

## **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**

### **Chairman's Report for: July 2009-September 2009**

Leech Lake Reservation

October 9, 2009 Quarterly Meeting, Onigum, MN

Good morning and welcome to the quarterly meeting of the Leech Lake Reservation Business Committee.

I will keep this report fairly short even though it has been a busy quarter.

We had a great wildrice harvest and we bought green rice at \$1.75 lb. A lot of our band members had a good season and as usual much of the money earned went for school clothes and supplies. So the kids are now back in school and we are busy preparing during this fall weather for the coming winter.

We had a wonderful fine dining dinner for the elders with entertainment last month at Northern Lights and the turnout was really great. I had many elders tell me how much they enjoyed it. Many traveled from the twin cities but said it was worth it and was worth the trip. Many also said they hoped there would be more social gatherings in the future. I think on behalf of the tribal council we can assure you there will be.

I want to touch on four main areas that are critical to our future economic and social development and job opportunities that we set in our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS plan; Telecommunications infrastructure, Youth education and job training, Business Development, and land acquisition.

We submitted Broadband Stimulus funding applications for our telecommunications needs for over 8 million dollars. If we get fully funded it will be a major infrastructure development opportunity for us with associated jobs and business opportunities. The Band was asked to attend a telecommunications conference in Texas last month because they wanted to use our submitted technology plan as a model and as a key presentation for the conference.

We continue our commitment to our youth and Leech Lake will host a Regional Youth Services Providers Summit October 14th. This summit will bring together area agencies and programs that serve youth to put together a Regional Youth Development Strategy and start the process to form a regional service network to develop collaborations and partnerships for guiding and saving young lives. Leech Lake has taken the lead on this and a number of outside agencies have joined us in this effort. We know the negative statistic for our youth

and we are committed to doing everything possible to make sure they get the services and opportunities they need. I expect great things to come out of this project.

We also are continuing to move us toward Nation Building on October 1 & 2 we attended a Bush Foundation Conference for Nation Building and we will be holding informational sessions for the Band members. All of these efforts are part of the change needed if we are to move away from business as usual and toward real nation building. A real exercise of sovereignty. Changes we need to make not just to survive but to prosper. By doing this I believe that I am fulfilling to you, the Leech Lake people, my promise to not only bring change, but to bring positive change that will guarantee a good future for our children, grandchildren, and our future generations.

In regard to land acquisition we are still battling the counties who are in opposition to us placing land into trust. We have less than 5% percent of our original reservation land base so this is a critical need for us. We need to continue to identify and acquire land that is available that will help us build our land base.

Lastly, I want to report on the Nelson Act settlement the Claim Settlement Fund Account Balance as of 8/31/09 is \$28,441,608 million. On October 1, 2009 MCT had a 10-2 vote to do a 1/6<sup>th</sup> split with a per capita payment of \$300 per MCT member. Leech Lake will continue to oppose this as we always felt we should be compensated 68.9% because that is the percent of damages that occurred on Leech Lake.

I give thanks to the most important supporters of all, the members of this reservation. I want to wish all the band members on and off the reservation and employees a happy holiday season as our next quarterly will be after the next couple of major holidays. Chi Migwetch Anishinabeg on behalf of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the RBC.