



Covering the Ho-Chunk Nation



HOCAK WORAK



Vol. XL, Issue 1

Hųc wiconį ną wira | First Bear Moon

January 9, 2026

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As Cannabis Rescheduling Moves Forward, Tribes Urged to Look Beyond the Headlines

Kaili Berg

As the federal government moves to reschedule marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III, the Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association (ICIA) is urging Tribal Nations and the broader cannabis industry to take a closer look at what the change does, and does not, mean for Indian Country.

Rescheduling cannabis to Schedule III marks a notable shift in federal policy. It acknowledges cannabis as having accepted medical use, opens the door for expanded research, and could ease certain tax and regulatory burdens for businesses.

However, it does not end federal prohibition for adult-use cannabis,

nor does it automatically provide legal protection for state or Tribal cannabis programs.

For Tribal Nations, the implications are particularly complex. While some Tribes operate cannabis or hemp programs under Tribal law, federal ambiguity continues to create legal and economic uncertainty.

In November, ICIA hosted its fourth annual Indigenous Cannabis Industry and Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., bringing together Indigenous cannabis entrepreneurs, Tribal leadership, and policy advocates just steps from the U.S. Capitol. Discussions focused on how shifting federal policy could affect Tribal sovereignty, intertribal commerce, and long-term economic development.

Building on that momentum, ICIA has partnered with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to strengthen policy frameworks around hemp and cannabis in Indian Country. During NCAI's Fall Convention in Seattle last November, Tribal leaders passed two resolutions addressing these issues.



Photos were taken by Kaili Berg at the WI ICIA Summits.



Resolution SEA-25-114 calls on Congress and the federal administration to support Tribal cannabis sovereignty and formally recognize intertribal trade among Tribal Nations. Resolution SEA-25-130 focuses on the safe regulation of hemp-derived cannabinoids in Indian Country while protecting USDA-approved Tribal hemp programs.

ICIA President Rob Pero, a member of the Bad River Ojibwe and founder

of Cannidigenous, said rescheduling should be viewed as a step forward, but not a solution.

"There is a lot for Tribes to digest in this announcement," Pero said. "Tribal Nations will continue to determine what is in the best interest of their own communities, as they always have."

According to Pero, rescheduling acknowledges cannabis medical value and supports expanded research, *Continued on Page 9*



Inaugural Ho-Chunk National Treasure Awards Honor Cultural Leaders

Kaili Berg

The Ho-Chunk Nation Museum and Cultural Center, in partnership with the Ho-Chunk Nation, hosted the first-ever Ho-Chunk National Treasure Awards and Gala on December 13, at the District 1 Community Center in Black River Falls.

The event recognized community members whose work has helped sustain Ho-Chunk culture and traditions.

The event honored Jerod Stacy and Rita Kingswan, along with National Treasure Award recipients Richard Mann, Robert Mann, Wilbert Cleveland, Aurelia "Lera" Hopinkah, and Kimberly Crowley.

Each honoree was recognized for decades of work as teachers, artists, cultural practitioners, and leaders. Their efforts have played a key role in passing down Ho-Chunk knowledge, language, and practices to future generations.

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Want something special placed in the Hockak Worak? Limited space is available so send your request in early. Submissions will be handled on a first come first serve basis.

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Beyond the Title: Ryan John Crain

By Henry Sanders
Reprint from Madison365
Beyond the Title is a series of Q&As with alumni of Madison365's Most Influential Lists.

Ryan Crain (Wisconsin's Most Influential Native American Leaders, 2025) is executive director of education for the Ho Chunk Nation, where he oversees a variety of early childhood, cultural and language education, and academic support programs. He too that role on in 2023 after several years as a project director and interim treasurer for the nation. He earned a degree in business administration at UW-La Crosse and a master's degree in servant leadership at Viterbo.

What does presence before performance mean to you – and how do you stay grounded when the pressure to perform is high?

Presence is about consistently bringing positive energy that inspires confidence from the very start, even before any work begins. In those high-pressure moments, I find my anchor by reflecting on my "why." It's a powerful reminder of my purpose and passion, helping me stay focused and composed when the stakes are high.

What's the best advice you've received from a mentor?

Only one person can be the greatest at something, so don't aim to be the best in the world; instead, strive to be the best version of yourself.

Tell us about a time you had to lead before there was consensus – when you were the only one who saw it, believed it or were willing to act. What gave you the courage to move anyway?

I believed we needed to enhance literacy outcomes and provide our students with the chance to become passionate readers through stories that reflect their experiences. I brought on a talented individual who was more than capable of conquering this task, and with the proper support, they will undoubtedly succeed. Simply, it was the right thing to do.

What's one question every new leader should ask during their first 100 days and why?

Can I perform this work without compromising my integrity? To determine whether you're the right fit for this job, it's essential to remain authentic and avoid getting involved in situations that exceed your capabilities.

Who's in your "corner" – that voice of wisdom you trust when things get tough? How do you build and protect that circle?

My wife, Cassidee, is my biggest supporter. She believed in me from day one and has always given me that extra motivation to get the job done. My best friend, Mark, is also someone who, no matter how impossible a situation seems, always knows the right words to say to make me believe

that everything will work out.

Leadership can be exhausting. What practices or boundaries help you avoid burnout and stay aligned with your purpose?

Leadership has a considerable impact on the body, mind, and spirit. This is why I make it a priority to position myself for success every day. I start with early morning workouts and take time for reflection before my family wakes up. I enjoy a good espresso and have meaningful conversations before entering any decision-making situations.

Clout fades. Calling lasts. How do you stay anchored in impact over recognition?

Too many people are counting on me, so I don't have the luxury of worrying about being recognized for doing what is needed.

What's a leadership value you refuse to compromise even when it's inconvenient?

Extending grace to others may sometimes feel inconvenient, yet it's essential to remember that every human being deserves to maintain their dignity. Compassion can go a long way in uplifting those around us. A leader's words tend to carry additional weight, so I want to choose mine wisely.

What book, quote, lyric or even scripture captures how you lead or how you live?

Aye aye aye! I'm on vacation



Photo supplied

every single day because I love my occupation

When life gets heavy or leadership feels overwhelming, what's something you turn to: music, travel or cultural connection that helps you feel like yourself again?

Activities with my boys, such as visiting the children's museums or parks.

Who is your favorite sports team? Go Pack Go!

What is your favorite holiday and why?

Indigenous Peoples Day. We get to celebrate our culture with the communities that care for and appreciate us.

After 135 years, Wounded Knee Massacre site securely in Native hands

Monday ceremony doubled as anniversary ceremony and as a celebration of new preservation law for site of 1890 atrocity

by Stewart Huntington
December 29, 2025
Reprint from ICT
WOUNDED KNEE, S.D. – The fate of the site of one of the U.S. Army's worst acts of violence against Indigenous Nations rests now permanently where it belongs: in the hands of the atrocity's descendants.

Tribal and U.S. federal officials on Monday traveled to Wounded Knee on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to mark the 135th Anniversary of the killing of hundreds of Lakota and Dakota people – and to celebrate the Wounded Knee Memorial and Sacred Sites

Act that passed Congress this month and was signed into law.

"We are thankful for coming here today because this is healing for us as we dedicate this sacred site," Cheyenne River Chairman Ryman LeBeau told the crowd of more than 200 people gathered at the site for the morning ceremony that included honoring songs. "It's Important today to remember to have that healing of ourselves, that historical trauma that we all carry. Because we don't want to pass that down to the next generation."

The new federal law places

40 acres of land where most of the massacre's carnage took place into what is known as restricted Indian fee title in the names of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Much of the land in Indian Country is placed in trust with the federal government. In this case, the tribes did not want the government's name on the title.

LeBeau was joined by Oglala Sioux President Frank Star Comes Out and the entire South Dakota Congressional delegation – and a host of other dignitaries and massacre descendants – for ceremonies to mark the historic event. Tribal leaders thanked the lawmakers for their help getting the bill through Congress and honored them with gifts of star quilts.

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Republican-S.D., sponsored the original House bill. It passed the House last Congress but never received a Senate vote. This year, it was appended to the defense spending bill that passed this month.

"For 135 years, we have gathered on December 29th to mourn a tragedy, a massacre," said Johnson. "And today we gather in sorrow, but also for the first time we have the opportunity to acknowledge that something special has happened."



Oglala Sioux Tribe President Frank Star Comes Out speaks to Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman Ryman LeBeau and Republican South Dakota lawmakers U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, and U.S. Sen. John Thune at a ceremony marking the passing of the Wounded Knee Memorial and Sacred Sites Act on Monday, Dec. 29, 2025. "For 135 years we have gathered on December 29th to mourn a tragedy, a massacre," said Johnson. "And today we gather in sorrow but also for the first time we have the opportunity to acknowledge that something special has happened." (Stewart Huntington / ICT)

The tribes now own the massacre site that for generations was in the hands of the Czywczynki family, which had previously operated a trading post and museum on the property. The tribes purchased the land in 2022 and now have had it placed permanently in their hands through the federal legislation.

Tribal leaders say that any decision about what to do with the land will be done in consultation with Wounded Knee descendants.

"The Wounded Knee land will be used for sacred purposes and remembrance, including ceremonies and prayer, and the descendants of
Continued on Page 3



Citizens gather at the Wounded Knee mass gravesite to mark the 135th anniversary of the massacre of Lakota and Dakota people there on Dec. 29, 1890. The crowd was also there to mark the passing this month of the Wounded Knee Memorial and Sacred Sites Act, which placed into tribal hands 40 acres around the grave. (Stewart Huntington / ICT)

Attention Rental Management Applicants Reminder



All applicants with the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Housing – Rental Management Program are required to:

Resubmit a New Application Every Year

Applications do not automatically renew. To stay active on the housing waiting list, you must submit a new application annually.

Why this is important

- Keeps your information current
- Ensures we can contact you when a unit becomes available
- Prevents removal from the waiting list

If you have any questions, contact the Department of Housing Rental Management Office (608) 374-1225 or Housing@ho-chunk.com

Rental Management Office
27374 HWY 21 East Bldg. #5
P.O. Box 170, Tomah, WI 54660
Phone : (608) 374-1225 Fax: (608) 374-1233

Continued from Page 2
victims and survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre will be consulted about the proper care and maintenance of the land as a memorial and sacred site and about the ceremonies and activities to be conducted on the land,” President Star Comes Out said in testimony before Congress as part of the effort to get the law passed.

The deceased and the survivors were not far from the hearts of those in attendance Monday. “We read off 338 names of our ancestors who were massacred,” said Oglala Lakota citizen Valentina Merdanian. “We remember and we continue to move forward in a good way, remembering what they had sacrificed so that we could be here today.”

Now that the campaign to place the massacre site in tribal hands has ended successfully, leaders are looking ahead to work on

another front.

“We have a long way to go,” said Star Comes Out. “There’s a lot of concern about the medals.”

On Dec. 29, 1890, the U.S. Army 7th Cavalry surrounded a group of Lakota as they camped near Wounded Knee Creek on the modern-day Pine Ridge Reservation. The calvary had been arresting several tribal members who were participating in the Ghost Dance movement and told the camp to lay down their weapons and that they would be moved to a new camp. According to National Geographic, the campers began a Ghost Dance, which the soldiers took as a signal and began to fire upon the mostly unarmed Lakotas, killing primarily women, children and babies.

Twenty Army soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their actions at Wounded

Continued on Page 5



More than 200 people gathered Monday, Dec. 29, 2025, in Wounded Knee, S.D., to celebrate the passing into tribal hands of the lands around an 1890 massacre site. Tribal leaders thanked South Dakota’s Congressional delegation for their help getting the federal law passed that secured the land for the tribes. (Stewart Huntington / ICT)

Attention: The Next Deadline of the Hocak Worak will be January 16th which will be published on January 23rd. Please contact Hocak Worak at ext. 11004 if you have a change of address or would like to be placed on the mailing list.



**Insurance Open Enrollment
January 2026**

The benefits you currently have will remain the same for 2026 unless you make changes by January 31, 2026. See below for new updates that you want to consider for 2026:

Enroll/Change the following:

- Health Insurance - Dental/Vision
 - Medical Plan – 2 plan options to choose from in 2026 for Non Ho-Chunk enrolled employees.
 - **Option #1** - Medical plan – No changes to benefits
 - **Option #2** – Value Plan – **Lower employee contributions** and plan structure to encourage members to seek medical services at high-quality, low-cost providers.
- Open Enrollment provides the opportunity to:
 - Enroll if you previously declined coverage
 - Add eligible dependents*
 - Drop currently covered dependents; or
 - Drop all coverage
 - *No changes in plan elections allowed after open enrollment unless there is a qualifying event as defined by the IRS as a marriage, divorce, death, etc.*

LIFE AND DISABILITY APPLY OR MAKE CHANGES

- Short Term Disability
 - Apply for coverage OR change coverage amount
- Life Insurance
 - Apply or change coverage amounts

**If adding any dependents on your major medical health/vision/dental plan, remember to bring their Social Security numbers with you. If the dependent is Ho-Chunk Enrolled, please bring Ho-Chunk Enrollment number. If adding a spouse with a different last name bring a copy of Marriage License.*

All paperwork must be in the Black River Falls Insurance Department by 4:30 pm on Saturday, January 31st, 2026 or it will be too late and not processed!

DON'T MISS OPEN ENROLLMENT!!

Staff will be at various locations at least once to assist employees with questions, updates or changes. See reverse side for scheduled dates and times.

JANUARY 2026 (Subject to Change)

Not Mandatory

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--|---|--|---|--------|----------|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 BRF Executive * 9:00 11:00 1:30 3:30 Cafeteria | 6 Dells Gaming * 11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00 Lower Ballroom B/H | 7 Dells Gaming 6:00 AM 9:00 12:00 Lower Ballroom B/H | 8 Tomah YS Building* 10:00 1:00 3:00 Cafeteria | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 BRF Gaming 8:30 10:30 1:30 3:30 Bingo Hall | 13 Wittenberg * 8:30 10:30 1:30 3:30 Siga Funmaker Building | 14 Nekoosa * 8:30 10:30 1:30 3:30 Banquet | 15 Madison 8:30 11:00 1:30 3:30 Large Conference Room Community Bldg. | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 BRF Executive 9:00 11:00 1:30 3:30 Cafeteria | 20 | 21 Dells Gaming 11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00 HOW 11:00 and 2:00 | 22 Dells Gaming * 11:00 6:00 AM 9:00 12:00 Lower Ballroom B/H | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 BRF Gaming * 11:00 1:30 3:30 5:30 Bingo Hall | 27 Madison * 8:30 11:00 1:30 3:30 Large Conference Room Community Bldg. | 28 Nekoosa 8:30 11:00 2:00 Banquet | 29 Wittenberg 11:00 1:30 3:00 Siga Funmaker Building | 30 | 31 |

*Signifies a 401k representative on sight

The Hocak Worak is a periodical published twice monthly by the Ho-Chunk Nation. Editorials and articles appearing in the Hocak Worak are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of the Hocak Worak staff or the Ho-Chunk Nation.

The Hocak Worak encourages the submission of letters to the Editor. All letters must include the signature, address and telephone number of the author. Letters are subject to editing for grammar, length, malicious and libelous content.

The Hocak Worak reserves the right to reject any advertising, material, or letters submitted for publication. The submission of articles, poetry, artwork and photos is encouraged. The Editor makes the sole decision of what is published in the Hocak Worak. The Hocak Worak will not assume any responsibility for unsolicited material.

Submissions deadlines for the Hocak Worak are by 4:30 PM. We cannot guarantee the publication of submissions meeting these deadlines if the space is not available. No part of this publication may be produced without express written consent from the Editor.

HOCOK WORAK NEWSLETTER

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The Hocak Worak is a member of:
Indigenous Journalists Association



A glimpse into what 2026 could bring to Indian Country

From a potential government shutdown to the end of America's 'largest powwow,' here's what Indian Country can expect in 2026

Amelia Schafer
Reprint from ICT

As 2025 came to a close, economic uncertainty and the potential for another government shutdown carried into the new year. On a brighter note, the new year will bring historic Indigenous representation to the FIFA 2026 World Cup and a potential for Indigenous athletes to shine at the 2026 Winter Olympics and the 150th anniversary of a historic Indigenous victory at the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Economic uncertainty, unemployment rates double



Miss Indian World 2022-23 Tashina Red Hawk, Sicangu Lakota. (Photo courtesy of Gathering of Nations website)



Hundreds of dancers and drummers look toward the announcer's booth, while an honor song is sung for veterans after the 2018 Gathering of Nations' Grand Entry.



Volunteers with the Rapid City-based nonprofit COUP Council serve meals at the Pejuta Waste Day Center. Credit: Courtesy of COUP Council

for Natives in rural areas

Above all else, the United States is headed toward continued economic uncertainty in 2026. Over half of all states have declared a recession following stagnant economic growth in 2025.

There's a lot of conflicting information at the moment, said Matthew Gregg, a senior economist at the Center for Indian Country Development.

Despite strong nationwide figures, with 3.8 percent GDP growth but a 4.3 percent unemployment rate, a majority of states are either in a recession or at high risk of being in one. For tribal communities and Indigenous workers, any hit to the economy is going to be felt harder and more deeply.

"Historically, when the economy or when the unemployment rate is creeping up and it increases, it increases by more for communities and people that have historically high unemployment rates," Gregg said. "When the economy worsens and unemployment grows, those groups are disproportionately worse off."

For Indian Country, things are a bit more bleak, as indicated by data from the Center for Indian Country Development. Part of the

Federal Reserve System, the center studies how tribal economies and Indigenous employees are fairing and provides data on Indian Country's economy.

Unemployment among American Indian and Alaska Native people in urban areas sits at 5.7 percent and unemployment among American Indian and Alaska Native people in rural areas sits at a stark 8.8 percent, double that of the nationwide average.

Currently, the unemployment rate among American Indian and Alaska Native individuals in non-urban areas has declined throughout the year, peaking at 12.3 percent unemployment in June 2025 and dipping back down to 8.8 percent in December.

"Most experts call the present-day economy a low-hire, low-fire economy," Gregg said. "What that means is that the hiring rate has been really low for a while, but the layoff rate has been really low for a while. It's basically really hard to enter the labor market now and look for a job."

Labor force participation among American Indian and Alaska Native individuals in urban areas has steadily grown throughout 2025, as shown by Center for Indian Country Development data, with 63.9 percent currently employed or seeking employment. For those in non-urban and rural areas, participation has declined since June, with only 54.5 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals seeking employment or currently employed.

Compared to non-Native individuals, labor force participation among American Indian and Alaska Native individuals in urban areas is higher than that of non-Native individuals but lower among those in rural areas.

This phenomenon is not uncommon among those in rural areas, said Gregg. Living in a rural area is typically associated with increased difficulty finding employment, something further exasperated by how extremely rural reservation and tribal communities can be.

"We're in a situation where we don't have a ton of job growth," Gregg said. "So there's not a lot of job creation. The demand for workers is relatively low right now, but so is the supply of workers. We've seen a low labor supply growth rate."

If the economy continues to stay stagnant or even dip



Red Horse pictographic account of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1881.



Jessican Matten as Bernadette Manuelito and Zahn McClarnon as detective Joe Leaphorn will reprise their roles in Season Four of AMC's 'Dark Winds.'

into a full-blown recession, there will likely be a decrease in consumer spending. For Indigenous small business owners, this could mean a further decline in sales, which many reported over the holiday shopping season.

For tribal economies that thrive on gaming and tourism, those areas could also see a decline in revenue.

"The Federal Reserve right now is looking at interest rates to try to encourage spending in this kind of weird economy," Gregg said. "This is a little different, but during the COVID recession we know a lot more about what happened in those service industries that rely on casino gaming, they took a big hit. It is something to look out for."

A potential government shutdown

The clock is ticking for lawmakers who vowed to vote on extending Affordable Care Act subsidies following the longest government shutdown in American history. Lawmakers have until Jan. 30 to pass legislation. If they fail to do so, the government will once again shut down.

As of Dec. 30, lawmakers have passed only three of the 12 appropriated bills needed to fund the government in 2026. If the remaining nine bills aren't funded, another shutdown is on the table.

The end of Gathering of Nations

April 24 will mark the beginning of Gathering of Nations' "Last Dance," the final time "North America's

largest powwow" will take over Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Powwow organizers, the Matthews family, have not said why the powwow is ending.

The past several years have been marked with controversy for Gathering of Nations.

In 2024, lead organizer Derek Matthews went viral after he gave a 12-minute speech at the powwow in which he held a mirror up to the audience and responded to criticism leveled against him regarding costs of attendance, dancer registration fees, and the fact that Matthews is non-Native, saying Native people should look at themselves and solve their own problems.

Expo New Mexico, where the powwow is held, is also undergoing a costly redevelopment plan that could increase usage fees and drive out events.

Organizers did not respond to ICT's requests for comment.

150th anniversary of 'Greasy Grass'

June 25 will mark 150 years since as many as 1,800 Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors, led by Lakota chiefs Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, defeated Gen. George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry in Montana on the Crow Reservation in 1876.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, also known as the Battle of the Greasy Grass, marked a significant victory
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HO-CHUNK NATION

Department of Education

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 667, Black River Falls, WI 54615
1-800-362-4476; 715-284-4915; FAX 1-715-284-1760

Requesting Bids for Meal

Sunday, January 25, 2026
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
Nekoosa Community Center (Nekoosa)
916 Chak Ha Chee Ln
Nekoosa, WI 54457

The meal will be for a family-oriented Ho-Chunk Finger Weaving Workshop. The meal will be served to 40 people and should include a variety of healthy food and drink options. Please be aware of possible food allergies and dietary restrictions.

Bids should include the following information:

- 1. A detailed menu that encompasses all necessary paper products, including plates, bowls, forks, spoons, knives, napkins, and cups.
2. The full name of the organization submitting the bid and a mailing address to which the bid award can be sent.
3. The proposed dollar amount for the bid.
4. A statement confirming the organization's commitment to set up and clean up for the specified timeframe mentioned above.

Bids will be accepted through January 9, 2026. No exceptions. Bids should be sent to the attention of Mattea Twinn and Angela Ward, Indigenous Arts & Sciences Grant Managers, Education Department, via email at Mattea.Twinn@ho-chunk.com, and Angela.Ward@ho-chunk.com.

Organizations will be notified via email on January 12, 2026, whether their bid was accepted. For this reason, please include a contact person and an email address for communication purposes. If your bid is accepted, payment will be made on the event day.

Thank you.

Angela K. Ward
IAS Grant Manager

Mattea Twinn
IAS Grant Manager

FINGER WEAVING WORKSHOP

CULTURE & COMMUNITY EDUCATION



LEARN TO WEAVE

Join us for this 3-day beginners weaving workshop. Start Workshop 1 by learning to make a keychain, then Workshop 2 with arm/leg bands and finally, Workshop 3 begin weaving a yarn belt!

SIGN UP HERE:



You must be able to attend ALL three workshops to sign up. Sign-ups are non-transferrable. Please contact us asap if you need to cancel. Material, lunch, snacks, and drinks are provided.

Must be 14+ years old to participate.

DATES:

- Sunday, January 25th 10am-2:30pm
• Sunday, February 8th 10am-2:30pm
• Sunday, February 22nd 10am-4:30pm



CHAHK HA CHEE COMMUNITY BUILDING
916 CHAHK HA CHEE LANE | NEKOOSA, WI 54457



Contacts:
Angela.Ward@Ho-Chunk.com
Mattea.Twinn@Ho-Chunk.com

HO-CHUNK NATION

Department of Education

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 667, Black River Falls, WI 54615
1-800-362-4476; 715-284-4915; FAX 1-715-284-1760

Requesting Bids for Meal

Sunday, February 8, 2026
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
Nekoosa Community Center (Nekoosa)
916 Chak Ha Chee Ln
Nekoosa, WI 54457

The meal will be for a family-oriented Ho-Chunk Finger Weaving Workshop. The meal will be served to 40 people and should include a variety of healthy food and drink options. Please be aware of possible food allergies and dietary restrictions.

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4. A statement confirming the organization's commitment to set up and clean up for the specified timeframe mentioned above.

Bids will be accepted through January 16, 2026. No exceptions. Bids should be sent to the attention of Mattea Twinn and Angela Ward, Indigenous Arts & Sciences Grant Managers, Education Department, via email at Mattea.Twinn@ho-chunk.com, and Angela.Ward@ho-chunk.com.

Organizations will be notified via email on January 19, 2026, whether their bid was accepted. For this reason, please include a contact person and an email address for communication purposes. If your bid is accepted, payment will be made on the event day.

Thank you.

Angela K. Ward
IAS Grant Manager

Mattea Twinn
IAS Grant Manager

HO-CHUNK NATION

Department of Education

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 667, Black River Falls, WI 54615
1-800-362-4476; 715-284-4915; FAX 1-715-284-1760

Requesting Bids for Meal

Sunday, February 22, 2026
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
Nekoosa Community Center (Nekoosa)
916 Chak Ha Chee Ln
Nekoosa, WI 54457

The meal will be for a family-oriented Ho-Chunk Finger Weaving Workshop. The meal will be served to 40 people and should include a variety of healthy food and drink options. Please be aware of possible food allergies and dietary restrictions.

Bids should include the following information:

- 1. A detailed menu that encompasses all necessary paper products, including plates, bowls, forks, spoons, knives, napkins, and cups.
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Bids will be accepted through February 6, 2026. No exceptions. Bids should be sent to the attention of Mattea Twinn and Angela Ward, Indigenous Arts & Sciences Grant Managers, Education Department, via email at Mattea.Twinn@ho-chunk.com, and Angela.Ward@ho-chunk.com.

Organizations will be notified via email on February 9, 2026, whether their bid was accepted. For this reason, please include a contact person and an email address for communication purposes. If your bid is accepted, payment will be made on the event day.

Thank you.

Angela K. Ward
IAS Grant Manager

Mattea Twinn
IAS Grant Manager

Continued from Page 3
Knee. Tribal leaders have worked for generations to have those medals rescinded. Those efforts were rebuffed in September when U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced in a social media post that the soldiers will keep their awards. Hegseth referred to the action at Wounded Knee

as a "battle." Federal officials did not repeat that language in South Dakota on Monday. "The recognition in the law, designating it as (a massacre) I think is important," said Sen. John Thune, Republican-S.D. "What happened here 135 years ago will always be a blight on our state and on our nation's history. But it's important for those coming

generations that this site be preserved to honor the victims, to honor the lost and remind future generations of what happened here." Said Rep. Johnson: "There is a lot of darkness that comes from the massacre but I want to thank all the leaders who worked so hard to bring some light into that darkness." And Star Comes out vowed

the issue of the medals won't drift away. "We need to address it," he said. "That's going to come next." Chairman Ryman LeBeau and Republican South Dakota lawmakers U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, and U.S. Sen. John Thune at a ceremony marking the passing of the Wounded Knee Memorial and Sacred

Sites Act on Monday, Dec. 29, 2025. "For 135 years we have gathered on December 29th to mourn a tragedy, a massacre," said Johnson. "And today we gather in sorrow but also for the first time we have the opportunity to acknowledge that something special has happened." (Stewart Huntington / ICT)

2025 Elk Hunting Season Wraps Up

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) celebrates the completion of the 2025 elk hunting season. The state’s eighth managed elk hunt opened on Oct. 18 and concluded Dec. 19.

“This elk season marks another rewarding hunt for 13 lucky state hunters,” said Christina Kizewski, DNR Central Elk Zone biologist. “The opportunity to establish a close relationship with the elk hunters and witness the excitement each one had was very special.”

The 13 Wisconsin state-licensed hunters who participated in this year’s hunt were randomly selected from a pool of more than 26,000 applicants. The DNR received 17,737 applications to hunt in the Clam Lake (Northern) Elk Range and 8,452 applications for the Black River (Central) Elk Range. An eight-bull quota was established for the Clam Lake Elk Range. Four licenses were awarded to state hunters, and, per treaty rights, the Ojibwe Tribes declared a harvest of four bull elk. In the Black River Elk Range, five antlerless and four bull licenses were issued to state hunters, up from a four-bull quota in 2024.

The random draw process ensures that each applicant has an equal chance of selection within the respective management zones. Applicants were required to identify their management zone of choice during the elk hunting application process.

State-licensed hunters found success in both elk ranges, in which a total of seven bulls and five antlerless elk were harvested statewide. In the Black River Elk Range, nearly all license holders found success, filling five of five antlerless tags and three of four bull tags.

“All five antlerless elk were harvested in areas where the reduction of a few elk was intended, making it a successful harvest for the hunters as well as meeting harvest objectives,”



The state’s eighth managed elk hunt opened on Oct. 18 and concluded Dec. 19, 2025. Photo credit: Thomas Yarrington

said Kizewski.

Some hunters found success during the first opportunity to hunt elk, from mid-October to mid-November, while others filled their tags in the December timeframe. In the Clam Lake Elk Range, all four state-licensed hunters harvested bull elk in the first two weeks of the season. Tribal hunters have until Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, to complete their pursuit of elk within Wisconsin’s Ceded Territory.

Hunters Can Apply For The 2026 Elk Hunting Season Starting In March 2026

The DNR’s Elk Management Program is driven by the revenue received from hunter application fees, which contribute directly to the future of the state’s elk population. For each \$10 application fee, \$7 goes directly toward elk management, habitat restoration and research.

The 2026 elk hunt application period for Wisconsin residents is expected to open with the new license year on March 1 and run through May 31, 2026. The 2026 elk hunting season will open on Saturday, Oct. 17.

For more information on elk in Wisconsin, visit the DNR’s Elk webpage.

Book Report January 2026

As a sci-fi reader I was a bit disappointed with this book, “Walking the Clouds,” edited by Grace Dillion, an anthology of indigenous science fiction. I had expected a series of short stories but instead found a series of excerpts from books and poems. That said, this book is a great starting point from which to explore the work of these authors included in this

book and those mentioned in the lead up to each excerpt. The book divides up sci-fi into categories of The Native Slipstream, Contact, Indigenous Science and Sustainability, Native Apocalypse, and Returning to Ourselves. Sherman Alexie has a couple entries within the book which I looked forward to reading. Remember to visit the library at D1.

Josiah “Hoocak Hoit’e” Thunder, Sr.

September 17, 1948 – January 2, 2026

Josiah Thunder, Sr. (1948-2026) passed away peacefully on January 2, 2026 at his residence in Tomah, Wisconsin. Josiah was born on September 17, 1948, to Mary (GreenCrown) and Frank Thunder. On July 9, 1978, he married Rosalie Gokee, who survives him.

He is fondly remembered as an avid outdoorsman, spending most of his time hunting or fishing. He also enjoyed gaming, watching football, and spending time with his grandchildren.

Joe spent most of his career working for the Department of Natural Resources as a Forestry and Fire Control Technician and Heavy Equipment Operator. He loved being outdoors cruising timber or responding to calls for wildland fire control or supervision. You could often find Joe in a local parade as “Smokey the Bear.” A highlight of his career was being on a wildland fire crew.

Survivors include his children Leah, Josiah Jr., and Arlene; grandchildren, Justin Thompson, Jr., Alexandria Thompson, Brett Blackdeer, Layla Blackdeer, Mya Darge, Austin Breeden, Josiah

Thunder, III, Jocelyn Thunder, Naomi Thunder, William Thunder, Jr., Eric Thunder, and Jasmine Thunder; sisters Myrtle Long and Faye Begay; sister-in-law Beverly Thunder; along with nieces, nephews, and extended family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Mary; brothers Merton Thunderbull, Gordon Thunder and Levi Thunder; sisters Faith Matter, Hope Smith and Charity Thunder; and beloved son William Thunder, Sr.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Anderson Funeral Home in Augusta with Stuart LoneTree officiating. Burial will be at a later date in the Fairchild Cemetery. Friends may call on Tuesday starting at noon at the funeral home.



The Ho-Chunk Nation Child and Family Services wishes to thank all the employees, community members, Office of the President and various Departments of the Ho-Chunk Nation who either sponsored or collected gifts for Hocak Woga. Through your continued generosity, 239 children received Christmas gifts and/or gift cards this year. We could not do this without your support every year! Thank you for making Christmas special for so many children!

Continued from Page 4 for Native American people against the US military and is celebrated in many Lakota communities every year.

The nine Oceti Sakowin tribes of South Dakota, Northern Cheyenne Nation and Northern Arapahoe Nation are currently planning a celebratory event to be held June 25, 2026. Event details will be made available as soon as they are made public.

America’s 250th

The United States will celebrate its 250th birthday on July 4, 2026. Several events are planned across the country to celebrate. The Great American State Fair will travel across the country and visit various state fairs, before landing on the National Mall in July 2026 to honor the “most patriotic”

state fair.

Milano Olympic Winter Games

The 2026 Winter Olympics will kick off in Milan, Italy, on Feb. 6 and end on Feb. 22. The United States’s roster is not yet finalized, so it’s unclear what, if any, Indigenous athletes will be competing.

Ice hockey, a sport popular among Indigenous athletes, will be a featured sport at the 2026 Olympics.

For Canada’s team, snowboarder Liam Gill, Łı́ı́dli ı́ Kų́’ę́ (Dene) First Nation, could return to the roster. Gill participated in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Notably, Gill modeled Team Canada’s 2026 Olympic gear for the team in November, hinting that the Dene snowboarder

could be on the roster.

Alex Loutitt, Metis, will not be joining Canada’s ski team following a knee injury in September. Loutitt was part of Canada’s 2022 Winter Olympics team and was the first Canadian to win a medal in ski jumping.

World Cup and historic Indigenous partnerships

The FIFA World Cup will begin June 11 in Estadio Azteca in Mexico City, Mexico. Games will be held at various locations worldwide until the tournament ends on July 19, 2026.

A historic first, the World Cup will partner with the Puyallup Tribe for the game in Seattle, marking the first time an Indigenous nation is highlighted in the tournament.

FIFA has pledged that the 2026 tournament will highlight and honor Indigenous peoples following criticism regarding a lack of Indigenous athletes in previous tournaments.

In Canada, FIFA will partner with three additional Indigenous host nations – the Musqueam Indian Band, the Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation for its games in British Columbia.

In Mexico, FIFA said, it will work to honor the nation’s 68 federally recognized Indigenous groups as part of its work with the host city of Guadalajara.

Officials are also working on plans to translate information on rights, safety, protocols and public awareness campaigns into

various different Indigenous languages.

It is unclear what Indigenous athletes will be participating in the tournament, as team rosters are not yet available.

Movies and TV

Season 4 of AMC’s southwestern noir mystery series “Dark Winds,” starring Zahn McClarnon, Hunkpapa Lakota, Jessica Matten, Red River Metis-Cree, and Kiowa Gordon, Hualapi, will premier on Feb. 15.

Inuit comedy show “North of North” was a hit among Native viewers in 2025, and 2026 will bring the show’s second season. The release date is yet to be announced, but is expected to be sometime in 2026. Filming for Season 2 is ongoing.



Wii Te'e Waagax Haraja Ee Warupj Wa'ujee

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

NOMINATE A STUDENT OF THE MONTH

We are proud to recognize **three** outstanding Ho-Chunk students each month in our Student Spotlight!

Who Can Be Nominated?

All Ho-Chunk students — any age, any grade, any level of education (Head Start, Elementary, Middle School, High School, Home School, and Post-Secondary).

What We Celebrate

- Academic achievements (Honor Roll, Dean's/President's List),
- Student-athletes & extracurricular achievements.
- Volunteer work & community service.
- Leadership & contributions to school or family.
- College acceptances & future goals.
- Everyday efforts that inspire others.

Where Will They Be Featured?

- *Ho-Chunk Nation Social Media.
- *Education Department Spotlight Wall.
- *Hocak Worak (monthly feature).

How to Nominate

It's quick and easy! Fill out our form here:

<https://form.jotform.com/250025400580038>

Questions? Email us at:

StudentSuccess@Ho-Chunk.com



Ho-Chunk Nation Dept. of Housing Q&A LA CROSSE

MONDAY, JANUARY 26TH

4PM-5PM CST

THREE RIVERS HOUSE
724 MAIN STREET
LA CROSSE, WI 54603

Questions? Contact Kaleena Emery
at Kaleenaemery@Ho-Chunk.com

Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health

Feed the Elders Event

Teejop Hocira

4724 Tradewinds Parkway Madison, WI 53718

Soups Provided:
Vegetable Beef & Barley
Split Pea & Ham
Cheesy Vegetable
Chicken & Wild Rice
Root Vegetable Soup

Friday
January 16th
11AM-2PM

Some Tupperware will be provided,
but please bring your own to take
soup home!

Contact:
Jamie Decorah
Public Health Worker Supervisor
jamie.decorah@ho-chunk.com
Office: 715-253-2382 ext. 33142
Work Cell: (715) 896-1126

Wendy Lonetree
Public Health Worker
Wendy.Lonetree@ho-chunk.com
Office: (608)-355-1240 ext. 35600
Work cell: (715) 896-7199

SEEKING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY & DIVERSITY (S.E.E.D)

To discuss educational equity and inclusive practices for the betterment of all students.

SPRING 2026 VIRTUAL S.E.E.D CLASS
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 21, 2026

**WEEKLY CLASSES BEGIN ON:
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026.
TIME: 6:00 - 8:00 PM (VIA ZOOM)**

Facilitators: Dr. Marcus Lewis & Kate Grovergrys

Questions, please contact:
Michelle Cloud: michelle.cloud@ho-chunk.com
Bethany Redbird: bethany.redbird@ho-chunk.com

PLEASE JOIN US!

Use Smartphone to Register

January is Radon Awareness Month

Have you had your home tested for radon before? Homes with high levels of radon have been found in every state. In fact, radon levels can vary greatly from home to home; even levels next door can be very different.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can build up to dangerous levels inside any home; this means new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without a basement. Radon gas is odorless and invisible and the only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test for it.

Breathing radon can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer for people who do. The EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year in the U.S. If you smoke and your home has a high radon level, your risk of lung cancer can increase even more.

For more information regarding radon, contact the HCN Division of Environmental Health.

Matt Malimanek
Tribal Air Quality Specialist
715-284-9851 Ext. 35054

The HCN Division of Environmental Health uses Radon Test-Kits, like the one pictured, to test Tribal Member's Homes

HO-CHUNK NATION Land Development Team

Petition
For
Zoning Change

App Number: _____
File Date: _____
Fee Paid: _____
Office Use Only

Petitions for Zoning Change must be submitted, reviewed and approved in accordance with 8 HCC § 4, prior to the application and issuance of necessary permits. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all required documentation at the time of petition submission. Petitions with misrepresented information or absence of required documentation will be denied.

Applicant and/or Agent Name: Waagax Hakinuxaraxara Hosto
Address: N 1261 Warrior Ave. City: Black River Falls State: WI Zip Code: 54603
Phone: 608-574-6631 Alt. Phone: _____ Email: JMrie@Wisc.edu
Legal Description of Property: Wazee, Btk Tract # 101, # 122

Property and/or Title Name: Wazee Present Zoning: Residential
Proposed Zoning: B-1 Township: Brockway County: Jackson

Present Use, Leases and/or Improvements: _____
Vacant, unassigned

Proposed Use, Leases and/or Improvements: _____
Future Library

Zoning Change Checklist

Legal Description Attached: Yes No Preliminary Development Plan Filed: Yes No
Scale Drawing Attached: Yes No Full Development Plan Filed: Yes No

The petitioner requests zoning change approval in accordance with 8 HCC § 4 of the Ho-Chunk Nation Zoning and Land Use Code. The approval sought by the petitioner is limited to the general acceptability of the land uses proposed, and will not be construed to endorse the precise locations of uses, configuration of parcels or engineering feasibility. Petition approval will not be considered by any person(s) as a commitment by the Ho-Chunk Nation to approve subsequent rezoning petitions, final development plan, or any applicable permits.

Janice M. Rie, President Janice M. Rie 12/11/2025
Printed Name of Applicant/Agent Signature Date
Waagax Hakinuxaraxara Hosto

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Rezoning in the Wazee South
Subdivision
Ho-Chunk Nation Division of
Planning & Development
January 19, 2026

Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Office
Building
W9814 Airport Road
Black River Falls, WI 54615
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm



Online Pathways Program 2026 Important Dates

SAVE THE DATE

Winter 2026
 Registration Week of January 12-16, 2026
 Orientation week of January 19-23, 2026
 Classes begin the week of January 26, 2026

Summer 2026
 Registration Week of May 11-15, 2026
 Orientation week of May 18-22, 2026
 Classes begin the week of May 26, 2026

Fall 2026
 Registration Week of September 8-13, 2026
 Orientation week of September 14-18, 2026
 Classes begin the week of September 21, 2026



Hooçak Language Winter 2026 Course Offerings

ONLINE REGISTRATION JAN 12-16, 2026

Classes run Jan 26 - April 17, 2026

OPP 1A Introduction & Kinship
 Objectives: learners will be able to introduce themselves including their name, age, Clan, Where they live. Kinship terms and system.

OPP 1B Time\Weather & Traveling
 Objectives: learners will be able to add time and weather to their language and begin using Hooçak Traveling Verbs.

OPP 1C Daily Life - Mealtime & In the House
 Objectives: learners will gain a vocabulary in "daily life" areas of Mealtime, In the House, and Everyday Phrases.

OPP 1D Body, Characteristics & Personality Traits
 Objectives: learners will gain a vocabulary and every day language about the body. Learners will be able to talk about their physical characteristics and personality traits.

OPP 2A Getting Ready & Clothing
 Objectives: learners will be able to talk about putting clothes on, putting items on their head and putting items on their feet. These all have different verbs in Hooçak necessitating this new concept.

OPP 2B Daily Routines & Current Events
 Objectives: learners will be able to talk about their daily routines and be able to use spontaneous language to talk about current events.

OPP 2C Daily Life - Work, Recreation, Social Interactions
 Objectives learners will be able to talk about daily life interactions, such as work and school, recreation and entertainment, and social situations.

OPP 2D Personal Information & Žuura
 Objectives: learners will be able to talk about personal information including home and email addresses, date of birth, phone number, and Nationalities. Learners will also be able to talk about money, costs and social transactions.

OPP 3 Coming in Spring 2026!
 OPP 3 will be discussion tables\sessions where learners will engage in interpersonal activities around everyday topics and themes.



Online Pathways Program Winter 2026

WINTER 2026 CLASS TIMES

Registration Week of January 12-16, 2026
 Orientation week of January 19-23, 2026
 Classes begin the week of January 26, 2026

OPP 1 Series

- OPP 1A - IntrolKinship**
 Mon 10:00 a.m.
 Tues 5:30 p.m.
 Wed 10:00 a.m.
 Thur 2:00 p.m.
- OPP 1B - Time | Weather | Travel**
 Mon 2:00 p.m.
 Tues 10:00 a.m.
 Wed 5:30 p.m.
- OPP 1C - Mealtime | Home**
 Mon 2:00 p.m.
 Tues 11:00 a.m.
 Wed 5:30 p.m.
 Thur 2:00 p.m.
- OPP 1D Body | Personality | Phys. Characteristics**
 Mon 2:00 p.m.
 Tues 5:30 p.m.
 Thur 2:00 p.m.
 Fri 10:00 a.m.

OPP 2 Series

- OPP 2A - Getting Ready, Clothing**
 Tues 1:00 p.m.
 Thrs 11:00 a.m.
- OPP 2B - Daily Routine, Current Events**
 Tues 1:00 p.m.
 Fri 11:00 a.m.
- OPP 2C - Daily Life**
 Tues 1:00 p.m.
 Wed 6:00 p.m.
 Thrs 11:00 a.m.
- OPP 2D - Personal Info | Žuura**
 Tues 1:00 p.m.
 Wed 6:00 p.m.
 Thrs 11:00 a.m.

JANUARY 2026

HO-CHUNK NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

**OFFICE HOURS: 8:00AM - 11:45AM
 1:00PM - 3:45 PM**

**SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
 PHONE: 715-284-7461 EXT. 35038**



| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|-------------------|---|--|---|
| | | | 1 CLOSED HAPPY NEW YEAR | 2 OPEN BRF |
| 5 OPEN BRF | 6 OPEN BRF | 7 WITTENBERG DISTRIBUTION 10:30 AM-12:30 PM NUTRITION BOOTH KATHY | 8 OPEN BRF | 9 OPEN BRF |
| 12 OPEN BRF | 13 OPEN BRF | 14 WIS DELLS DISTRIBUTION 10AM-130PM NUTRITION BOOTH ALEX | 15 REEDSBURG HOME DELIVERIES OPEN BRF | 16 WIS. DELLS HOME DELIVERIES OPEN BRF |
| 19 OPEN BRF | 20 OPEN BRF | 21 TOMAH DISTRIBUTION 12N-1:00 PM | 22 OPEN BRF | 23 LACROSSE PICKUPS CLOSED SHIPMENT |
| 26 OPEN BRF NUTRITION BOOTH KATHY | 27 OPEN BRF | 28 NEKOOSA DISTRIBUTION 12N-1:00PM NUTRITION BOOTH ALEX | 29 OPEN BRF LAST PICK-UP DAY | 30 CLOSED INVENTORY |

****CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY FOR TAILGATE DAYS****

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HO-CHUNK NATION HOMELESS COALITION (HCNHC)

Let's Make Everyone Count!

2026 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count

What is the PIT

The PIT Count is a one-day snapshot of the people experiencing homelessness in our communities.

Why do we do it?

Knowing the number of people facing homelessness in our communities can help us advocate for more local and federal funding. It also helps to raise awareness within our communities.

Wednesday, January 28-29, 2026

Available times between 11 PM - 6 AM

Survey Locations (Ho-Chunk Tribal Lands)

Counties Included:
 Brown, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, La Crosse, Sauk, Shawano and Wood

Sign up to volunteer. No experience necessary. Training materials will be provided.

If you are experiencing homelessness contact HCNHC.

at this number



email: lynnette.henryh@ho-chunk.com
 Call: 715-284-7749

What new hemp and cannabis regulations can mean for Indian Country

By Omar Waheed
Reprint from Madison365

Changes to hemp definitions under the Nov. 2025 Federal Spending Bill and President Trump’s push to reschedule cannabis will impact the scattered industry, but for Tribal Nations, their sovereign determination presents a unique opportunity to create legitimate enterprises.

Two large changes to how hemp and cannabis are classified have large potential to change the cannabis industry. Rob Pero, founder of the Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association (ICIA) and owner of Wisconsin’s first Indigenous-owned hemp farm and THC beverage company, looks towards how these changes impact his own business, advocacy and efforts in the cannabis industry throughout Indian Country.

“The ban basically closes the loophole,” Pero said. “The clock is ticking on what that looks like, but I think there’s still a lot of defining and massaging to this language that has to happen from all sectors.”

In November, the Federal Spending Bill had a provision to change the legal definition of hemp. The change effectively bans products like Delta-8 and THCA through its limit of total THC concentration of no more than 0.3% on a dry weight basis — or a limit of 0.4 milligrams of total THC per container in a final hemp-derived product.

Cannabis dispensaries operated in a legal loophole prior to this classification, as no formal laws for hemp-derived products existed. Changes to hemp definitions now close that loophole with a one-year transition period. The new regulation will be in full effect in November 2026.

Over a month later, President Trump signed an executive order to expedite the reclassification of cannabis. It directed Attorney General Pam Bondi to hasten the process of loosening federal restrictions without a timeline.

The order aims to increase research on its medical use without legalization. Trump’s plan for the executive order is to make it easier to conduct cannabis-related medical research to study benefits, dangers and potential treatments, CNN reported.

The combination of changes with hemp definition and push for schedule reclassification presents

opportunities for Tribes, but how they react will take time, Pero said.

“There is a lot for Tribes to digest in this announcement, and Tribal Nations will continue to determine what is in the best interest of their own communities, as they always have. Rescheduling cannabis to Schedule III is a commonsense step toward progress that acknowledges its medical value and supports expanded research, but it does not change the responsibility of Tribes to govern thoughtfully and on their own terms,” Pero said. “Indian Country will continue to lead with sovereignty, community well-being, and long-term impacts at the center of these decisions.”

To advance efforts, ICIA has partnered with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to strengthen the policy framework in Indian Country. Indian Country has passed two joint resolutions to express ICIA’s and NCAI’s positions on policy for how it impacts Tribes.

The first resolution calls on Congress and the Trump Administration to support Tribal cannabis sovereignty and intertribal trade. The second calls for supporting safe regulation of hemp-derived cannabinoids in Indian Country and protecting USDA-approved Tribal hemp programs.

Regulations can create safer cannabis and strengthen the industry

Announcements posit a potential net benefit in regulation in Pero’s eyes. The options he believes are common-sense reform to create a safe, legal market or risk an unsafe black market. Pero points to the current beverage market as an example.

“There’s a lot of talk about the beverage aspect of the industry being protected somehow, if these low-dose THC beverages should be at grocery stores or in a dispensary. Dispensaries are off-putting,” Pero said.

Talks have circled around treating low-dose THC drinks like a light beer, he said. As it stands, the broad availability of THCA products like drinks, gummies and flower in readily accessible places like gas stations is a result of poor regulation, Pero said.

“You shouldn’t be able to go to a gas station and have a 17-year-old tell you that it’s okay to buy 26% THCA,” Pero said.



Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley (left) with Rob Pero, founder of the Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association and co-founder of the Indigenous Business Group (Photo by Omar Waheed)

The Federal Spending Bill and its November 2026 implementation deadline would alleviate some of the poor regulations that allows high dosage products to make their way into gas stations.

As it relates to joint resolutions between ICIA and NCAI — specifically the portion on intertribal trade — Pero hopes to see changes that allow state partnerships.

The current state of cannabis and hemp regulation makes no room for production or retail-based partnerships across states. Cannabis industries are limited to per-state domestic operations due to a lack of federal regulation and interstate commerce bans preventing the transportation of goods across state lines.

There is no trade between state lines currently allowed. Tribes, despite their sovereignty on their own lands, cannot leverage their independence to create industrial hemp and cannabis partnerships due to the need for interstate use.

Intertribal trade would, ideally, help bolster a larger Indigenous industry in cannabis if the resolution does gain support from Congress and the Trump Administration.

ATTENTION
Ho-Chunk Nation Members

The Annual General Council Meeting is on
September 19, 2026.

The deadline to submit proposed resolutions is
July 21, 2026.

A fillable resolution form is available on the
Ho-Chunk Nation website under the
Office of General Council tab.



Submit proposed resolutions to:
Henry.WhiteThunder@ho-chunk.com

Partners in Parenting:

Wittenberg
area



Specific to parents and grandparents
of infant to school-aged children

When: Wed. January 14th
11:45am - 1:00 pm

Where: Siga Funmaker Community Center
Wittenberg WI

GUEST SPEAKER:
Ronelle McKernan
Public Health Nurse

.....
QPR Suicide Prevention
.....

Event includes lunch and a prize raffle!

MUST ATTEND PRESENTATION TO RECEIVE RAFFLE AND INCENTIVES

To sign up: Contact Claudia Yaeger

CLAUDIA YAEGER
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKER
PHONE: (715) 253-2382 EXT 33140
CLAUDIA.YAEGER@HO-CHUNK.COM

Updated 10/25 88

Continued from Page 1 but it does not replace the responsibility of Tribal governments to regulate cannabis on their own terms. He emphasized that the moment could either strengthen or undermine Tribal sovereignty, depending on how future policy reforms unfold. “For Tribal Nations, rescheduling could be a useful tool, or a wedge, for asserting sovereignty and building legitimate cannabis-

related enterprises,” Pero said. “But only if Tribes and their advocates are strategic, organized, and vigilant.” ICIA leaders stress that each Tribal Nation will continue to decide whether and how cannabis fits into its community, culture, and economic goals. While federal policy may be shifting, they say, sovereignty and self-determination remain at the center of decision-making in Indian Country.





Continued from Page 1

Community members gathered for the evening to acknowledge those contributions and support the museum's ongoing work. Catering for the event was provided by Wild Berries, with lighting and sound by MC Whitehorse Productions. Photography was provided by Leticia Casarez. A raffle featuring donated items from Ho-Chunk artists was also held during the gala.

The event raised more than \$8,000, which will support programming and operations at the Ho-Chunk Nation Museum and Cultural Center.

Organizers said the inaugural awards ceremony is intended to become an ongoing way to recognize Ho-Chunk community members whose long-term commitment continues to strengthen the Nation's cultural foundation.

"I want to say that we appreciate everything that you do, who you are, and the environment and lives of people that you touch around you," President Jon Greendeer said. "This event, if you look around, is done by all Ho-Chunk providers. We have always wanted something as our very own, and thanks to the work you have done, we have it."




Health & Wellness Class Schedules 2026

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Live Well, Prevent Diabetes!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 sessions (six education & six interactive sessions), in person/or online. Best for those with a pre-diabetes diagnosis or those at high risk. <p>Class Start Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 14th at 2:30 pm August 4th at 2:30 pm November 10th & 2:30 pm | <p>Balancing Your Life & Diabetes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 sessions of comprehensive diabetes education. Coaching included. Available online only. Best for those with a diabetes diagnosis, and those who love/care for them. <p>Class Start Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 29th at 2:30 pm May 7th at 1:00 pm September 10th & 2:30 pm | <p>Native Food for Life Online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 sessions on diet only. Participants should be interested in a plant-based/vegan diet. Available online only. Best for those with high risk, pre-diabetes, and/or a diabetes diagnosis. <p>Class Start Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 15th at 11:00 am June 11th at 1:00 am September 24th at 11:00 am | <p>Conversation Map Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A one time, 90 minute session. Available in person only, maximum of 6-8 people per session. Available to anyone interested in hosting a class, we will come to you if you would like as well. <p>Class Start Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classes will be scheduled directly with the department/family/group that would like to hold a session. |
|--|---|--|--|

Contact Info:

Rachel Montana (Health & Wellness Program Recruiter)

- rachel.montana@ho-chunk.com
- 715-284-9851 ext. 35039

Lyndsey Killian (Health & Wellness Program Recruiter)

- lyndsey.killian@ho-chunk.com
- 715-284-9851 ext. 35068

12/29/25 UK



Community Health Foot Clinics

January 2026

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Black River Falls - 1/5, 1/15, 1/28</p> <p>Community Health Office W9850 Airport Road (715) 896-1343</p> | <p>10:00 AM - 2:00 PM</p> <p>A Registered Nurse will clip/file your nails, and dremel if necessary. For ingrown toenail removal, please contact podiatry.</p> |
| <p>Tomah - 1/13</p> <p>Tribal Aging Unit 358 Eos Road (608) 372-5202</p> | <p>Madison - 1/20</p> <p>Branch Office 4724 Tradewinds Pkwy (608) 277-9964</p> |
| <p>La Crosse - 1/20</p> <p>Three Rivers House 724 Main Street (608) 783-6025</p> | <p>Nekoosa - 1/22</p> <p>Nekoosa Health Office 1021 County Road G (715) 886-5444</p> |
| <p>Wisconsin Dells - 1/20</p> <p>House Of Wellness S2845 White Eagle Road (608) 355-1240 x35509</p> | <p>Wittenberg - 1/29</p> <p>Siga Funmaker Center W17634 Radke Road (715) 701-2069</p> |

Open to Tribal Members - No walk-ins - Appointment is now needed.

Jackson In Action WINTER HIKE SERIES

Gather your friends and family for a winter hike on the beautiful trails of Jackson County! Arrows will guide the way as you explore anytime during the dates listed below. No pre-registration required; just come and enjoy!

Jackson County Park admission is FREE for Jackson in Action events!

JANUARY 17-25: WAZEE LAKE
Start Location: Take a right at the registration booth, follow arrows

FEBRUARY 14-21: LUNDA COMMUNITY PARK
Start Location: West end of parking lot, closest to pond

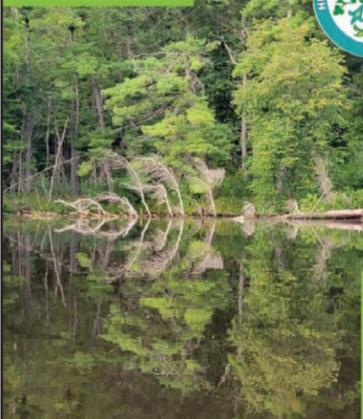


Scan for More Info

www.JacksonInAction.org/winterhike

How Does Nature Help Our Health?

- Class 1 - January 14th, 2026
 - 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm
 - Strengths and the benefits of nature.
- Class 2 - January 21st, 2026
 - 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm
 - Tools that nature offers to improve health & peace.
- Class 3 - January 28th, 2026
 - 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm
 - The benefits of sound & animals.


"Our very essence, health & happiness depend on Mother Earth."
— David Suzuki

These classes are online to reach as many people as possible. However there will be homework in nature and will be discussed in classes.

Contact to register:
kathleen.clemons@ho-chunk.com
715-284-9851 ext. 35308

Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Health
Division of Public Health



PARENTING GROUP

Family-friendly event for parents, guardians, caregivers, and kids 0-18 years old.

Topic: Healthy Winter Habits



January 13, 2026
5:00 - 6:00 pm
House of Wellness Atrium

Activity: Indoor Crafts

Light dinner provided
Please RSVP to:
Irina Clendenning, RN, PHN
Email: Irina.Clendenning@ho-chunk.com
Office: 608-355-1240 ext 35620
Cell: 715-896-7408
Created 12-26-25 IC

NATIVE FOOD FOR LIFE ONLINE

THURSDAYS: JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2026
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM VIA WEBEX
(9 AM PST/ 10 AM MST/ 11 AM CST / 12 PM EST)

A 7-WEEK "PLANT-BASED" PROGRAM WITH A FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS FOODS FOR NATIVES TO HELP PREVENT AND MANAGE DIABETES.

| | |
|--|--|
| January 15th- Prevent and Reverse Diabetes | February 12th- Meet the Power Plate! |
| January 22nd- The Power of the Plate | February 19th- A Tale of Two Sisters |
| January 29th- The Magic 8 Indigenous Foods | February 26th- Putting It All Together |

(Optional) March 12th - Virtual Potluck: plant-based recipes

Please reach out to Rachel Montana or Lyndsey Killian to sign up.

Rachel Montana
715-284-9851 ext. 35039
rachel.montana@ho-chunk.com

Lyndsey Killian
715-284-9851 ext. 35068
lyndsey.killian@ho-chunk.com

Past Participants said: "I lost weight", "lowers blood sugars", "better digestion", "more energy", "feeling better about food choices", "good recipes" and "I feel fuller longer".



11/20/25 KB

Ho-Chunk Nation Child and Family Services and Community Supportive Services

Clothing Giveaway

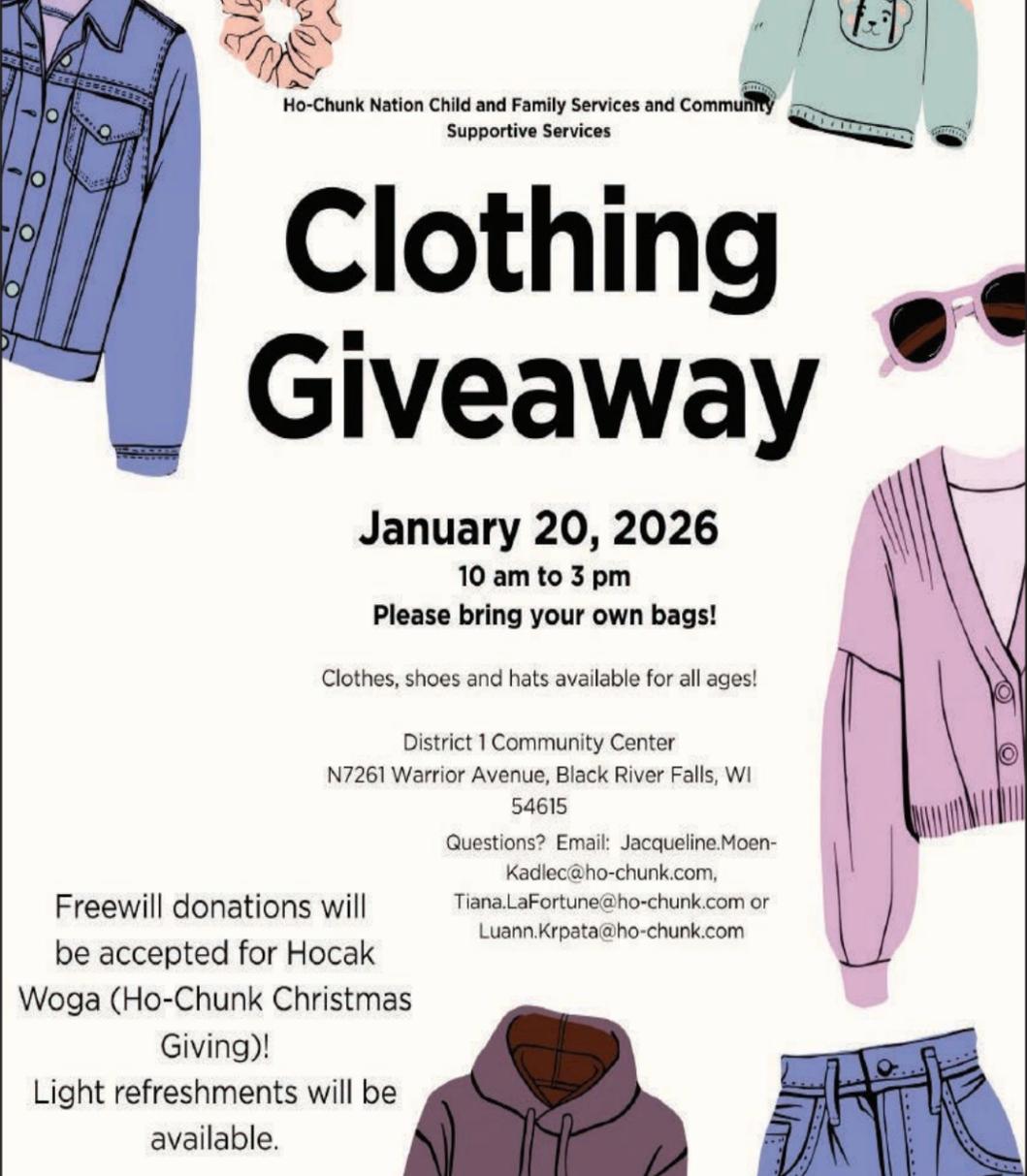
January 20, 2026
10 am to 3 pm
Please bring your own bags!

Clothes, shoes and hats available for all ages!

District 1 Community Center
N7261 Warrior Avenue, Black River Falls, WI 54615

Questions? Email: Jacqueline.Moen-Kadlec@ho-chunk.com,
Tiana.LaFortune@ho-chunk.com or
Luann.Krpata@ho-chunk.com

Freewill donations will be accepted for Hock Woga (Ho-Chunk Christmas Giving)!
Light refreshments will be available.




HUĆ WICON! WIIRA
January: First Bear Moon

HARVEST OF THE MONTH

Wąksik sij
Wild Rice

About Wild Rice

- Wild rice has been a key part of Native American culture for centuries. It's considered a sacred gift from nature and is used in ceremonies, rituals, and traditional foods.
- It grows best in shallow lakes, marshes, and slow-moving streams, and can survive cold weather and changing water levels better than many other grains.
- Wild rice is higher in protein than white rice and rich in nutrients like iron, magnesium, and B vitamins. It's also low in fat, making it a healthy choice for energy, muscle growth, and overall wellness.
- It's packed with antioxidants and natural plant compounds that protect your cells and may help lower the risk of long-term diseases like heart problems and diabetes.

For more info:
1) <https://www.ricearray.org/editorial/origin-of-wild-rice/>
2) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32534311>

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
This material was funded by USDA's supplemental nutrition assistance program-SNAP.




Cranberry-Pecan Wild Rice Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more, for the dish
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/4 cup finely chopped celery
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves, or 2/3 teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 3 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, or 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 2/3 cup toasted pecan pieces, chopped
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries

Steps:

- Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and butter a 2-quart baking dish.
- In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add onion and celery; cook until soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in thyme, salt, and pepper.
- In a large bowl, combine the cooked wild rice, sautéed vegetables, parsley, pecans, and dried cranberries. Mix well and season to taste.
- Spread the mixture evenly in the baking dish and bake for 30 minutes, until heated through.
- Garnish with extra parsley and serve warm.

Recipe inspired by: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/cranberry-pecan-wild-rice-stuffing-5497084>

For more Information Contact a HCN Registered Dietitian/ Nutritionist:

BRF, Tomah, Wittenberg areas:
(888) 685-4422, ext. 35335
BRF, La Crosse areas:
(888) 685-4422, ext. 35340
Dells, Nekoosa, Madison areas:
(888) 552-7889, ext. 35554

HCN HEALTH & WELLNESS DIV.
<http://health.ho-chunk.com/>
Created 8/25 MB




DISTRICT 1 AREA MEETING NOTICE



BLACK RIVER FALLS AREA MEETING
Tribal Office Building
 W9814 Airport Road
 Black River Falls, WI 54615
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
IN PERSON/VIRTUAL

Twin Cities AREA MEETING
St. Paul Branch Office
 1724 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104
Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
IN PERSON/VIRTUAL

paul.fox@ho-chunk.com (715)896-6251
phyllis.smoke@ho-chunk.com (715)299-1016
tracythundercloud@ho-chunk.com (715)299-0576

For WebEx/e-packet, information please contact:
michelleramberg@ho-chunk.com
 (715)284-9343 Ext. 11250

Posted on: 12/15/25



HO-CHUNK NATION
PEOPLE OF THE BIG VOICE

DISTRICT 2 AREA MEETING NOTICE



LA CROSSE AREA | THREE RIVERS HOUSE
 724 Main Street La Crosse, WI
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 6:00PM

TOMAH AREA | BLUE WING COMMUNITY BUILDING
 324 Epinal Avenue Tomah, WI
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 6:00PM

BARABOO/W DELLS/MAUSTON AREA | INDIAN HEIGHTS
 975 Dyer Street Wisconsin Dells, WI
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 6:00PM

REP. STEPHANIE BEGAY stephanie.begay@ho-chunk.com (608) 408-0339
 REP. DAMIAN THUNDERCLOUD damianthundercloud@ho-chunk.com (715) 896-9321
 REP. KYLE WHITE EAGLE kyle.whiteeagle@ho-chunk.com (800)294-9343 x.11276

POSTED 12/23/25

DISTRICT 3 AREA MEETING NOTICE



MILWAUKEE | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 | 5:30 PM
WITTENBERG | MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 | 6:00 PM
GREEN BAY | TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 | 6:00 PM
MADISON | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 | 6:00 PM
WI RAPIDS | THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026 | 5:30 PM

FOR WEBEX INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

REP. LAMBERT CLEVELAND lambertcleveland@ho-chunk.com (715) 896-5166
 REP. SARAH LEMIEUX sarah.lemieux@ho-chunk.com (715) 315-8071
 REP. SHELBY VISINTIN shelby.visintin@ho-chunk.com (715) 896-9323
 AIDE BELLA BLACKDEER isabella.blackdeer@ho-chunk.com (715) 284-9343 x11313



POSTED 12/23/25

District 4 Area Meeting Notice



IN PERSON / VIRTUAL DISTRICT 4 AREA MEETING
Chicago Branch Office
 4738 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL 60630
Monday, January 12 2026
6:00pm CST

VIRTUAL DISTRICT 4 AREA MEETING
Available via WebEx
Wednesday, January 14 2026
6:00pm PST

12/29/2025 - updated



HO-CHUNK NATION
PEOPLE OF THE BIG VOICE

For WebEx information please contact:
 Rep. David Greendeer david.greendeer@ho-chunk.com (715)-896-9192
 Rep. Edward Mullen edward.mullen@ho-chunk.com (715)-896-9180
 Rep. Sandra Whitewing sandra.whitewing@ho-chunk.com (715)-896-9183
 Aide: Jennifer Adams jennifer.adams@ho-chunk.com (715)-284-9343x11284
D4@ho-chunk.com

| ELECTION BOARD MEMBERS | DISTRICT | CITY | TERMS | Position |
|------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Devin Funmaker | 1 | Black River Falls | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Crystal Pettibone | 1 | Black River Falls | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Patrick Red Eagle | 1 | Minneapolis/St. Paul | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Victoria Fox | 1 | Minneapolis/St. Paul | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Myra Price | 2 | Tomah | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Delegate |
| Deanna Mitch | 2 | Tomah | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Alternate |
| Marsha Smith | 2 | Lacrosse | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Delegate |
| Ethel Funmaker | 2 | Lacrosse | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Alternate |
| Wetha Montelongo | 2 | Baraboo/Wis. Dells | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Delegate |
| Barbara Funmaker | 2 | Baraboo/Wis. Dells | Jan. 2026 - Dec. 2028 | Alternate |
| Cher Laubmeier | 3 | Madison | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Lance Anwash | 3 | Madison | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Alexandria Lange | 3 | Milwaukee | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Hazel Guerrero | 3 | Milwaukee | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Mary Lopez | 3 | Green Bay | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Dave Radtke | 3 | Green Bay | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Danee Walker | 3 | Wittenberg | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Alana Hansen | 3 | Wittenberg | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Greg Smith | 3 | Wisconsin Rapids | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Melanie Kasun | 3 | Wisconsin Rapids | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |
| Joann Maney | 4 | Chicago | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Delegate |
| Ron Perry | 4 | Chicago | Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2026 | Alternate |



Ho-Chunk Nation Election Board

WebEx/Election Board Meeting

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Election Board Meeting - 9:00 AM

Ho-Chunk Gaming, Wisconsin Dells, WI

The public will be allowed to observe in person or through WebEx

Post 1/6/2026

**HO-CHUNK NATION
LEGISLATURE
REGULAR MEETING
EXECUTIVE OFFICES
BLACK RIVER FALLS, WI
DECEMBER 23, 2025**

Call to Order: President Jon Greendeer called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll Call:

President Jon Greendeer-P
Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr.-P
Rep. Phyllis Smoke-P
Rep. Tracy Thundercloud-P
Rep. Paul Fox-P
Rep. Damian Thundercloud-P
Rep. Stephanie Begay-P
Rep. Kyle White Eagle-P
Rep. Shelby Visintin-VC
Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle-P
Rep. Edward Mullen-VC
Rep. David Greendeer-VC
Rep. Sandra Whitewing-VC

VC-Video Conference

Determination of Quorum: Quorum is established at 10:02 a.m.

Opening Prayer: Rep. Paul Fox offered a word of prayer.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve the agenda with ADDING under New Business I. NATOW Winter Gala and STRIKING under New Business I. Resolution-Rescission of Resolution 10-07-25 U Regarding the Authorization for the Limited Sale of Ho-Chunk Nation Land in Lynwood, Illinois. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Legislative Meeting-December 9, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve the December 9, 2025 Legislative Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Commission Reports:

Gaming Commission Report

The Gaming Commission was virtually present. A written report was received.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to accept the Gaming Commission report. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Government Administration Commission-December 11, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve the December 11, 2025 Government Administration Commission Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Housing Commission-December 18, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to approve the December 18, 2025 Housing Commission Meeting minutes with corrections. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 11-0-1(Rep. Stephanie Begay) **MOTION CARRIED.**

Unfinished Business:

Resolution-Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with First Nations Community Financial

Legislative Counsel stated that First Nations has had MOU's with the Nation overtime. Cedar Growth's name change has not been fully processed through the IRS. This MOU reserves the right to the renaming of First Nations to Cedar Growth.

Becky Albert-Breed, Executive Director of Cedar Growth, is virtually present, and briefly overviewed the MOU. Mrs. Albert-Breed mentioned that Cedar Growth is able to administer the Heating Assistance program for the Nation.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to adopt **Resolution 12-23-25 A**, Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with First Nations Community Financial. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Letter to Kijire Nagu Board

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to authorize Vice President signature on the letter and the letter to be mailed to Kijire Nagu. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

New Business:

Presentation: Solar Investment Opportunity District One Community Center

Energy Management Manager Adam Meinerz overviewed his presentation with the Legislature. The Nation received a grant totaling \$100,000 for solar panels. \$589,000 is being requested for the solar panel project at the District 1 Community Center.

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke for Legislative Legal to prepare a resolution to be ready for after executive session today for a compact deduct for the \$589,000 for the Solar Investment for the District One Community Center. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 8-2(Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle, Rep. Tracy Thundercloud)-2(Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr., Rep. Shelby Visintin) **MOTION CARRIED.**

Rep. David Greendeer would like the following information regarding this project: the roof condition and the life of the roof, who is going to own the whole solar system (if it's a D1 specific, is the District going to receive the grant?), if this will be a Nation asset, annual savings, the financial

model to understand what this investment would be, the return on investment, maintenance, and operations.

Resolution-Rescission and Restatement of Resolution 05-06-25 D, Approval of Classification and Compensation Plan

The Executive Director of Personnel is present, and stated that the Department of Personnel has studied the cost-of-living index specific to the Janesville-Beloit-Rockford metropolitan area and has found; its relative price levels for consumer goods and services compared to national average in housing, utilities, groceries, transportation, and healthcare and miscellaneous goods and services is comparable to those geographic metro locations listed in HCN Resolution 05-06-25D.

It is the Department of Personnel's recommendation to rescind and restate HCN Resolution 05-06-25D and include the Janesville-Beloit-Rockford metro area into the Ho-Chunk Nation Metro Wage Scale Pay Guide.

MOTION by Rep. Shelby Visintin to adopt **Resolution 12-23-25 B**, Rescission and Restatement of Resolution 05-06-25 D, Approval of Classification and Compensation Plan. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Adoption of Amendments to the Employment Relations Act (6 HCC § 5)

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to adopt **Resolution 12-23-25 C**, Adoption of Amendments to the Employment Relations Act (6 HCC § 5). Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorization of Paid Administrative Leave for Mending Broken Hearts Workshop

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to adopt **Resolution 12-23-25 D**, Authorization of Paid Administrative Leave for Mending Broken Hearts Workshop. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorization to Enter into Emergency Services Agreement with the City of Wisconsin Rapids for Ambulance Services to Ho-Chunk Gaming Nekoosa

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to adopt **Resolution 12-23-25 E**, Authorization to Enter into Emergency Services Agreement with the City of Wisconsin Rapids for Ambulance Services to Ho-Chunk Gaming Nekoosa. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Twin Cities Elder Vehicle (July 17, 2025 Twin Cities Area Meeting Motion)

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to refer the Twin Cities Elder Vehicle to the Finance Commission. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Maqnikisak Event D2 Funding Request

EMERGENCY MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to approve the Maqnikisak event budget in the amount of \$5,025 from D2 Community Improvement, payable to Andrea McCaskey. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

NATOW Winter Gala

The NATOW Winter Gala will be held at Potawatomi in Milwaukee January 30, 2025. **MOTION** by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve funding for the NATOW in the amount of \$585 payable to NATOW with funding coming from Charitable Contributions. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

NOTED FOR THE RECORD: This item was addressed at the Legislative Meeting, as there is not a Finance Commission before the Gala.

District Meetings:

D1 Njioxawani - December 10, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to refer to Legislature and Office of the President the MOTION by Kelly Jo Funmaker to have title to be used in public forums/meetings instead of individual names. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 11-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.** Rep. Kyle White Eagle out of the room.

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to refer to Office of the President, Department of Administration and Department of Labor, Safety Division, the MOTION by Dawson McAndrew to have armed security guards for all facilities with training. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 11-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.** Rep. Kyle White Eagle out of the room.

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to refer to Office of the President and Department of Administration the MOTION by Darcy Funmaker to have the back doors of TOB locked. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 11-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.** Rep. Kyle White Eagle out of the room.

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to refer to Office of the President, Division of Veterans Affairs and Department of Heritage Preservation the MOTION by Dawson McAndrew to place the Legion building back under Division of Veterans Affairs Office. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D1 Maqniico Horuzra - December 18, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Paul Fox to refer to Twelve Clans, Inc. the MOTION by Libby Fairchild

to have Twelve Clans, Inc. hold the annual shareholder meeting in the morning of General Council Meeting. Second by Rep. Phyllis Smoke. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D2 Hjuukwas- December 15, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to refer to Legislative Legal to draft a resolution for next session the MOTION by Adam Kruse to reappoint Marsha Smith as Election Board delegate for La Crosse. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to refer to Legislative Legal to draft a resolution for next session the MOTION by Tracy Littlejohn to reappoint Ethel Funmaker as Election Board alternate for La Crosse. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to refer to the Cannabis Workgroup the MOTION by Tracy Littlejohn for the Ho-Chunk Nation to be prepared to start business regarding cannabis within 60 days after rescheduling or legalization. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to refer to HHCDA and Legislative Legal the MOTION by Marsha Smith to reject the 11/20/25 meeting minutes due to lack of quorum on voting. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

It was mentioned that the 11/20/25 meeting minutes are the 11/20/25 HHCDA Board of Commissioners meeting minutes.

D2 Hoxajkeja/Hogucejal Njzhakisuc - December 17, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to Department of Housing the MOTION by Robert Funmaker, Jr. to include the Housing Board of Directors in the selection process for Down Payment Assistance and Existing Mortgage Assistance. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to HHCDA and the HHCDA Board of Commissioners the MOTION by Robert Funmaker, Jr. for all HHCDA Board of Commissioners meetings to be accessible to all tribal members in-person and virtually. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to HHCDA and the HHCDA Board of Commissioners the MOTION by Barb Funmaker for all HHCDA Board of Commissioners meeting minutes to be posted to the Worak and sent to the HCN Legislature within five *Continued on Page 14*

Continued from Page 13

business days of meeting. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to the Finance Commission the **MOTION** by Elena Terry to support Courage Cleveland's proposal totaling \$131,110. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to Legislature and the Insurance Division, the **MOTION** by Elena Terry for HCN Legislature to active the existing Health Care Reform/Improvement Act and Affordable Care Act Workgroup. Second by Rep. Kyle White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Damian Thundercloud to refer to the Finance Commission the **MOTION** by Courage Cleveland to support the motion made at Tomah Area Meeting for the donation of \$10,000 to Wild Bearies. Second by Rep. Stephanie Begay. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D2 Ho'ųni Xųnųŋk – December 16, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to HHCDA and the HHCDA Board of Commissioners the **MOTION** by Hilary Green for all HHCDA Board of Commissioners meetings to be accessible to all tribal members in-person and virtually. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to HHCDA and the HHCDA Board of Commissioners the **MOTION** by Hilary Green for all HHCDA Board of Commissioners meeting minutes to be posted to the Worak and sent to the HCN Legislature within five business days of meetings. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to TAU and the Labor Department, Safety Division the **MOTION** by Marie Lewis for all HCN Tribal Aging Unit buildings to have Automated External Defibrillators on-site. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to Office of General Council and Legislative Legal and Attorney General for legal opinion, the **MOTION** by Deana Mitch to re-establish General Council Agency to be in line with the HCN Constitution. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to the Finance Commission the **MOTION** by Deana Mitch to donate \$10,000 to Wild Bearies. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

READ FOR THE RECORD:

MOTION by Andrea McCaskey request funding for the Maąŋkiskak Event in the amount of \$5,025.

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to the Finance Commission the **MOTION** by Steve Eades for a \$1,500 donation to Ahucho Head Start Parent Committee. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

READ FOR THE RECORD:

MOTION by Hilary Green for JOM/Title VI funding request to be allocated on an emergency basis.

MOTION by Rep. Kyle White Eagle to refer to Language Division and Heritage Preservation the **MOTION** by Deana Mitch for HCN Language Division to do a presentation on the state of language. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D3 Pac cinąk – December 15, 2025

No motions.

D3 Tee hoikšek – December 16, 2025

No motions.

D3 Tejop – December 17, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to refer to Twelve Clans, Inc. the **MOTION** by Muriel Whiteagle-Lee that a member from 12 Clans attend the next Madison Area Meeting. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 11-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.** Rep. Damian Thundercloud is out of the room.

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to refer to I.T. and Department of Administration the **MOTION** by Chelsea Thompson to re-open the possibility for Ho-Chunk members to get Ho-Chunk emails to ensure Ho-Chunk members are able to send and receive emails to and from Branch Offices. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to refer to next Legislative Meeting so the Legislature can get an update on the information the Treasurer spoke to today, the **MOTION** by Chelsea Thompson to request a cost analysis from the Department of Social Services Director. Cost Analysis should include the cost to overnight mail CPA payment to each of our placement homes for the remainder of this fiscal year as well as the cost to overnight mail each placement home CPA payment for the next fiscal year and that amount place in the 2026/2027 budget. In accordance with the results of the cost analysis, the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature approve a budget modification for those amounts to be placed in the budget for

each appropriate year. This should have a completion date of January 8, 2027 so CPA payments can be mailed overnight. Our placement families and homes are a vital, cherished part of our great Nation. Payments should be dependable and timely as they provide for the necessities and care of our Ho-Chunk children in need. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Treasurer Twinn mentioned that the foster parents that are enrolled Tribal Members could be added to the payroll system for them to get their payment direct deposit.

MOTION by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle to refer to the Children's Code Workgroup the **MOTION** by Chelsea Thompson that the Children's code get changed so that the checks get mailed on the first Friday of the month. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D3 Cexhaci – December 18, 2025

No motions.

D4 Guųšgonąk – December 15, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Sandra Whitewing to refer to the Finance Commission the **MOTION** by Casey Brown for legislators to approve up to \$2,000 for the Chicago Branch Office to receive a freezer for the community to have storage for venison that will be available to tribal members and the Chicago Native community. Second by Rep. Edward Mullen. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

D4 Virtual Meeting – December 17, 2025

MOTION by Rep. Sandra Whitewing to refer to Office of the President and Department of Treasury the **MOTION** by Victoria Stacy GoodThunder for any and all federal grants for the Ho-Chunk Nation follow the chain of command. Starting with the President by way of his CEO and each of the Executive Director of each program be aware of the 30 day, 90 day and 120 day notice and to be examining each grant and red flag 10 days before notice due dates. Second by Rep. Edward Mullen. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Rep. Sandra Whitewing to refer to the Department of Justice and the Election Board the **MOTION** by Victoria Stacy GoodThunder for the Election Board to have meetings the third week of the month and to utilize Ho-Chunk Nation tribal buildings, community centers, casinos conventions room. Second by Rep. Edward Mullen. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

READ FOR THE RECORD:

MOTION by Victoria Stacy GoodThunder for Tribal Aging Affairs, all Ho-Chunk seniors to have a once a year in the month of May Monday

to Monday meeting for elders to partake in activities to visit Ho-Chunk Tribal Office, Ho-Chunk Clinic, Black River Falls Records Departments, Tribal Court, Original Tallmadge Museum, Tours of Wittenberg, and the new build in Beloit. Transportation expenses to be covered by the Nation.

MOTION by Rep. Sandra Whitewing to refer to the Department of Personnel, Department of Labor and the Government Administration Commission the **MOTION** by Reta Littlegeorge that personnel open up job descriptions for D4 tribal members with remote and LTE options. Second by Rep. David Greendeer. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Executive Session (Business Matters, Criminal Matters, Inter-governmental Relations, Land, Law Enforcement, Legal Advice, Personnel Matters, Public Safety or Well-Being:

MOTION by Rep. Paul Fox to move to Executive Session for Business Matters, Criminal Matters, Inter-governmental Relations, Land, Law Enforcement, Legal Advice, Personnel Matters, Public Safety or Well-Being. Second by Vice President Lambert Cleveland, Jr. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting moved to Executive Session at 11:20 a.m.

MOTION by Rep. Paul Fox to return to Open Session. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting returned to Open Session at 12:51 p.m.

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to ratify all action taken in Executive Session. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 11-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.** Rep.

David Greendeer is not online.

Amendment to the Agenda:

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to add under New Business J. National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) Legislative Summit & Gala. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) Legislative Summit & Gala

MOTION by Rep. Stephanie Begay to approve travel for any Legislator on the Housing Commission to attend the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) Legislative Summit & Gala in Washington, D.C. from February 3-5, 2026. Second by Rep. Sarah Lemieux-White Eagle. 11-0-1 (Rep. Edward Mullen) **MOTION CARRIED.**

Resolution-Authorization to Deduct Amounts from Annual Gaming Compact Payment for Contribution Toward District 1 Community Center Solar Project

MOTION by Rep. Phyllis Smoke to TABLE Resolution-Authorization to Deduct Amounts from Annual Gaming Compact Payment for Contribution Toward District 1 Community Center Solar Project. Second by Rep. Paul Fox. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

Adjournment:

MOTION by Rep. Paul Fox to adjourn the Legislative Meeting to January 6, 2026 at the Tribal Office Building in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. Second by Rep. Damian Thundercloud. 12-0-0 **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Legislative Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

**Oral Traditions: Connecting Culture to Indigenous Food-ways
~Research Study~
Conducted by: Zoe Fess**

Do you receive the Tribal Elder Food Box?

Are you interested in sharing stories (traditional and non - traditional alike) of culturally relevant and traditional foods?

Research Overview

This research study aims to look at the inclusion of traditional foods in the Tribal Elder Food Box Program (TEFB) through holding community gatherings and hearing traditional stories and cosmologies from elders. The community gatherings will last approximately 2 hours, and compensation for time will be provided.

If interested please email zfess@wisc.edu





NEW!

QUARTERLY GIVEAWAY

14 WINNERS!

Month Earning Period | January 1–March 28

Entries | Slots: 1 entry per 100 points | Table Games: 1 entry per 5 Comp
All Rewards Club Members get 1 FREE entry.

Activate Entries | 3PM, Saturday, March 28, 2026 at any Promotional Kiosk



SATURDAY, MARCH 28

7PM | 1 WINNER

10PM | 1 WINNER

GREY PORSCHE MACAN!

BLACK PORSCHE MACAN!

5PM | 6PM | 8PM | 9PM | 3 Winners each hour will spin our wheel and

WIN UP TO \$5,000 CASH!

Register beginning at 3pm at the Promotional Kiosks for drawings. Receive one free entry for each drawing. Slot and Table Games eligible. Earn an additional entry for every 100 slot points and every 5 Comp Dollars earned, January 1 - March 28 for the March 28 drawing.

Visit the Rewards Club for complete rules and details. The Ho-Chunk Nation gaming entities reserve the right to cancel or alter promotions at any time.

HO-CHUNK GAMING

WISCONSIN DELLS

FRO\$TY
**DOUGH
 FLAKE\$**

GIVEAWAY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

KIOSK DRAWINGS | 6PM | 7PM | 8PM | 9PM | 10PM

3 WINNERS EACH HOUR

Each winner will play our Pick & Win Promotional Game and have a chance to win between

\$500 - \$10,000 CASH!

START EARNING ENTRIES JANUARY 1

Register beginning at 4pm at the Promotional Kiosks for drawings. Receive one free entry for each drawing. Slot and Table Games eligible. Earn an additional entry for every 25 slot points and every Comp Dollar earned, January 1 - 30. Visit the Rewards Club for complete rules and details. The Ho-Chunk Nation gaming entities reserve the right to cancel or alter promotions at any time.