



# WIN AWENEN NISITOTUNG

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## Court of Appeals affirms Election Committee Newly elected board members take the oath of office July 21

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. — On July 15, the Sault Tribe Court of Appeals issued its decision in the appeal filed by tribal member Isaac McKechnie challenging the recent general election. The court unanimously rejected McKechnie's June 23 challenge and affirmed the June 29 decision of the Election Committee.

McKechnie argued that the Election Committee violated his rights by picking up the ballots from the Sault Ste. Marie post office at 4:30 p.m. on election day rather than at the customary 5 p.m. The court found that, because the post office stops processing election mail at 2 p.m. each day, no ballots would have been processed into the Election Committee's post office box after 2 p.m. Thus, the committee did not violate the Election Code by picking up the box at 4:30 p.m. instead of at 5 p.m., because the post office would not have processed any additional ballots into the box during that time period.

As a result of the court's decision, all pending election contests are now finally resolved. The Sault Tribe Board of Directors resumed its consideration of the election on July 21 at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste. Marie. The Election Committee certified the election results and the newly elected officials were formally sworn into office.

Above, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Directors sworn in July 21 (L-R): Unit II Director Lana Causley-Smith, Unit I Director Michael McKerchie, Unit IV Director Darcy Morrow, Unit V Director Anita Nelson, Chairperson Aaron Payment, Unit II Director Bridgett Sorenson, Unit I Director Denny McKelvie and Unit I Director Jennifer McLeod.



Photo by Brenda Austin

## Fifth annual Bureau of Indian Affairs conference comes to Kewadin Casino

BY RICK SMITH

SAULT STE. MARIE — The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Midwest Region and Sault Tribe hosted the fifth annual Partners In Action conference at the Kewadin Casino and Convention Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., over July 19-22.

The conference attracted tribal and federal government interests from throughout the BIA Midwest Region area covering Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota and Iowa.

The BIA indicates the Midwest Region serves 35 tribal governments and reservations with a jurisdiction covering about 4.6 million acres in the coverage area. The regional office is in Bloomington, Minn., and three

multi-tribe agencies or field offices in Sault Ste. Marie, Bemidji, Minn., and Ashland, Wisc., along with a one-tribe field office in Red Lake, Minn. Additionally, the regional office provides direct services to seven tribes.

According to Diane K. Rosen, BIA Midwest Region director, this year's conference capitalized on unprecedented gains in Indian Country such as restoration of tribal homelands, expansion of economic development opportunities and trails blazed for safer and healthier communities. "With this momentum in mind," she noted in a welcoming statement, "We have selected '*Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present and Shaping the Future*' as the conference theme. Not only does this year's theme recognize past leadership for their incredible efforts in laying the foundations for sovereignty, it brings in the many new leaders who will create



Photo by Rick Smith

Above, some conference attendees in a legislative update session in the Kewadin Sault DreamMakers Theater as others take in workshops conducted in the mezzanine rooms of the Kewadin complex on July 19.

the blueprints to the future."

Rosen indicated the conference allows elected leaders and tribal staff opportunities to participate in a multitude of informative workshops, training and networking development. At any time during the conference hours, attendees could choose to attend from a selection of up to seven simultaneous breakout sessions or

workshops or ongoing individualized sessions.

Topics covered in the workshops included understanding federal government procedures, child welfare, natural resources, realty, human services, records management, fish and wildlife, transportation, gaming, legal issues, youth initiatives, justice and others.

## ITFAP conducts first time stocking of 65,000 walleye in Lower Cheboygan River

CHEBOYGAN, Mich. — The Inter-Tribal Fisheries and Assessment Program (ITFAP) stocked the Lower Cheboygan River with 65,000 walleye summer fingerlings on June 20. The program has stocked other areas of the upper Great Lakes and the St. Marys River since 1990, but this is the first stocking in the Cheboygan area of Lake Huron.

The fingerlings, about 2 inches long, were given an internal mark to identify them as stocked fish, which will help determine post-stocking survival and future

contributions to the fisheries. ITFAP officials plan to continue stocking walleye fingerlings in this area on an annual basis and will conduct field assessments to evaluate the success of the stocking program.

In addition to the Great Lakes, ITFAP also conducts walleye stocking individually and cooperatively in various inland waters. Between 2010 and 2015, Mullett Lake received 121,813 summer fingerlings and Black Lake 147,000. The number of 7-inch walleye planted in

the fall during this period was 18,750 for Mullett Lake and 20,167 for Black Lake. These fish were also marked for prospective study.

The ITFAP hatchery is administered by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians with additional funding provided by Bay Mills Indian Community and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

For more information, call ITFAP Director Tom Gorenflo, (906) 632-0072.

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# Primary candidates weigh in on tribal issues

SAULT STE. MARIE — Sault Tribe asked State of Michigan House of Representatives candidates in the coming primary election five questions about Sault Tribe issues. Candidates in the tribe's seven-county service area and just below the bridge were sent a questionnaire and a distribution map of tribal members in the 105th through 110th voting districts.

*Win Awenen Nisitotung* received responses from 106th District candidates

Robert Kennedy (D) and Erin Kieliszewski (D), 107th District candidates Phil Belfy (D) and Kathy Twardy (R) and 108th District candidate Dana Dziedzic (D).

There were no responses from Triston Cole or Wyatt Knight in the 105th, Sue Allor, Jackie Krawczak or Jesse Osmer in the 106th, Lee Chatfield in the 107th, Alan Arcand, Beau LaFave, Darryl Shann or Scott Celello in the 108th; Kevin Pfister, Wagner Patterson, Joy Melody, Sara

Cambensy or John Kivela in the 109th; Gregory Markkanen or Scott Dianda in the 110th.

The candidates were given three days to respond via email and each response had a 250 word limit.

The five questions, numbered one through five in the answers below, are 1) What is your understanding of, and do you support, the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver? 2) Do you support tribal treaty

rights? Why or why not? 3) Do you support a public option for the Affordable Care Act? 4) The Michigan Indian and Family Preservation Act was enacted in 2013 and amended in 2015. As a member of the Michigan Legislature, how would you ensure full compliance with this act at the state and local level? 5) What ideas do you have to support joint efforts on tourism and tribal economic development?

The primary election is Aug. 2.

## Candidates' Answers to Sault Tribe's Five Questions

### 105TH DISTRICT

No response.

### 106TH DISTRICT

#### ROBERT KENNEDY

1. If you are one quarter Native American blood quantum, are enrolled in a federally accepted tribe, are a resident of Michigan for 12 months, and are accepted at a Michigan public university or community college, you qualify for the waiver of tuition. I support this program and any other avenue to make college and higher education more affordable.

2. Yes, I support tribal treaty rights. Agreements made should be agreements kept. Native Americans were granted the right to hunt, fish and gather on mentioned land and this promise should be honored.

3. Yes, a public option is the best way to reduce the cost of health care because it would eliminate the private health insurance companies whose administrative costs are about 20 percent of the total cost of health care now. With a public option like Medicare the administrative cost is 2 to 3 percent. The savings could be passed along in lower premiums and/or better coverage.

4. I would ensure compliance by overseeing the state trial courts and the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) to be sure the rights of Indian families are protected. And if we err, let us err on the side of keeping families together.

5. I support the tribal cultural centers like in Standish and Mt. Pleasant and would advocate expanding to other regions. We should continue the cooperative effort between Lake Huron Discovery Tour and the Chippewa Indian Tribe. Also we should continue our support for the many powwows, which allow the Native American culture to be experienced by the general population.

#### ERIN KIELISZEWSKI

1. A solid education, including college study, unlocks the future for our children. Years ago, the state of Michigan made a promise to Native American residents in Michigan, telling them that the cost of tuition would be waived for them at state colleges and universities. It's shameful that the state has been negligent in holding up its end of the bargain by underfunding the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver program. As a retired educator, I want to see all of Michigan's children thrive and have good careers, which is why I strongly favor fully funding this program.

2. The state and federal governments have made numerous promises to Native Americans

through several treaties. It is important that the government uphold its end of the bargain. I support the rights negotiated in these treaties and oppose efforts to weaken or circumvent them.

3. The health care plan that is currently in place is something I did not vote for. While we can all agree the implementation and rollout of the law was far from perfect, I'm focused on working in a bipartisan effort to make sure it works for Michigan without costing Michigan taxpayers money. Additionally, we need to ensure that coverage for the Native American community isn't eroded by those trying to get repeal the ACA.

4. It is vitally important for a child to grow up rooted to his or her family and community, which is why I support the Michigan Indian and Family Preservation Act. It's imperative that the voices of tribal leaders are heard when it comes to caring for Native American children involved in involuntary placement proceedings. In order to get the maximum benefit from this program, I would look to both tribal leaders and the state's Department of Health and Human Services to address any gaps or issues identified by case work or court decisions.

5. Gaming is a popular activity that draws in visitors from neighboring states and benefits both the state and tribal economies. I support gaming-based tourism in our state. Michigan also has a rich Native American history that has largely gone untold to tourists. I'm encouraged by the new state law that directs the Department of Natural Resources to place signs along popular trails explaining Native American history in Michigan and point out sites of historic significance and I favor more programs like this. I'm also interested in efforts such as the Great Waters Initiative, in which the Sault Tribe is collaborating with other regional partners to promote cultural and outdoors tourism.

### 107TH DISTRICT

#### PHIL BELFY

1. As professor emeritus of American Indian studies, Michigan State University, I have a long-standing, deep and abiding interest in the MITW. While at MSU, I saw first hand the great benefit of the tuition waiver for Native students. I also am painfully aware of the illegal and immoral violations of the tuition waiver perpetuated by MSU, and other institutions, and how these reprehensible "policies" continue to harm great numbers of Native students. As a state rep, I will work tirelessly to see that the MITW agreement is fully

implemented (like eliminating the racist "blood-quantum" requirements), and each college and university is fully reimbursed by the state for every dollar of tuition that is waived by each college and university in full compliance with the MITW legislation.

2. As a citizen of the White Earth Nation, I whole-heartedly support the full recognition of tribal treaty rights. I'm afraid that many non-Native people (and almost all legislators and other "public officials") feel that the treaties are "outdated," which is certainly not the case. We must constantly remind them that, without the "land cession treaties" of the 19th century, there would be no "State of Michigan." If you don't support tribal treaty rights, you simply cannot support the existence of Michigan as a sovereign "political entity." Treaties are "two-way streets," recognizing the sovereign political rights of both "parties" to the treaties ("Indians" and the US).

3. While fully recognizing and in full support of the treaty right to health care, typified by the Indian Health Service (which I use whenever needed), I would very much like to see a "public option" included in the Affordable Care Act. Just as I see the IHS as a "human and treaty right," access to health care should be a "human right" of all (regardless of tribal status). The U.S. is the only modern industrialized country that refuses to provide it's citizens with universal health care as a right of citizenship. While an ACA "public option" would not guarantee access to health care for everyone, it would certainly be a step in that direction.

4. Well, the "compliance" that you refer to is not an option that can either be recognized by the courts or ignored at their whim. It is a legislative mandate. I have seen first-hand the devastation to Native families when state courts ignore that mandate — devastation the legislative is designed to mitigate if not eliminate. As a member of the state legislature, I would work to establish criminal sanctions against any state employee, lawyer, prosecutor, or court that refuses to recognize the rights of Native people and families under the Michigan Indian and Family Preservation Act.

5. By "joint efforts," I assume that you mean "cooperation" between the state and tribal governments. Well, cooperative joint efforts should be pursued and promoted only when such efforts don't infringe on tribal sovereignty. Generally, I oppose all efforts by the State of Michigan to reduce tribal governments to something akin to a "municipality," with tribes being forced to get "permission" from the state

to do anything on the tourism and economic development fronts (and nearly everything else, it seems). At the same time, tribes are sovereign and they should act like it. Having said that, as a member of the state legislature, I might support a "compromise cooperative" position — if the state wants to engage in "tourism and economic development efforts," they should be required to get "permission" from the tribes. "It's good for the goose, it's good for the gander."

#### KATHY TWARDY

1. I understand that any tribal member who is one-quarter or more tribal, will receive a waiver to attend one of the 15 public universities and 28 colleges of their choice. The person must also be a resident of the state of Michigan for no less than 12 months. Upon completion of the classes, the college or university can then submit paperwork to the state for reimbursement of the cost of tuition. I am in support of this program. This allows people to further their education in search for jobs to help support a better quality life. As far as the state paying back the colleges and universities, they have dropped the ball. The state owes LSSU, based in Sault Ste. Marie, large amounts of money. Because LSSU is located by a large tribal community, it is one of the hardest hit with these shortfalls in re-payments. This creates a negative impact for both the university, and for the community as it limits growth and development.

2. I do support tribal treaty rights. I think its important to support any federal document agreement between the tribes and the federal and or state government. I think that its also important for municipalities to have a great relationship with the tribe with which they are associated. Community partners are what I call us in Sault Ste. Marie and the Chippewa tribe. We consistently work together to make life better for everone in our community through development, projects and community programs.

3. I think when big government takes over programs, there is a huge amount of oversight and waste. Smaller governmental systems can usually have a better control over programs and are able to serve the public better due to close contact with patients and services. This being said, I am not in favor of insurance monopolies in statewide markets. Competition keeps the rates lower and the services at a higher quality for patients and members. As a small business owner, I know how difficult and expensive the current healthcare system is. I feel this system needs much work

to bring rates down to a reasonable cost so that all Americans' can enjoy the benefits of health care.

4. First and foremost, I would be in compliance with this act by voting to protect its current statute. The placement of this preservation act is to ensure that both state and local authorities are following the same guidelines as the current federal law. I believe that all children deserve the right to grow up in a loving and safe home, whether that home be on public land or on tribal land. The best way to ensure that children have a safe home is by ensuring that there is cooperation between the state trial courts and DHS with regard to these two Acts.

5. Pure Michigan is a beneficial campaign that brings many tourism dollars into the state of Michigan. Most of the historical areas of Michigan also contain local Indian tribes who also have so much history to offer, not only for Michigan but for the United States as well. When an area has both a CVB and a tribe, they can be working together to bring in more tourism to the area by offering even more history and culture. I for one, love that the EUP and northern Michigan offer so many reasons for people to visit and learn about Native American culture and how our founding fathers worked together to bring community to our area. Over the generations, the community has created unity amongst our cultures. The River of History Museum situated in downtown Sault Ste. Marie educates tourists about the tribal culture and history of our area. It's easy to see that we have a great working relationship and respect among us. However, as a state representative, I feel that I can help to expand on the tourism by identifying key groups and ideas to bring in more tourism which will benefit the tribes and the municipalities as well. The legislative seat for district 107, belongs to all of the people who live in the district, and all ideas and opinions are welcome to be heard.

### 108TH DISTRICT

#### DANA DZIEDZIC

1. The Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver is a law that allows members of federally recognized tribes to attend Michigan colleges and universities tuition free. Students must also be at least one quarter Native American. Through ancestral research, tribal committees determine eligibility. Students do incur living expenses, textbook costs and any other program fees while attending college. Often times, tribes will assist students with those costs, but that depends on

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