



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST ELDER'S ELECTRICITY ASSISTANCE PILOT PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES

Financial Assistance Provided to 214 Tribal Seniors

AKWESASNE, NY – The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is proud to announce the successful conclusion of the Elders Electricity Assistance Pilot Project that was administered for the months of April 2015 to June 2015. The Tribal Council also expresses its appreciation to tribal staff that worked in collaboration to locate financial resources and help 214 tribal seniors aged 70 years or over with their electric bills or rental assistance. They are grateful for everyone's efforts in providing seventy-five dollars (\$75) for each of the three months to help alleviate the financial stress on tribal elders.

"We are pleased with everyone's combined efforts that contributed to the success of the Elder's Electricity Assistance Pilot Project," stated Tribal Chief Beverly Cook. "It has been our pleasure to make this possible and we continue to appreciate the positive comments from tribal seniors who have received the financial assistance."

According to tribal elder Barbara Lazore, "The Tribe is helping our seniors by providing fuel assistance and now helping with our electricity bills. The assistance has been wonderful and it has made a huge difference for our fixed incomes. We appreciate whatever tribal assistance we can get."

To help elders with their energy costs, Tribal Council in collaboration with the Compliance Department, Tribal Administration and the Tribe's Chief Financial Officer developed a working policy for the pilot program designed to help tribal members aged 70 and over. They worked as a team during a time of fiscal constraint to identify and provide indirect financial support to tribal elders, while being fiscally responsible to tribal program and the protection of community interests.

"The pilot project has been on our radar ever since the Tribe partnered with CITGO and offered to conduct home energy assessments in many elder's homes. They indicated a need to assist with energy saving appliances or help with the rising cost of electricity," stated Director of Compliance Elliott Lazore.

The Tribal Council is grateful for efforts in developing a one-time pilot project that provided monetary assistance on electric utility bills for three months—beginning in April 2015 and ending in June 2015. The Compliance Department remitted the amount of \$75 to the utility company for a qualified individual's electricity bill or, for tribal seniors who reside in rental units where electricity is included; the monetary assistance was applied to their rental fees.

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The response and results from the initial disbursement in April 2015 indicated that the majority of the 214 tribal seniors who benefited from the pilot project chose to use the financial assistance for their electric bills; with 178 applied toward National Grid, nine (9) for Massena Electric, 26 for Sunrise Acres rental assistance, and one (1) with NYSEG.

“Tribal Council is always looking at ways to improve the well-being for all of our community members. We hold our elders in high regards and it has been our pleasure to help them during a time of high electricity costs,” stated Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. “We are pleased that our Compliance Structure works was able to generate the funds needed to help our tribal seniors.”

“On behalf of the Tribe and our elders, we want to thank the tribally licensed and compliant businesses for helping to make the Elder's Electricity Assistance Pilot Project possible,” remarked Tribal Chief Paul Thompson. He further stated, “We extend our appreciation for working in cooperation with our Compliance Department and for providing the licensing fees needed to help our older tribal members who are most in need.”

The Tribal Council is grateful, once again, for being able to provide financial assistance to tribal elders to help with their electricity or rental bills. They intend to re-evaluate and, hopefully, expand, the pilot project in the near future to help more of the community's elders.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.