

July 2014

To the People

This has been a time of transition for the new council members. I have been busy this first week in office working to find out where the band is financially as it is the end of the last fiscal year and the start of the new one. The last quarterly financial reports give us part of the picture but we won't know for sure where exactly we ended the year financially until around mid-August with division and program final closeouts. We know we have a cash flow shortage and a deficit with the exact amount yet to be determined. I will have a report out to the people as soon as I have the facts assembled.

We can now deal with the Native cigarette issue we have with the State of Minnesota. This is an opportunity to weigh the pros and cons of going back to it, leaving the tax agreement completely, or to consider negotiating a whole new tax agreement. Any decision or new agreement must strengthen Leech Lake and take into consideration our sovereignty and inter-tribal commerce.

I am hopeful this new council will continue the work to develop a Sovereign Economic System to broaden the Leech Lake Reservation tax system and our jurisdiction that includes inter-tribal commerce. We initiated our own tax system including passage of the Tribal Secured Transaction Act, establishment of a Leech Lake Tax Ordinance and Tax Commission, as well as a Public Utilities Ordinance and a Public Utility Commission but there is more work to do.

The council will need to still set priorities some of the many areas that need attention are employment, workforce training and education, addictions, addressing the poverty and homelessness. Another area that needs improvement is communication and making sure we keep the people informed of issues and efforts as we move forward. There is still a spending freeze in place, but we need to look at some policy changes to help free up more resources to help our Band members.

I thank you for your patience during this transition. I want to thank all the people who gave me their trust and voted for me. I take my responsibilities as the Secretary/Treasurer very seriously and will work hard for all the people.

**Miigwetch**

**Arthur "Archie" LaRose**