

**From:** [ND Indian Affairs Commission](#)  
**To:** [Padilla Lynch, Melinda K.](#)  
**Subject:** Celebrating Highlights: A Year of Growth and Accomplishment  
**Date:** Thursday, January 9, 2025 12:38:50 PM

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## Indian Affairs Commission Header



### 2025 Quarter One

Discover stories of success, insights, and impactful updates from across North Dakota as we celebrate the achievements and progress of our vibrant Native communities.

#### **In this issue:**

- Intro to Indian Affairs Commission
- Message from the Director

Buffalo

Meet the Staff

- 2024 Year in Review
- Economic Asset and Workforce Needs Summary
- Discover the 5 Nations in North Dakota
- Partners
- Upcoming Dates



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## Get to Know Indian Affairs

Map of Tribal Nations



Created by the North Dakota Legislature in 1949, the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission (NDIAC) is one of the first such commissions established in the United States. The NDIAC exists as an executive branch agency with the governor as chair of the commission.

The function of the NDIAC has changed to reflect major changes in federal and state policy. However, the goal of the NDIAC has always been to create a

better North Dakota through the improvement of tribal/state relations and better understanding between American Indian and non-Indian people.

Find out more follow us go to our website [www.indianaffairs.nd.gov](http://www.indianaffairs.nd.gov).

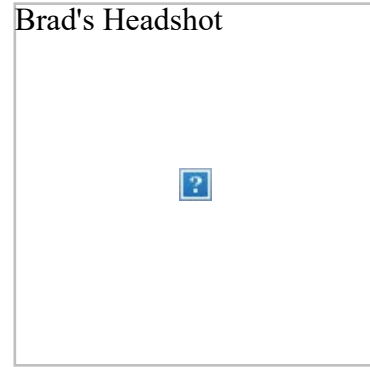
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## Message from the Executive Director

On behalf of the North Dakota Indian Affairs

Commission (NDIAC), it is my distinct honor to welcome you to the inaugural issue of our newsletter. This publication is designed to keep you informed about the Commission's ongoing initiatives, achievements, and opportunities for engagement. This newsletter will also be an opportunity for the Tribal Nations in ND to showcase the wonderful projects in their communities.

Brad's Headshot



Since its establishment in 1949, the NDIAC has achieved numerous milestones that have significantly impacted North Dakota and its tribal communities. With this newsletter, we aim to celebrate these accomplishments while keeping you updated on our current and future efforts.

We hope this newsletter serves as a valuable resource for staying connected with the important work of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission. Your support and involvement are vital as we continue to foster Tribal engagement.

If you have feedback or ideas for future issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference for all who call North Dakota home.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to the mission of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission.

Sincerely,

Brad Hawk, Executive Director

North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission

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## Meet the Staff

IAC Team Pic



L to R in Picture- Brad Hawk, Executive Director, Melinda Padilla Lynch, Economic & Workforce Development Specialist, Anthony Bauer, Deputy Director, Marietta Kemmet, Executive Assistant

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## 2024 Year in Review

MHA EOC

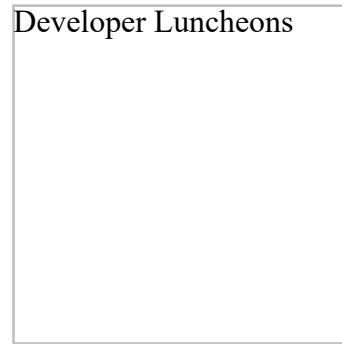


MHA Emergency



Standing Rock Sioux  
Tribe Community  
Strategic Planning  
Meeting

Operations Center



Developer Luncheons  
Native Developer  
Luncheons



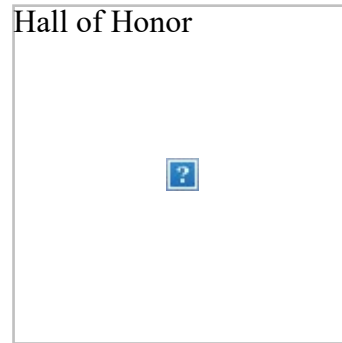
F5 Ceremony

Akisni Warrior Lodge  
Grand Opening



White Buffalo

White Buffalo Gifting  
Ceremony



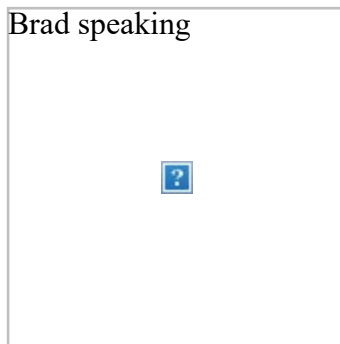
Hall of Honor

Hall of Honor Ceremony



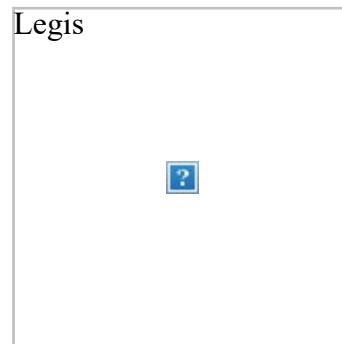
TM Recovery Center

Turtle Mountain  
Recovery Center Grand  
Opening



Brad speaking

G2G Conference



Legis

Native Legislative  
Training Day



## Tribal Economic Assets and Workforce Needs

### Unlocking Potential: Updates from North Dakota's Five Sovereign Nations-

North Dakota's Five Sovereign Nations—MHA Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, and Spirit Lake Nation—continue to demonstrate the strength and vibrancy of their communities through a rich tapestry of economic and cultural assets. From energy reserves and renewable projects in MHA Nation to the cultural and environmental

tourism opportunities in Standing Rock, each tribe showcases unique advantages.

Initiatives like the NG2 Greenhouse Project foster sustainability, while gaming enterprises such as Spirit Lake Casino and Turtle Mountain's Sky Dancer Casino drive regional tourism and employment.

However, challenges remain, including housing shortages, healthcare infrastructure gaps, and limited entrepreneurial support across the tribes.

Collectively, North Dakota's tribal nations contribute significantly to the state's economy, with over **41,000+ enrolled** members representing a powerful workforce and cultural presence. Approximately **50% of these members live off-reservation**, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to bridge community engagement. Gaming, agriculture, and manufacturing generate millions annually, while tourism continues to grow as visitors are drawn to cultural events, casinos, and historical landmarks. These statistics underscore the importance of addressing barriers such as housing and childcare to fully harness the potential of this diverse and dynamic population.

The Tribes prioritize workforce development through training in customer service, technology literacy, skilled trades, healthcare, and leadership programs tailored to local economies. Key recommendations include improving childcare, expanding housing, and utilizing financial literacy programs like the Bank of North Dakota's Smart Money initiative. By aligning infrastructure upgrades with community engagement and economic diversification, they aim for sustainable growth and cultural preservation.

Horse Races



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### Discover the 5 ND Nations: News, Stories, & Flag Meanings

## Flags



### **Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes)**

#### MHA Flaf



Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation Logo and Flag was Designed by Dennis R Fox, Jr. in 2001 The images of the men represent the historic leadership of the Nation in this case, the man are Four Bears (Mandan), Two Ravens (Hidatsa), and Son of Star({Arikara) These leaders perpetuated our Nation's government and culture to present day. Our Nation of the Three Affiliated Tribes was established by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.

### **West Segment's Exciting New Attraction!**

The Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation's West Segment is thrilled to announce the opening of a trampoline park in December! The **West Segment Jump**

## MHA Jump House

**House**, located in Mandaree, promises fun and entertainment for the whole community.

Be sure to follow their Facebook page for updates and grand opening details. Don't miss the chance to jump into the excitement!

[West Segment Jump House Facebook Page](#)



## Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation Website

### Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation

This Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Flag is blue in color in the center is a triangle in the shape of our Reservation boundaries. The lake shown on the triangle is Lake Traverse. There are 7 teepees in the reservation boundaries and each teepee represents one of each of our total of seven districts:

- Old Agency
- Buffalo Lake
- Long Hollow
- Big Coulee
- Heipa
- Lake Traverse
- Enemy Swim

### SWO Flaf



### Bison Roots & Agricultural Futures: Sisseton FARMS and COLT Unite for Innovation

Sisseton FARMS and Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) Partner to Advance Bison Rematriation and Agricultural Innovation. For more on the story check out their Facebook page [Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation Facebook page](#)



SWO partnership with FARMS



### Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Website

#### Spirit Lake Nation

##### OUTER CIRCLE:

- SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE, the Federal Government recognizes Native People as Indian Tribes, originally our tribe was known as Devils Lake Sioux and since has been correctly changed to Spirit Lake.
- FOUR TIPIS represent the four districts of the Spirit Lake Reservation.
- SEVEN STARS represent the seven campfires (Oc'eti S'akowin) of the Dalcota Nation which are: Mdewakantonwan, Wahpekute, Sisitonwan, Wahpetonwan, Titonwan, Ihanktonwan and Ihanktonwana.

##### SL Flag



##### MIDDLE CIRCLE:

- WAHPETONWAN, SISITONWAN AND IHANKTONWANA were the three bands of Dakota residing here at Spirit Lake when the treaty was signed in 1867.
- INNER CIRCLE:
  - 1867 TREATY is blank representing the promises that were made to the Indian People by the U.S. Government.
  - The PEACE PIPE represents the Dakota Chiefs way of honoring their word when they signed the 1867 Treaty (the pipe is typical eastern Dakota).
  - THE SWORD AND WAR BONNET represent the peace agreement between the U.S. Anny and the Dakota Warriors (the sword is typical 1860s era).

## Ski Jump Hill Revived: Skyline Skiway Returns to St. Michaels

The once-abandoned Skyline Skiway in St. Michaels is making a remarkable comeback. Thanks to the efforts of K.J. and Alyssa Graywater, the ski hill is being revitalized to bring tourism and economic growth back to the area.

Follow their journey and get the latest updates on their Facebook page as they breathe new life into this historic site! [SkiJump Adventures](#)

Skijump hill



[Spirit Lake Nation Website](#)

## Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

The flag of the Standing Rock Sioux is medium blue with the tribal seal in the center.

The seal's outer ring is white, edged by two narrow red bands, and bears, in red, "STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE" above and "JULY 1873" below.

The seal contains a circle of eight white tepees representing the eight districts of the reservation. The ring of outward pointing tepees encloses a yellow disk depicting the Standing Rock in white on its red pedestal.

Around the disk are the names of the eight districts in red:

- Long Soldier
- Cannon Ball
- Wakpala
- Kenel
- Running Antelope
- Bear Soldier

SR Flag



- Rock Creek
- Porcupine

**Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Community:  
Building Economic Bridges**

**Strategic Vision in Action**

On December 18th, 2025, MNI WICHONI hosted an Economic Consortium, uniting several participants from a variety of organizations, including Tribal Government, Local Government, small businesses, and non-profits, to discuss Standing Rock's Strategic Plan.

**Next Steps:** The journey continues—join us at the next meeting in February to keep the momentum going!

Scenic Byway



**Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Website**

**Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa**

TM Flag



- 12 feathers months of the year
- Chief Little Shell with pipe and hatchet symbolizes peace and defense
- Red River cart represents the Metis
- Four tepees represent four districts on reservations
- Sacred circle with four directions and turtle with yellow, red, black and white (races) teaching of the seven grandfathers
- Wisdom: to cherish knowledge
- Love: to know love is to know peace
- Respect: to honor all creations is to have respect
- Bravery: to face the fee with integrity

**Turtle Island Adventure Parks: Dive into the Fun!**

**Big Splashes & High Hops Await!**

Have you explored the excitement of Turtle Island Adventure Parks at Sky Dancer Casino? Experience the thrills of the Indoor Waterpark today and get ready to leap into action with the upcoming Trampoline Park and so much

[TM Adventure Logo](#)

more!

Don't miss out—your next great adventure is here! [Turtle Island Adventure Park](#)

[Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Website](#)

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## Collaborations

[ND Native Vote](#)

[ND Tribal College System](#)

[ND Native Tourism Alliance](#)

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## Upcoming Events

January 23rd-24th- Tribal Economic Conference hosted by NDAC

February 20th, IAC hosting Native Day in the Memorial Hall

April 2nd Native Economic and Tourism Developer Luncheon

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