



THE NON- REMOVABLE

MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE

A thriving tribal culture in East Central Minnesota



A MESSAGE FROM OUR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



**MILLE LACS BAND
OF OJIBWE**

The Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is a sovereign, self-governing, federally recognized American Indian tribal government. Our people have lived for generations on the Mille Lacs Reservation and on tribal lands throughout East Central Minnesota, from Mille Lacs Lake east to the St. Croix River and north to Rice Lake and Sandy Lake.

We have a rich history and culture, and our relationship with the United States as a sovereign nation dates back to a time before Minnesota became a state. In fact, American Indian nations have been recognized as sovereigns since before the formation of the United States.

In the mid-1700s, our ancestors settled in this region and established a way of life that we continue to preserve today. We hunted, fished, gathered wild rice, and served as stewards of our lands and resources – never taking more than was needed. Our ancestors endured hardship and poverty in the face of pressure from the non-Indian culture as well as fraud and deception from timber companies colluding with government officials attempting to remove us from our lands. Yet our ancestors refused to leave. They stayed true to our values and culture, worked hard, and continued to dream of a better day. Our legacy today is one of extraordinary resilience and strength as an Indian nation committed to a future of prosperity and hope for all.

As the Band's democratically elected Chief Executive, and on behalf of our more than 4,500 tribal members and more than 4,000 employees, it is my great honor to present the story and proud history of the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians.

Melanie Benjamin



OUR VALUES

OUR VALUES

Our values form the foundation of our lives.

While they are rooted in our history, culture, and language, we believe that all people will recognize these as important values.

GWEKWAADIZIWIN

HONESTY

To achieve honesty within yourself is to recognize who and what you are. Do this and you can be honest with all others.

DBAADENDIZIWIN

HUMILITY

Humble yourself and recognize that no matter how much you think you know, you know very little.

DEBWEWIN

TRUTH

To learn Truth, to live Truth, to walk Truth, and to speak Truth.

NBWAAKAAWIN

WISDOM

To have Wisdom is to know the difference between good and bad and to know the result of your actions.

ZAAGIDIWIN

LOVE, COMPASSION

Unconditional love and compassion is to know that when people are weak, they need your love and compassion the most.

MNAADENDIMOWIN

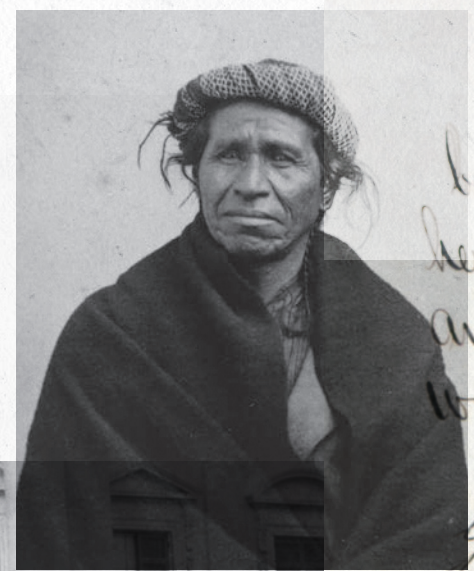
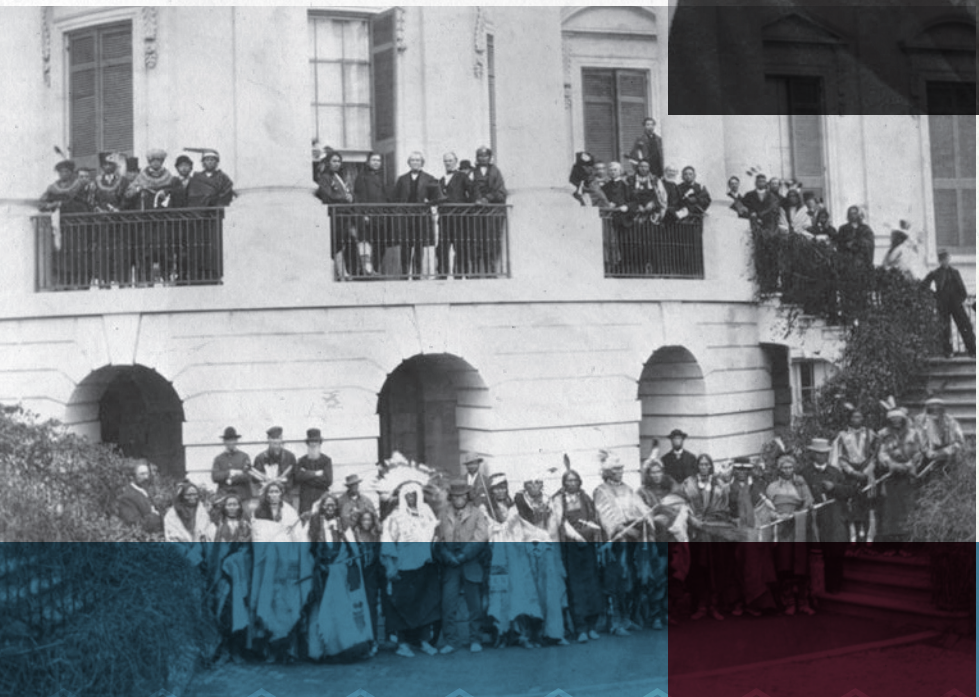
RESPECT

Respect others, their beliefs. Respect yourself. When you practice respect, respect will be given back to you.

AAKWADE'EWIN

BRAVERY, COURAGE

Have bravery and courage in doing things right even though it may hurt you physically and mentally.



bands of Chippewa Indians
Account to their hands and
and on the day and you
written,
Geo. A. M... ..

Chiefs and delegates of the
Dug-o-na-ke-shick, or Hole in the day
Que-we-sans-ish, or Bad Boy.
Waud-e-kaw, or Little Hill.
Lawe-showe-we-ke-shig, or Crooping sh
Peltud-dance, or Rats liver.
Mun-o-min-e-kay-shain, or Rice maker
Mah-yah-ge-way-we-durg, or The Christian
Kay-gwa-dansh, or The attempter.
Lawe-cang-e-we-gwon, or Crow feather.
Show-bansh-king, or The that path under wing
Chiefs and delegates of the Pillager and Lake
Aish-ke-bug-e-koshe, or Flat-mouth.
Be-sheck-kee-, or Buffalo.
Kay-bun-a-caush, or Young man's
Mang-e-gaw-bow, or Stepping ah
Mi-gi-si, or Eagle
Kaw-be-mub-bee, or North Star

HISTORY OF THE MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE

THE BEGINNING

Ojibwe people originally lived on the Atlantic Coast of North America. About 500 years ago, our ancestors began migrating west – guided by the dreams and prophecies of their elders and spiritual leaders to journey to the place “where food grows on water.” By the mid-1700s, the Ojibwe were established throughout the Great Lakes region. They supported themselves by hunting deer, bear, moose, waterfowl, and small game; fishing the area’s lakes and streams; gathering wild rice, maple sugar, and berries; and cultivating plants.

Since then, the Mille Lacs Band’s self-sufficient way of life has been disrupted by many changes and encroachment to our homeland. Yet our Ojibwe culture and values have endured.

TREATIES OF 1837 AND 1855

In the Treaty of 1837, our ancestors ceded millions of acres of land in what is now Minnesota and Wisconsin to the United States, but reserved the right to hunt, fish, and gather on the ceded lands. In the Treaty of 1855¹, the federal government set aside 61,000 acres of land south and west of Mille Lacs Lake, which became the Mille Lacs Reservation. These treaties established an ongoing government-to-government relationship between the Band and the United States. They also established how the Band and others would share land, fish, and other resources.

¹In this treaty, the Mississippi and Pillager Ojibwe bands ceded a large tract of land covering northwest Minnesota—excluding the northwest-most corner of the state—and retained their usufruct rights upon the land. Additionally, they had nine reservations established for the Gull Lake, Mille Lacs Lake, Pokegama Lake, Rabbit Lake, Rice Lake, and Sandy Lake bands (all Mississippi bands) as well as the Cass Lake, Leech Lake, and Lake Winnibigoshish bands (all Pillager bands).

SANDY LAKE TRAGEDY

In the fall of 1850, the Office of Indian Affairs directed the Ojibwe from across the Great Lakes region to gather at Sandy Lake for their annuity payment. When the 5,500 tribal members arrived in early October, the Indian agent was gone. No food or supplies had been delivered, no shelter was available, game was scarce, fishing was poor, and floods had wiped out the wild rice crops. As a result, 150 Ojibwe died due to the harsh winter, disease and starvation. An additional 250 died on their journey home to parts of Wisconsin and Michigan.

LATE 1800s

The young men of the Mille Lacs Band volunteered in high numbers to serve in the Civil War (1861-1865). Meanwhile in 1862, the Band was instrumental in keeping peace among the Ojibwe during the Dakota War in Minnesota. In recognition of good conduct during the Dakota War, the Mille Lacs Band received a guarantee in the 1863 and 1864 treaties with the U.S. government that Band members would not be forced to leave the Mille Lacs Reservation, becoming henceforth the **Non-Removable** Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Meanwhile, Band leaders faced non-Indians' continued westward movement, increasingly harsh federal Indian policy, and the timber industry's desire to harvest lumber from the lush pine and oak forest on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Despite the Treaty of 1864, the U.S. Interior Department in 1879 proclaimed the reservation available for purchase by timber companies and others. Congress later reversed the proclamation, but not in time to prevent non-Indians from squatting on the reservation and stripping large tracts of trees.

Further disruption followed in 1889, when Congress passed the Nelson Act. This act sought to move Ojibwe populations to land allotments on White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota, even while it allowed them to take allotments on their own reservations.



During this same period, the government declared that Indians must conform to the lifestyles of non-Indians. Mille Lacs Band children were taken from their families and sent to government boarding schools. In an attempt to assimilate them into mainstream society, they were forbidden from speaking the Ojibwe language or practicing Ojibwe religious and cultural teachings.

By the end of the 19th century, the Band was impoverished and virtually landless, tribal members were being wrongfully removed from the homeland promised to them, and generations of children were being stripped of their Ojibwe identity. Hopes of peace, cultural preservation, and prosperity in harmony with nature were in severe peril.

"PROVIDED, THAT OWING TO THE HERETOFORE GOOD CONDUCT OF THE MILLE LACS INDIANS, THEY SHALL NOT BE COMPELLED TO REMOVE SO LONG AS THEY SHALL NOT IN ANY WAY INTERFERE WITH OR IN ANY MANNER MOLEST THE PERSONS OR PROPERTY OF THE WHITES"

Treaty of 1864 between the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the United States of America

SURVIVAL AND STRENGTH

When federal representatives visited Mille Lacs in 1902 to negotiate an agreement for damages done to Mille Lacs Band members by settlers, the Band discovered that Nelson Act promises of allotments at Mille Lacs had been broken. Many Band members abandoned hope of fair treatment and moved to White Earth. Others were harassed into moving over the next few years as their property was sold out from under them.



CHIEF MIGIZI



CHIEF WADENA

A small group of Band members led by Chief Migizi and Chief Wadena refused to leave. In 1911, a sheriff's posse burned the Mille Lacs Lake village of Chief Wadena. Its residents were forcibly removed so that their land could be claimed by a developer.

The Mille Lacs Band's hardships continued, but a glimmer of hope for the future came in 1934, when Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act. A formal recognition of Indian tribal self-governance, the act intended to restore Indian self-determination and tribal cultures.

Later that year, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe was formed as a political union of six Ojibwe bands, including the Mille Lacs Band.



CHIEF ART GAHBOW

Following additional cycles of progress and setback, a series of landmark court cases affirmed the right of Indian tribes to regulate commerce on their lands. In 1991 Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act which established a framework for tribes and states to negotiate gaming compacts. The Mille Lacs Band opened Grand Casino Mille Lacs in 1991 and Grand Casino Hinckley in 1992.

In a move that reduced federal bureaucracy over tribal programs, Congress passed the Tribal Self-Governance Act in 1994. The Mille Lacs Band was one of seven tribes that negotiated the innovative, cooperative self-governance agreements, laying the foundation for hundreds of tribes to integrate self-governance principles into their programs and services.

Through perseverance, the Band's cultural traditions remain strong today. We gather maple syrup, berries, and wild rice as our ancestors did. We continue to hunt and fish while respecting the land and water. The Ojibwe language is taught in the Band's schools. And we treasure our powwows, which are popular with both Band members and non-Indians.

"YOU ARE THE NON-REMOVABLE MILLE LACS BAND. NON-REMOVABLE. NO OTHER RESERVATION IN THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN DEEMED NON-REMOVABLE. BY TREATY OF 1864, THE PEOPLE OF MILLE LACS AND SANDY LAKE WERE DEEMED NON-REMOVABLE. WE CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE REMOVED."

The late Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Art Gahbow, 1989 State of the Band Address



GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES



DIVISION OF POWERS

In the 1980s, the Band created a division of powers form of government similar to the United States federal government. This system has American Indian roots, as the 14th century Iroquois Confederacy was a model for the U.S. government.

The three branches of our government – legislative, executive, and judicial – ensure through proper checks and balances that no single person or part of the government has absolute or arbitrary power in any particular area.

The Band has laws to regulate Band affairs. Our judicial branch preserves and maintains justice and accords equal rights, equal protection, and equal opportunity for Band members under Band laws and statutes. The Band's Court of Central Jurisdiction is made up of a District (or tribal) Court and a Court of Appeals.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The legislative branch, known as the Band Assembly, enacts laws that regulate the Band's affairs and appropriates money for Band programs and services

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

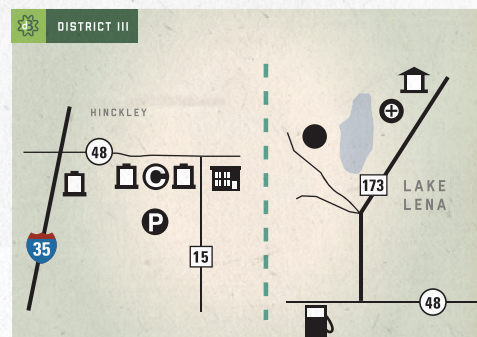
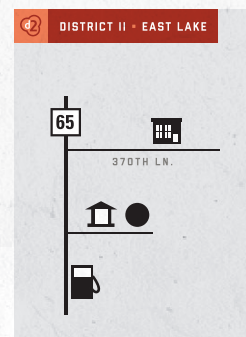
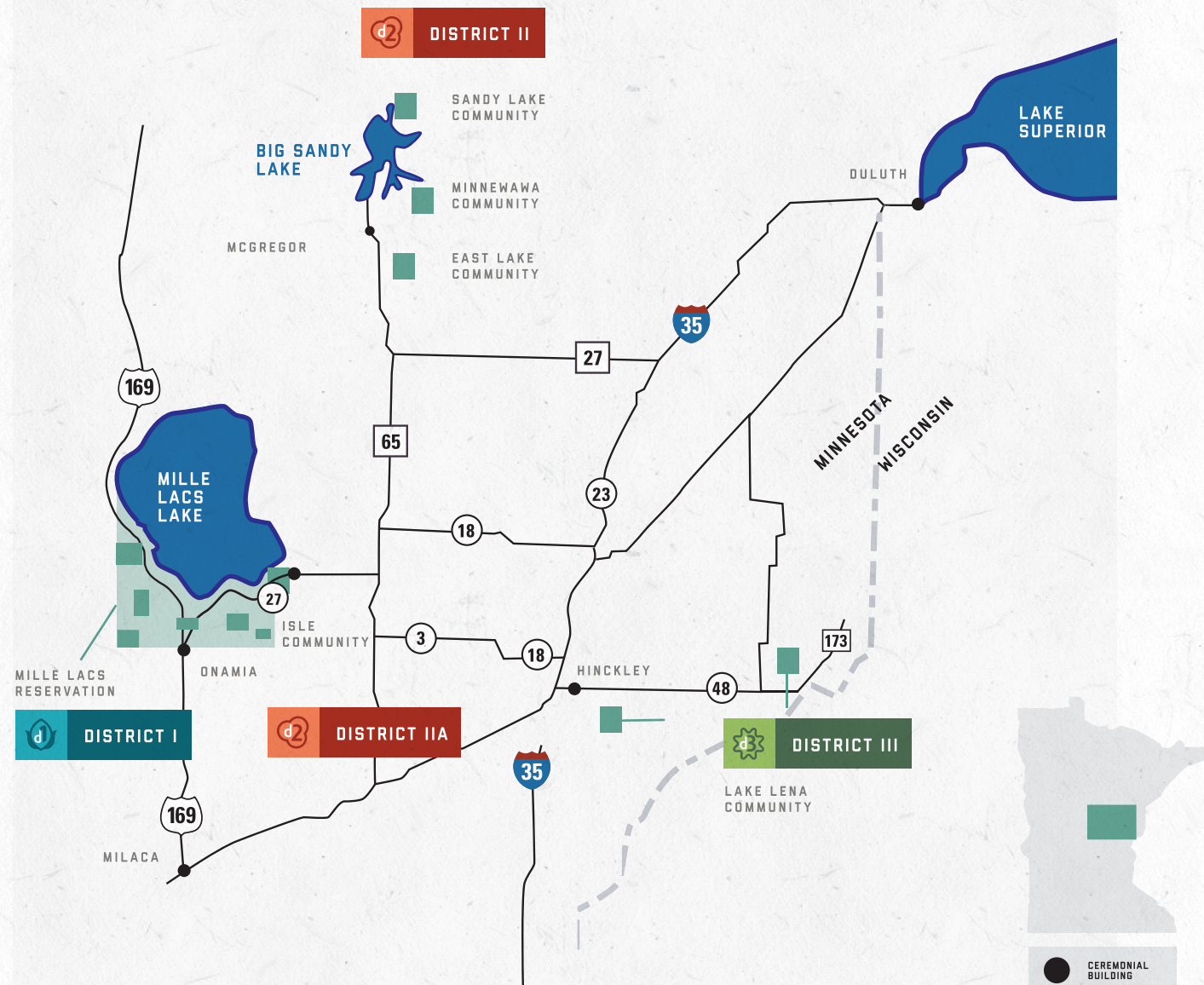
The executive branch, led by the Chief Executive, implements the Band's laws and administers the Band's programs and services

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The judicial branch, or Tribal Court, upholds the Band's laws and ensures justice is served equally to all Band members

Members elect the head of the Band's executive branch, the Chief Executive, every four years. The four members of the legislative branch – known as the Band Assembly – also serve four-year terms. The Speaker of the Assembly is elected by all Band members. Each of the Band Assembly's three Representatives is elected by the people who reside in his or her district; Band members who live off the reservation select a home district and vote for a Representative from that district.

MILLE LACS RESERVATION



- CEREMONIAL BUILDING
- CLINIC
- GOVERNMENT CENTER
- SCHOOL
- ASSISTED LIVING UNITS
- MUSEUMS
- COMMUNITY CENTER
- HOTEL
- CASINO
- CONDO
- POWOW GROUNDS

ACTIVE CITIZENS, PROACTIVE GOVERNMENT

Mille Lacs Band members are active in their communities and tribal government.

From leadership on the local school board to advocacy for public safety and community policing, Band members of all ages get involved in causes that strengthen the entire region. Elder and youth advisory committees advise Band leaders and departmental commissioners. Their activism ensures that our Ojibwe values guide us in answering today's difficult questions while getting passed on to the youngest generations.



OUR CULTURE AND LANGUAGE



The Mille Lacs Band's Ojibwe culture drives our decisions and daily life, and preserving it is a top priority. That's why we teach the Ojibwe language in our early education, K-12, higher education, and community ed programs across the reservation. We also maintain cultural grounds and ceremonial buildings where Band members practice our traditions and beliefs.

The Mille Lacs Band has long been known for talented artists and craftspeople. Basket making, beading, and using natural materials to create beautiful Ojibwe designs are skills that have been handed down from one generation to the next. Ojibwe art is woven into our tribal facilities today, including murals gracing the walls of our government center and the Nay Ah Shing Upper School, both located in District I of the reservation.

OJIBWE IS EVERYWHERE

Minnesota is full of the Ojibwe language, from our signature river, Misiziibi (you know it as the Mississippi), to cities and towns like Bemidji (a lake with water flowing through) and Mahnomon (or manoomin – what we call wild rice). While visiting reservation communities, you may hear the following common Ojibwe words/phrases:

BOOZHOO

boo-zhoó

HELLO

ANISHINAABE

Ah-nish-in-ah'-bay

THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE, OR THE PEOPLE

GIGAWAABAMIN MIINAWA

ge-guh-wah'-buh-min me-na'-wah

SEE YOU AGAIN

MIIGWECH

me-gwech'

THANK YOU

MILLE LACS INDIAN MUSEUM

Sharing the heritage and culture of the Mille Lacs Band with people of all cultures is critical to preserving Ojibwe history – which is integral to Minnesota and United States history. The Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post, operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, is located on the east side of Highway 169 across from Grand Casino Mille Lacs (www.mnhs.org). Exhibits and tours focus on everyday life, Ojibwe arts and crafts, and the survival of the Mille Lacs Band through some of the darkest periods in American history.

ANNUAL POWWOWS

The public is warmly welcomed to attend these annual Mille Lacs Band powwows:

Memorial Day Powwow – Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post

Grand Celebration – Third weekend in June – Grand Casino Hinckley Powwow Grounds

East Lake Traditional Powwow – Typically the third weekend in July – Gii-Ishkonigewag Powwow Grounds

Mille Lacs Traditional Powwow – Third weekend in August – Iskigamizigan Powwow Grounds

AMVETS Powwow – Veterans Day weekend – Nay Ah Shing and Onamia School Powwows

New Year's Eve Powwow – District I – Community Center



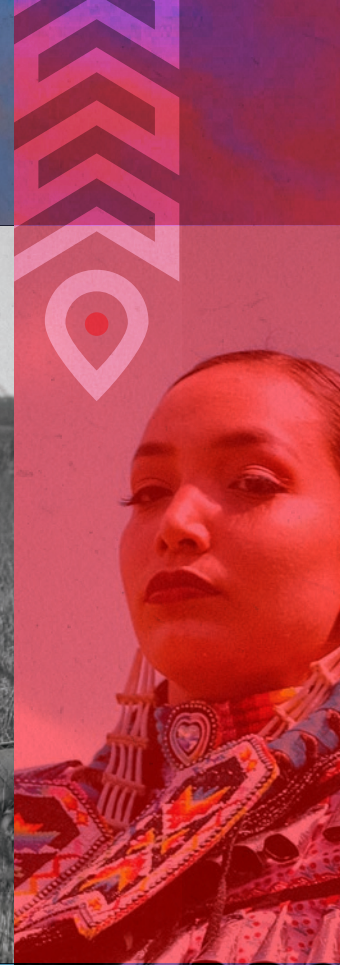
SUGARBUSHING



DREAMCATCHER/OJIBWE ARTWORK



WILD RICE HARVEST



YOUNG GIRL IN REGALIA



ONE OF THE MILLE LACS BAND'S 10 HOTELS

OUR WAY OF LIFE



DRUM GROUP AT HINCKLEY POWWOW

OUR SERVICES TO BAND MEMBERS



The Mille Lacs Band uses a significant portion of tribal resources to provide valuable programs and services to Band members. These programs and services include:

- A Tribal Police Department
- Clinics in each reservation district
- Preschool programs and K-12 schools, with approximately 400 students
- Circle of Health, the Band's secondary health insurance program
- Charter schools in District II and District III
- A scholarship program
- Elder services and assisted living units in each reservation district
- Programs focusing on fitness, healthy lifestyles, academics, arts, and cultural activities
- A workforce center that provides employment assistance and promotes lifelong learning
- Community centers and ceremonial buildings in each reservation district
- Housing and housing/neighborhood-related services
- Department of Natural Resources, which employs biologists, game wardens, and scientists who protect Mille Lacs Lake and Band land resources
- Infrastructure including roads, water and wastewater treatment facilities, and community facilities

To administer the Band's programs and services, the Chief Executive appoints and the Band Assembly ratifies commissioners for four-year terms:

- Commissioner of Administration
- Commissioner of Education
- Assistant Commissioner of Administration
- Commissioner of Finance
- Commissioner of Corporate Affairs
- Commissioner of Health and Human Services
- Commissioner of Community Development
- Commissioner of Natural Resources

RIVAL HOUSE
SPORTING PARLOUR
WOOD-FIRED PIZZA + PINTS



OUR IMPRINT ON THE ECONOMY

TOP EMPLOYER AND TAXPAYER

40TH LARGEST EMPLOYER IN MINNESOTA

3,400 CORPORATE

4,100
TOTAL

700 GOVERNMENT

Grand Casinos have been a catalyst for employment growth, with jobs increasing by **35%** in Mille Lacs County and **72%** in Pine County over the past **25** years.

90% of our employees live in surrounding East Central Minnesota communities.

Annual employee payroll totals nearly **\$114 million**.

\$1.9
Million

Paid in annual property taxes to Pine County

\$434+
Thousand

Paid in annual property taxes to Mille Lacs County

\$1.3
Million

Paid in annual property taxes to Ramsey County

We pay more than **\$19.8** million annually in federal and state taxes based on wages paid to employees.

We pay more than **\$237** million annually to our several thousand vendors.

30+ MILLE LACS BAND-OWNED BUSINESSES

The Band has worked hard to diversify the tribal and regional economies, provide a variety of employment opportunities for Band members and other local residents, and offer quality services to visitors. Please visit the following Band-owned businesses:

**GRAND CASINO
MILLE LACS**

- Adjoining hotel and a variety of restaurants
 - Events and Convention Center
- Latest casino games

**GRAND CASINO
HINCKLEY**

- Three hotels and RV resort
 - Restaurants, spa and golf course
- Events and Convention Center
- Latest casino games

WOODLANDS NATIONAL BANK

Onamia, as well as Hinckley, Sturgeon Lake, Zimmerman, Minneapolis, Cloquet and Grand Market Branches

ML WASTEWATER, INC

Onamia

**EAST LAKE
CONVENIENCE STORE**

McGregor

GRAND MARKET

Onamia

**GRAND NATIONAL
GOLF COURSE**

Hinckley

GRAND MAKWA CINEMA

Onamia

GRINDSTONE LAUNDRY

Hinckley

HINCKLEY MEDICAL OFFICE

Hinckley

**DOUBLETREE BY HILTON
AND RIVAL HOUSE
SPORTING PARLOUR
RESTAURANT**

Downtown Saint Paul

**DOUBLETREE BY HILTON
MINNEAPOLIS PARK
PLACE HOTEL**

Saint Louis Park

**EMBASSY SUITES BY
HILTON OKLAHOMA CITY
WILL ROGERS AIRPORT**

Oklahoma City

**INTERCONTINENTAL®
SAINT PAUL
RIVERFRONT HOTEL AND
CITIZEN RESTAURANT**

Downtown Saint Paul

**BIG SANDY LODGE
& RESORT**

McGregor

**MILLE LACS
SUPER STOP**

Onamia

SWEETGRASS MEDIA

Onamia

2020 BRAND SOLUTIONS

South Saint Paul

SUBWAY RESTAURANT

Onamia

TACO JOHN'S

Onamia

**MLB CONVENIENCE
STORE**

Onamia

**CROSSROADS
CONVENIENCE STORE**

Hinckley

EDDY'S RESORT

Onamia

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, visit us online:

www.millelacsband.com

www.mlcorporateventures.com

www.grandcasinomn.com

www.woodlandsnationalbank.com

Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post

(www.mnhs.org)