



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan. 25, 2007

CONTACT: Helen Wilkie

651-260-2420 cell

Helenwilkie@comcast.net

Reservation Employment Hits All-Time High At Bois Forte, Chairman To Report In State of the Band

Bio-Fuels Demonstration Project Being Initiated

NETT LAKE, Minn. – Band employment is at an all-time high on the Bois Forte Reservation in northeastern Minnesota thanks to better education and training, aggressive development of small businesses, and tougher employment requirements, Tribal Chairman Kevin Leecy will report in his State of the Band address on Thursday.

“We have made significant strides in the employment of native people,” Leecy states in an advanced copy of his speech. “Bois Forte now provides income to 277 Band members and their families – the highest in the history of the Band,” he said.

Diverse training programs in everything from heavy equipment operation and small business planning to golf turf management have helped create new opportunities for many Band members, Leecy reports. The Band’s governing body, the Reservation Tribal Council (RTC), also toughened ordinances calling for more Indian workers on Band construction projects including a \$13 million hotel expansion at Fortune Bay started last spring. Leecy stated contractors working on the \$10.7 million construction of the Nett Lake School beginning this spring will be given a goal of hiring 50% Native workers.

(more)

Leecy's speech, scheduled for 6 p.m. at the Woodlands Ballroom at Fortune Bay Resort Casino, will be the centerpiece in a day-long celebration marking the chairman's annual progress report to the Band and the people of Minnesota.

Leecy will also announce that the tribe will assess the feasibility of developing a renewable bio-fuels demonstration project at Nett Lake. "Right now, Bois Forte – like the rest of the country – is dependent on outside sources of energy," Leecy says in his prepared text. "As a result, our future economic vitality is threatened by forces beyond our control." The demonstration project will explore the use of biomass resources found right on the Reservation, from logging residue to municipal waste, to create environmentally clean fuels.

Other events slated for the day include:

- The release of a new language CD featuring Ojibwe words, phrases and music during a 2 p.m. reception at the Heritage Center located adjacent to the Resort Casino. National award winning recording artist Keith Secola, who collaborated on the CD, will perform at a free concert for Band members later in the evening.
- An afternoon job fair at Fortune Bay that will be attended by representatives from local companies and labor unions to discuss career opportunities and apprenticeships.
- Booths on the programs and services available from every department of the Bois Forte tribal government including health, education, environmental services, natural resources and casino/resort operations.

The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa is located in northern Minnesota on Lake Vermilion near Tower, Minn.