITE EARTH TRIBAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
 GAAWAABAABIGANIKAAAG GABEGIRENDAASOWIGAMIG

2250 College Road  
 Mahnomen, MN 56557  
 218-935-0417  
[www.wetcc.edu](http://www.wetcc.edu)

### Attention New Homeowners & Existing Homeowners

If you are in need of a Well & Sewer system for your house/trailer home, you can contact the White Earth Water & Sewer Department

**Requirements to qualify for the grants are:**

- White Earth Tribal enrolled member
- Reside on the White Earth Reservation
- Proof of the Land in which you own, Fee land (Land Deed/Warranty Deed or Tribal Trust Land (Tribal Trust agreement)
  - Proof of home ownership
  - Eighteen (18) years of age or older
- Must have electricity, heat source and interior plumbing to the home

**Contact us at 218-983-3202**

### HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED:

**Nycklemoe & Ellig**  
 ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
 Call **JOSEPH R. ELLIG & VAN R. ELLIG**  
 "Our family helping your family since 1925"

**Hurt at work or in an auto accident?**  
**Slipped & fell or attacked by a dog?**

**Fergus Falls**  
**218-736-5673**

\*Licensed in Minnesota and White Earth Tribal Courts

**INVESTMENT INITIATIVE**

**Jodi Lunde**  
 WEI Community Services Coordinator  
 218.844.7057  
 218.844.7029

*Volunteer with us!*

**Sue Trnka**  
 WEI Community Services Coordinator

White Earth Investment Initiative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Home Stretch

## Homebuyer Education Class

Attend **ONE** all-day session to receive a Homebuyer Education certificate

December 11  
January 8  
February 12

All classes are 9am to 5pm at Shooting Star Casino Mahnomen MN

White Earth Investment Initiative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Register online at [weii.website](http://weii.website) or call 218-844-7057



# SHOOTING STAR CASINOS

MAHNOMEN + BAGLEY  
STARCASINO.COM + 800.453.STAR



# Frosty Fortune Frenzy

# WIN COLD HARD CASH OR A HOT NEW TRUCK


December 1, 8, 15, 22 & 25 | 4PM-8PM

Take home up to \$2,000 cash to stuff your stockings or the grand prize, a shiny red sleigh to make Santa jealous.

**COME CHECK IT OUT!**

**ORION'S NOW OPEN IN MAHNOMEN**

Newly renovated area  
Food & drinks • Live sports

### White Earth Reservation Tribal Enrollment Elder Snow Removal Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouses Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Permanent residency is required.*

Mailing Address/P.O. Box: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alt Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Spouses Enrollment ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
*Attach a color copy of ID.*

Do you own the home: Yes  No  if no, landlords name: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in a Housing home? \_\_\_\_\_, as they plow for their own Residents/units.

Which district do you reside in: District I  District II  District III

Detailed directions to your residence (new applicants only): \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated length of driveway (new applicants only): \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Snow plowing will be done **only when snowfall accumulation exceeds 4" inches or more.**

\*\*\* Driveway needs to be cleared of vehicles and debris prior to plowing.

\*\*\* Snow shoveling of driveway or sidewalk **will not** be done.

\*\*\* Signatures from elder's will be required on Snowplow Provider's timesheets.

White Earth Water & Sewer Department  
PO Box 418 White Earth, MN 56591 Phone: 218-983-3202 Fax: 888-228-3650  
Email Address: [Lisa.donovan-larson@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:Lisa.donovan-larson@whiteearth-nsn.gov) or [Burnham.tibbettsIII@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:Burnham.tibbettsIII@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

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## 22nd Annual Wild Rice Round-Up

*"Lose your winter blues"*

January 31- February 2, 2025  
Shooting Star Hotel & Event Center



AGENDA	
<b>Friday, January 31, 2025</b>	
3:00pm	Registration opens
4-6:45pm	Hospitality Room – SSC Event Center Waubun room, light refreshments
7:00pm	AA Speaker: Gina L. Moorhead, MN
9:00pm	Memorial Talking Circle: Stephen M.
9:00pm	Al-Anon Meeting: Host
9:00pm	Recovery Talking Circle: Host
<b>Saturday, February 1, 2025</b>	
6:30am	Morning Meditation/Stretches: Kevin M.
7:30am	BREAKFAST (on your own)
9:00am	AA Workshop: Kevin M., Mpls
10:30am	AA Speaker: Anonymous Twin Citian
11:30pm	LUNCH (on your own)
1:00pm	Al-Anon Workshop: Vickie F. Mandan, ND
3:00pm	Al-Anon Speaker: Dan P., Waubun
5:30pm	Banquet
7:00pm	AA Speaker: Andrea A., McCloud, OK
8:45pm	Fun Night hosted by Dan P. & Dan B. Bring your acoustic instrument for singalongs & games
<b>Sunday, February 2, 2025</b>	
10:00am	AA Speaker: Steve P., Moorhead
11:15am	Raffle, closing ceremony and goodbyes

**Contact Information:**  
Pam A. 612.250.1171  
Email: [pamroseasp@hotmail.com](mailto:pamroseasp@hotmail.com)  
Dan P. 218.401.0585  
Email: [drgrain@arvig.net](mailto:drgrain@arvig.net)

**Website:** [www.wildriceroundup.com](http://www.wildriceroundup.com)  
Pre-Register by mail **Jan 15, 2025**

**Pre-Registration fee:** \$40.00  
**Banquet fee:** \$15.00  
**Pre-Registration + Banquet:** \$55.00

**ON-SITE REGISTRATION is \$50.00 with Banquet tax \$15.00** (as available) for a **total of \$65.00**.  
The Pre-Registration fee & banquet purchase must be received no later than Jan 15, 2025. Call Pam or Dan PFI.

[Use back side for other registrations →](#)

Name _____	Address _____
City, State, Zip _____	Phone# _____
Email _____	Home Group _____

AA  Al-Anon  Alateen  Other  Banquet  Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail PRE-REGISTRATION FORM with payment to: Wild Rice Round-Up, PO Box 203, Mahnomon, MN 56557**  
Your cancelled check is your receipt.

### WE Transit showcases new buses



Submitted photo

White Earth Public Transit will be putting into service new buses with a new look. Transit has added six buses to its fleet with the help of FTA (Federal Transit Administration) and Tribal Council through grants. Although some of the other buses will still be on the road with the older graphics, new buses will be phasing out the older buses once they meet their useful life requirements. Some of the new buses are on the road now with new graphics and new logo. Call Transit Dispatch 218-983-3283.



## FREE FINANCIAL WELLNESS COUNSELING

**DO YOU WANT TO:**

- CREATE A HOUSEHOLD BUDGET?
- SET UP A PERSONAL SAVINGS PLAN?
- BUY YOUR OWN HOME?
- ESTABLISH OR REPAIR CREDIT?
- SET FINANCIAL GOALS?

**We can help!** Financial wellness counseling is a service provided by White Earth Investment Initiative and made possible by support from Minnesota Housing, Minnesota Homeownership Center and the Oweesta Corporation. White Earth Investment Initiative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Call 218.844.7057 to schedule your appointment today!



### White Earth Band of Ojibwe

# SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT INITIATIVE LOANS

AND COLLATERAL SUPPORT

▶ APPLY NOW



218-983-4020  
[www.well.website](http://www.well.website)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The Small Business Credit Initiative program is operated under the funding requirements of the US Dept of the Treasury. White Earth Investment Initiative is the SBCI Contracted Entity for the White Earth Band of Ojibwe.



# MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR YEAR-END GIVING



- 1 DONATE APPRECIATED STOCK INSTEAD OF CASH.**  
This can eliminate capital gains tax and maximize the impact of your contribution.
- 2 BUNDLE YOUR DONATIONS.**  
Contributing two years' worth in 2024 could help you exceed the standard tax deduction.
- 3 CONSIDER A DONOR ADVISED FUND HERE AT WEST CENTRAL INITIATIVE.**  
Simplify your giving, gain tax advantages, and tap into our expertise about the community.
- 4 IF YOU'RE 73 OR OLDER, CONSIDER DONATING FROM YOUR IRA.**  
You can direct up to \$105,000 annually from your IRA to West Central Initiative tax-free.



Call (800) 735-2239 or visit [wcif.org](http://wcif.org) to learn more.

# WELRP highlights from 2024

**By Margaret E. Rousu**  
Executive Director  
White Earth Land Recovery Project

Here are some key highlights from our recent efforts:

We distributed 1,920 individual meals through Decolonize Our Diets, with an additional 100 meal kits to be dispersed in December. We were able to adjust our meal kits to meet full family needs thus some kits received more food than others based on family size. This change has allowed us to serve more families and individuals.

We tilled 45 gardens for families and individuals and assisted some families with plant starts and seeds.

We distributed 14 grow boxes with soil to Anishinaabe elders in our community.

We returned 80 acres of land to the Tribe in January, and we are on track to return another 121 acres by Jan. 31, 2025.

More than 120 individuals joined traditional arts classes, with some programs targeting youth and others welcoming both youth and adults.

WELRP sponsored four community events providing a meal, entertainment, and fun for children. Some of these had support

of our White Earth Tribal Council.

We sponsored Cultural Exchange Projects which brought Anishnaabe culture to nonnative communities.

With the loss of our Boys and Girls Club in Callaway, WELRP has opened the doors to the YES Program, where children come to play during June and July. Once again this summer we continue this collaboration.

These initiatives are part of our ongoing work to ensure the survival and thriving of the Anishinaabe heritage.

KKWE offers a mix of pow-wow music, Anishinaabe language, and other Indigenous education, light-hearted humor, eclectic music, and Native news programs, all guided by a community advisory board. If you are interested in becoming an advisory board member please contact the station.

Currently, we are seeking to grow our membership before our Annual meeting on January 25. All members are invited to attend the meeting where three board members will be voted in. Being a board member takes a small amount of time commitment along with passion and love of our community.



The White Earth Land Recovery Project had a busy year in 2024. They provided meals, tilled gardens, distributed 14 grow boxes with soil, returned land to the tribe, sponsored cultural classes, plus much more.

**Top:** *Roots Within* performs at the Minnesota Mixdown Summer Solstice Event.

**Left:** An Elder with her grow box.

Submitted photos



That sense of calm you get when you watch the sunset from your new home?

We've got a loan for that.

White Earth Investment Initiative offers affordable home loans for those living in Native American communities. Apply at [www.weii.website/home-loans/](http://www.weii.website/home-loans/)



(218) 983-4020 | [www.weii.website](http://www.weii.website)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and lender.



# Give even more cheer this holiday.

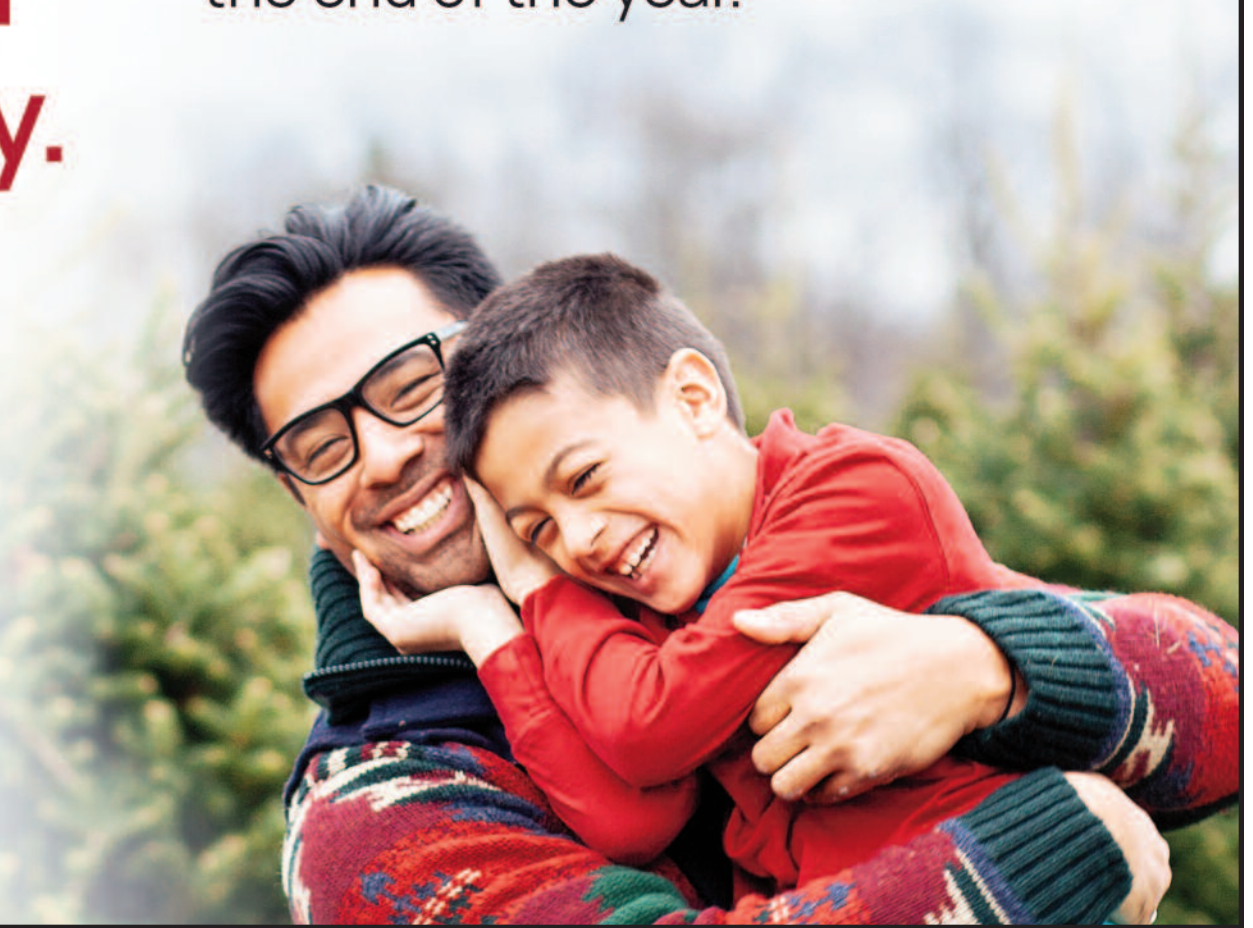


## DEERWOOD BANK

Member FDIC

\*Buckaroo accounts valid only for kids 16 and under. Parent/guardian must be on account with child. Limit of one bonus per new customer. Promotion valid to new buckaroo customers. \$10 minimum balance to obtain bonus. \$25 bonus will be deposited at account opening. Any bonus in excess of \$10 may be reported to the IRS as interest. Annual Percentage Yield is 0.20% if balance is \$0.01-\$999.99 and 0.25% if balance is \$1000 or greater. Rates are subject to change. Offer valid now through 12/31/2024. Fees could reduce earnings.

### Earn \$25\* when you open a kids Buckaroo savings account before the end of the year.



### White Earth welcomes District 09 State Senator

**THRONE**  
MIXED MARTIAL ARTS  
NORTHERN LIGHTS FIGHT NIGHT

**CLARK** vs **FINN**  
LIGHTWEIGHT BOUT

**JAN 25**  
TICKETS STARTING AT \$45  
DOORS 6PM | FIGHTS 7PM

Send a gift [NIGHTSCASINO.COM](http://NIGHTSCASINO.COM) OR CALL 844-834-2848

WALKER, MN

It's White Earth versus Leech Lake in this lightweight battle when Kevin Clark (White Earth) collides with Eli Finn on Saturday, Jan. 25 at the Northern Lights Casino in Walker, Minn. Tickets start at \$45 and can be purchased at [northernlightscasino.com](http://northernlightscasino.com)

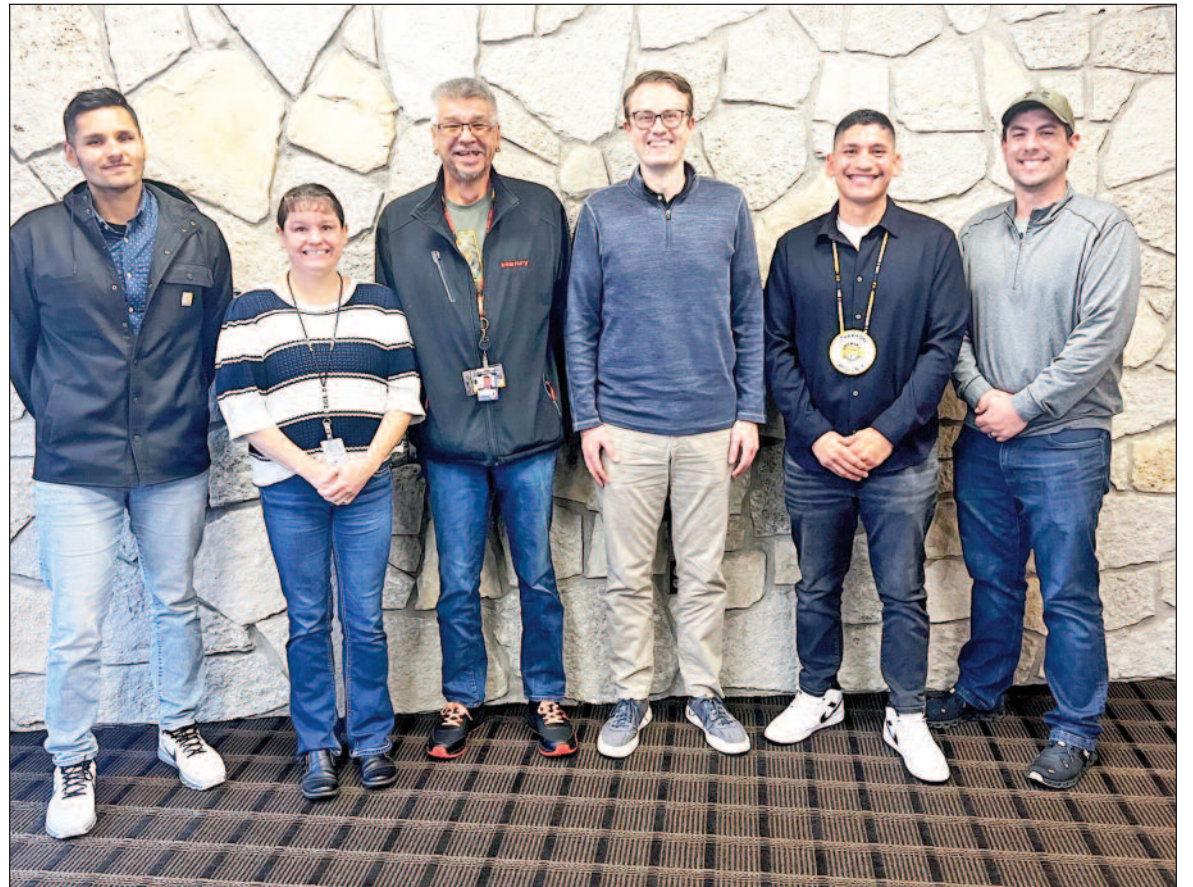


Photo by Richard Hanks

White Earth recently welcomed District 09 Senator Jordan Rasmussen at the RBC headquarters building. Tribal Council and staff discussed Tribal legislative priorities, land and water issues, cannabis, e-tabs, and sports betting. From left are Assistant Executive Director Curtis Rogers, District 3 Rep. Laura Lee Erickson, District 1 Rep. Henry Fox, Senator Jordan Rasmussen, District 2 Rep. Eugene Sommers, and White Earth Natural Resources Director Dustin Roy.

### Center hosts welding class



Submitted photo

The Maadaadizi Workforce Center in Naytahwaush is currently hosting a Welding class for tribal members. The class started in October and will finish later this month. Pictured are Sonny Goodman, center, Joe Bush, right, and Robert Keezer on the left.

### Fire chief visits child care center



Submitted photo

Ed Snetsinger, Twin Lakes Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief, made a surprise visit on Nov. 26 at the Naytahwaush Child Care Learning Center. He brought out equipment for the youth to exam and they explored the inside cab of a fire truck. He also gave a lesson on fire safety.

## Congratulations

### Thunderbirds for a successful 2024 season

By Sue Gruman Kraft  
Mahnomen Pioneer

The Mahnomen-Waubun Thunderbirds Varsity Football Team ended their 2024 Season on Saturday, Nov. 16, in a State Semi-Final Game vs. the Springfield Tigers, played at US Bank Stadium. The Tigers won 30-16, and the Thunderbirds finished with a season record of 11-1.

This was an exciting game, and for the first three quarters, the Thunderbirds were leading. It wasn't until the fourth quarter of the game that the Springfield Tigers scored their first of four touchdowns, which all happened in the fourth quarter.

Many Thunderbirds fans made the trip to US Bank Stadium, as did the Thunderbirds Cheer Team, The Thunderbirds Pep Band, and the Opichi Drum Group.

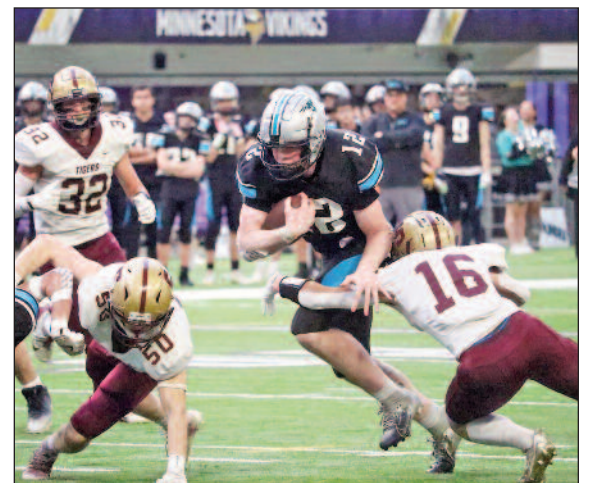
Coach John Clark commented on the game: "Two great teams went toe to toe at US Bank Stadium in a hard fought game. We played near flawless football in the first half. I don't think we could have played any better. Our boys executed on offense and defense. It was just awesome watching them compete. All of our boys were making plays all over the field."

"Springfield turned the tide in the second half. Late in the third quarter, they seized momentum and we just couldn't get it back. There were a few key plays in the second half where we just came up a little short. Give credit to Springfield for making plays when they needed to."

"Football is a game of inches and this game surely made that true. We were oh so close on a lot of plays but couldn't quite get over the hump in the second half. The final score does not do justice to how hard fought this game truly was."

"Our boys left everything on that field including blood, sweat and tears. As coaches, that's all we can ask for. The coaches could not be prouder of how hard they played, the toughness they showed, and the class that they represented our football team and communities with. Everyone should be proud of this team!"

"The coaches want to thank the communities for unbelievable support, the players for their hard work and dedication, and most of all to the seniors for amazing careers. Those seniors will be missed more than they know."



Top: Tanner Stech runs with the ball during a game at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. Bottom: Blake McMullen powers though a defender.



Photos by Hallie Clark

The Mahnomen/Waubun Thunderbirds team, cheerleaders and support staff celebrate the Section 8 Championship held Oct. 31 at the Fargodome in Fargo, N.D. The Thunderbirds defeated Red Lake County 36-8.



# Highlights of the White Earth Nation Veterans Pow Wow



Photos by Gary W. Padra

More than 360 dancers and 17 drums attended the annual White Earth Nation Veterans Powwow held Nov. 9-10 at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. The host drum was Walking Buffalo. Veterans were honored with the gift of a winnowing tray, wild rice and maple syrup.





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discounts, no-cost car seats for  
children, rewards for taking care  
of your health and much more.**

Find out if you qualify at [ucare.org/boozhoo](https://ucare.org/boozhoo)  
Call 1-866-605-3418 (TTY 1-800-688-2534)



**Chairman** from Page 3

ple. Whether through the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and White Earth State Forrest.

I am grateful for the support of you all, our membership. Together, we are shaping the future of White Earth Nation, one that honors our past while embracing new opportunities for growth and success for our generations to come.

Minobii Niibaa Anama'e Giizhiigad gaye Mino-Biboon Giizhigad

Happy Holidays from my family to yours.

Baamaapii wiingezin.

Miigwech bizindawiyeg.

Gigawaabaminim naagaj.

Take it easy.

Thank you for listening to me.

See you all later.

**Chairman Michael Fairbanks**

**Erickson** from Page 6

possible. These memories will be ones you and our community treasure for a lifetime.

**Callaway Community Council**

We continue to collect names for community members interested in participating to form a Callaway Community Council. For more information or to express your interest, please reach out to me directly or contact my assistant, Tiffany Swiers.

As we approach the holiday season, please take a moment to check in on others. A simple gesture of care and kindness can make a big difference, especially as we come together to support one another during this time of year.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you

need assistance or have questions. Miigwech for allowing me to work for you all.

Contact information:

**Laura Lee Erickson**

[laura.erickson@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:laura.erickson@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

Office: 218-935-6238

Cell: 218-401-1153

Facebook: VOTE LAURA LEE

Assistant for District 3

**Tiffany Swiers**

Office: 218-935-6235

Cell: 218-997-9124

[tiffany.swiers@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:tiffany.swiers@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

**Health** from Page 9

or improving your mental health, the key is to take action. Visit your healthcare provider regularly for checkups and screenings. Early detection can make a big difference in treating conditions before they become severe.

By prioritizing your health, you become a role model for others in the community. Fathers, brothers, uncles, and friends all have a unique opportunity to set an example for the next generation. Your commitment to well-being strengthens not only yourself but also the entire White Earth Nation.

**Resources for Support**

The White Earth Nation offers various

programs and resources to support men's health, from diabetes prevention to counseling services. Take advantage of these opportunities and encourage others to do the same.

Taking care of your health is not just about living longer—it's about living well. Make the commitment today to focus on your physical and mental well-being. Together, we can build healthier communities for future generations.

Miigwech. Stay strong. Stay healthy.

This article is for informational purposes only and should not replace advice from a healthcare provider.

**Award** from Front Page

sentiment in their presentation of the award, acknowledging Judd for the impact he's had in the communities.

Judd is the kind of person who doesn't just talk about change—he lives it every day. His dedication, compassion, and cultural pride inspire everyone around him. He embodies what it means to lead with heart and purpose.

Judd expressed his gratitude for the

recognition, emphasizing that his work is not about awards but about making a difference.

As Judd continues to serve as a mentor, advocate, and overdose recovery support officer, the Life Saving Award serves as a powerful reminder of his incredible contributions. The White Earth Reservation is proud to celebrate him as a true example of strength, leadership, and compassion.

**Anishinaabeg Today Readers**

Let us know if you recently moved so we can update your address, or if you have moved in the past few years so we can cancel your old address.  
Call 218-935-3569 or email: [today@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:today@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

**White Earth Food Shelf  
December 2024 Delivery Schedule**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4	5	6
NTW	Callaway	Rice Lake	NTW	Cleaning, Inventory
Walk in's	10am-noon	10am-noon	Walk in's	CLOSED
9am-3pm	Nijii Radio	ENP-Site	Stocking Shelves	
NTW CLOSED	NTW CLOSED	NTW CLOSED	9am-3pm	CLOSED
9	10	11	12	13
NTW	Elbow Lake	Pine Point	NTW	Cleaning, Inventory
Walk in's	10am-noon	10am-noon	Walk in's	CLOSED
Stocking Shelves	ENP Site	ENP Site	Stocking Shelves	
9am-3pm	NTW CLOSED	NTW CLOSED	9am-3pm	CLOSED
16	17	18	19	20
Closed	White Earth	Ogema	NTW	Cleaning, Inventory
Veterans	10am-noon	10am-noon	Walk in's	CLOSED
Day	ENP Site	Dream Catcher Homes	Stocking Shelves	
	NTW CLOSED	NTW CLOSED	9am-3pm	CLOSED
23	24	25	26	27
NTW	Waubun	CLOSED	CLOSED	Cleaning, Inventory
Walk in's	9am-11am	CHRISTMAS	CLOSED	CLOSED
Stocking Shelves	Community Center	DAY	CLOSED	
9am-3pm	NTW CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
30	31			
NTW	Mahnomen			
Walk in's	9am-11am			
Stocking Shelves	Vet's Building			
9am-3pm	NTW CLOSED			
<b>HOURS OF OPERATION 7AM-- 3:30PM Monday--Friday</b>				
applications are available at Community Centers, ENP Sites and Naytahwaush Sports Complex				
Hours are subject to change due to weather and closure's for Holiday's				
Walkin's are Monday's and Thursday's only at the Naytahwaush Sports Complex from 9am-3pm				
please feel free to contact the White Earth Food Shelf at 218-935-6313 or 218-935-6314				
<b>PLEASE TAKE AT PICTURE SAVE A TREE</b>				
<b>PLEASE NOTICE TIME CHANGE ON THE 24TH AND 31ST OF DECEMBER 2024</b>				

**Tribal leaders gather at NCAI Convention**



Photo by Richard Hanks Jr.

Tribal leaders recently gathered at the 81st Annual National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention in Las Vegas. One breakout session included an overview of the Minnesota model of Tribal-State relations with a panel of Tribal leaders/ reps from White Earth, Mille Lacs, Leech Lake, Fond du Lac, and Shakopee and the impact that Minnesota Statute 10.65 has had to improve relationships between the Tribes and State agencies.

## Supporting your mental health during the holidays

As we approach the holiday season, it is important to remember that it is very common to feel added stress, and this stress can worsen symptoms of a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety, or a substance use disorder. However, there are ways to help address the stress and improve your mental health. Below are strategies to help you find moments of joy amidst the hustle and bustle this holiday season.

### Pay attention to your feelings

Remember that it is okay to feel unhappy during the holidays. Recognizing your feelings is the first step to addressing and nurturing them.

Develop a plan for when you are feeling stressed, sad, or lonely

This plan may include calling a friend or family member, going for a walk, engaging in an activity that brings joy, or watching a favorite movie. Having a plan ahead of time can help ensure the difficult moments are more manageable.

### Practice self-care

It is important to schedule time for yourself and activities that recharge your mind and body. This may include reading a good book, working out, spending time in nature, and practicing stress management skills, such as deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness. It is also important to remember to prioritize necessities, including eating a balanced

diet, getting plenty of sleep, and finding time for exercise.

### Connect with community

If you can't be near loved ones during the holidays, finding a supportive community through clubs, support groups, community centers, local meet ups, and faith communities can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Consider scheduling a regular phone call with family and friends as well.

### Support others

During this time of year feelings of grief and loss can amplify. Check in on loved ones who may be alone or struggling during the holiday season. Helping a friend or neighbor not only gives joy to others, but it can improve your own happiness and well-being.

### Know when to seek help

If you feel that your mental health struggles are becoming overwhelming and difficult to handle, it is important to seek help and know that treatment is available. Below are free and confidential resources that can connect you with effective treatment and support.

You are not alone. Here's how to seek help:

Contact any local mental health provider or human services agency and ask for a crisis assessment or call the 24-hour mobile mental health hotline at 218-850-HELP (4357) or 877-380-3621.

## Solar from Page 8

more resilient power for the future. Some of the residents expressed concern about siting, which is still being determined, and others asked when the solar power would come to the low income residents of the housing project.

### More about the Pine Point Resilience Hub Partners

**10Power** is a mixed-race, woman-owned, certified 'Best in the World' B-Corp, founded in 2015, collaborating directly with underserved communities who lack equitable access to electricity to deploy renewable energy projects for climate justice, with focus on local workforce development for a green

economy with a gender empowerment lens. 10Power is supporting tribal communities to access Inflation Reduction Act capital.

**8th Fire Solar** was launched in 2017 in the village of Pine Point as a community development initiative aimed at restoring a regionally integrated Anishinaabe economy focused on food, energy and value-added production. A program of Akiing, 8th Fire Solar manufactures solar thermal collectors as part of a local workforce development program, providing training on manufacturing and installation, reducing energy bills and carbon emissions.

## WE hosts dinner for Becker County Commissioners



Photo by Richard Hanks

The White Earth Reservation Business Committee hosted a working dinner with the Becker County Board of Commissioners on Nov. 7 at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen. The two sides discussed collaborative efforts, upcoming projects, forestry issues, and more.



# New Year Sobriety POWWOW

## GAAWAABAABIGANIKAAG

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### Naytahwaush Sports Complex

DECEMBER 31st                      JANUARY 1st  
 Grand Entry 1pm & 7pm              Grand Entry 1pm  
 Feast 5pm                                      Lunch will be provided

- SPECIALS -  
 Veteran's Special  
 Women's Jingle & Men's Grassdance  
 Women's Traditional & Men's Traditional  
 Spot Dances & Hand Drum  
 Royalty Contest

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VENDOR CONTACT - BRIAN 218-902-0336 & LEW 218-261-1599  
 SHOOTING STAR HOTEL 218-935-2711 - BLOCK New Year's Powwow  
 Sponsored by White Earth RBC & Behavioral Health  
 Not responsible for accidents, injuries, or short funded travelers

## What is Radon?

According to the CDC, Radon is an odorless and invisible radioactive gas naturally released from rocks, soil, and water. Radon can get trapped inside homes and buildings, and build up in the air. Over time, breathing in high levels of radon can cause lung cancer. All outdoor and indoor air has some radon in it. Testing your home is the only way to know if radon levels are high. If radon levels in your home are high, you and your family could be at risk for lung cancer from radon.

**White Earth Natural Resource Division** offers free radon testing to individuals living within the reservation boundaries.

Please contact Amy Moore 218-204-1341 or amy.moore@whiteearth-nsn.gov for testing options or further information on radon.

## B & T Meat's products are from your local community

We have steaks, ground beef, roasts, sausages, brats, meat sticks, pork chops, bacon, summer sausage...plus much, much more!

**Order your holiday hams and special cuts soon!**

Store Hours:

**Monday- Friday: 9 am - 6:30 pm / Saturday: 9 am - 4 pm**

*Meat Bundles are available, including our new "Maggie & Mary's Soup Bundle" that includes a variety of meats and soup mixes!*

"Have a beef or hog you need butchered? Give us a call to schedule a date. Want to purchase a whole, or half hog or beef? We can help you with that too!"

Facebook: **Benson + Turner Foods, Inc.**

Website: [btmeats.com](http://btmeats.com)

Address: 3145 US Hwy 59, Waubun, MN

Phone: 218-473-2822

**Now accepting EBT**





## Manoomin Arts Initiative announces exhibition

The Manoomin Arts Initiative, a newly formed non-profit, is proud to announce its first Emerging Artists exhibition for 2024-2025.

Two local artists have been selected to showcase their artistry at the Gizhiigin Arts Incubator in Mahanomen. Both White Earth Reservation residents Eliza Klarer and Jakob Littlewolf will feature their work in an exhibition entitled Mazinaatebiishin "It is Reflected in the Water." The opening reception will occur at the Gizhiigin Arts Incubator on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 2-5 pm.

**Eliza Klarer** is a lifelong artist raised on the White Earth Reservation, where the intricacies of the wilderness inspire her detailed artworks. With foundations in woodland pottery from her grandmother, the late Judy Toppings, Eliza graduated from the University of Minnesota Morris in the Spring of 2024, majoring in Studio Art with a focus on ceramics and painting. Since returning to her hometown, she has reconnected with her roots in traditional woodland pottery by teaching classes with her moth-

er, Janet Klarer.

**Jakob Littlewolf** is a visual artist from the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe, where he currently resides. Although he is an emerging artist, he has had the privilege to watch the growth and be inspired by fellow artists from the White Earth Nation, such as Paula Littlewolf and Kent Estey. "When they first started Gizhiigin in Mahanomen, I immediately found myself drawn to it. I have always been interested in abstract and contemporary art," says Jakob.

Jakob's paintings first appeared in public as part of the Naytahwaush: Faces, Stories, and Artists exhibit this past spring and, most recently, in the Native American Exhibition at the Red Door Gallery in Wahpeton, N.D. Jakob has participated in multiple pop-up vendor events in Naytahwaush, Mahanomen, and the Studio Art Crawl in Fargo.

Mazinaatebiishin "It is Reflected in the Water" opens on Saturday, Dec. 7 with a reception from 2-5 pm. The Emerging Artists exhibition will be displayed at Gizhiigin Arts Incubator until Feb. 15.

## Elder from Page 32

about her culture at the time, she shook her head. She said she didn't know she had a culture — she didn't know she was an Indian.

She was simply an orphan, with no sense of identity beyond that. The boarding school life was all she'd ever known, and the friends she made there were her true family. Even after she left White Earth, she kept in touch with some of the girls.

### Boarding school apologies and reflections

Recently, Big Gram listened to President Biden's public apology for the history of boarding schools in the U.S., but it left her feeling ambivalent. When I showed her the video on YouTube, she simply said, "What does he know?"

She felt that his words, however well-intentioned, couldn't fully capture the reality of what stu-

dents experienced. "There's more to it than what he said," she added, with a look that spoke volumes.

### Gratitude Amid Hardships

Yet, Big Gram admits that her experience in boarding school wasn't all bad. For a child with no home or family, it was, in many ways, a refuge. She was fed well, received a decent education and formed bonds that would last a lifetime. Boarding school was "all I ever knew," she said, and for her, it was a place that, however complicated, offered stability.

Big Gram also attended Flandreau Boarding School in South Dakota, but her memories of White Earth remain some of the most vivid. Today, she holds the distinction of being the last living boarding school survivor of White Earth — a quiet legacy she carries with both pride and pain.



Courtesy photo

St. Benedict's Mission in White Earth was opened in 1882.

**Special Events**

- **Diabetic Bingo**  
December 4th— Pine Point  
December 11th— Elbow Lake  
December 19th —Valley View
- **Elder Christmas Party:**  
December 10th, 10am-2pm  
At the Shooting Star Event Center

**White Earth Elder Nutrition Program**  
**Gaawaabaabanganikaag Ogikaag Miniwanjige**  
**“White Earth Elder Eating Good”**  
**Manidoo-Giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon)- December**

**Elderly Nutrition Program Information**  
\*Daily Menu includes 1% milk, and provides 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) set by USDA guidelines, with health conscious and cultural consideration to overall well-being.

\*Menu is subject to change depending on product availability and/or schedule changes

Guest Meals \$6

Elders Suggested Donation \$4

Questions or comments please contact :

White Earth ENP Site (218) 983-3744  
Site Supervisor ~ Angie Clark


Elbow Lake ENP Site (218) 734-2315  
Site Controller ~ Cheryl Rindah

Pine Point ENP Site (218) 573-2210  
Site Controller ~ Thor Smith

Naytahwaush ENP Site (218) 935-5554  
Site Supervisor ~ Sherry Halberg

Rice Lake ENP Site (218) 694-2795  
Site Controller~ Millie Roy & Larae Stevens

Kat Thompson, ENP Manager  
Danielle Sutherland Uran, Nutrition Coord.  
(218) 983-3286 ext. 1266  
katherine.thompson@whiteearth-nsn.gov  
danielle.sutherland@whiteearth-nsn.gov

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<b>2</b> Chicken alfredo Breadstick Steamed broccoli Tropical fruit	<b>3</b> Salisbury steak Mashed potatoes Stewed tomatoes Wheat bread Apricots	<b>4 Chefs Choice</b> Main Entrée Vegetable and/or salad Fruit Bread	<b>5</b> Chili Cornbread Spinach salad Berry yogurt parfait	<b>6</b> Pork fritter Rosemary potatoes Sauerkraut Dinner roll Fruit cocktail
<b>9</b> Fish WR cranberry bread Baked sweet potato Coleslaw Cinnamon baked apples	<b>10 Closed for the Elders Christmas Party @ Shooting Star Event Center 10 am—2 pm</b>	<b>11 Chefs Choice</b> Main Entrée Vegetable and/or salad Fruit Bread	<b>12</b> Beef stroganoff Mashed potatoes Italian blend veg. Wheat bread Chocolate pudding w/ bananas	<b>13</b> Tomato tortellini soup Ham & cheese on a croissant Caesar salad Pears
<b>16</b> Chicken noodle hotdish Wheat bread Sliced cucumbers Mandarin oranges	<b>17</b> Pork roast Mashed potatoes Corn Manoomin stuffing Peaches	<b>18 Chefs Choice</b> Main Entrée Vegetable and/or salad Fruit Bread	<b>19 Birthday Lunch</b> Baked ham Mac n cheese Green beans Mixed fruit Birthday Treat	<b>20</b> Chefs salad Artisan roll Brownie Fresh fruit
<b>23</b> Spaghetti w/ meat sauce Garlic toast Steamed California veg. Fruit salad	<b>24 Closed for Christmas Eve</b>	<b>25 Closed For Christmas</b> 	<b>26</b> Beef stew Biscuit Spinach salad Fruit crisp	<b>27 Brunch for Lunch</b> Egg bake Sausage Roasted root veggies Manoomin and berries
<b>30</b> Sweet and sour chicken Fried rice Stir fry veggies Egg roll Mangoes	<b>31</b> Ham and potato soup Wheat crackers Cookie Fresh fruit			

**White Earth Food Distribution December Store Hours**

**Mon-Thurs 8:30-3:30**

Office Hours M-F 8-4:30 / 218-935-2233

December 2024 Home Delivery Schedule (Subject to Change)

Nutrition Education w/Shirley: Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>.

December 6<sup>th</sup>: Bagley, Ponsford & Naytahwaush

December 9<sup>th</sup>: Mahnomen, Waubun and Biimaad

December 16<sup>th</sup>: White Earth and Detroit Lakes

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Closed Christmas holiday

December 31<sup>st</sup>: Store closed for inventory

No Store hours on Fridays

If you receive home delivery service and will not be home on your scheduled route, please notify us ASAP.

**White Earth WIC December 2024**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	Red Fox Community Building 9:30-3:30	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	7
8	Mahnomen Tribal College 9:30-3:00	Mahnomen Tribal College 9:30-3:00	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	Naytahwaush Health Center 9:15-3:30	White Earth Health Center 8:15-12:00	14
15	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	Bagley Elementary School 10:00-3:00	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	Naytahwaush Health Center 9:15-3:30	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	21
22	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	Naytahwaush Health Center 9:15-3:30	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	28
29	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00	White Earth Health Center 8:15-4:00				

Please call 218-204-0399 or 218-401-4247 to contact our department.

\*WIC follows RBC Schedule for closings\*  
\*Locals and times are subject to change\*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## Obituaries

### Donovan "Swede" Francis Larson

Beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Donovan Francis Larson, 89, passed away peacefully on Oct. 26 at the Veterans Administration Home in Bemidji, Minn. Donovan (Don, aka "Swede") was born July 23, 1935, in White Earth, to Edward and Lucille Larson Crowell (nee Brunette).

Don was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. He served his country faithfully and honorably for 20 years in many states and foreign countries, including the Vietnam conflict. He enjoyed sightseeing wherever he was stationed. When he retired from the service, he worked at the Eagan Bulk Mail Facility for over 20 years then and then permanently retired and eventually relocated to Park Rapids, Minn., where he valued spending quality time with his wife, Kay, siblings, and with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and pets. He was a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

His family remembers him as one who was the happiest when he spent time tinkering in the garage with his many vehicles. At one point, he had collected so many vehicles that his wife said the place looked like a used car lot! He was handy and could build or fix just about anything, and he always had a project going on. Other hobbies included fishing with his buddies and listening to country music. He liked to keep busy. Don was a loving, caring husband and family man. He always took the time to call and check in on everyone and to visit whenever possible.

He was preceded in death by his parents; first wife, Audrey; stepfather, Clifford Crowell; and siblings: Raymond, Edward and Leonard Larson, Gail Heinonen and William Crowell. He was particularly fond of his aunt, Frances Herda, and his maternal grandmother, Isabelle Brunette, who was an elder with the White Earth Band of Ojibwe.

He is survived by his wife, Kay of 41 years; brothers, Alvin (Janet) Gjustrum and Samuel Crowell; children, Diane (Dan) Erickson and Ronald Larson; stepdaughter, Janis (Chakib) Marrakchi; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; along with many nieces, nephews and treasured friends.

Visitation was held Nov. 9 at Jones Pearson Funeral Home in Park Rapids. A private service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a charitable donation to the Minnesota Veterans Home of Bemidji, 920 Anne Street NW, Bemidji, MN 56601.

Interment: Linnell Cemetery in Carsonville Township at a later date.

Online: [www.jonespearson.com](http://www.jonespearson.com).



### Robert W. "Bob" Keezer

Robert W. "Bob" Keezer, 40, of Elbow Lake Village, died unexpectedly on Nov. 6.

Robert Wallace Keezer was born Dec. 2, 1983, in Park Rapids, Minn., the son of Kenneth and Susan (Anderson) Keezer. Affectionately known by family and friends as "Bob Bird," he grew up in Elbow Lake Village and attended school in Waubun.



After his high school graduation, Bob entered the workforce. He worked at Olson Pools and Spas while living in Hawley, Minn., followed by Tuffy's in Perham, Minn. Bob returned to the White Earth Reservation to make his home and was employed by the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen and most recently North Star Bin Builders. In addition to his bin building, over the years Bob would also trap leeches seasonally for income, both occupations he enjoyed and prided himself in.

Bob was an easy going individual with a great sense of humor. Although he had his share of struggles over the years, he always worked hard and knew how to have a good time. Bob enjoyed fishing, leeching, and gambling. However, some of his most treasured times were those spent with family. He loved his son, Bubba, and had a special place in his heart for his niece, Nahlah. Although Bob leaves this world too soon, he will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Saddened by his passing is his son, Robert "Bubba" Keezer Jr.; mother, Susan Keezer; brothers, Jeffrey Keezer and Kenneth "Beep" (Lois) Keezer Jr.; sister, Terrie Sue Keezer; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents; father; brother, Timothy; and nephew, Derek Keezer.

Funeral services were held Nov. 15 at Anderson Family Funeral Home in Mahanomen.

Arrangements: Anderson Family Funeral Home of Mahanomen.

Online: [www.andersonfamilyfh.com](http://www.andersonfamilyfh.com)

### Patrick Arthur Sandberg

Patrick Arthur Sandberg passed away peacefully under hospice care on Nov. 4. Pat was born on Jan. 4, 1953, to John Sandberg and Georgianna (Vizenor) Sandberg in Detroit Lakes.

At the young age of 3, Pat began having seizures that had significant impact on his health. He lived at home until the age of 18. He lived in several group homes around the area, but primarily stayed in Elbow Lake, Minn. He made many life-long friends and participated in activities such as shop and the Special Olympics where he won many medals and ribbons.

He enjoyed family picnics and going to garage sales. His favorite past time was telling stories and teasing family and staff. In October 2022, he made Bethany on the Lake Nursing Home his home. He made friends quickly and the staff became like family to him. They kept him busy with activities and showered him with the best care. The staff took him bowling, and he was so proud that he got a strike.

Patrick is survived by his sister, Rita (Russell) Miller from Detroit Lakes; brother, Michael (Kathy) Sandberg from Fargo, N.D.; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and nephew, Jeffrey Miller.

Interment: Oak Grove Cemetery in Detroit Lakes next to his parents.

### Terrance "Terry" Ingalls

Terrance "Terry" Ingalls, 71, of Lengby, Minn. died on Nov. 14, at his home in Lengby.

Terry was born on March 4, 1953, in Bagley, Minn. He was the son of Eugene and Lucille Ingalls. Terry worked on the pipeline for many years. It was always important to him to provide for his family as he was continually putting his family first. Terry was an avid hunter and fisherman, he loved watching football on Sundays, and was a huge Vikings fan. Terry enjoyed playing around in his garage and was always fixing and repairing his equipment. Terry loved his kids and grandchildren very much and always wanted them to succeed in every aspect of life.



Terry is survived by his mom, Lucille Hanse of Mahanomen; daughters: Melinda Ingalls of Lengby, Michelle Bell of Kimball, Minn., and Tami Coetzer of Stanley, N.D.; son, Derrick DeCoteau of Bagley; grandchildren: Ethan, Breven, Isaac, Mason, Keegan, Brayden and Timothy; brother, Lucky Ingalls of Bagley.

He is preceded in death by his son, Billy Ingalls, dad, Eugene; and Anita Ingalls.

Funeral services were held Nov. 22 at Cease Family Funeral Home Chapel in Bagley, with Reverend Jill Torgerson officiating.

Arrangements: Cease Funeral Home of Bagley.

Online: [www.ceasefuneralhome.com](http://www.ceasefuneralhome.com)

### Ronald "Ron" Karl Ankeny

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Ron Ankeny, 64, at his home in Mahanomen. Ronald Karl was born Aug. 23, 1960, to Linda Littlewolf in White Earth. He was later adopted by John and Lois Ankeny of St. James, Minn. Ron grew up in St. James and was baptized/confirmed and was a member of the St. James United Methodist Church.



He graduated with the Class of 1978. Ron played football in high school and he loved to party and have fun. He loved music and invested in stereos from the time he was in school. Ron attended many concerts. He attended Southwest State University in Marshall, Minn. He got into the construction business and worked out west in Colorado, Arizona and California for many years before moving back to the midwest. Ron lived in Sioux Falls, S.D., for a number of years before moving to Mahanomen in 2019. There he reconnected with his biological mother and family.

Ron was an avid Minnesota Vikings and Minnesota Twins fan and faithfully cheered on his teams every chance he got. He enjoyed hunting and fishing. He enjoyed getting together with the family every Labor Day weekend. Ron loved to tell the stories of his life experiences and working in the construction business over the years.

Ron is survived by his siblings: Rick (Carol) Ankeny of Sioux Falls, Robin Ankeny of Lengby, Risa (Dave Wheeler) Carlson of Elmwood, Wis., and Rachel (Jake) Johnson of Akeley, Minn.; biological mother, Linda Littlewolf; biological sisters: Lorrie Littlewolf Johnson of Wyoming, Raone Strutz of Flandreau, S.D., and MoJo Littlewolf of Mahanomen; nieces and nephews: Shawn (Brooke) Ankeny of Wyoming, Chris Jacobs of Sioux Falls, Jamison and Jakob Carlson of St. James, Rianna (Tyce Todd) Carlson of Baldwin, Wis., Gabby Klicker of Fargo, N.D., and many cousins, great nephews and nieces.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents, John and Lois Ankeny; grandparents, Karl and Dorothy Gust; niece, Miranda Jacobs; biological brother, Casey Littlewolf; and biological sister, Teresa Littlewolf.

A memorial service was held Dec. 3 at the Anderson Family Funeral Home in Mahanomen.

Arrangements: Anderson Family Funeral Home of Mahanomen.

Online: [www.andersonfamilyfh.com](http://www.andersonfamilyfh.com)



## Obituaries

### Joyce Shirley Johnson

Joyce Johnson, 86 of Bagley, Minn., died on Nov. 20 at her home in Bagley.

Joyce was born on June 22, 1938, in Bagley. She was the daughter of Emil and Grace (Ziegler) Murray. Joyce lived with her family in Portland and Chicago before moving to Bagley. She attended Bagley High School and graduated in 1956.

Joyce married Lawrence Johnson on Nov. 30, 1957, in Fosston, Minn. Joyce was a hard worker and has worked at many places in her life. She worked at the Mileage Café, Drift Inn, Red Owl Grocery Store, Hartz Store, and Kubiaks. Lawrence and Joyce owned Johnsons Lakeside Grocery store from 1993 until 1995. She went to work at Lueken's in Bemidji where she was the Flower Department manager. Joyce retired in 2005 when she was 67 years old.



Joyce had a spunky personality, with great wit and a clever sense of humor. Joyce used to say, "I drink coffee to keep my tan!" She enjoyed playing bingo every Friday night, going to the casino and watching any kind of music show that was performing. She was fond of going for rides with her husband. Lawrence and Joyce spent many years logging while also dairy farming. They were dairy farmers for 13 years. The couple sold their farm in 1976, and moved into town.

Joyce adored her flowers and her "Frog Garden." Joyce was quite a cook and baker and was always making tasty homecooked meals. She wouldn't miss a chance to play cards, especially Gin Rummy, or take a trip to Bemidji to shop particularly for jewelry. Joyce was an Auxiliary member at the Irvin Blix American Legion Post #16 of Bagley and attended Faith Hill Assembly of God Church. Joyce's grandchildren were her life,

and she watched them growing up. She was an enormous influence in all their lives and has made a huge impact on all of their hearts.

Joyce is survived by her daughter, Cheryl Snook of Bagley; granddaughters: Melissa Johnson & John Good of Battle Lake, Minn., Holly & Ryan Strickler of Anchorage, Alaska, and Nicole & Ken Davis of Wasilla, Alaska; grandsons, Derrick Goodwin of Rice Lake, and Dennis and Sarah Goodwin of Rice Lake; great grandchildren: Samantha, Haley and Justin Olson, Lindsey and Sam Strickler, Taylor Davis, Jayden and Ashawnte Goodwin, Teri, Tyra, Daunte, Dani Ann, Daynia, Dalyan, Destin, Denessa, Desire Goodwin, Jax Olson and Kayden; great-great grandchildren: Emberly Strom, Braven, Brighten Cloud and Akeenah Goodwin.

Joyce was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Lawrence; brother, Frank Randall and Clyde Milton; sister, Marlyce Halverson; stepmother, Louella Murray; and great grandson, Dennis Goodwin Jr.

A Celebration of Life was held Nov. 25 at the Faith Hill Assembly of God Church in Bagley with Pastor John Swanson officiating.

Interment: Westby Cemetery.

Arrangements: Cease Family Funeral Home of Bagley.

In lieu of flowers the family would prefer memorials to be sent to offset funeral expenses to:

Cease Family Funeral Homes  
PO Box 87, Bagley, Minnesota 56621  
c/o Joyce Johnson

A crowd funding fund has been created on the Cease Funeral Home web page as well at [ceasefuneralhome.com](http://ceasefuneralhome.com)

### Mildred "Judy" Thomas

Mildred "Judy" Thomas, 81, of Detroit Lakes, Minn., passed away peacefully at home on Nov. 22, surrounded by her loving family.

Born on April 29, 1943, in White Earth, she was the daughter of Reverend William J. Hanks Sr. and Mary Ellen Roy. Judy spent her early years in Pine Point before her family relocated to Ft. Yates, N.D., where her father served as the Episcopal Priest for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. It was in Ft. Yates that Judy met and married Philip "Junior" Thomas in 1962. Together, they raised five children: Mary, Phil, Ann, Alan "Sonny," and Bart.



Judy began her professional journey as a teacher's aid in Ft. Yates and later pursued her education degree through the Future Indian Teachers (FIT) Program at the University of North Dakota, graduating summa cum laude in 1976. Her teaching career spanned many years and locations, including positions on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in Ft. Yates and Bullhead, S.D.

In 1996, she returned to Minnesota to teach at the Pine Point School on the White Earth Chippewa Reservation—an institution she had attended as a child—before retiring in 2005. Throughout her career, Judy left a lasting impact on her students and colleagues alike.

Known for her vibrant personality and mischievous spirit, Judy brought fun to those around her. She enjoyed dancing, singing karaoke, outdoor concerts, and hosting cook-outs at her home. A frequent visitor to Las Vegas to gamble and spend time with her daughter Mary, Judy cherished every moment spent with family and friends.

Judy is survived by her children: Mary, Phil (Karma), Ann, Sonny (Joel), and Bart; as well as her grandchildren: Kris, Brendon, Jayce, Aleisha, Philip, Isaiah, and Cody. She also leaves behind her sister Betty "Beebes" Red Horse; brother, Sherald Hanks; numerous cousins, nieces, nephews; and great-grandchildren.

Judy is also survived by her youngest child, Cha Chi, her little nine-year old dog. Cha Chi was her constant companion and was with her until the end, never leaving her side. Cha Chi is adored by all and will remain in the family home with Sonny and his family.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Junior; siblings: Frances "Jonsey" Hanks, Wilma "Bobbie" McGregor, Bill "Beeker" Hanks, and Tom Hanks.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to Joel Hoffman for his unwavering support and care during Judy's later years and illness.

A visitation and prayer service was Dec. 2 at David-Donohewer Funeral Home in Detroit Lakes. The funeral service was held Dec. 3 at St. Columba Episcopal Church in White Earth.

Interment: St. Columba Episcopal Church Cemetery in White Earth.

Arrangements: David-Donohewer Funeral Home.

Online: [www.daviddonohewer.com](http://www.daviddonohewer.com)

### Visiting with MN Department of Corrections



Photo by Gary W. Padrta

The White Earth RBC held a Government-to-Government Consultation meeting with Minnesota Department of Corrections Commissioner Paul Schnell on Nov. 26 at the RBC headquarters building. Discussions included DOC legislative initiatives, tribal supervision, Culturally Responsive Re-Entry Program, Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA), local correction facilities, and a tribal liaison update. From left are District 3 Rep. Laura Lee Erickson, Chairman Michael Fairbanks, DOC Commissioner Paul Schnell, and DOC Tribal Relations Director Wendy Spry (White Earth).

### RBC offices closed for holidays

White Earth RBC offices will be closed Dec. 24-26 for Christmas and Dec. 31-Jan. 1 for the New Year's Day holiday. Modified services will still be available.



### WE attorneys can now practice law in Minnesota Federal Courts

White Earth Legal Department attorneys can now practice law in Minnesota District Federal Courts.

In the arena of Indian Law, much of the litigation practice happens in the Federal courts. So now, all White Earth Legal Department attorneys can sue and defend the Band in the Minnesota District Federal Court.

**Top:** Ashley Nelson, left, Andrea Szabo, and Veronica Newcomer were sworn in by Federal Magistrate Judge Leo Brisbois (White Earth descendant) in Fergus Falls, Minn.

**Left:** Andrea Kingbird was sworn in by Federal Magistrate Judge Jon Huseby in Bemidji, Minn.

Submitted photos

## REGISTER FOR CLASSES

during WETCC's **SWEET START**

### OPEN HOUSES

**December 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>**

**WETCC Drum Hall**

- Meet WETCC Staff
- Fill out College Application
- Complete Placement Testing
- Learn about Financial Aid
- Register for Classes

**2-6 PM**

**FREE COOKIES COCOA & CIDER**

**Classes Start Jan. 13**

**WHITE EARTH TRIBAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
GAAWAABAABIGANIKAAAG GABEGIKENDASOWIGAMIG

2250 College Road  
Mahnomen, MN 56557  
218-935-0417  
www.wetcc.edu

## HEART HEALTH/ MMIWR EVENT

### SAVE THE DATE:

**Thursday, Feb. 13th**  
**2PM to 6PM**  
**Shooting Star Casino**

Our White Earth Nation fitness centers provide opportunities for all members of our community to strengthen their health and wellness.

**Our Services:**

- Free **personal training** is available in all centers (call to schedule an appointment)
- **Diabetes Prevention** classes

**For questions, please call:**

218-401-2421 OR 218-401-3079

## WHITE EARTH FITNESS CENTERS

*Because exercise is medicine!*

**PINE POINT FITNESS CENTER**  
[Located in the new Community Center]

**CENTER HOURS:** (may vary)  
Key fob access - available by appointment  
Staff may be available by appointment Mon-Fri (8am-4:30pm)

**Phone number:** 218-401-3079

**RICE LAKE FITNESS CENTER**  
[Located in the Community Center]

**CENTER HOURS:** Mon-Fri (8am-4:30pm)  
Staff may be available by appointment Mon-Fri (8am-4:30)

**Phone number:** 218-401-2421

**WHITE EARTH FITNESS CENTER**  
[Located at Tribal Health]

**HOURS:**  
Key fob access - Mon-Fri - 24/7  
Sat & Sun - (6am-6pm)

**Phone number:** 218-401-3079 or 218-983-3286 ext. 1416

**NAYTAHWAUSH FITNESS CENTER**  
[Located in the Sports Complex]

**CENTER HOURS:**  
Open during RBC hours  
Staff may be available by appointment Mon-Fri (8am-4:30pm)

**PHONE NUMBER:** 218-401-3079

**STAR FITNESS CENTER - MAHNOMEN**  
[Located in the Manitoak Mall]

**CENTER HOURS:**  
Key fob access: 24/7 Mon-Fri  
Staff may be available by appointment Mon-Fri (8am-4:30pm)

**Phone:** 218-401-2421

White Earth Nation  
TRIBAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Healthy TOGETHER

# 9th Annual: White Earth Tribal 4-H Cultural Winter Camp

January 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
10:00am-3:00pm each day

White Earth Rediscovery Center, 29401 400<sup>th</sup> St, Waubun, MN

*Celebrate Learning and Growing through Traditional Anishinaabeg Values*



Everyone is welcome to come and bring your families for an introduction to 4-H Youth & Family Winter Activities: fishing, traditional arts and/or crafts (all ages), language, storytelling, games, food, and winter fun. Dress for the weather! Youth, please bring your parent or guardians (No youth drop off please). **This event is a collaboration between the White Earth Tribal 4-H Program, White Earth Nation Tribal Public Health, and White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) Extension.**

The University of Minnesota Extension, Office of Youth Development, offers 4-H Community Programming serving the communities of the White Earth Nation. 4-H provides youth opportunities to learn, explore, and grow through leadership.

**For questions on this event, please contact: Dana Trickey at 218-289-1193, [tric0014@umn.edu](mailto:tric0014@umn.edu)**



White Earth Tribal 4-H Community & Youth Program  
[www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H](http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H)

## Veterans from Page 2

force was comprised of three armies with 13 infantry, seven panzer divisions, five divisions in reserve, plus thousands of artillery pieces—a total of 290,000 men that would hit the thin American line being held by only 80,000 men on a front spread across 75 miles. In the direct path of the onslaught were the 99th and 106th Infantry Divisions.

The following morning, Dec. 15 at about 0600, a full barrage of German shells suddenly began saturating the front...the Battle of the Bulge had begun and the 106th Infantry Division, having had no experience in combat, stood no chance against the overwhelming German force.

By late morning on the 16th...the seam between the American units was torn with the German breakthrough above and below the 106th's 422nd and 423rd Regiments. Albert's entire division were trapped in a classic double envelopment. The Germans captured and took some 8,000 prisoners.

Marching the American prisoners for four days into German held territory, the roads became packed with the thousands of U.S. servicemen being marched toward trains that would haul them to various prison camps. They were loaded onto overcrowded box cars with 60 or so men per boxcar. Their transport in the boxcars were horrendous. Close confinement in each car with only a box placed in the center, or the floor in one corner of the boxcar for toilet use, the air was putrid and insufferable. Along the way, matters worsened when Allied planes began bombing and strafing the trains not knowing they were filled with American GIs.

Trains packed with Albert and the other prisoners from the 423rd soon arrived at Bad Orb. After descending from the boxcars, the half-frozen POWs were marched through the town, festooned with Christmas decorations, where the civilians hissed and booed them and children threw snowballs.

Camp officials at Bad Orb were overwhelmed by the sheer number of prisoners. While POWs at most German camps were treated humanely, the Geneva Convention's rules about the treatment of prisoners were blatantly ignored at Stalag IX-B.

The GIs were assigned to barracks - Albert to barracks 43 B and serial number 26281. Each barracks held about 500 men with no bathroom facilities, poor heating, as well as being infested with lice. Some barracks lacked bunks, forcing POWs to sleep on cold concrete floors, or so few bunks that they had to take turns sleeping. Assigning the prisoners to strenuous physical labor along with extremely poor quality and quantity of food, the POWs lost weight at alarming rates. After the war, one POW stated "They served us...beets and carrots and cabbage and grass...At night we'd get a small loaf of black bread mixed with sawdust that had to be divided among eight prisoners."

Lifelong friend, Bill Norcross of Pine Point, recalled how skinny Albert was when he first saw him after his release. He shared with Pete Fairbanks one experience that Albert had told him not long after the two of them returned home from the war:

When Albert was being interrogated by the Nazis, the commandant noticed Albert in the prison yard and asked him if he was an Indian. The German officer had been in Wisconsin before the war and recognized Albert as one. He asked Albert why he was fighting the Germans as this wasn't [Indian's] war. Albert said out of consideration for him being an Indian, the officer made him his personal servant and Albert said he got fed better food than the other prisoners. When Bill asked Albert what kind of food he got, Albert responded "potato peelings."

Guards abused prisoners verbally and physically, often beating them for small infractions of camp rules. Without basic sanitation (POWs weren't even allowed to bathe or change clothes), dysentery, diarrhea, and typhus were rampant and many of the prisoners died.

On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, a reconnaissance task

force comprised of members of the 2nd Battalion, 114th Regiment, US 44th Infantry Division, the 106th Cavalry Group, and the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion broke through German lines and went ahead of the main body of American forces driving 37 miles through enemy-held territory. They arrived at a hill overlooking Bad Orb. When a German garrison opened fire on the American position, they answered with machinegun fire and artillery shells throughout the night. The following morning German forces withdrew and Stalag IX-B was turned over to the Americans, many who wept when they saw the condition of the emaciated POWs.

After their rescue, Albert was assigned for movement to RO Group 427-16 as Liberated Prisoners of War and later came home to his father Jim Jugg in Ponsford on furlough. He was honorably discharged Oct. 7, 1945. Albert died May 23, 1959 in St. Paul at the age of 51 and is buried in Breck Memorial Episcopal Cemetery, Pine Point.

### Survives 2 days in shark infested waters after his ship was sunk

**Seaman 1st Class Martin G. "Bewaush" Roberts** was stationed onboard the escort carrier USS Gambier Bay (CVE-73) when she was sunk in the Battle off Samar, the centermost action of the Battle of Leyte Gulf - the largest naval battle of World War II involving hundreds of ships, thousands of aircraft, and over 200,000 personnel. The Battle of Leyte Gulf is, in fact, credited as being the largest naval battle ever in history.

Steaming in the Philippine Sea off Samar Island, in the Philippines in the early morning of Oct. 25, 1944, the Gambier Bay and the other ships comprising the escort carrier task unit known by the call sign Taffy 3, were caught by the vastly superior Japanese fleet with no chance to escape the faster force. Around 0810 hours, the Gambier Bay came under fire with 8" shells from the heavy cruiser Chikuma and 18.1" projectiles from the battleships Yamato and Kongō. At 0837, a direct hit to the pilot house resulted in loss of steering control. Three minutes later at 0840, a shell ripped into the aft engine room disabling No. 3 boiler causing total loss of steam pressure.

Between 0810 and 0850, the Gambier Bay was pummeled by at least 15 hits puncturing boilers, ripping holes in her hull, resulting in loss of power, multiple fires and major flooding.

By 0845 Gambier Bay was dead in the water, without power and sinking. The order was given to abandon ship and within about five minutes, most of the crew was in the water. Survivors remembered "a line of heads strung out behind the ship, resembling a collection of coconuts floating in the ship's wake."

"At 0907, she capsized to port with her keel exposed to the sky revealing the underwater damage she had sustained - several shell holes visible, and her port screw gone. The Gambier Bay remained floating inverted only four minutes before succumbing. Her hull was so evenly perforated that she dropped straight down without rolling to either side or dipping her bow or stern."

From the first hit till her sinking, took the span of only 1 hour and 1 minute.

Bewaush, along with the hundreds of others of Gambier Bay's crew, found themselves in shark infested waters clinging to rafts, life rings and whatever other floating debris they could find. They drifted in the waters of the Philippine Sea for two days after their ship went down before rescue ships located the survivors.

Most veterans of their generations rarely, if ever, spoke of their wartime experiences except amongst themselves. Bewaush would confide freely with his friend and fellow

combat veteran Bill Norcross of Pine Point. Years after he passed away, Bill relayed Bewaush's recollections to Pete Fairbanks.

For two days Bewaush and the others floated and drifted in the sea not knowing how things would turn out. They would see dorsal fins of sharks frequently and every now and then he would hear someone screaming from being attacked by sharks. The worst was the screaming at night. Always, there was the feeling that you would be next.

Later when talking with Bill, Bewaush would still ruminate on why it was that the sharks never attacked him and wondered why it was that he had survived that entire ordeal. After their rescue, Navy records indicate 147 crewmen from Gambier Bay were killed or lost at sea and her more than 700 survivors were rescued.

Martin G. Roberts of Pine Point, enlisted in the U.S. Navy on Sept. 3, 1943 and reported to Farragut Naval Training Station, Idaho for boot camp. From boot camp at some point, he reported to the USS Gambier Bay. After being rescued, he came back stateside and soon reported to SCTC Terminal Island, Calif. (Small Craft Training Center) for training in the operation of the many small wooden hulled crafts used in World War II such as submarine chasers, net layers. PT boats, minesweepers, etc. These crafts were given the nickname the Splinter Fleet. Completing small craft training he went on to serve onboard the USS YDG-8, a degaussing vessel, and the minesweeper USS Gavia (AM-363) before being honorably discharged from the Navy on March 2, 1946. Bewaush died in Park Rapids May 24, 1991 and buried in St. Theodore's Catholic Cemetery, Pine Point.

### Two brothers - one at Omaha Beach on D-Day and the other at Battle of the Bulge

**Earl Erion, MOMM3, USN**, was at Omaha Beach that day, because of radio silence he had to drive a wooden messenger boat between ships delivering messages. His boat was sunk that day. Till the day he died at age 91 he still found it difficult to talk about it. Like most of this generation, when people would thank him and call him a hero, he was adamant about the fact that he was no hero - the ones that never came home were the heroes.

**Valentine O. Erion, M/Sgt.**, was in the US Army Air Corps and afterwards reenlisted in the US Army. In World War II, he was in the Battle of the Bulge - considered by most historians the worst battle of the war. He was awarded the bronze star medal while serving in the Korean War.

### 1st Native American to rise to flag rank was from White Earth

**Rear Admiral Francis J. Mee, U.S. Navy**. Francis is credited as being the 1st Native American to be promoted flag rank. Born at White Earth in 1899, the grandson of one of the 1st removals to White Earth - Julia Warren Spears, he graduated from high school in Detroit (now Detroit Lakes), was a 1922 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, and spent the next 30 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring in 1952 as a Rear Admiral. Flag rank, or flag officer, designate a commissioned officer in the Navy with the rank of rear admiral and higher. Francis Mee is often credited as the 1st Native American to rise to the level of flag rank in the U.S. Navy.

After graduating from Annapolis, he was commis-



sioned an ensign and reported to the fleet onboard the battleship USS Tennessee (BB-43) serving as Junior Watch and Division Officer in the ship's Engineering Department thus beginning his exemplary and remarkable career comprised of a long list of both sea and shore commands.

In 1923 he was assigned to the USS Thompson (DD-305) as an assistant engineering officer; returning to Annapolis at Naval Postgraduate School for further instruction in mechanical engineering and the following year earning his master's degree in mechanical engineering from Columbia University in New York City. He was assigned as engineering officer to the USS MacLeish (DD-220) in 1929 which was attached to the Asiatic Fleet based in the Philippines followed by assignment to the USS Luzon (PG-47), flagship of the Yangtze River Patrol as engineering officer with additional duty as Patrol Engineer on the staff of Commander Yangtze River Patrol. In June, 1932, he was reassigned to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as Assistant to Shop Superintendent, Industrial Department.

In 1934, Lieutenant Mee took command of the minesweeper USS Robin (AM-3) from which he received a commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for his performance. In 1935, he became senior assistant engineer on the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis (CA-35). By now, having risen to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, LCDR Mee was assigned to the Office of the Inspector of Naval Materials, New York, NY serving as Assistant to the Inspector.

Mee assumed command of the Ellet during the fitting phase and, once the new destroyer was commissioned USS Ellet (DD-398), he assumed command as her commanding officer. Around this period, on June 7, 1941, Francis was united in marriage to his wife, Sue Kathryn Kelly.

Having moved on to his next command as navigator onboard the heavy cruiser USS Portland (CA-33), the ship had departed Peal Harbor and were two days away escorting the carrier USS Lexington when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Shortly after learning of the attack, Mee was quoted as saying: "What you've got to do first is get that old flag out front and develop some respect for it and a feeling of honor if you serve it."

While Mee was onboard, the Portland participated in the combat actions at Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, and the initial phase of the Guadalcanal Campaign.

Completing the Command Course at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in June 1943, he became Material Officer on the staff of Commander Operational Training Command, U. S. Pacific Fleet. In this capacity he was responsible for providing underway training for all newly commissioned ships constructed in West Coast shipyards. In July 1944 he reported as the Commander of Amphibious Force, Seventh Fleet, LST Flotilla 22, consisting of 36 LST Class ships. While in command of this unit he was awarded the Legion of Merit:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct...in action against enemy Japanese forces at Balikpapan, Borneo, on July 2, 1945....the Legion of Merit with Combat Distinguishing Device V. The citation continues in part: "Skillfully deploying the LST'S under his command, Captain Mee maneuvered in close proximity to mine fields and unloaded assault echelons in proper order and exactly on schedule...."

From there he assumed command of the U.S. Navy Mine Countermeasure Station, Panama City, Fla. In February 1947, he assumed command of the Cleveland-class light cruiser USS Little Rock (CL-92) and in 1948 as Commander Fleet Training Group and Underway Training Unit, Western Pacific based in Guam where he was responsible for all underway training and training facilities in the Pacific west of Hawaii.

In May 1949, Mee's final command of his illustrious career came in May 1949, when he was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Navy Department, Washington, D.C., as Director of Administrative Inspections. RADM Francis J. Mee was involuntarily retired June 30, 1952.

Much of Mee's post-retirement years were spent as an instructor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He and his

wife Sue retired to her hometown of Vicksburg, Miss., where he died Dec. 29, 1990, at the age of 91 yrs. He and Sue are buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery in Vicksburg.

**Courageous women served in wartime  
World War I, World War II, Korea & Vietnam**

Yes, courageous. Although some senior members of the armed forces realized the importance, necessity, and benefits of women serving, and saw how they could significantly enhance the strength of the military, female service members faced a tremendous amount of prejudice - both from within the services and out. Many in the general public felt women would be distractions to the servicemen - to their husbands or their sons - and that women would actually weaken our military. Some newspapers around the country ran cartoons and editorials suggesting that by allowing women into the armed forces could make degenerates of "your daughters" and that they would become promiscuous or "unwomanly."

In 1941 as senior officers bickered amongst themselves for months whether to allow women into the Navy for non-combat positions freeing more men for deployment to sea duty, one woman observer stated "Many admirals would prefer to enroll monkeys, dogs, or ducks." Despite prejudice, the stigma, name calling, and ridicule, women have consistently come forward in tremendous numbers to serve in every branch of the military. And our country, and the armed forces, are much better for it.

Once in the service however, women were still treated unequally compared to their male counterparts. Like many of the female veterans listed here in this article, once a female on active duty got married, she was involuntarily discharged within days. It was an honorable discharge but still, it was involuntary and mandatory. This regulation wasn't changed until 1973, and even then, females were not permitted to continue their enlistment if they married another servicemember. Women who had a child were not permitted to serve and servicewomen who became pregnant on active duty were also involuntarily discharged. This was DOD policy until 1976.

These policies have thankfully gone away. Just as with their male counterparts, our country are deeply indebted to and grateful for their courage, sacrifice, and dedication to our nation.

If anyone has photographs or information about veterans who died in the war eras, served in World War II or earlier, and female veterans, please send an email to: [whiteearthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:whiteearthhistory@gmail.com) or [faircox@arvig.net](mailto:faircox@arvig.net).



Marguerite "Peg" McCarthy, SKT3, USN, WWII



Gail Trotterchaud, Pvt., US Army, World War II



Margaret Vizenor, PFC, US Army Air Corps, World War II



Barbara Perrault, HN, US Navy, Korea Era



Merceline Warren, Sgt., US Army, Korea Era



Carrie Sayers, Sgt., US Army, Korea Era



Eleanora "Ella" Beaulieu, Nurse, World War I, Died in Service



Theodora "Dode" Davis, Nurse, World War I



Blanche Warren, SP2, US Army, Korea Era



Jacqueline Bellanger, US Army, Korea Era

Melba Buckanaga, HN3, US Navy, WW II

Georgianna 'Bunny' Brisbois, HN, US Navy, Korea Era

Rita Vizenor, US Air Force, Korea Era

Wilma Brown, Pvt., USMC, Vietnam Era  
- No photos located



Cecilia "Ceety" St. Clair, TEC 5, US Army, World War II



Myrnr Hamlin, SP3, US Navy, World War II

**Note from the author:**

In the November 2024 *Anishinaabeg Today* article I failed to note that the two KIA/MIA Sailors - Sylvester Frank Sharbono and Paul Orland Charbonneau - were first cousins. Syl was the son of Frank Sharbono and Frank's brother William Charbonneau was the father of Orland Charbonneau.

## Visiting with Minnesota BIA Superintendent



Photo by Richard Hanks

White Earth recently welcomed Minnesota BIA Superintendent Heidi Gordon to the RBC headquarters building. They discuss potential changes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs with a new president, Trust lands, and funding. From left are Chairman Michael Fairbanks, BIA Superintendent Heidi Gordon, District 3 Rep. Laura Lee Erickson, District 2 Rep. Eugene Sommers, and Secretary-Treasurer Michael LaRoque.

## Volunteers needed for Income Tax Assistance site at SSC

Since 2006, White Earth Investment Initiative has hosted a free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site at the Shooting Star Casino where taxpayers can have their returns prepared for free by trained community volunteers and White Earth Investment Initiative tax staff.

In 2024, WEII's VITA sites filed more than 650 federal returns and facilitated the return of nearly \$800,000 to the community by way of federal tax refunds while also saving taxpayers more than \$133,000 in tax preparation fees.

"The community volunteers who help at our sites make a big difference," said Sue Trnka, one of WEII's VITA site coordinators. "When a taxpayer is greeted and helped by someone they know, they feel more at ease."

White Earth Investment Initiative is seeking six to eight new volunteers to help with the 2025 tax filing season, primarily at its location at the Shooting Star Casino from late January through mid-April. Volunteers can help with greeting, intake, and tax

return preparation. WEII's biggest need is for volunteers willing to prepare tax returns.

"Like many programs that rely on volunteers, we are still rebuilding that vital volunteer base," said Trnka.

All volunteers receive in-person training and guidance from WEII tax site staff both prior to and throughout the tax season. A WEII tax site coordinator is always present at the tax site, so volunteers are always fully supported.

"No special knowledge is needed to be a tax volunteer – only a desire to help others in the community. The majority of returns prepared at our sites are very simple. Volunteers are fully trained on simple tax law and have to pass a certification before they can prepare returns," said Trnka.

Training dates have not been finalized, but WEII anticipates offering in-person training in mid-December and early January. Anyone interested in volunteering at WEII's tax sites should contact Sue Trnka at 218-844-7029 or strnka@mmcdc.com.

## WE Water & Sewer offers cold-weather tips

1. The most likely spot for water lines to freeze is where it enters the house/trailer home/building. Make sure warmer air can reach pipes where water enters the house/trailer home/building. If you have **heat tape wrapped around your pipes, make sure it is plugged in.**

2. Check around your home for areas where water supply lines are in unheated areas and take measures to prevent the flow of cold air in these areas. Common locations include: basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

3. Determine where your water shut-off valve is in your house and learn how to use it. For most homes the shut-off valve is located near the water meter at the point where the water line comes into your home, which is usually in your basement. If a pipe freezes and breaks it will be important to know where the shut-off valve is located.

4. Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures,

you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.

5. **Do not plow or drive over the area where your water and sewer lines are buried.** Doing so pushes the frost further into the ground, increasing the risk of freeze ups.

6. **Make sure the roof vent is not covered** with snow or blocked. Snow build up over the vent will cause the sewer drain to slow down. This prevents the warmer air in the sewer system from venting up the house and keeping the line above from freezing.

7. **Make sure any sewer cleanouts or riser (white pipes in the yard) are capped** so none of the cold air can enter the sewer system causing a freeze up.

Please contact the White Earth Water and Sewer department in the event of your water or sewer system freezing at 218-983-3202. The community water systems will monitor water temperature to prevent community freeze ups.



### WETCC AIBL CRAFT FAIR AND SPUD-TACULAR POTATO BAR!

Whether you're looking for Christmas gifts for family or friends, or looking to sell your crafted items at one of our tables, come check out our craft fair.

**Don't miss out on our 2 day potato bar!**

**VENDORS RESERVE TABLES FOR \$30 A PIECE OR \$50 FOR 2 DAYS! DISCOUNTED RATES FOR STUDENTS**

Thursday, December 12th:

**Craft Fair:** 12-6 pm

**Potato Bar:** 11-2 pm

Friday, December 13th:

**Craft Fair:** 11-3:30 pm

**Potato Bar:** 11-2 pm

To reserve a table email **Carlene Hisgun** at:

**carlene.hisgun@wetcc.edu**

**WETCC DRUM HALL**

2250 College Rd Mahanomen, MN

56557



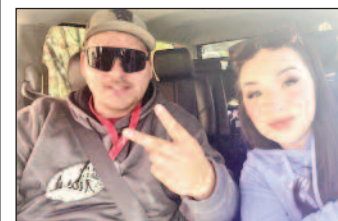
## Howah Ads

Happy B'day  
Dec 5th  
**Brandon Goodwin**  
Love Mom

Happy **5th** Birthday  
**Thaddeus**  
December 15th



Happy Birthday  
**Ty!**  
Thanks for everything you do!  
Love, Josie & the boys  
**December 16th**



**Happy Holidays**  
from the  
**Anishinaabeg Today**



Healing Pathways Interviewers are back!

If you were a Healing Pathways participant.

The interview team is trying to reach you.

Please call 218-261-1010.

**White Earth Nation has a Facebook page!**

**Visit us for the latest updates**

**www.facebook.com/WhiteEarthNation**

## PP School Meeting Minutes

### Pine Point Regular School Board Meeting Monday, September 30, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m. Pine Point School Staff Room

**1.0 Roll Call** – Meeting called to order by Chairman John Swan at 4:36 p.m.

Members present – Marva Aitken, Sara Hunt, Michael Swan, John Swan, Allison Jones

Members absent – Gerald Roberts

Ex-officio – Christopher Schulz, Principal

**2.0 Recognition of Visitors** – Bonnie Meeks

**3.0 Approval/Amendment of Agenda** – Motion by Sara Hunt to approve the agenda as amended: 7.2 Microgrid Solar Panel Ownership, seconded by Allison Jones. All in favor. Motion carried.

**4.0 Approval/Amendment of Minutes** – Motion by Michael Swan to approve the September 9, 2024 minutes as presented, seconded by Marva Aitken. All in favor. Motion carried.

**5.0 Finance**

5.1 Treasurer’s Report – Motion by Michael Swan to approve Treasurer’s Report for September 2024 as submitted. All in favor. Motion carried.

5.2 Payment of Bills & Electronic Funds Transfer & Debit Card Transactions – Motion by Marva Aitken to approve the payment of bills for the month of September 2024 in the amount of \$63,408.76 for check #33737 through check #33805 and the EFT for Federal/State/TRA Payroll Tax & Debit Card Transactions, seconded by Michael Swan. All in favor. Motion carried.

**6.0 Unfinished Business**

6.1 No unfinished business

**7.0 New Business**

7.1 IOWA Designation – Motion by Sara Hunt to designate Christopher Schulz to act as the Identified Office with Authority for Pine Point School District #25, seconded by Michael Swan. All in favor. Motion carried.

7.2 Microgrid Solar Panel Ownership – Motion by Michael Swan to table until more information is available, seconded by Marva Aitken. All in favor. Motion carried.

**8.0 Principal’s Report** – Discussion on Grades 4-8 Tamarac Field Trip on 10/1/24; Grades K-3 Maple Hills Apple Orchard field trip on 10/3/24; Grades K-8 Carsonville Fire Station field trip on 10/4/24; Afternoon Culture Camp on 10/4/24; 3-week break October 7-25, 2024; Threat against the school incident. No action needed.

**9.0 Public Participation** – Culture Camp on 9/28/24; Halloween Party

**10.0 Adjournment** – Motion by Michael Swan to adjourn the meeting at 5:01 p.m.

## Lake Grove Township Residents Notice of Filing

Notice is hereby given to the residents of Lake Grove Township that the annual filing for election of officers opens on Dec. 31, 2024. The following positions are to be filled at the election on March 11, 2025.

### Supervisor– 3 Year Term

If you wish to file for candidacy please file with the township clerk at her residence or call for further information at 218-841-4963. The deadline for filing is Jan. 14, 2025 at 5 p.m. The clerk’s home will be open for filing on Jan. 14, 2025 from 1-5 p.m.

Lori Tibbetts, Clerk  
Lake Grove Township



Minnesota Department of Corrections  
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 200 | St. Paul, MN 55108  
Main: 651.361.7200 | Fax: 651.642.0223 | TTY: 800.627.3529  
www.mn.gov/doc

### MRRA Meeting for Minnesota Tribal Members

#### What:

Join Department of Corrections (DOC) Commissioner Paul Schnell to learn more about the Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA).

The Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA) will shift our focus from how much time people spend in prison to how people spend that time. The MRRA creates incentives for people in the custody of the Department of Corrections to participate in and make progress toward individualized goals that they aid in setting when they start their time in prison. Policy development is underway and is expected to be published January 2025.

#### When:

September 16, 2024, 6:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

#### How to Register:

Please register in advance for this meeting by scanning the QR code below or by typing in the following website into your browser: <https://doc-mn-us.zoomgov.com/join/61tc-6rqDkIHmNqVevXj0I20JDaeoG4X0I>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Email: [mrna.doc@state.mn.us](mailto:mrna.doc@state.mn.us)

Phone: (651) 361-7200

(This QR code will bring you to the Zoomgov Meeting registration website.)



### Finance Director

**Position Summary:** Under the direction of the president, the finance director supports the WETCC mission and strategic goals through planning, directing, and controlling the financial functions of all college activities, including the external audit.

**Work Schedule:** Monday – Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm

**Advertised Salary:** \$78,500.00/year.

#### Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in accounting, finance, or related field or currently enrolled in an accredited bachelor’s degree program in accounting, finance, or related field with a projected graduation date of 2026.
- Three years of progressively responsible experience in accounting or finance.
- Minimum of 1-year supervisory experience.
- Must be able to multi-task and meet deadlines.
- Current driver’s license and insurance.
- Ability to pass a background check before being offered employment.
- Ability to travel for professional development and job-related activities.

Visit [www.wetcc.edu](http://www.wetcc.edu) for the full job posting as well as the application and background check form.

## NEED MORE ENERGY?

## JOIN STAR FITNESS CENTER TODAY!

Located in the Manitok Mall, Mahnomen

Email [Jackie.Haugo@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:Jackie.Haugo@whiteearth-nsn.gov) or call 935-0808 or 218-401-2421 to fill out an application

### NEW KEY CARD HOURS:

Monday-Friday 6 a.m.-10:00p.m. (age 15-17)

Saturday &-Sunday 6 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. (age 15-17)

**Adults (18 & older) get 24 hour access 7 days a week.**



White Earth Nation  
TRIBAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
Prevent. Promote. Protect

## WE TRIBAL COURT CHILDREN’S COURT

In the Matter of the Welfare of the Child(ren) of:  
**Isadoris Green**

Summons of Petition and Hearing Notice

Court File No. **CP2024-00030**

YOU ARE HEREBY notified that on November 6, 2024, a Suspension of Parental Rights Petition was filed with the White Earth Tribal Court regarding your child in file CP2024-00030. A Pretrial hearing on the matter is scheduled for January 17, 2025, at 9:15am. You are asked to contact White Earth Tribal Court Administration located at the RTC in White Earth, Minnesota at 218-983-4648. If you fail to appear for this hearing the Court may find you in default and enter an order

Dated:

Joy Parker

Attorney for White Earth Indian Child Welfare

## Diabetic Bingo

All are welcome and it costs nothing to play.  
We have chips for 20 players only.



December 4<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Pine Point

December 11<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Elbow Lake

December 19<sup>th</sup>, Thursday

Mahnomen – Valley View

Bingo in Pine Point is on the west side of the School in the E.N.P. Dining Hall after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo in Elbow Lake Village in at the E.N.P. building after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo at Valley View will be in the Community Room in Valley View at 1:00pm.

January 8<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Naytahwaush

January 22<sup>nd</sup>, Wednesday

White Earth – Congregate

January 29<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Rice Lake

Bingo in Naytahwaush is at the Sports Complex, E.N.P. dining hall after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo in White Earth is at the Congregate Housing, Dining Hall after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo in Rice Lake is at the Rice Lake Community Center after the 11:30 elder meal.

February 5<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Pine Point

February 19<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Elbow Lake

February 26<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

Mahnomen – Valley View

Bingo in Pine Point is on the west side of the School in the E.N.P. Dining Hall after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo in Elbow Lake Village in at the E.N.P. building after the 11:30 elder meal.  
Bingo at Valley View will be in the Community Room in Valley View at 1:00pm.

Schedule is subject to change without notice. If the RBC or the E.N.P. site is closed, Bingo will be rebooked to another date, if possible.

#### Upcoming December events:

Elders Christmas Party December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Shooting Star Casino pre-registration required.

Dr. Ung Clinic: December 16<sup>th</sup> in White Earth

December 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in Mahnomen

## Thank You

Thank you to the Ogema Elementary School staff and students for the outstanding Veterans Day Program. The students did an amazing job under the direction of Anne Champa and Lisa Fabre. The bleachers were full! The addition of a veterans’ photo slide show has continued and growing. Thank you also to all the support staff for working on programs, serving refreshments following the program, setting up chairs and cleanup. An event such as this requires a lot of planning and work which is much appreciated. Thank you also to the parents and all that attended this annual event.

Also, thank you to the Waubun Elementary and High School administrative staff, teachers and students for the great 1st Annual Veterans Day Program directed by Sarah Bauck. Thank you students for your performance; what a great way to honor veterans! Thank you also to the support staff who prepared programs, prepared and served refreshments and set up chairs along with cleanup. We look forward to this program being an annual event! Thank you to parents and all who attended.

Above All,

THANK YOU ALL VETERANS!

Ogema VFW Post 9880 & Auxiliary

# “Big Gram” shares memories of White Earth Mission School

By Melissa Widner

Granddaughter of Phyllis Bunker

On Oct. 29, I sat down with my grandmother to ask her about her early life. She’s 94 now, and though she preferred not to speak directly to others at this time, she was comfortable sharing her memories with me to pass along, as she normally does.

Her story is extraordinary, a mosaic of resilience, loss, friendship and the complex legacy of her time in boarding schools.

## A difficult start in life

My grandmother, whom I affectionately call “Big Gram,” was born in 1930. From the very beginning, life was full of uncertainties. She grew up in St. Paul as an orphan, with no parents or family as far as she knew. For those early years, she lived in an orphanage, her world confined to its walls and the small community of children and caretakers around her.

But when she turned 6, everything changed.

Big Gram was sent to the White Earth Mission School, a boarding school she knew nothing about. As they took her from the orphanage, she cried all the way to her new life, frightened and alone. They told her she would be “living with the Indians,” but she didn’t even know what that meant. She had no concept of her Indigenous identity; to her, she was simply an orphan.

She’d never heard of a nun either, so when she encountered the sisters for the first time, it was a bit of a shock.

## Life at White Earth

The White Earth Mission School was strict, especially for a young girl who had already been through so much. Big Gram would remain there, without leaving, for eight years. The nuns maintained a firm, sometimes stern presence, and though there were occasional slaps or punishments — like sitting under a piano — Gram recalls that the school was more moderate than some others she heard about later.

For example, the school didn’t require the harsh



Courtesy photos

**Top:** Phyllis Bunker, 94, attended St. Benedict’s Mission School in White Earth starting when she was 6 years old. **Bottom:** One of the boarding school dormitories in the upper floors of the newly-built St. Benedict’s Mission School.

manual labor that some boarding schools did; hired hands managed that work, while Gram and other girls had basic chores, like peeling potatoes, washing dishes and making bread.

Over time, Big Gram formed strong bonds with her fellow students. Her closest friend was Dorothy Stevens, a girl who became like family. There was also Madeline and MaryJane Folstrom, her trusted companions through those formative years. The girls were her family in every way, sharing laughter, hardships and quiet moments in a world that was the only one they knew.

Gram recalls one teacher, a kind nun, who took a special interest in her, often calling her “smart.” In many ways, it was the nuns and her friends who taught her the foundations of life.

She learned to cook, sew, read, can food and even play the piano. White Earth was an all-girls school, and though things changed after she left — it eventually turned into a day school — she never forgot her time there. She also took solace in the fact that, during her time, there were no deaths among the students. She felt she was lucky compared to others.

## A discovery of family

It wasn’t until Big Gram’s teenage years that she saw her mother for the first time. She also found out that she had siblings she had never met. The realization that she wasn’t entirely alone in the world must have been overwhelming, but she speaks about it sparingly, as though even now the memory is something private and complex.

## Thoughts on culture and identity

When I asked Big Gram if she thought much



Courtesy photo

White Earth’s Phyllis Bunker she “didn’t even know she was Indian” until being sent to the St. Benedict Mission School in White Earth when she was 6 years old.

## Happy Thanksgiving!



Submitted photo

The White Earth Urban Community Council recently sponsored a Thanksgiving dinner party at the MCT building in Minneapolis. Urban families were treated to a turkey meal with all the fixings to include apple and pumpkin pie.

## Super hero in the house



Photo by Deanne Cameron

The White Earth Family Service Center (liaison office) hosted a Halloween party at their building in Cass Lake, Minn. There was lots of candy, popcorn, games and scary costumes.

See Elder Page 22