



NEWS FROM A NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

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FREE

Federal government shuts down again under Trump



Trump has shut down the government again making it his 3rd time, including a 35-day closure spanning the end of 2018 into early 2019 in his first term. It remains the longest in U.S. history.

THE CIRCLE

The federal government's fiscal year ended at midnight Sept. 30 without a new spending deal in Congress, forcing the government into a shutdown that cut off dozens of services to tribal nations.

A shutdown was something tribes said they could not afford. Native nations and communities depended on federal personnel and programs for roads, police, energy, health care, food and other services.

In an article by *Indian Country Today*, Michael Stopp said, "We're at a point now where the government is going to shut down." Stopp, who is Cherokee and Muscogee, served as president and CEO of Seven Star Holdings. "The question is, how long is that going to happen and which side is going to blink?"

Health services at risk

During the shutdown, certain functions continued if deemed essential, including the Indian Health Service. IHS had six accounts not funded by advance appropriations and used prior-year balances to keep staff working.

But lease payments were not included in those appropriations. A prolonged shutdown threatens to prevent IHS from issuing payments to tribes, according to the National Congress of American Indians.

"Government shutdowns affect Indian Country more quickly and more broadly than

they do everyday Americans because of our direct relationship with the federal government," said Holly Cook Macarro, a Red Lake Ojibwe tribal advocate, political strategist and Democratic commentator.

Partisan gridlock

The shutdown stemmed from a standoff between Republicans and Democrats over the 2026 spending bill. Republicans control both chambers of Congress, but the Senate remained short of the 60 votes needed to pass legislation.

"Republicans do not have much of an issue with letting the government shut down until they get what they want, and Democrats don't usually have the stomach for it," Stopp, a Republican commentator, said.

Democrats said they would not support the GOP bill unless it restored Medicaid cuts from Trump's "big, beautiful bill" and permanently extended subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. They also opposed cuts to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

Republicans had offered a temporary funding extension through Nov. 21. Democrats countered with an Oct. 31 deadline.

The longest shutdown in history lasted from Dec. 22, 2018, to Jan. 25, 2019, during Trump's first term.

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Bemidji State professor pioneers suicide screening tool for Natives

BY NINA MOINI & ALEESA KUZNETSOV/MPR

Native Americans have the highest suicide rate out of any racial and ethnic group in the U.S. Yet there aren't many screening tools available that are tailored to Indigenous communities. A Bemidji State University professor wants to change that.

Mark Standing Eagle Baez has created the Indigenous SAFE Screening tool, a suicide screening tool specifically for Indigenous people. SAFE stands for Suicide-Assessing-Factors of Event. Baez is a member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan, Mission Indian. He is the co-director of the Indigenous Students in Psychology Training Program at Bemidji State.

Baez spoke to MPR News host Nina Moini about how this tool was created to be culturally sensitive for Indigenous communities.

NINA MOINI: A note to our listeners-- this next conversation mentions suicide. Please take care while listening.

Native Americans have the highest suicide rate out of any racial and ethnic group in the US, yet there aren't many screening tools available that are tailored to Indigenous communities. A Bemidji State University professor wants to change that. Mark Standing Eagle Baez has created the Indigenous safe screening tool, or ISS, a suicide screening tool specifically for Indigenous people. Mark is a member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan, Mission Indian, and is the codirector of the Indigenous Students in Psychology Training program at Bemidji State. Thank you for your time this afternoon, Professor.

MARK STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Oh, you're welcome. It's a pleasure to be here.

NINA MOINI: I wondered about where this idea came from through the work that you do.

How did you decide, well, this is a missing tool? This is necessary?

MARK STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Well, as you previously mentioned, we have the second leading cause of death among our own people. That's alarming in itself. But knowing that this has been something that has been missing, at least for myself as a practitioner for over 15 years, that we do not have a tool specific for our people. And I knew we needed to change that.

NINA MOINI: And some more statistics here for people, in case they didn't know, as of 2022, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Native Americans. What have you been hearing from people about this tool? Is it of use right now, or is it being used right now?

MARK STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: It's taking off faster than I expected. Colleagues and relatives across Indian country and even in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, they want this, like, yesterday. We worked on this as I created-- I had an input from a panel of experts, Indigenous majority, Indigenous clinicians, along with non-Indigenous clinicians looking at how we can develop this instrument. So we've just recently were able to obtain the content validity.

And we are now going to be looking at the contextual validity essentially to see what we created. Does it say and/or identify what it says it's going to identify? And we're looking at our next steps in a pilot study. But as far as the buzzword, it's off the charts. I'm very excited, very anxious to get this done correctly in hopes that this instrument can be given to individuals across Indian country and others that are servicing Indigenous populations.

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Manoominikewag: wild rice and its deep connections

BY WINONA LADUKE

Giiwewag. They are coming home. Manoominikewag — harvesting wild rice is a deep connection back to water and land. The Anishinaabe have harvested wild rice for a thousand years on the same lakes. That’s a land-based economy, not an economy based on profit margins of foreign corporations. It’s worth fighting for.

I came off ricing Height of Land and the Otter Tail River, places well frequented by my ancestors and ricers today. A couple of younger people followed my grandson, Aandegoons Neeland, and me out on the lake. It was their first time ricing ever, and they were happy. They had come up from the Twin Cities, and it was indeed a homecoming.

A bit later, I met a trio at the gas station. Old family names — Villibrun and Boswell — now from the Twin Cities.

“I used to rice as a child,” Boswell said. “I used to sit by the side of the lake and watch my parents rice. I was three then. The first time I actually riced was this year — and I’m 53.”

I asked him, “How did it make you feel?” He nodded. “Happy.”

For the Anishinaabeg, the wild rice season is one of the most important for food,



Jon Martin, Will Sayers and Aandegoons Neeland.

for income, and for homecoming. And this year, with the tribes buying hundreds of thousands of pounds of green rice at a good price, there are lots of ricers.

This is the only place in the world where wild rice grows. Wisconsin has about 5,000 acres of wild rice, and the lakes were closed down early this year. The stronghold of manoomin in Wisconsin is the Kakagan Sloughs on

Bad River, and from all accounts, it was a good year there.

But it’s really here, omaa akiing. The strongholds of Nature’s Lake up on the Leech Lake Reservation, the Sandy Lake Flowage, Dean Lake, Rice Lake Refuge, and Minnewawa are all big lakes for the wild rice harvest. Minnesota has 64,000 acres of wild rice; Manitoba and Ontario are also rich with manoomin. White

Earth Reservation itself, with 47 lakes and 500 bodies of water, includes Shell Lake, Mitchell Dam, Flat Lake (which always provide), Basswood Lake, and then the mother lode — Lower Rice Lake — which had 200 or more boats on it on opening day.

Wild rice is the mark of wealth, happiness, and independence. The Anishinaabe food security was tied to wild rice, and that has not been stolen. There’s a lot of joy, dust, and jokes at the rice mills. Some families still hand-parch in kettles in the yard, but most are taking the manoomin to get parched because it’s not simple — equipment, heat, river rice versus lake rice, and more.

Gaapizigewag. They are parching wild rice.

The parchers of White Earth are a proud bunch. They are the descendants or students of some of the great parchers who are now in the Spirit World — Sunfish Opegard, Donavon Vizenor, Russel Warren, Dave Annette, Dale Greene, and more. This is a fine art.

Jon Martin may be the youngest of the parchers on White Earth. He’s headed toward 38 and is parching at the Akiing rice mill on Round Lake. He was taught by Ron Chilton and is using equipment purchased from some of the old guard

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— Sanborn from McGregor and Gregwaire from MaKoonce. Jon has been parching for about ten years, but it's in his lineage: Jon is the grandson of Darwin and Dorothy Stevens of Rice Lake. When we had the Rice Chiefs, Darwin was one. (The Good Life) This year, Jon processed about 6,000 pounds of manoomin, along with his nephew Aandegoons Neeland. That had to make those ancestors proud.

Brian Buck parches over by Mahnomen. Brian's grandfather Donavon Vizenor worked with Louis DeWandler at the mill on the Ponsford Prairie. "My grandpa was the one who taught Louis DeWandler how to parch. They parched together for 20-some years..." That's where Brian learned to parch. "I have two 500-pound parchers, and this year we did 22,000 pounds of green rice," he tells me.

He continues, "I parched about 7,000 pounds from the tribe, and the rest was private or custom wild rice for individuals." Some of those folks came from as far away as Rochester and Pine River to get their rice parched. "I'm glad to keep parching rice, something my grandpa started years ago." Brian Buck fashioned his own parchers and a thresher, illustrating some of the local mechanical genius. It's custom equipment, and every mill has specifics. And vintage is classic: "One of the scales we used to weigh the rice on was my great-grandfather's, Delmas Vizenor. And it's still on the money. I had Minnesota Weights and Measures come out and check my scale... and they were right."

Ernie Bloom processes wild rice by Pine Point Village. Using equipment that came originally from Dave Annette and Sunfish Oppegard, he's been parching for a couple of years but comes, like most of the community, from generations of ricers.

The largest rice mill on the reservation today is the DeWandler Mill on the Ponsford Prairie. "It's time when the first acorns fall on the roof. That's the time of wild rice. The time when the plums are ripe," Rich DeWandler tells me. I spent an hour or so sitting in the DeWandler wild rice mill — another intergenerational family tradition. Aaron DeWandler is throwing big logs into the huge parchers. Rice parching is not for the lazy, that's for sure. Over forty years, the DeWandlers, along with Donavon Vizenor, built the mill, expanded it, and reworked everything until it was perfect.

It's a good smell in the rice mill. Parched rice is sort of like the smell of freshly baked bread, except it has the lake smell still on it, if it's good. There's a lot of nuance in rice parching — sounds, smells, fire, tinkering with machines endlessly. Rice parches out at 30–50% usually (green to finished), and there are a lot of variables. The mill is the place where ricers meet parchers, stories are told, and tens of thousands of pounds of freshly harvested Ojibwe gold turn into something we can eat and cherish — manoomin.



Ernie Bloom with equipment



Jon Martin buys wild rice.



Brian Buck

In 2024, the White Earth Tribe, with possibly the largest wild rice holdings of any tribe, harvested about 240,000 pounds of rice. Some small Native businesses and community members also sell wild rice throughout the year. This year the tribe will purchase maybe 300,000 pounds. There's no question that the

ricers and local businesses will be happy with the sales, and the community will have access to the plant that has sustained us for a thousand years.

The Anishinaabe fought hard to keep our wild rice because of its value spiritually and in terms of food security. Proposals for dam projects, mines, and

pipelines, as well as the University of Minnesota's genetic engineering trials of wild rice, have met with resistance from people who continue a way of life. Indeed, it's not only the rice itself — it's also the name: manoomin, or wild rice. In the 1980s, Mike Swan and Frank Bibeau, two White Earth enrollees, filed a lawsuit against Anheuser-Busch, which was marketing something called Onamia Wild Rice. The label had two Indians and a canoe on it, and it was pure paddy rice from California.

Waabizi v. Anheuser-Busch challenged the misrepresentation on the label. The rice and the Anishinaabe won — now there's a labeling law that must acknowledge lake rice over paddy wild rice. That law, however, is only in Minnesota, and still 75% of the wild rice sold on U.S. markets comes from diked rice paddies, mostly in California. In 2020, White Earth and the 1855 Treaty Authority declared the Rights of Wild Rice, putting tribal regulations in place to enforce and protect the ability of wild rice to continue to exist and flourish.

Today, wild rice faces challenges from big foreign mining corporations that want to mine in wild rice lake areas. In 2024, the MPCA listed 55 wild rice waters as impaired due to sulfate, and that is too many. The key question now is whether sulfate will be reduced.

In this time of endless greed, self-serving individuals and big foreign corporations are lobbying to bend the sulfate rules so they can get rich, making the wild rice, tribes, and people of Minnesota pay for their profits. New Range Copper Nickel (formerly PolyMet) is a combination of Swiss and Canadian mining interests and is proposing an open-pit copper-nickel mine. Twin Metals Minnesota, a subsidiary of the Chilean company Antofagasta, wants to mine the Boundary Waters, a stronghold of the most pristine water in the world.

Talon Metals, owned by a group of foreign investors and partnered with Rio Tinto Zinc, a notorious British mining corporation, wants to open a big mine near Sandy Lake and Minnewawa, two rice strongholds. And in June 2025, Japanese Nippon Steel acquired U.S. Steel for \$14.9 billion. These corporations talk about jobs, but not about water and pollution. It's a bit like the Avatar quest for "unobtainium": endless greed and destruction for money. None of those foreign corporations care about our manoomin.

Back here on White Earth, there are no mining corporations — but there is agribusiness taking our water, forest clear-cutting, and more. Yet the rice is still here — it has been for centuries. So long as the Anishinaabe people respect and protect our wild rice, our manoomin, we will be able to care for our people. And so long as we remember how to parch, we will eat.

Dakota-led nonprofit closes distance in cultural learning with videos

BY CHANDRA COLVIN/MPR

Dakota-led nonprofit Owámniyomni Okhódayapi recently started a video series aimed to share Dakota culture with both Native and non-Native people. The goal is to ensure access to education about Dakota land, culture and community. The organization is working to transform St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis, a significant site for Dakota people, into a place of healing and restoration.

Sage Yeager is the organization’s communications coordinator and video series producer. She says the series will help those who live far from St. Anthony Falls, also known as Owámniyomni to better understand Dakota traditions. “We are of the belief that these videos and sharing Dakota lifeways strengthen connections and help foster a deep sense of community for everybody that is going to be utilizing the site,” Yeager said. Following the U.S.-Dakota War of



Above: In the Owámniyomni Okhódayapi's Dakota Lifeway video series, Kahmomy Weston cuts squash. (Images courtesy of Owámniyomni Okhódayapi.)

Below: Still image from Owámniyomni Okhódayapi's Dakota Lifeway video series which focuses on bapa or dry meat in the Dakota language.



1862, Congress revoked treaties with Dakota tribes in Minnesota. Thousands of Dakota were exiled from the state and pushed into surrounding states. Yeager says now there are ways to enhance awareness. “Social media is a really big tool for that, and I think that really helps reach others and helps them feel more connected back to their original homelands,” Yeager said. However, the goal is not only to connect with Native communities but with non-Native ones as well. “It’s also an invitation to non-Native people to learn more about Dakota culture and help build a relationship with that culture,” she said. The series’ first videos are centered on food preservation, a topic relevant to the fall season says Kahomy Weston, who appears on-screen in the videos and is Owámniyomni Okhódayapi’s program and project coordinator. “We decided to do it seasonally, so that way our videos coincide with the season, and it would make sense,” Weston said. “You would be drying corn when the corn harvest is ready, or we’ll be drying meat to preserve for the winter around now.”

In one video, Weston demonstrates the process of making dried meat, or bapa in the Dakota language. In another, she demonstrates the process of making wóžapi, or berry pudding. “We just kind of go through a quick step-by-step process of mashing the berries or boiling them and sweetening them and how to thicken them into this berry pudding that we would traditionally eat, either at home with our families or at gatherings,” she said. Weston says upcoming videos in the winter season will focus on beadwork, quillwork and storytelling, all of which are wintertime activities in Dakota culture. “Sharing these teachings, we’re also like strengthening our identity and encouraging inter-generational learning, creating space for everyone to engage meaningfully and really give Dakota presence in a place that was taken from us,” Weston said. The organization plans to release one video per month. Videos and information can be found on Owámniyomni Okhódayapi’s website.



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Pine Point's resilience solar and energy hub on WE breaks ground

BY WINONA LADUKE

After recent political uncertainty regarding funding for solar energy projects nationwide, a northern Minnesota project on the White Earth Nation reservation called “The Resilience Hub” is finally getting installed. Construction began late this summer and will supply close to 700,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of solar, which can be stored in the batteries, for a K-8 school and elderly gathering center, which currently uses almost 800,000 kilowatt-hours annually. The system should be fully operational by early 2026.

The hub will power the Pine Point School which will serve as a resilience hub for the community. Climate justice developer 10Power and community-based renewable energy non-profit 8th Fire Solar are working together to bring the project to fruition. Assets will be owned by the Pine Point School. The project is also providing an Ojibwe educational program, a job fair, and other benefits to a rural community plagued by severe poverty and unemployment.

Project size and energy capacity

The inclusion of energy storage and the magnitude of solar in the project is a first for this region. The installation will include a half megawatt (MW), or 500.8 kilowatts (kW), of direct current solar photovoltaics (PV) and 2.76 megawatt hours (MWh) of battery storage. This will enable solar-generated electrons to be saved and used when the sun is not shining.

The battery will also create emergency backup power during disasters, serving as a critical resource for this underserved community. During peak power times, especially in summer months when the school is not in session, the battery can help regulate the system to feed power back into the grid once policies shift. This means power would be available to the utility when it is needed most, reducing costs for energy retailers and system operators, savings which can potentially be passed to consumers.

“The Pine Point project has faced many political and financial headwinds,” notes Sandra Kwak, 10Power’s CEO. “Although the initial project and funding originated with the Biden Administration’s Bipartisan Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), under Trump’s second term, many projects like this were being eliminated overnight. We persisted and the installation is thankfully underway. It will reduce costs and provide critical services for the Pine Point community. Everyone is excited



to see this effort completed soon.”

Recent Headlines Indicated Potential Trouble for the Hub

For a time, the growing headlines about clean energy funding and projects made the hub project seem like an impossibility. “The Trump administration has frozen or canceled more than \$29 billion in community environmental and clean energy grants awarded under President Biden, according to a new analysis from the Natural Resources Defense Council, as reported in Inside Climate News.

E&E News reporting was also pessimistic, noting that “U.S. solar deployment could be 21% lower through 2030 than previously forecast, according to a new industry analysis that’s one of the first since the passage of the federal budget bill that phases out wind and solar tax credits.” Meanwhile, “more than \$1.2 billion in federal Solar for All funding was allocated for Midwest and Great Plains

states, which advocates said would have helped jumpstart the industry in some low-solar-adoption states (Harvest Public Media).

Energy security and sovereignty

“As the project comes online, the Resilience Hub 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 alright. Finally, they will not be the first to lose power and the last to get it back,” says Gwe Gasco, Program Coordinator for 8th Fire Solar in Pine Point (where 8th Fire Solar’s small Indigenous workforce manufactures, markets, and installs thermal solar panels). “With the 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.”

Against all political and financial odds, The Resilience Hub remained resilient! In June of 2024, Minnesota U.S. Senator Tina Smith announced the allocation of \$1.75 million in Federal funding to expand the existing solar array at the Pine Point Elementary School and Community Center. That funding combined with almost \$2 million from other grant sources and \$1.4 million in tax credits. Finally, additional funding – just under \$1 million – was raised from other private funders.

Benefits of the hub

Defying the anti-clean energy headlines and the stark fossil fuel reality of this second Trump term, the benefits for White Earth residents at Pine Point are clear. Historically, they have faced much higher residential energy and economic burdens than much of the rest of Minnesota — the worst in the country at the 97th percentile nationwide. But now the White Earth Indigenous community can create energy security through owning their energy and the means of production, while the Pine Point School will significantly decrease their energy bills.

Besides providing greater energy security, the Hub’s operation will also be used as an educational opportunity for students through an energy curriculum geared toward inspiring students to work in and support renewable energy. And the installation of the solar-plus battery array will help create increased stability and safety within the Pine Point community, allowing residents to stay safer during severe winter storms, providing emergency power to charge critical medical equipment and communication devices, and be a place where people can cook and have access to energy if needed.

After operating expenses, the school is projected to save money each year, depending on utility rates. Even with electrical costs in Minnesota consistently rising, building a solar-plus battery array now will help the Pine Point school, which would otherwise disproportionately feel the effects of rising energy costs, get ahead of the curve, especially in times of extreme weather.

Once completed, all the economic benefits will remain with the Pine Point School as the sole beneficiary of the project. And this project will also provide a basis to educate and raise funds for future clean energy expansions at both Pine Point and the White Earth Nation. It is an important first step in creating a clean energy economy, which generates wealth for members of White Earth.

Leech Lake Legacy a pillar of animal welfare on Leech Lake Rez

STORY AND PHOTOS BY K.E. MACPHIE

On my first day as a volunteer at Leech Lake Legacy (let's call it Legacy, for short), I pulled in past a long line of cars stretched out of the parking lot and down the road in Cass Lake filled with people patiently waiting with dogs on laps and cats bundled in kennels and blankets. I saw young kids with their grandmothers holding onto leashes, and elders who'd driven hours just to get vaccines or flea treatment for their pets. What I witnessed wasn't just a clinic; it was a quiet, powerful movement rooted in love, community, and respect for all living beings.

That day changed the way I saw animal care on the reservation. It wasn't just about dogs and cats, it was



about our stories, our relationships with animals, and the way we take care of each other when no one else will. And that's exactly what Legacy is doing by lifting up both animals and people, one act of compassion at a time.

Leech Lake Legacy started back in 2011 with a goal to help the ubiquitous rez dog epidemic within reservation borders. Since then, it's become a pillar of animal welfare on the Leech Lake Reservation and beyond. What makes Legacy different from so many other rescues is that it's not trying to "rescue" us from ourselves. It's here to walk alongside us, to fill in the gaps where systems have failed, and to offer help, not judgment.

The organization is based in the cities where most of the volunteers live, but the primary care center is housed in the old Cass Lake Movie Theater off highway 2, right in the heart of the Leech Lake Reservation. They operate with one full-time employee (the amazing Jenny Fitzger!), and a team of volunteers that do everything from grant writing to animal transport to actual medical care from the vets and vet techs. Many of them work late nights and early mornings, sometimes driving across the state to bring a litter of puppies to safety, or setting up spay/neuter clinics on weekends when most people are off work.

Current clinics are running once a month, but in between there are always animal transport from homes and to shelters around the state; they do wellness clinics some weekends and spay/neuter services on others; they've handed out thousands of pounds of dog food, built insulated dog houses for outdoor pups, and provided everything from collars to kennels; and in their free time, they do education and outreach through both programs and one-on-one conversations.

I've talked to people who've had to surrender pets, not because they didn't love them, but because they had no choice. Maybe the dog was sick and there was no vet nearby. Maybe someone lost their home. Maybe there was no food to share. 48% of the reservation population lives under the poverty line. But Legacy never shames people. They understand that loving an animal doesn't always mean you can meet every need, and that's okay.

In our Ojibwe teachings, and across so many Indigenous cultures, animals are not “pets.” They are our relatives. They’re helpers, protectors, companions, even teachers. They appear in our stories, our dreams, and our everyday lives. When we care for them, we are honoring those relationships. Legacy understands this,

and honors it. They don't see animal care as a charity project. They see it as an act of community healing, rooted in culture. And that's why they've earned our trust, despite not being a Tribally-run organization.

That's right, it's a common misconception, but they are not funded by the Tribe. The Leech Lake Tribal Police Department has their own animal control, but does not have the staff or time to fill the gaps of service that Legacy is providing. But they can't keep this up without help. Their services are in high demand, but their resources are limited. They're a small nonprofit, powered by competitive grants, donations, volunteers, and the goodwill of the community. There are always more animals who need help, more families who could use support, and more work to be done. And now with winter around the corner, their need for donations and volunteers is urgent. Supplies like dog houses, straw, blankets, and food can be the difference between life and death for outdoor animals.

If you believe in the work Leech Lake Legacy is doing, there are many ways to support:

- **Donate:** Every dollar goes directly toward animal care. You can donate online at leechlakelegacy.org, or through their GiveMN page.
- **Volunteer:** Whether it's driving animals to the Cities or helping out at a clinic, there's a place for you.
- **Share Supplies:** Pet food, leashes, collars, crates, or anything you have to give.
- **Spread the Word:** Follow them on social media, share their posts, tell your friends. Awareness leads to action.
- **Honor Your Animals:** Care for them to the best of your ability, spay and neuter them as early as possible, and educate your friends and neighbors to be responsible pet owners, too.

We often talk about sovereignty and self-determination in our communities. Legacy is part of that story as they are building something with us, not for us. They're meeting people where they are and offering tools, not judgments. That's the kind of support we need more of.

In the words of one elder I spoke with, “They came when no one else would. They helped my dogs, and they treated me with respect. That’s all I needed.”

If that speaks to you, I encourage you to support this work in whatever way you can. You can find their schedule and all the ways to give your time, talent, and treasure at <https://www.leechlakelegacy.org>.

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Federal workforce cuts

A memo from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) signaled a departure from past shutdowns, encouraging agencies to consider layoffs instead of temporary furloughs. The OMB letter directed agencies to prepare mass reductions in force, following earlier efforts by the Department of Government Efficiency.

“The administration is taking this opportunity to further implement their priority of the reduction in the federal workforce, and these are permanent job losses,” Cook Macarro said.

About 30,600 federal employees are Native American, or 1.5% of the federal workforce, according to 2023 data. That number had likely dropped following workforce cuts in early 2025.

“We really need to double down and make sure we’re advocating for those positions that serve programs that go out to Indian Country,” said Liz Carr, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and vice president of intergovernmental affairs for the Cedar Rock Alliance. “Indian Country can’t afford a shutdown.”

Impact on Native communities

Federal trust and treaty obligations required the U.S. to provide education, policing and health care to Native nations. While those obligations did

not end in a shutdown, the funding delays caused immediate strain.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs’ already underfunded tribal police faced further cuts. Officers continued working but without pay. Emergency response times in rural areas lengthened further.

Food programs such as the Food Distribution Program on tribal lands relied on reserve funding, though prolonged disruption threatened shortages.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development will shut down, halting Native housing programs and Indian Housing Block Grants.

Smaller tribal governments that depended heavily on federal dollars are especially vulnerable, with services such as domestic violence shelters and homelessness programs left in limbo.

“When I was much younger, my mother worked for IHS and we had a very long shutdown,” Stopp recalled. “She wasn’t getting paid, but she had to be at work, and we had a hard time putting food on the table. I hate these fights in Washington. It’s not those guys having this fight that suffers.”

Native voices in Congress

Of the five Native American and Indigenous members of Congress, views were split.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., Chickasaw, criticized Democrats for what he called stalling tactics. “The contrast

with Democrats on this is telling,” he said in a press release. “It is wrong and they know it. House Republicans rejected that approach and chose stability, discipline and results instead.”

Rep. Sharice Davids, D-Kan., Hockley, urged bipartisan talks. “Instead of canceling votes and continuing to push partisan agendas, it is time for members to reach across the aisle and be open to compromise,”

Services continuing despite shutdown

The Indian Health Service announced Oct. 1 that its operations will continue during the federal shutdown. Because the agency received advance appropriations for fiscal year 2026, IHS clinics and programs are expected to function normally.

Other major programs — including Social Security, Medicare, Veterans Health Administration facilities, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the U.S. Postal Service — also remain open to the public.

Public safety will continue as well. Bureau of Indian Affairs police departments are considered essential and will stay on duty, although officers’ paychecks will be delayed until Congress resolves the budget impasse.

Some tribes may see disruptions in other areas. For example, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe — where most land is leased by tribal members and organ-

izations — could face slower turnaround times for lease payments from the Department of the Interior. Federal officials have said those payments will eventually be made once funding resumes.

“Shutdowns land hardest on our people,” said Larry Wright, Jr., Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians. “Tribal leaders do what they’ve always done: show up for their citizens, keep clinics open, protect public safety, and care for our elders and children. As sovereign governments we should not have to uphold these commitments we made to our citizens at the expense of federal inaction. The United States must uphold its trust and treaty obligations regardless of the circumstance and without interruption.”

Even as Tribal governments work tirelessly to cover federal shortfalls, shutdowns force them to either spend limited resources upfront or divert money from other essential programs. Many Nations take on significant financial risk in doing so, stretching already tight budgets, overwhelming staff, and disrupting long-term planning.



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NINA MOINI: Would you tell me a little bit more about what it looks like in practice implementing this tool? Because is it kind of like when you go to the doctor's office, and there may be a survey of questions, or what does it look like in practice?

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Sure. This is a screening tool and almost like a brief assessment, and looking at individuals that would come in, they would be screened to identify any risk factors. This particular tool, as I mentioned, being a clinician for several years, I haven't used this as a Native clinician. I haven't seen anything, rather, that would focus and be tailored specific to Indigenous populations. The instruments out there are wonderful in identifying suicidal risk factors and some protective factors, but nothing that I've seen that are specific to Indigenous populations.

This is nine questions, and the nine questions not only identifies risk factors but also identifies protective factors. And we look as Indigenous people is grounding in building a meaningful relationship. Well, when we hear screening tool, that doesn't scream relationality. It's just let me get the information and move forward. But this tool deeply looks at honoring our people's experiences and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



Mark Standing Eagle Baez is the co-director of the Indigenous Students in the Psychology Training program at Bemidji State University. He is the creator of a suicide screening tool specifically for Indigenous people. (Photo courtesy Mark Standing Eagle Baez.)

NINA MOINI: And I wonder too, just with the disproportionality here of the population of Native Americans and this issue of suicide, is this something that you feel like most people you talk to

have a connection to? I mean, most people in general do, but this is something that's impacting a lot of families.

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Absolutely. Earlier this morning, I was

on the phone with a couple of individuals, and they were looking at instruments that could be incorporated. What was interesting on this phone call is these were two practitioners, one Native and one non-Native. And the one non-Native practitioner is looking at how can I, as a non-Native, incorporate this ISS instrument as a non-Native practitioner working with Indigenous populations.

And that was a key factor in developing something that we are looking at and developing with this ISS tool by not only looking at the practitioner's perspective as Native and non-Native in hopes that they can disseminate that information to Indigenous clients, regardless of their ethnicity, that they can be professional, be ethical, and be able to be proactive in sharing the instrument.

An elder that I continued to connect with and was supervising this instrument is something is very traditional. A lot of prayer, a lot of well-thought-out positions went into developing this instrument. And yes, I go back to my elders in saying, this is what we're developing. Well, as Indigenous people, we don't talk about suicide. So that was a big barrier there is it's taboo. So how do we help our people? And elders coming together saying it's important we do need something, like, yesterday, but we do not want to continue to retraumatize.

So we have to look at a more culturally-relevant, more culturally-sensitive,

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and more culturally-appropriate words that honors our people and connecting with the elders and saying, no, this doesn't look right. No, change this. Change that. And then, working with the panel of experts, it took a whole lot longer than expected, but life is worth it. And continuing to incorporate not only our Indigenous ways in making decisions when we process, but we want to make sure that we do it the right way as professionals when we're working with humanity.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, oftentimes, things that are done with intentionality and nuance do take longer. And depending on different cultures, people talk about this issue or don't talk about this issue in different ways. Can you say a little bit more about why or how it's taboo within the different cultures and how, maybe, the elders helped to get not around some of that but to face it?

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: We all know that there's a problem with suicide among our people, and we want to make sure that we are more proactive than reactive. We believe our people-- I should say, some of us have this understanding is if we speak it, we're putting that energy out, that spirit out. And if it's something negative, we can be calling on that energy. So if we continue to talk about death, we continue to talk about suicide, we can actually be invoking that spirit.

So when speaking to our elders, they

realize and understand there is a serious problem and need to address life. And how can we honor life? So it wasn't anything new that I developed. It's listening to our elders saying, we have these words. How do we honor who that person is in front of you and empower them, motivate them, share with them our medicine ways, come in a good way, and also address some areas of need of when they thought about taking or thinking about taking one's life?

So in this instrument, there's no mention of the word, literally, "death" or "kill." Some instruments that are out there, first question presented is if you wish you were dead. If I don't know you and you're coming into my office and I'm trying to build a relationship, and the first question I'm asking you is, do you want to be dead? The client's more likely going to say, no, I don't want to kill myself. One, I don't even know you.. Number two, you don't want to build a conversation of this topic that is so sensitive that it's really difficult to speak.

So the ISS really provides these cultural steps and components in ways that we can bring honesty and honor who they are and hoping that we identify those risk factors, in addition to identifying cultural support factors to help the client when they leave that office.

NINA MOINI: I have in my notes here that the first question is, tell us what you enjoy about life or living. So that's interesting, that nuanced, more-- an approach

with more care when there's so much vulnerability involved. I want to know, before I let you go, Mark, just what is next. So you're doing a pilot study. What will that look like?

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Yes. I've had several agencies contact me because they want in. There's a serious need. So the steps that we're happening right now is we're contacting and making our connections with those agencies, those facilities. I am currently working on the IRB, which is the Institutional Review Board, making sure that everything is done professionally, ethically in this study, that it's in a positive and a professional approach. And we are also looking at how we can begin to develop these relationships.

And so, from here, we're going to start out with a small pilot study with near agencies, and then we want to have a larger pilot study where we can incorporate tribes throughout the United States.

NINA MOINI: All right, if all goes as planned, when would you hope it would be widely available?

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: We're hoping to finish up this first round of by the end of December, early January, and then open it up to a larger study. So I'm hoping this time next year would be the latest. But yes, we're trying to work as fast but as professional as possible.

NINA MOINI: Sure. Mark, thank you for your work and for sharing it with us.

Appreciate your time.

STANDING EAGLE BAEZ: Oh, [NON-ENGLISH], thank you. Thank you very much.

NINA MOINI: Thank you. Mark Standing Eagle Baez is an assistant professor of counseling and clinical psychology at Bemidji State University. If you or someone you is struggling, help is available. Call or text 988 to get connected with trained counselors. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7.

Crisis Hotlines for Native Youth

Native and Strong Lifeline: Calls are answered by Native crisis counselors who are tribal citizens. They are fully trained in crisis intervention and support, with emphasis on cultural and traditional practices related to healing. It is confidential, free, and available 24/7. Call "988", press 4.

• **LGBT National Youth Talkline:** youth serving youth through age 25. Provides telephone, and online private one-to-one chat, and email peer-support. Call 800-246-7743.

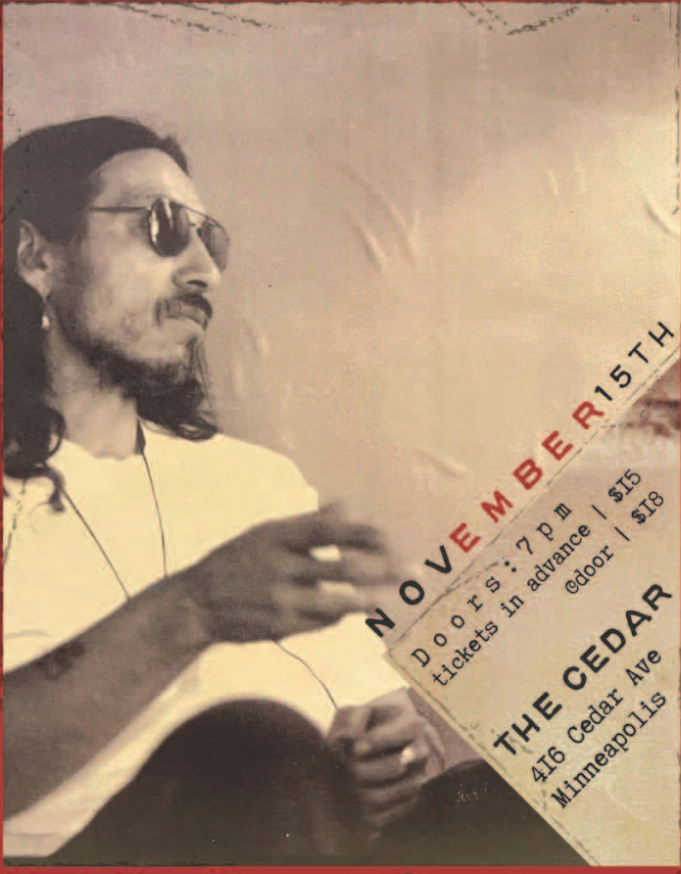
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FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT: [FIREINTHEVILLAGE.ORG](https://fireinthevillage.org)

Kingbird is the “forever pitcher” on women’s Native softball circuit

Annabell Kingbird is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and lives in Bemidji, MN with her husband Gordon and family.

“I started playing softball when I was about 20 years old,” said Annabell Kingbird. “I didn’t really play or do sports in school. I continue to play ball because I enjoy playing, traveling and meeting people.”

“My teammates are nice and good ball players, and they have fun. I often said that I would play until teams stopped asking me to play. They are still asking me to play,” she added.

“This may be my last year playing, as everyone has been asking me lately when I will retire,” said Kingbird.

“I currently play in two leagues for two different teams, Bemidji and Park Rapids, two nights and both double headers,” she added.

Kingbird started playing in the Bemidji League. “First year and maybe second year, I played for Benny Tonce, who was our coach, we were called the ‘Athletics.’”

“After that, I played for Pete Greenleaf, we were called Greenleaf Masonry,” said Kingbird.

“I was asked by a team member to play for Red Lake, Bruce Graves and Gary Sumner were the coaches,” said Kingbird. “When I started playing for them, I told my husband, ‘How am I going to remember everyone’s name?’ I didn’t know anyone on the team.”

“The team was a really good team. Bruce and Gary took us to many tournaments, (both) in state and out of state. We played almost every weekend and traveled everywhere. We won a lot, district tournaments, state tournaments, National Indian tournaments, it was very fun,” Kingbird said.

“This was the first time that I traveled out of state and probably traveled anywhere,” She said. “The first time that I also traveled to Bismarck. I’ve only missed one year traveling there. We did



Top: Annabell Kingbird pitches during a game. (Photos courtesy Annabell Kingbird.)



Bottom: Wrecking Crew team: Kayla Kingbird, Paula Roy, Debbie Graves, Annabell Kingbird, Ashley White, Cara Donnell. Back Row: Starr Kingbird, Jeanette Bowstring, Adriana McNeal, Rihanna Kingbird, Grace White

win first place maybe a couple of years. I think this has been my favorite place to go, because my family now travels with me there.”

Kingbird played for the MN Stars, the Rez, and also some coed teams. She played for some White Earth teams, won a state championship and traveled to National’s with the team name “Pine Point.”

“Another team I played for was McDonald’s, with Jerry Northbird as the coach,” said Kingbird. “We had several names as he had various sponsors. He also took us to many tournaments, both in state, out of state.”

“One year we went undefeated in the Bemidji league, and we placed second in Minnesota State and traveled to National Tournaments. When I played for his team, it seems like we were forever placing second in Bismarck, never first. I don’t remember if we won first, we may have,” she said.

Other teams she played with were the Red Lake Co-ed “49ers”, and a

Minneapolis Co-ed Team, as well as the Bemidji “Con’s Masonry”. “My husband and I played in co-ed tournaments in Minnesota and Sisseton, SD we won first place jackets,” said Kingbird.

Kingbird was the pitcher in the women’s league. Once, when her team members found out she pitched, she became the ‘forever pitcher.’ As a co-ed softball player, she played the outfield, second base and catcher positions.

Kingbird and her husband played power volleyball for many years. She said, “My husband and I played in the Bemidji Power Volleyball league for many years. I was the setter. We travelled to some tournaments and won a few. I enjoyed playing that also, but I enjoy playing softball more.”

Kingbird considered her top accomplishments were playing in several state tournaments and traveling to national tournaments. She played for several years in the Native American World Series. She earned several all star and all tourney team awards.

“I was truly honored and very thankful to have been selected to the Individual Hall of Fame in Bismarck, ND,” said Kingbird. “I was also part of the team, MN Aces, who were also selected to the Hall of Fame.”

“I am thankful and honored to receive the award for ‘Legends’ in Sisseton, SD from JC Crawford,” she said

A memorable coach of Kingbird was (the late) Bruce Graves of Red Lake.” She said, “He was the first coach that believed I was a good pitcher and player. He took our team to many tournaments, both in state and out of state. He had our team practice before every tournament. He provided us with transportation and lodging. He provided almost everything for us to play ball.”

“Another coach was (the late) Jerry Northbird of Cass Lake. He always kept the book and let us know what we needed to do to improve our game. He took us to many tournaments. He got us sponsors for travel to and from the tournaments,” added Kingbird.

“My contribution to the team is I encourage them,” said Kingbird. “I let them know that I think they are good players, and I enjoy playing on their team. I think that they see that I am playing ball and maybe they can also play as long as I have.”

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Revising the Wounded Knee Massacre

On Sept. 27, the *New York Times* reported that Secretary of War Pete Hegseth will not revoke Medals of Honor for soldiers who took part in the 1890 massacre of Chief Big Foot's band at Wounded Knee.

"More than 300 Lakota Sioux men, women and children were killed by U.S. Army soldiers on Dec. 29, 1890, in one of the deadliest attacks on Native Americans by the United States military," according to the *Times*. "The Lakota people had gathered to resist government control in an area of South Dakota that is now part of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation."

Some 20 soldiers with the U.S. Seventh Cavalry received Medals of Honor, as per a report in *The Guardian* (UK).

(In early September, Trump authorized the Defense Department to use the secondary title of "Department of War," an historical name of the department. Trump's executive order on the this matter declares: "The Secretary of Defense is authorized the use of this additional secondary title — the Secretary of War — and may be recognized by that title in official correspondence, public communications, ceremonial contexts, and non-statutory documents within the executive branch." The website for the largest department in the federal government is

now titled "U.S. Department of War" [war.gov]. In 1949, the combined military command of the army and other forces was renamed the Defense Department; however, Trump in his great discernment preferred the old appellation — "war" has a certain ring to it.)

The Secretary of War — or Defense or whatever — is Pete Hegseth, 45, who grew up in Forest Lake, Minnesota. Hegseth was in the news earlier this year when he leaked plans for a military attack on the Houthis in Yemen over the Signal messaging app to an email list that included top government officials and Jeffrey Goldberg, editor of *The Atlantic* magazine. Goldberg thought that he was the subject of a prank but later confirmed that the information revealed in the group chat, March 11-15, was real.

Goldberg later wrote an article about the "Signalgate" scandal titled "The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans." There were calls from members of Congress to fire Hegseth in the aftermath of the egregious security breach.

Fast forward to September, when Hegseth expressed his admiration for the soldiers who massacred the Lakota at Wounded Knee Creek.

The Guardian newspaper reported: "We're making it clear that [the soldiers at Wounded Knee] deserve those

medals,' Hegseth said, announcing the move in a video on social media on [Sept. 25]. Calling the men 'brave soldiers,' he said a review panel had concluded in a report that the medals were justly awarded. 'This decision is now final, and their place in our nation's history is no longer up for debate.'"

Hegseth, a Christian nationalist whose body is tattooed with Crusader symbols, is part of the Trump 2.0 regime's program of revising U.S. history to fit the MAGA ideology. Trump and his ilk are trying round the edges of presentations — by the Smithsonian museums, at federal monuments, schools, etc. — of history related to chattel slavery, depredations against Native nations and other tragic elements of U.S. policies. The Trumpites are promoting "patriotic education," the glorification of U.S. imperialism, which began with the subjugation of the domestic Indian nations and then moved on to colonial adventures around the world.

Readers of *The Circle* likely will judge Hegseth as morally depraved, vis-à-vis his valorizing of the U.S. soldiers involved in the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. That's my view, too.

Robert Redford walks on

Maybe I've told this story before: When I visited Leonard Peltier at Marion

federal prison in 1980, I was accompanied by the late photographer Dick Bancroft. We drove up to an intercom on the driveway to the prison complex. We identified ourselves to a guard in a distant watchtower, let him know that we were there to interview Peltier. He had a question: "Is there a Mr. Redford with you?"

No, just me and Dick. The famous actor and director had visited Peltier in Marion several weeks prior to our interview.

Robert Redford, a champion of Leonard Peltier's long fight for justice and a supporter of aspiring Indian filmmakers, died at his home in Utah on Sept. 19. He was 89.

"Redford's contributions to Indian Country were significant and enduring," according to a remembrance on *Native News Online*. The article noted that Redford was an executive producer of *Incident at Oglala*, the 1992 documentary about the Peltier case.

In a telephone interview with *Native News Online*, Peltier, whose prison sentence was commuted by Pres. Joe Biden in January, said, "Robert served as the narrator [of the documentary] and he helped finance the making of it. It was done in a decent way and I was happy at the time. ... and it helped my cause."

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MIWRC opens 24 supportive housing units in Minneapolis

BY THE CIRCLE

The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center has opened 24 permanent supportive housing units in its south Minneapolis facility, welcoming residents into a new community designed to address Native homelessness.

The apartments, called Oshki-Gakeyaa — “New Way” in Ojibwe — occupy the third and fourth floors of the center. Construction began last year, and staff began moving tenants into their new homes at the end of August.

According to an article published by Minnesota Public Radio, Chief Executive Officer Ruth Buffalo said the project reflects a commitment to providing shelter and stability for Native families and individuals. “It feels good, but it’s a huge responsibility,” she said. “We want to make sure that everybody is well taken care of — the tenants, that they first and foremost feel safe and welcome but also have the support services that are needed.”

The new housing is intended to respond to disparities identified in the Minnesota Homeless Study, which shows Native Americans experience homelessness at significantly higher rates than other groups. Residents at Oshki-Gakeyaa will have access to cultural events, support groups and community meals, along with other programs already offered by the center. Buffalo said the approach provides more direct support than the center’s earlier housing program, with extra attention placed on ensuring tenants



The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center has opened new units to help house more community members. (Above photo by Google. Photo below by Chandra Colvin/MRP News.)

can easily reach out for help.

The center held a blessing ceremony the day before move-in as staff and volunteers walked through each unit with sage, song and drumming to cleanse the space.

Buffalo described the event as a powerful moment for both staff and residents. “It was beautiful to see our younger women on staff be the helpers to the elder,” she said.



The center is partnering with Hennepin County to fill 20 of the units through a coordinated application process. Four apartments with accessibility features are being filled directly through the center. Buffalo said housing, treatment and community resources are also made available during the center’s weekly Resource Connect events.

“It’s critical that we help one another and find ways to support the relatives move from one path in their life to a healthier one,” she said.

The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center expects all 24 units to be occupied by March of next year.

The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, founded in 1984, is a nonprofit dedicated to the well-being of Native women and families. The organization offers social and mental health services grounded in cultural traditions, along with programs that aim to educate, empower and connect the Native community. It also provides training and resources for those who work with Native populations across the region.



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Ongoing MAIC Events

See events at the Mpls American Indian Center on their updated website. MAIC events listings: Sewing Circle, Running Club, Drum and Dance, Pickup Basketball, Volleyball, Congregate Dining and more. MAIC, 1530 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. See more at: <https://www.maicnet.org/upcoming-events>.

Virtual Native Exhibit

The Minneapolis Institute of Art offers a virtual tour of its Americas Galleries, allowing viewers to explore artworks from Indigenous cultures and other parts of the Americas. This self-guided, 3D tour provides an immersive experience of the museum's collection. Accessible anytime. Free. Contact: visit@artsmia.org | 612-870-3000 or see: <https://discover.matterport.com/space/cbvQ4TefkEh>.

Oct - Nov

Fallenstar: The Watchoverers

New Native Theatre's "Fallenstar: The Watchoverers" is an action-packed superhero adventure made for kids and their families. It will tour to reservation communities and rural areas in the Upper Midwest! When a mysterious space rock crash-lands near their campsite, three cousins – Rosie, Billy-Sweet, and Shania – get superpowers and team up to protect their home from giant, chomping machines. With big laughs, cool powers, and a whole lot of heart, playwright Ramón Esquivel brings young BIPOC heroes to life in a story about family, courage, and standing up for what's right. This 50-minute play is ideal for youth ages 8 to 14 years old. Book a show today at your school or community venue! For info, see: https://www.newnativetheatre.org/events#news_eason.

Oct 10 (deadline)

Call for Artwork

Honor the Earth is inviting Indigenous and Black artists across the globe to help envision a Sovereign Indigenous Future – a future that has grown beyond colonization, genocide, imperialism, prisons, white supremacy, ableism and all the other modern systemic oppressions. HTE is collecting digital submissions of original artworks across various media that respond to this prompt: what does a Sovereign Indigenous Future look like? Winners will receive a cash prize of \$2,000-\$3,500. Applications are due Oct. 10. See info at: bit.ly/RadicalArt.

Oct 10 THE ORCHESTRA

THE ORCHESTRA Starring ELO

and ELO Part II Former Members Brings ELO's Greatest Hits to Shooting Star. Fans of classic rock anthems and lush string-driven soundscapes – this one is for you. With a legacy spanning decades and a catalog that shaped the sound of the '70s and '80s, THE ORCHESTRA will light the stage with iconic hits like "Can't Get it Out of My Head," "Don't Bring Me Down" and "Evil Woman. Star ticket: \$60, Select ticket: \$30. For info, see: <https://www.star-casino.com/event/the-orchestra>.

Oct 10, 11, 12

Indigenous People's Weekend Basketball Expo

Indigenous People's Weekend is Minnesota's largest Native-led basketball expo. Featuring something for all ages; skills camp, 3 x 3, 5 x 5, MMIW/R Awareness Game. We'll be bringing back the Art Expo and Vendor Market as well and a handful of more public health activities this year. Kicking off Friday night at Indigenous Roots/Eagle and Condor Native Wellness Center at 790 E 7th St, St Paul with a VIP Market & Sponsors Reception. Then, on Saturday and Sunday, all activities will begin at a Saint Paul Johnson High School at 1349 Arcade St, St Paul. For info, see: <https://www.facebook.com/events/489201330925189>.

Oct 11

Wakan Tipi volunteer day

Join us from 9:00am - 11:00pm for a community volunteer day at Wakan Tipi. Sign up for a morning of caring for the land, getting her ready for the winter months through your choice of plantings and trash clean-up. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore the newly installed outdoor interpretive exhibits. We will provide instruction, equipment, plus snacks and lunch - so all ages and experience levels are welcome. These activities will take place after the Bird Walk, so you don't have to choose! For info, see: <https://www.wakantipi.org>.

Oct 11

Native Reel Takes: AMRA Native Short Film Festival

Join us as we screen six films by five Native American local and national filmmakers. Jada Brown and Colin Monette kick off the evening with a live musical performance, followed by the screenings of emerging and established filmmakers. This event takes place outdoors in the parking lot of All My Relations Arts and street food from Frybread Factory will be available for festival goers. Featured films: "River Bank" directed by Charine Pilar Gonzales (San Ildefonso Pueblo – Tewa). "When Thunderbird

Dances" directed by Khayman Goodsky (Bois Forte Band Of Chippewa). "Tiger" directed by Loren Waters (Cherokee/Kiowa). "How the Bear Got a Short Tail" directed by Elizabeth Day (Leech Lake Ojibwe). "The Comedian" directed by Ajuawak Kapashesit (Waskaganish Cree, White Earth Ojibwe Descendant). "Language Keepers" directed by Ajuawak Kapashesit. Music at 6:30pm; screening at 7:15pm. Limited chairs are available. Guests are welcome to bring. Pow Wow Grounds in the parking lot, 1414 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.

Oct 11

TC Diversity Homeownership Fair

Come to the Twin Cities Diversity Homeownership Fair 2025 and join us at the Metropolitan State University for a day filled with workshops, seminars, and resources to help you achieve your dream of owning a home. Whether you're a first-time buyer or looking to invest in property, our event is designed to cater to all levels of experience. Connect with industry professionals, lenders, and real estate agents who can provide valuable insights and guidance. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about the various aspects of homeownership and take the first step towards securing your future. This one-day event offers free, community-driven resources to help families achieve the dream of homeownership. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/twin-cities-diversity-homeownership-fair-2025-tickets-1492821773109>.

Oct 11

Indigenous Peoples Day Festival Midtown Global Mkt

Celebrating Indigenous culture through music, food, storytelling, and crafts. 11:00am to 8:00pm. Free and open to the public. Midtown Global Market, 920 E Lake St, Minneapolis. Contact: <https://www.midtown-globalmarket.org>.

Oct 16

Matrilineal Memory

All My Relations Arts and the Native American Community Development Institute are pleased to present Matrilineal Memory by artist Mikaela Shafer. "Memory is Ephemeral" plays with the concept of how memories can resurface unexpectedly, triggered by a smell, taste, or sound, blurring the line between what is real and what is remembered. The installation invites contemplation on the impact of memory on our identities and how these ephemeral recollections continue to influence us in profound ways. Exhibition run October 16th through

December 13th. Opening Reception: **October 16**, 6pm - 8pm at All My Relations Gallery, 1414 E Franklin Ave, #1, Minneapolis. Artist Talk: **November 15**, 2-3:30pm. For info, see: allmyrelationsarts.org.

Oct 16

MAICC TopGolf Networking Event

Join the Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce for an afternoon of golf, food, and networking at our annual TopGolf event! Whether you're a seasoned golfer or just swinging for fun, this event is a great way to connect with Native professionals, tribal leaders, and business allies. 12:30pm: Registration. 1:15pm: Welcome. 2:00pm: Shotgun Start and Lunch. 4:30pm: Awards Ceremony. Individual Golfer: \$200. Team of 6: \$1,000. Includes golf play, lunch, and networking access. Food and Networking \$40, Includes lunch, and networking access. TopGolf, 6420 N. Camden Ave, Brooklyn Center. For info, see: <https://maicc.org/events/#!event/2025/10/16/2nd-annual-topgolf-fundraiser>.

Oct 17

We Survived the Night: Julian Brave NoiseCat

Join Birchbark Books as we celebrate Julian Brave NoiseCat's debut book, We Survived the Night. A stunning narrative from one of the most powerful young writers at work today. We Survived the Night interweaves oral history with hard-hitting journalism and a deeply personal father-son journey

into a searing portrait of Indigenous survival, love, and resurgence. Julian Brave NoiseCat will be in conversation with Allison Waukau, cohost of the podcast Books are Good Medicine. This event is free and open to the public. 7pm - 9pm. For info, see: <https://birchbarkbooks.com>.

Oct 18

Dyani White Hawk: Love Language

Rooted in intergenerational knowledge, Dyani White Hawk's (Lakota) art centers on connection – between one another, past and present, earth and sky. Featuring multimedia paintings, sculpture, video, and more, Love Language gathers 15 years of the artist's work in this major survey. The exhibit runs through Feb 15, 2026. Walker Art Center, 725 Vineland Pl, Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://walkerart.org/calendar/2025/dyani-white-hawk-love-language>.

Oct 18

Owámní: Falling Water Festival

Owámní: Falling Water Festival, a celebration of indigenous Minnesota cultures will be held at Mill Ruins Park, Water Works Park, and Father Hennepin Park. This free, all-ages event is co-presented by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the St Anthony Falls Heritage Board to celebrate indigenous Minnesota culture with music, art, food, and more. For info, see: https://www.minneapolisparkevents.org/activities-events/events/owamni_falling_water_festival.

Nov 4

Municipal Election

The Minneapolis League of Women Voters, along with co-sponsoring organizations, is hosting in-person, non-partisan candidate forums for every contested city race in the November 4th Municipal Election. These forums are free and open to the public and press as part of the LWVmpls mission to encourage informed and active participation in all levels of government. Forums are in-person events, and are also live-streamed. For info, see: lwvmppls.org/2025-candidate-forums.

Nov 15

Remembering JOHN TRUDELL

Rising to prominence as a spokesman in the 1960s – John Trudell broadcast fiery messages as "Radio Free Alcatraz" before serving as national chairman of the American Indian Movement throughout much of the 1970s. His life and words continue to matter. Remembering JOHN TRUDELL will feature a very special pre-recorded short film of music and memories by Quiltman and Mark Shark. Annie Humphrey and Keith Secola will give performances with guitarist Jeremy Ylvisaker and drummer Sean Carey. Art making with Fire in the Village, a collective of artists and cultural organizers. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets in advance: \$15. At the door: \$18. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: fireinthevillage.org.




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Sharing the contents of our “basket” before we depart

BY WINONA LADUKE

“My heroes are the unacknowledged do-gooders that strive to help because they love humans and plants and water and still believe in the magic of this realm. There are people who prayed for you before you were born. There are people taking action every day. They’re not taking selfies or handing money to the homeless. They’re out there doing it for the greater good. Those are my heroes...” Dani Pieratos, Bois Fort Anishinaabe.

There have been some great ones who have passed to the spirit world these last months, leaving holes in our communities. I think of these times with great sadness but also think of the transition- the sharing between peoples and generations. We all carry a basket. That’s a basket which not only contains our possessions, land, things, which will be divided up after we have passed on, but also a basket of our gifts, our passions, our love, our work. Some of us hope to share much of the contents of our basket before we depart from this world; for others we can all share or shoulder what is in the basket.



Joseph Nayquonabe Sr.

The Apache have “burden baskets.” Cone shaped, with flat or rounded bottoms, embellished with fringe and cone jingles often, most baskets have a buckskin carry strap, worn around the forehead or shoulders. The baskets carried all that was essential for life. We continue to carry these baskets to share gifts of food and more. Who carries the baskets when we pass?



Dale Herbert "Kaadaak" Greene, Sr.

These past few months have seen the passing of great elder leaders from ceremonies, like Joe Nayquonabe Sr, Drum keeper, kind man, who appreciated us all. Dale Greene Sr, the last Anishinaabe to be born on the homeland at Rice Lake, before the creation of the Rice Lake refuge also a keeper of the ceremonial drums now dances in the milky way above, his legs strong. There were times

when the drum dances were sparse in attendance, but now, the halls are full, and we can only hope that the songs and words are remembered and cared for, that the basket of the ceremony is still full. The ceremonial drums have seen many generations, let us continue to sound those drums and dance.

Early in the year, a great woman from Turtle Mountain reservation passed- Jacqueline Davis Walette. We see other women stepping up to carry on some of those roles in the NDSU and Fargo and Moorhead community, and for those of us who took her generosity and grace for granted, I am hopeful that a little bit of the basket, a little bit of that fairy dust of kindness she had, is sprinkled throughout.

There’s something called survivor’s guilt. We wonder how did I get to continue? We are all survivors. As we get older, “we know more people on the other side than on this one”, I was told once by Winifred Jourdain, White Earth elder. She lived to be 101 and taught us all much. Some of us continue to meet more people, and to remember their ancestors to them, that’s a gift of age. And, with age, there are memories of the good deeds done by people. And many questions like “What would Ingrid Do?”,

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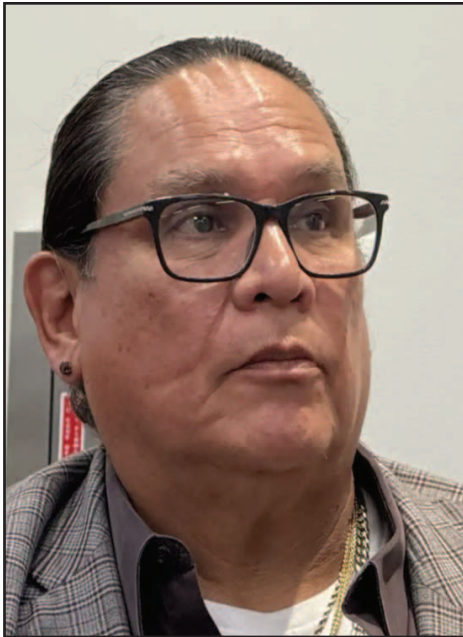
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SIMONE SENOGLES



Ernie Stevens Jr.

when we remember the work of Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa, who was assassinated by the political forces in Colombia, and until her death carried out great leadership for women through the Indigenous Women’s Network and nationally through a broad network advocating for the rights of Indigenous peoples at the UN. Her patience and love is remembered, and I still hear her laughter.

The most recent couple of months which have been very unsettling.

The passage of young women is always a sorrowful time. Young women with great gifts of community generosity, laughter and skills beyond measure. Danny Pieratos and Simone Senogles were two such women. Both strong community members, mothers and aunties, they were forces of change in their communities and in Minnesota. Their sudden passing reminds me, and perhaps all to be kind to one another, show appreciation and love so that the sorrow and pain which is silently carried by women, is soothed. Indeed, these are harsh times, and the lateral oppression which is unleashed upon each of us in our communities, wears on our hearts.

Remembered for so much, among her gifts, Simone Senogles was a great basket maker. We cherish the patient teachings of baskets. “If you want to disempower a people, attack the women. I think that Indigenous women are dealing with this still...” Her work to protect Mother Earth and women continues, and her kindness is remembered. Together we strive to carry the contents of her baskets, and hopefully as women, we remember to be kind, and not carry the weapons of our oppressors’ hatred into our communities.

As the leaves change, we saw more great losses for our community. Certainly Ernie Stevens, compassionate and strong leader for our communities nationally, provided the example of principled leadership, love and commitment which guided much national work. He is missed by all of us.

The passage of two of my close colleagues from the Indigenous Women’s Network- Charon Astoyer (Comanche) and Pamela Kingfisher (Cherokee), gives us pause, gratitude and a moment of sadness and celebration. In 1986, alongside her husband Clarence

Rockboy, Charon founded the Native American Community Board, on the Yankton reservation—an act of love and resistance that would blossom into a nationally and internationally recognized example of Indigenous women’s leadership, advocacy and vision.

That work grew into the Native American Women’s Health Education Resource Center, serving generations and advocating for the reproductive rights of Native women in national policy and financing. “Charon led with wisdom, strength, and fierce compassion,” said Katrina Cantrell, President of the Native American Community Board. “She held our stories, fought for our rights, and reminded us every day of the power we hold as Native women. Her loss is immeasurable, but we are committed to carrying her legacy forward—with the same fire, love, and dedication she gave us all.”

The same is true of Pamela Kingfisher, Pam worked for over forty years as a community organizer and led fights to shut down 23% of the world’s uranium supply and fight off big agricultural polluters from her Cherokee community. Today, we must face those demons again, as the Trump administration seeks to fast track dirty energy projects, and AI energy demands dictate policies.

“Asking questions...that is the key of organizing...nobody wants to be an activist, you know, but we are questioning, and we are very curious, and we want to know why, and we keep pulling those threads and pulling that string,” Pam would tell a reporter. In 1985 she moved to her grandmother’s allotment land in Oklahoma. There Native Americans for a Clean Environment was facing a uranium facility which wanted to deepen it’s impact on the health of the community. Opposing that was the work of Jesse Deerinwater. The proposal was to inject nuclear waste into the groundwater of the Cherokee people. The community organizing work stopped the injection well. Later, Deerinwater

left and Kingfisher became the board chair for NACE.

The Sequoyah Fuels Nuclear Plant in Gore, Oklahoma was responsible for bringing in yellowcake uranium from New Mexico and turning it into uranium hexafluoride, used for fuel, and uranium tetrafluoride, used for the shelling of army tanks and bullets.

Instead of dealing with toxic waste, known as raffinate and partnering with Monsanto, the facility created fertilizer that was spread onto 10,000 acres. As a result, a “happy cow operation” came about. New cows would need to be brought in every 3 months to replace those who had died. A community working together challenged this, and created a cancer map of Gore Oklahoma, which never had been done by state or federal officials. Organizing as water protectors is what women do. One Saturday night, an explosion occurred and the plant was not immediately evacuated. Later that same night, 350 people were fired and the plant was closed.

Although the plant was closed, the Cherokee Nation continued to follow the yellow cake trail, their eyes on the company conducting the cleanup. The company tried to get the state to allow them to leave the waste on site. The Cherokee Nation fought and won a case forcing the company to move the waste to Utah. That is how change is made, by determination and love. “This is human health, this is public health. I don’t care what stripe you are. I do care that we all live in this place, and what are we passing on,” Pam would tell us.

As the times change, and our heroes and loved ones move to the star world, we are reminded that their baskets, full of love, hope and hard work, were carried far and even carried us. Let us share the baskets, work, love and joy, and as many Indigenous people enter these winter times. And let us carry their baskets forward, renewed with new harvests and dreams.

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