

# LITTLE RIVER CURRENTS



**LITTLE RIVER BAND OF OTTAWA INDIANS**

GAACHING ZIIBI DAAWAA ANISHINAABEK

TRIBAL NEWSLETTER

BAASHKAAKODIN GIIZIS | NOVEMBER 2024

-Freezing Moon-

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**Cover Art By  
Sky Gonzalez**



# **THIS ISSUE**



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# Elected Officials

| <b>Ogema</b>    | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> | <b>Phone</b> | <b>Email</b>        |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Larry Romanelli | At Large        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6824 | ogema@lrboi-nsn.gov |

| <b>Council</b>       | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> | <b>Phone</b> | <b>Email</b>                  |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Tammy Burmeister (S) | 9 County        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6833 | tburmeister@lrboi-nsn.gov     |
| Al Metzger           | Outlying        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6869 | almetzger@lrboi-nsn.gov       |
| Misty Silvis         | 9 County        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6838 | mistysilvis@lrboi-nsn.gov     |
| Ron Wittenberg       | Outlying        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6828 | ronwittenberg@lrboi-nsn.gov   |
| Gary DiPiazza        | 9 County        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6825 | garydipiazza@lrboi-nsn.gov    |
| Pam Johnson (R)      | Outlying        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6836 | pamjohnson@lrboi-nsn.gov      |
| Shirley Wever        | 9 County        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6802 | shirleywever@lrboi-nsn.gov    |
| Shannon Crampton*    | Outlying        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6885 | shannoncrampton@lrboi-nsn.gov |
| Julie Wolfe          | At Large        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6834 | juliewolfe@lrboi-nsn.gov      |

| <b>Election Board</b> | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> | <b>Phone</b> | <b>Email</b>                |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Laura Echelbarger     | At Large        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6709 | electionboard@lrboi-nsn.gov |
| Kathy Gibson          | At Large        | 2023-2027   | 231-398-6709 | electionboard@lrboi-nsn.gov |
| Shawna Gonzalez       | At Large        | 2021-2027   | 231-398-6709 | electionboard@lrboi-nsn.gov |
| Lee Ivinson*          | At Large        | 2021-2027   | 231-398-6709 | electionboard@lrboi-nsn.gov |
| Janine Sam*           | At Large        | 2021-2025   | 231-398-6709 | electionboard@lrboi-nsn.gov |

| <b>Chief Judge</b> | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Angela Sherigan    |                 |             |

| <b>Associate Judge</b> | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Caroline LaPorte**     |                 |             |

| <b>Appellate Judge</b> | <b>District</b> | <b>Term</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Bernie Darrow          |                 |             |
| Melissa Pope           |                 |             |
| Bernadene Crampton     |                 |             |

**YOUR**  
**Vote**  
**COUNTS**

## Voting Districts

**At Large** means all registered voters shall have the opportunity to vote for the seat.

**9 County** means all registered voters who reside within the 9 County district shall have the opportunity to vote for the seat.

**Outlying** means all registered voters who reside outside of the 9 County district shall have the opportunity to vote for the seat.



# LRBOI SERVICE DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

## Education

**Yvonne Parsons**

**E:** [yparsons@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:yparsons@lrboi-nsn.gov)

**O:** 231-398-6735



### Services:

Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver  
Vocational Education Assistance  
Higher Education Scholarship  
College Book Stipend Program  
Tutoring Assistance  
Student Services School Clothing/Activities  
Student Services Driver's Training Assist.  
Class Ring Assistance  
Senior Pictures Assistance  
Cap, Gown & Announcement Assistance  
12th Grade Computer Assistance

## Housing

**Tara Bailey**

**E:** [lrboihousing@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:lrboihousing@lrboi-nsn.gov)

**O:** 231-398-6879



### Services:

Low Income Rentals - Elder designated housing, elder designated ADA housing, family housing, family ADA housing  
Fair market housing  
Section 184 Indian Home Loan Assistance  
Down Payment & Closing Cost Assistance

## Food & Nutrition Center

**Jamie Friedel**

**E:** [jamiefriedel@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:jamiefriedel@lrboi-nsn.gov)

**O:** 231-655-1041



### Services:

USDA Commodities Distribution – The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations provides a variety of Commodity Foods to low-income households living on or near Indian reservations. Foods include fresh and canned vegetables, frozen meats, breakfast cereals, cheese, and butter. The FDPIR is an alternative to the Food Stamp Program.

## Enrollment

**Dianne A Lonn**

**E:** [diannealonn@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:diannealonn@lrboi-nsn.gov)

**O:** 231-398-6713

### Services:

Enrollment Process  
Tribal Identification (ID)  
Judgment Funds  
Address Changes  
Tribal Directory Information  
Bereavement Program  
Per Capita Beneficiary Form  
Notary Services  
Per Capita Information Services  
Direct Deposit Form  
Tax withholding on Per Capita

## Family Services

**E:** [familyservices@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:familyservices@lrboi-nsn.gov)

**O:** 231-398-6707 or 398-6651

### Services:

Individual Self-Sufficiency Education & Assistance  
Family Self-Sufficiency Education & Assistance  
Indian Child Welfare Intervention & Reunification Services  
Elder Support Services  
Family Violence Protection, Education, Advocacy and Counseling  
Trauma Based Counseling  
Positive Indian Parenting Program



## LRBOI Service Department Contacts continued

### Health Services



O: 231-723-8299  
O: 231-398-6601

#### Services:

Family Medicine  
Foot and Ankle Clinic  
Community Health Nurse  
Diabetic Educator  
Purchase & Referred Care (PRC)  
Extended Health Assist. Program (EHAP)  
Pharmacy (231-398-6853)  
Fitness Center



### Tax Department

#### Valerie Chandler

E: [valeriechandler@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:valeriechandler@lrboi-nsn.gov)  
O: 231-398-6874

#### Services:

Tax-exempt Motor Fuel Program  
Tribal Certificates of Exemption for Resident Tribal Members  
Tribal Certificates of Exemption for Tribal Entities  
Tribal Tax Licenses  
Tribal Business Licenses  
Commercial and Subsistence Fishers



### Members Assistance

#### Jessica Steinberg

E: [jessicasteinberg@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:jessicasteinberg@lrboi-nsn.gov)  
O: 231-398-6739

#### Services:

Low Income Energy Assistance - LIHEAP  
Food Assistance  
Rental & Mortgage Assistance  
Elder Meal Program  
& Elder Chore Service  
Emergency Transportation Assistance  
Referral Assistance Service - help with finding assistance organization/agencies to assist with unmet needs.  
Interdepartmental Referral Services - help to provide coordination and collaboration with tribal service departments.

### Members Legal Assistance

#### Mary Witkop

E: [marywitkop@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:marywitkop@lrboi-nsn.gov)  
O: 231-398-2234

#### Services:

Estate Planning, Trust Preparation & Wills  
Probates of Estates  
Durable Power of Attorney  
Durable Power of Medical Attorney  
Real Estate  
Land-Lord Tenant Matters  
Divorce, Custody and Support  
Criminal and Civil Matters  
Paternity & DNA Testing  
Birth Certificates  
Guardianships & Conservatorships  
Driver's Licenses  
General Legal Advice

The attorney cannot appear in court with a tribal member or assist with issues that involve the Tribe. Attorney can assist with providing legal advice and drafting of documents.

Note that some of the assistance programs offered through Members Assistance is available to citizens living within the 9 county service area. Contact Members Assistance for details and possible referrals to help at other organizations and agencies.

## LRBOI Service Department Contacts continued

### Manistee

#### Government Center

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians  
2608 Government Center Drive  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288

#### Little River Health Service Center

2608 Government Center Drive  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8299 / 888-382-8299  
Office: 231-398-6601  
Pharmacy: 231-398-3853

#### Food & Nutrition Center

2690 Dontz Rd  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288  
Office: 231-398-6716 / 231-655-1041

#### Housing Department

2953 Shaw Be Quo-Ung  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288  
Office: 231-398-6875 / 231-398-6879

#### Aki Maadiziwin Community Center

2953 Shaw Be Quo-Ung  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288  
Office: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288

#### Justice Center

3031 Domres Road  
Manistee, MI 49660  
231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288

#### Natural Resources

310 Ninth St  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288  
Office: 231-723-1594 / 866-723-1594

### Muskegon

#### Tribal Office

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians  
1101 West Hackley  
Muskegon, MI 49441  
Main: 231-723-8288 / 888-723-8288

#### Little River Health Service Center

4905 S. Harvey St.  
Norton Shore, MI 49441  
Main: 231-723-8299 / 888-382-8299  
Office: 231-398-6601  
Pharmacy: 231-398-3853  
Services include Family Medicine,  
Pharmacy and Radiology.

#### Little River Health Center of Ellis

1478 E. Ellis Rd  
Muskegon, MI 49444  
Main: 231-723-8299 / 888-382-8299  
Office: 231-398-6601  
Pharmacy: 231-398-3853  
Services include Behavioral Health,  
PRC Dept., Admin Center, Dictation  
Center, Laboratory Facility, and Foot  
& Ankle Clinic.







# HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES

It's essential to stay informed about upcoming holidays and closures affecting LRBOI government offices. To assist you in planning accordingly, here's a comprehensive list of observed holidays and closures for the year 2024:

## **New Year's Day**

When: January 1.

Observed: Monday, Jan 1, 2024.

## **LRBOI Treaty Recognition Day**

When: March 28.

Observed: Thursday, Mar 28, 2024.

## **Memorial Day**

When: Last Monday in May.

Observed: Monday, May 27, 2024.

## **Independence Day**

When: July 4 & 5

Observed: Thurs & Fri, July 4 & 5, 2024.

## **Labor Day**

When: First Monday in September.

Observed: Monday, Sept 2, 2024.

## **LRBOI Reaffirmation Day**

When: September 21.

Observed: Friday, Sept 20, 2024.

## **Veteran's Day**

When: November 11.

Observed: Mon, Nov 11, 2024.

## **Thanksgiving**

When: 4th Thursday in November.

Observed: Thursday, Nov 28, 2024.

## **Extended Thanksgiving & Native American Heritage Day**

When: Friday after Thanksgiving.

Observed: Friday, Nov 29, 2024.

## **Christmas Eve Day**

When: December 24.

Observed: Tuesday, Dec 24, 2024.

Half day closure. Closed Noon-5pm

## **Christmas Day**

When: December 25.

Observed: Wed, Dec 25, 2024.

**Offices will be closed Dec 25 - Jan 1 in recognition of the 2024 winter holidays. Offices will close at noon on Dec 24, 2024 and reopen Jan 2, 2025 at 8 am.**

Holidays that fall on a Saturday are observed on Fridays and those falling on Sundays are observed on Mondays.

Additionally, our Ogema may declare additional holidays and closures. Updates will be shared on our government Facebook page and in the Currents newsletter, whenever possible.

If you need to contact someone during holiday closures, please consider reaching out via email or leaving a voicemail. Our government team members will respond at their earliest convenience upon returning to the office.



# Tribal Council Meetings



Meetings occur Wednesdays at 10am (eastern) on the following dates.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| November 6  | December 4  |
| November 13 | December 11 |
| November 20 | December 18 |
| November 27 |             |

## Tribal Council Meeting & Work Sessions

Tribal Council publishes to the website, a weekly calendar of upcoming work sessions. Tribal Council uses the same On-Line Zoom link for their meetings and work sessions. All citizens are encouraged to attend meetings and work sessions.

### Attend a Tribal Council Meeting

**In-Person:** 2608 Government Center Drive, Manistee, MI 49660  
in the lodge located on the 2nd floor.

**On-Line:** Zoom Web Link: <https://zoom.us/j/99705796129>  
Zoom Call-In Number: 1-929-436-2866  
Zoom Meeting ID: 997 0579 6129  
Zoom Passcode: 1836

### Etiquette for On-Line Attendance

**Identify Yourself:** When asked to do so, share your first and last name along with your tribal ID number.

**Mute Your Device:** When you join the meeting, please mute your device. Mute again after you've spoken.

**Raise Your Hand:** When you want to be placed in the queue to speak, use the Zoom control to virtually raise your hand.

# Tribal Council Meetings



## A Guide to Using Zoom!

The following excerpts were sourced at <https://support.zoom.com>

### ***How do I sign up for Zoom?***

You can sign up for a free Zoom account at <https://zoom.us/signup#/signup>

### ***How to download the Zoom client.***

You can download the Zoom Desktop Client for macOS, Windows, Linux, and ChromeOS. Download the Zoom Mobile App for iOS and Android, from our Downloads page or your app store.

### ***Create your own account.***

To sign up for your own free account, visit the Zoom sign-up page and enter your email address. You will receive an email from Zoom (no-reply@zoom.us). In this email, click Activate Account.

### ***How to sign into your Zoom account on the web***

You can sign into your Zoom account on the web at any time, at [zoom.us/signin](https://zoom.us/signin). Once you're logged in, use the panel on the left side to navigate the Zoom web portal. You can update your profile, schedule a meeting, edit your settings, and more.

### ***How to update your profile***

You can update your profile by adding a profile picture, set your time zone, update your password and more. To access your Zoom profile, sign into the Zoom web portal and click Profile.

### ***How to join another user's meeting***

There are many ways to join a meeting, but the easiest way is to click the join link that the meeting host provided. You can also click Join in your Zoom client and enter the meeting ID. You may also be prompted for a meeting passcode, so keep the meeting invite information available. You can join a meeting by clicking the meeting link or going to [join.zoom.us](https://join.zoom.us) and entering in the meeting ID.



# Election Board Meetings



## Election Board Open Meeting Schedule

Meeting Dates | Submit Questions Deadline  
Nov 21 | Nov 19

### Engage with the Election Board

Open Election Board meetings provide an opportunity for tribal citizens to engage with the election board, ask questions, and stay informed about the electoral process within our community. All open meetings will begin at 7:15pm. If no one joins the meeting by 7:30 pm, the open session will adjourn and transition into a closed session. To partake in the open meetings, please ensure your questions are submitted by Tuesday of the week of the meeting you plan to attend (48 hours in advance of the meeting). This allows the election board ample time to prepare and address inquiries effectively. Stay engaged and informed about the process in our community by attending the LRBOI Election Board open meetings. Your participation matters!

### Attend an Election Board Open Meeting

**On-Line:** Zoom Web Link: <https://zoom.us/j/99808338390>  
Zoom Call-In Number: 1-929-436-2866  
Zoom Meeting ID: 9998 0833 8390  
Zoom Passcode: 743234

### Etiquette for On-Line Attendance

**Identify Yourself:** When asked to do so, share your first and last name along with your tribal ID number.

**Mute Your Device:** When you join the meeting, please mute your device. Mute again after you've spoken.

**Raise Your Hand:** When you want to be placed in the queue to speak, use the Zoom control to virtually raise your hand.



# Election Board Meetings

## Election Calendar of Important Dates

### October

- 10/04 - Fully completed candidate packets due back no later than 5pm.
- 10/04 - Candidate packet drop off available in Muskegon & Manistee
- 10/25 - Slating of candidates. Per regulation, post the slating of candidate by 12 noon on 10/26.
- 10/28 - Deadline to withdraw candidacy via email by 5pm.

### November

- 11/01 - Registration deadline to vote in the Primary and Regular elections.
- 11/19 - Ballots mailed out for Primary election.

### December

- 12/23 - Deadline to request replacement ballot.

### January

- 01/03 - Deadline for disputes.
- 01/17 - Primary Election Day.
- 01/20 - Deadline for Primary Election winners to withdraw, via email by 5pm.
- 01/24 - Deadline for challenges.

### February

- 02/14 - Registration deadline to vote in the Regular election.

### March

- 03/07 - Ballots mailed out for Regular election.

### April

- 04/04 - Deadline to request replacement ballots.
- 04/25 - Regular Election Day.
- 04/28 - Deadline for Regular Election winners to withdraw, via email by 5pm.

### May

- 05/01 - Deadline for challenges and/or recounts.
- 05/02 - Deadline for finance reports from candidates.

### Offices to be elected

- At-Large - 1 seat
- Outlying Council - 2 seats
- Nine County Council - 2 seats
- Office of Election Board - 3 seats
- Associate Judge - 1 seat



# nativeWahl GRAND OPENING



## Gold Country Casino

4020 Olive Highway, Oroville, CA 95966

October 16, 2024

Little River Holdings is pleased to announce the grand opening of our second Native Wahl location in California, bringing the total number of locations to four. Upon the opening of a Native Wahl location, Little River Holdings, LLC receives an initial franchise fee of \$60,000 and an 8.5% royalty on gross sales. Additionally, we receive a percentage of sales from each location on a monthly basis. In exchange, Native Wahl allocates a portion of the initial fee and royalties to Wahlburgers.





# MANISTEE GATEWAY PROJECT

Little River Holdings, LLC is excited to provide the Manistee Community and all LRBOI Citizens with a few updates on The Gateway Project.



Little River Holdings received a soft commitment letter for project assistance.



Little River Holdings is working through construction company RFPs



Little River Holdings anticipates commencing construction Quarter One of 2025, contingent upon the successful closure of both public and private investments.



**WE INVITE YOU TO DISCOVER OUR  
INITITIVES AND SHARE  
ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE**



# CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

## Meeting Dates

November 4, 2024

July 7, 2025

January 13, 2025

September 8, 2025

March 3, 2025

November 3, 2025

May 5, 2025

January 5, 2026

**All meetings are held at 3pm**

**MEETING ACCESS CAN BE  
FOUND THROUGH THE QR CODE  
OR ON [WWW.LRHEDC.COM](http://WWW.LRHEDC.COM)**



 **SCAN ME**

# NORTHERN LIGHTS ILLUMINATE MANISTEE

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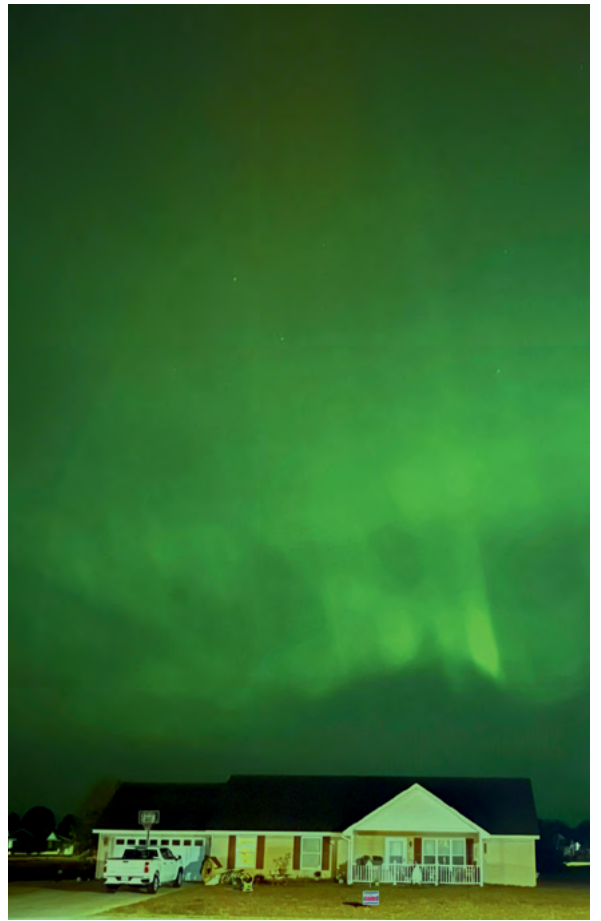
The northern lights on the night of October 10, early morning of October 11, were visible over the Manistee area. The northern lights occur when streams of charged particles from the Sun, known as solar wind, collide with Earth's magnetic field. This interaction energizes gases in the atmosphere, causing them to glow and form those familiar ripples of color. The trigger for this particular event was a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME), which the Sun released on October 8. By the time it reached Earth, it set off a powerful G4 geomagnetic storm, one of the strongest levels on the space weather scale. This powerful storm allowed the aurora to extend beyond its usual range, dazzling viewers across the Midwest, including in Michigan, and even farther south into states like Missouri and Alabama.

For those unfamiliar with the science, a G4 storm is intense enough to make auroras visible far beyond the northern regions where they are typically seen. This storm brought the lights down to Michigan, with Manistee enjoying a front-row seat. The clear skies made it a perfect night for viewing, and those lucky enough to look up saw waves of light moving in mesmerizing patterns overhead.

Auroras are most often green, thanks to oxygen molecules about 60 miles above Earth's surface. But that night, the display included pinks, and reds, caused by interactions with nitrogen and oxygen at much higher altitudes.



Northern Lights continued



## Northern Lights continued

For many in Manistee, it felt as if the sky had come alive, shifting and glowing in ways that photos alone can barely capture. There's something truly mesmerizing about watching the aurora. The colors pulse and flow, sometimes so faint you have to wonder if you're imagining them, and other times so bright that the night seems to glow from above. The experience is more than just beautiful, it's almost otherworldly.

The northern lights we saw in Manistee were a product of solar activity millions of miles away, yet they felt intensely personal as they lit up our skies. If you didn't get a chance to see the northern lights this time, don't worry there will be more opportunities as solar activity cycles continue. Apps and websites that track solar storms can let you know when the next aurora display might be visible. And when it happens, make sure to find a dark spot away from city lights and enjoy the view. You never know when nature will gift us with another magical night.





# 2024 FALL MEETING





# 2024 FALL MEETING





# 2024 FALL OGEMA'S MEET & GREET





# Every Child Matters

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On September 30, members of the LRBOL community came together at the Aki Community Center, wearing orange shirts to honor the many children who never came home from Michigan's Indian boarding schools. This day of remembrance is about recognizing the trauma that our families endured and ensuring the memories of those lost are never forgotten.

The history of Indian boarding schools in Michigan is one of pain and suffering. From the 1800s through the 1980s, schools like the Holy Childhood of Jesus in Harbor Springs and the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School aimed to strip away our languages, cultures, and identities. Children were forcibly taken from their families, given English names, forbidden to speak Anishinaabemowin, and punished if they disobeyed. But the trauma extended far beyond language and culture. Many of our children experienced unimaginable abuse. Children were beaten, starved, and neglected. In some cases, they were even murdered or died from illnesses due to the horrific conditions they lived under. In Michigan alone, it is believed that hundreds of children died while attending these schools, their bodies buried in unmarked graves.

The orange shirt has become a powerful symbol in this movement, signifying the enduring impact of the Indian residential school system. The "Orange Shirt Day" movement began in 2013 in Canada, inspired by the story of Phyllis Webstad, a First Nations woman from British Columbia. When Phyllis was just six years old, she attended a residential school where her new orange shirt, a gift from her grandmother, was taken from her.

## Every Child Matters continued



As our community gathered at the Aki Community Center, the sea of orange shirts stood as a reminder of the children who were taken, those who survived, and those who did not. It is a day not just of mourning, but also of reflection and hope. Survivors and their descendants continue to share their stories, ensuring that the legacy of the boarding schools is neither forgotten nor repeated.

Miigwech to Family Spirit, Food & Nutrition Center and Family Services for hosting!





# Adopt A Highway Fall Cleanup



Back row left to right: James Henderson, Bill Willis, Lynn Saunders and Lacy Moore. Front row left to right: David Karast, Lee Ivinson, Laurie Willis, Angela Sherigan, Michelle Lucas and Michelle Pepera.

On September 24, 2024, an enthusiastic team of ten volunteers from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) and Little River Casino Resort (LRCR) came together for the annual fall highway cleanup along a stretch of US 31, from M22 to Coates Highway. This marked another successful event in the LRBOI's ongoing commitment to the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program, which is part of the tribe's community service efforts. The team managed to collect 14 bags of trash from both sides of the highway, contributing to the ongoing effort to keep the area clean and free of litter. The total for the 2024 season is 23 bags of trash collected.

Prior to the cleanup, all volunteers participated in a mandatory safety meeting, where critical information was shared regarding the potential dangers they might encounter, including the handling of hazardous methamphetamine-related waste and the presence of invasive plants such as giant hogweed and wild parsnip. Organizers ensured the volunteers were fully informed about the necessary precautions, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to safely conduct the roadside cleanup.

During the safety briefing, specific attention was given to the growing concern about invasive plant species along Michigan's highways, particularly giant hogweed and wild parsnip. Both plants, while visually unassuming, pose significant risks to those



who come into contact with them.

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*): Known for its large leaves and towering height, giant hogweed is a phototoxic plant that can cause severe skin reactions when touched.

The plant's sap contains toxic chemicals known as furanocoumarins, which make human skin extremely sensitive to sunlight. Contact with this sap, followed by exposure to sunlight, can lead to painful burns, blistering, and even long lasting scars. If sap comes into contact with the eyes, it may cause temporary or permanent blindness. Given the potential dangers,

volunteers were advised to avoid direct contact with any plants that resembled giant hogweed and to report any sightings to MDOT or local environmental authorities.



Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*): Though less dramatic in appearance than giant hogweed, wild parsnip also poses a serious risk. Like giant hogweed, it contains phototoxic sap, which can cause painful rashes and burns when skin exposed to the sap is subjected to sunlight. Wild parsnip typically grows in sunny, disturbed areas, such as roadsides, making it a frequent encounter during cleanup efforts. Volunteers were briefed on how to identify this plant and the

importance of wearing long sleeves, pants, and gloves during the cleanup to avoid accidental exposure.

Both plants are considered invasive species, meaning they spread rapidly and can outcompete native flora, disrupting ecosystems. Their aggressive growth along roadways adds to the challenge of maintaining safe and clean highways, making awareness and careful removal during cleanups like this one essential.

Another critical aspect of the safety meeting focused on the potential discovery of hazardous waste from methamphetamine production. Meth waste is a significant and growing concern on Michigan roadsides. Often dumped along highways or in remote areas, remnants from illegal meth labs





can include chemicals, containers, and other hazardous materials that pose serious risks to those who encounter them.

Meth lab waste typically contains toxic and highly flammable chemicals, such as lithium, ammonia, and hydrochloric acid. These substances can cause burns, respiratory problems, and environmental contamination if not handled properly. Volunteers were educated on how to identify common meth waste, such as discarded cold medicine packages, propane tanks, and containers with residue. They were instructed to avoid direct contact with any suspicious materials and to report findings to the authorities for proper disposal.

By being informed of these dangers, the volunteers were better prepared to safely contribute to the cleanup effort. The focus on safety ensured that while the team was cleaning up litter, they were also mindful of potential hazards, such as these invasive plants and meth waste.

Despite these potential dangers, the team successfully cleared the roadside of litter, collecting a total of 14 bags of trash. Volunteers remained vigilant throughout the cleanup, with no significant incidents of exposure to either invasive plants or hazardous meth lab waste reported. Michelle Lucas, the event's organizer, praised the team for their diligence and dedication to maintaining the natural beauty of the area while prioritizing their own safety.

Lucas highlighted the importance of these cleanups not only for the environment but also for raising awareness within the community about the threats posed by invasive species and illegal dumping. "Our goal is not just to pick up trash but to ensure the safety of our volunteers and protect the land we cherish," Lucas said. "We couldn't do this without our team of committed individuals who take the time to come out and make a difference."

The Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program is an initiative by MDOT designed to maintain the cleanliness of Michigan's highways while fostering a sense of community responsibility. Volunteer groups adopt at least a two-mile stretch of the highway and commit to cleaning it at least three times a year, from April through October.

With the fall cleanup now complete, the LRBOI team is already looking ahead to next year's cleanups. Through their efforts, the volunteers are not only helping to maintain the cleanliness of the roads but also setting an example of environmental stewardship for the entire community. The participation in the Adopt-A-Highway program reflects the tribe's ongoing dedication to preserving and protecting the local environment for future generations.

Miigwech to all of the volunteers who helped with this important community effort. You are ensuring that Michigan remains beautiful, safe, and free from invasive threats and hazardous waste.

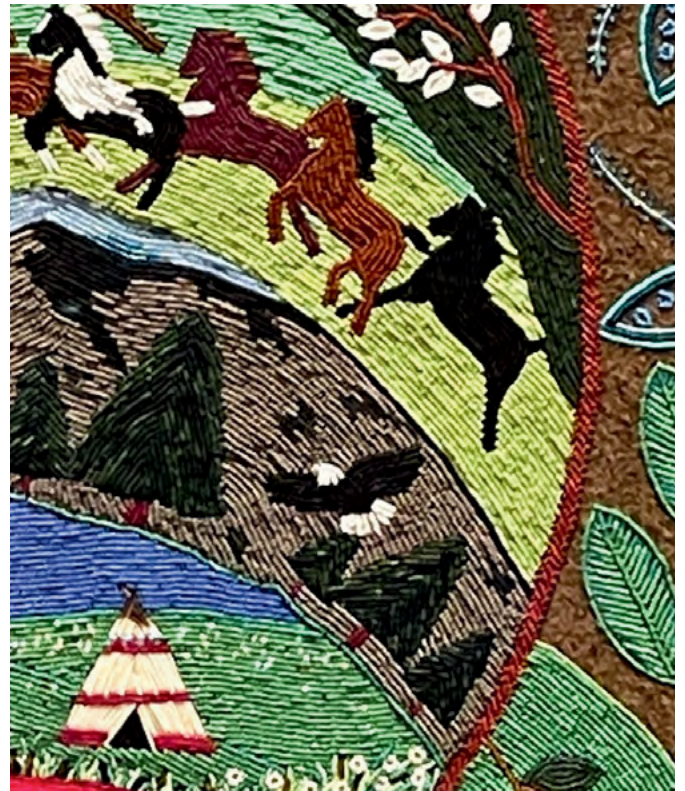
# Thank You Volunteers!



**YOU ARE AMAZING**



# Lucas' Turtle Clan Ranked Top 100 at ArtPrize 2024



We are proud to celebrate Michelle Lucas, a Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Tribal citizen, for her impressive achievement at ArtPrize 2024. Her piece, *The Turtle Clan*, placed in the top 100 out of 1,152 entries, an incredible honor that speaks to both her artistic talent and the strength of her connection to our cultural heritage.

The *Turtle Clan* is much more than just a piece of art; it's a reflection of the values, traditions, and stories that have shaped Michelle's life. As a proud member of the Turtle Clan, Michelle's work highlights the symbolic meaning of the turtle, which represents protection, longevity, and the passage of time. In her artist statement, Michelle shared that the turtle "speaks to the stages of life, as well as a representation of my family and heritage." This piece is rich with cultural significance, intertwining personal history with broader Anishinaabe teachings.

At the heart of *The Turtle Clan* is the sacred Medicine Wheel, depicted through four colors: yellow, red, black, and white. These colors represent the cycle of life and the wisdom of our ancestors. Michelle's art invites us to reflect on the lessons embedded in these symbols, reminders of how the Medicine Wheel reflects the balance and interconnectedness of life's stages.

Michelle also honors the Three Fires Confederacy through her art, portraying the



Displayed at the Cornerstone Church – Heritage Hill Campus, The Turtle Clan captivated audiences, drawing them into its rich narrative and vibrant storytelling.

Michelle's success at ArtPrize is a significant moment not only for her but for all of us in the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians community. Her piece is a vivid reminder of the importance of sharing and preserving our stories, traditions, and culture. In a world where Indigenous voices are too often marginalized, Michelle's work stands as a powerful expression of resilience, pride, and continuity.

In her artist statement, Michelle shared: "My grandmother weaved baskets, my mother created beadwork, and now I create seed bead paintings. Each generation brings something new while honoring what has come before." This sentiment beautifully captures the essence of her art - a bridge between the past and the future, rooted in tradition yet constantly evolving. Through her work, Michelle keeps our stories alive, inviting both Native and non-Native audiences to connect with the spiritual and cultural significance of our people.

On behalf of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Michelle Lucas for this extraordinary achievement. Her dedication to our cultural traditions, her artistic excellence, and her ability to share the beauty of our heritage with the world have earned her this well-deserved recognition.

Miigwech, Michelle, for representing our Tribe with such pride and talent. We are all inspired by your work and grateful for the stories you continue to tell through your art. Your success at ArtPrize is a moment of celebration for the entire community, and we look forward to seeing where your artistic journey takes you next.

### **ArtPrize press release dated June 26, 2024 excerpt**

ArtPrize, the international art competition and cultural event held annually in Grand Rapids, Michigan, returns September 13-28, 2024. And this year's return marks a tremendous increase in the numbers of participating artists, entries, and venues set to once again delight and inspire. Visitors eager to immerse themselves in this vibrant creative experience and witness amazing events should mark their calendars now, because it won't be long before the summer season turns to ArtPrize season.

With registration concluded, ArtPrize 2024 can officially announce that 1,644 artists have registered to exhibit their work in the form of 1,152 different entries. This abundance of creativity will be displayed in over 180 venues across the city of Grand Rapids. These numbers represent the event's highest participation since 2017.

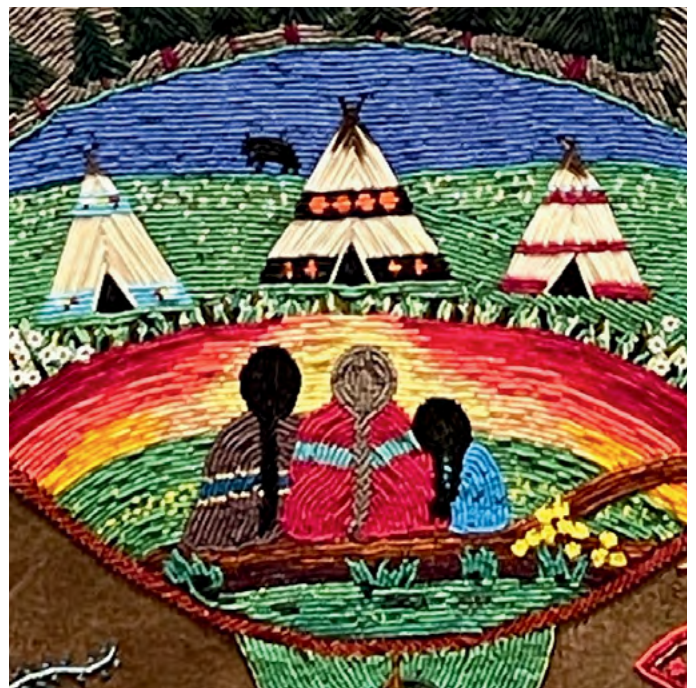
The national and international reputations of ArtPrize continue to bloom. Registered artists for 2024 hail from 53 different countries and 42 different states, working across all genres and mediums. At the same time, the event continues to provide a showcase for local and regional artists.

Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi as three teepees. The largest teepee symbolizes the Chippewa as the eldest brother, while the smaller ones represent the Ottawa as the middle brother and the Potawatomi as the youngest. This visual representation of the Three Fires not only signifies the unity and strength of our people but also offers a glimpse into our shared heritage. As Michelle describes these elements “serve as a visual reminder of the interconnectedness of our Three Fires people and the unity we share.”

Michelle’s journey as an artist has deep roots within our community. Her grandmother, Alice Moore (née Pete), supported her family by weaving ash baskets in Indian Village, Manistee County, carrying forward a long-standing tradition of craftsmanship. Her mother, Linda Hoover (née Moore), followed in her footsteps, becoming a respected Tribal artist known for her beadwork. These family traditions shaped Michelle from an early age, guiding her into the world of beadwork and traditional crafts. Michelle fondly recalls how she and her mother began selling their creations at powwows across Michigan in 1993, an experience that deepened her love for traditional art forms.

While Michelle began with wearable beadwork, including earrings, necklaces, and medicine bags, she has since transitioned to creating intricate seed bead paintings. The Turtle Clan is a beautiful continuation of her family’s legacy, made from materials commonly used in Native American arts, including sinew, glass seed beads, porcupine quills, and hide. These traditional elements connect her work to the generations of Native artists who came before her, infusing every piece with cultural significance.

ArtPrize 2024 brought together artists from around the world, with over 93,000 votes cast by attendees and art enthusiasts alike. For Michelle to place in the top 100 of this highly competitive event is a testament to the power and beauty of her work.





# Share Your Story



Our community is filled with incredible stories, and it's time we celebrate them together. Whether it's Robert Russ (Bobby) stepping into the world of acting with *Skinwalker Island* or Michelle Lucas shining at ArtPrize with her top 100 finish, there are so many examples of talent and success within our tribe and community.

We want to hear more! Every achievement, big or small, has the power to inspire others and spread positivity. Do you have a story to share? Your journey could be the next one to uplift and motivate our people.

Let's come together and showcase the strength and creativity of our community. Reach out to Jo Jo at [joannegreen@lrboi-nsn.gov](mailto:joannegreen@lrboi-nsn.gov) to start the conversation.

Let's make sure your story gets the spotlight it deserves!





# EMPOWER *The Future*

## BUILD A LEGACY FOR THE NEXT SEVEN GENERATIONS!

Join us in building a vibrant legacy for the next seven generations by working for your tribe.

As a tribal member, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to the sustainable development and cultural preservation of our people, our tribe, and our nation.

Your skills, passion, and dedication can make a significant impact on our tribe's future, ensuring that our traditions, values, and prosperity are passed down to future generations.

By working together, we can create a thriving, self-sufficient community that honors our heritage while embracing innovation and growth.

The future of our tribe is bright and full of potential, shaped by our collective efforts to preserve our cultural heritage, promote sustainable development, and ensure the well-being of our community.

Be a part of this transformative journey and help secure a bright future for our next seven generations.

**LOVE, RESPECT, WISDOM,  
TRUTH, HONESTY  
HUMILITY, BRAVERY**



# THE FUTURE *of Our People*

## Government Careers

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# Little River

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