

Chairman's Report

Arthur LaRose

Quarterly Meeting

April 8, 2011

Ball Club Community Center

It has been a long and cold winter and with the U.S. economy in crisis we have seen increases in gas prices, heating fuel costs and even food prices. Everywhere you look there is high unemployment and fear. These are tough times but for us they are not new. Like many other reservations we have and continue to experience historically high unemployment and poverty rates that exceed anything experienced in mainstream society. We are survivors and we have weathered many tough times without losing hope. We have not allowed that and social problems to destroy us, for we are and remain a strong people. Sad to say our greatest enemy has at times been ourselves because politics and greed often divide us. But these times also remind me that I have said many times that I want Leech Lake to again become an example of progressive, stable, open and honest tribal government. We have lost a lot of resources and time to bad decisions and corrupt behaviors that in many ways stalls our development as a reservation and as a people. But we will move forward and make Leech Lake a better place for all of us.

Along with the bad we also have successes we can point to such as the new reservation wide transit system that will soon be up and running. With the high cost of gas and even higher prices expected this summer this will help many struggling families. Because we can only stretch limited resources so far any money that does not have to go into the gas tank can be used for other needs. We still have work to do on setting up our cooperatives to get our people better and cheaper access to food and gas. This will also keep the dollars we spend on the reservation longer. We have a substantial financial impact on surrounding counties and communities from our government and gaming spending. We completed a gaming economic impact study that shows we pump millions of dollars just from our gaming operations alone into the surrounding economies. We need to stop the flow of our money straight off the reservation. Until we can make it go through our hands more than once we will not build a reservation economy that creates business opportunities or creates needed jobs. By allowing this drain we sustain the communities around us with our resources better than we sustain ourselves and that needs to be reversed.

When we look at what resources we have we see that less than 5% of our landbase is in our control, including the forest surrounding us. The reality is our people are our greatest resource and we need to invest in them. Education and workforce development are important because we have a young population in need of education, job training, and jobs. It is a simple fact that education is the key to fighting poverty. We will address our school dropout rates, identify and set the priority education goals of the Band, and identify funding needs. It is important that we train for jobs and opportunities that exist or can be created, and not train people just to train them. This will help create job and business opportunities on Leech Lake, and is the key to real Native Nation Building. Our Education Plan will also support our Education Workforce Development Plan.

Education is also the key to our continued cultural survival so this work will also guide our role as a partner in the education improvement agreement that we entered into with Red Lake and White Earth on January 20th, 2011. On that day we signed a cooperate agreement to work together on educational improvements in such crucial areas as Ojibwe language preservation, Indian education improvements, grant partnering and grant endorsements. Below is a summary of the education agreement.

WHEREAS, the three Tribes of Red Lake, Leech Lake and White Earth have historically close ties; and since we are all members of the Great Ojibwe Nation; and all share the same Ojibwe language and culture; and have recently worked together on economic development and social issues; and have similar educational challenges; and each have Tribal Colleges to serve their respective Tribal Communities;

BE IT RESOLVED, during the educational summit, the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and the White Earth Band of Ojibwe agree to cooperate, share ideas and work together on making educational improvements to the following major issues affecting Indian education:

The crucial and urgent issue of Ojibwe language preservation; and Any and all issues affecting Indian education specific program improvements; and Mutually agreed upon educational grant partnering and grant endorsements from this new three-Tribe educational consortium; and Mutually beneficial advocacy efforts that will help the Tribes of this new consortium; and since all of the Tribes of this new consortium also have tribal colleges to serve their respective tribal communities, the Tribal College Presidents will also work together on all of these areas that can be of mutual benefit to all Members of this consortium, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the three Tribal leaders and the three Tribal College Presidents will all sign this historic Education Nation consortium agreement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the three Tribal Education Directors/Superintendents, if any, of the three respective K-12 Tribal school systems for Tribal Members, will also work together on all of these areas that can be of mutual benefit to all Members of this consortium, and also sign this historic Education Nation consortium agreement, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the three Tribes will together create a new charter of operations to establish a process for adding new members, voting, and also sign this new document.

We also continues efforts at recovering the 2.4 million of the band's funds that were released through an unauthorized loan. We are also still trying to get a fair compensation in regard to the Nelson Act settlement with the other MCT reservations. We also continue to protect our treaty rights guaranteed under the 1855 treaty. In addition we are trying to deal with an unauthorized agreement that was drafted with and signed for the Power line Cooperative that wants to run a 230kV line through our territory. This deal was also cut behind the backs of the full council and the people. The 230kV Power-line Agreement was submitted in violation of governing by-laws of Leech Lake, the Band will engage in government to government consultation regarding the Treaty Rights compromised by the utility crossing. The Band hopes the power companies and PUC will recognize that the duly elected, governing authority for LLR never gave consent or made an agreement.

These are just a few of the many issues facing the council. These and internal political issues such as the recent recall/removal of the Secretary/Treasurer and the special election now under way to fill that vacancy keeps us from at times from staying focused on top of issues that need attention. Because there is so much that needs to be presented to the band membership I will be setting some meeting times in the near future to go over issues more fully with the Band membership including going over our priorities and the short and long term plans that have been adopted to move the Leech Lake Reservation forward for the betterment of our people.

I have said many times that I want Leech Lake to again become an example of open, honest, stable, and progressive tribal government. As a people we have been victimized in many ways but we cannot allow ourselves to act the role of the victim. We need to stand strong and together and set a better future for our children. Working together we will move forward and make Leech Lake a better place for all of us.



Arthur "Archie" LaRose
Chairman, Leech Lake Band Of Ojibwe