



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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NEWS RELEASE

For release:
Kentenhkó:wa/November 25, 2014

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Akwesasne Strengthened From Gaming Enterprises *Community Impact and a Look Forward to 2015 Proposed Budget*

Akwesasne, NY- The contribution from gaming was a modest \$600,000 in 2003. A decade of diligence and growth has led to a multi-year run of a \$19 million commitment to Akwesasne through the Tribal Gaming Fund. The gaming enterprises on territory attract 2.8 million visitors annually. Our youth, our elders and our community organizations are supported directly and indirectly through major donations and programs. In the next month, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Benefits of Gaming publication will be shared with our members and our visitors.

The budget story is as multidimensional as the infrastructure of the programs supporting our community, thanks to our long-term self-sustainability plan and the (local gaming tourism) visitors of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort. Fourteen essential tribal departments and over a hundred programs are either supplemented or fully funded by the Tribal General Fund (TGF). "In a community of 6,000 residents, the tribe can be proud of the management of our territory's gaming enterprise that fulfills the mission of positively impacting our community, Akwesasne," stated Sub-Chief Michael Connors.

Major donations are made annually to programs that keep our youth and our families safe and healthy, outside of tribally managed organizations. Community Support donations directly impact our youth, our elders and everyone who lives on our territory. Cultural and educational enrichment programs such as the Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club, the Akwesasne Freedom School and the Akwesasne Pow-Wow, are gifts that enrich our community. The Akwesasne Mohawk Ambulance Unit and the Hogansburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department protect and serve everyone. In the long, cold winter months, our community members are eligible for home heating fuel assistance, off-setting the very expensive cost of keeping our families warm.

Indirectly, our kids have access to extracurricular activities and are exposed to events otherwise out of reach through the Akwesasne Boys and Girls Club. For the past three years, the ABGC has received \$300,000, annually. The kids are able to attend events, participate in our after-school program and have transportation in a bus donated by the Tribe.

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This spring, the delivery of a state-of-the-art ladder fire truck designed to reach the top floor of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort symbolized our commitment to a thriving and safe community. A ceremony recognizing generations of firefighters who put their lives at risk for our families and the families of our surrounding counties unveiled the seven-story ladder truck. Through mutual aid agreements, firefighters from Akwesasne and neighboring towns stood proudly while the truck was unveiled and took its inaugural ride, demonstrating the power of our communities when we pull together.

The Mohawk Gaming Enterprise has donated an additional \$99,806 (annually) to the ladder truck payment, the ABGC, the Ironworkers Festival – Pension Fund, the Mountain of Toys and event sponsorships.

In Akwesasne, our elders are our richest part of our history; they gift us with their wisdom, their strength and their love. The Community Support Fund assists the Senior Citizen’s Club, provides sponsorship for the Senior Games, Friends of Tekakwitha Club and Iakhihsohtha, our home for the elderly.

The Community Partnership Fund was formed in 2004 to provide the Tribe a system to distribute donations from the gaming enterprises in collaboration with the Pepsi Corporation donations to charitable causes. Sports are an intrinsic part of our community and the life-blood of so many of our families; this fund has provided thousands to sports teams and individual athletes to assist with the expense of our elite athletes who represent us on a national and international stage. From 2011-2013, contributions total \$148,615.

Scholarships and sponsorships to educational enrichment opportunities, such as the AISES Science Fair and National Conference, National Honor Society events and youth leadership events are possible because of this fund. Cultural programs, such as the Ohero:kon Rites of Passage is possible because of a \$35,500 commitment from 2011-2013.

“The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe extends sincere appreciation to the program managers, directors and staff who participate in the budget process each year. This is an arduous and detailed process. We extend our thanks to community members who took time to participate in the budget process by attending meetings and providing us with valuable feedback and questions for both the 2015 proposed budget and the 2014 YTD budget meetings,” remarked Tsiorsara Barreiro, Executive Director. “One of the strategic priorities on the 2015 budget horizon is healthcare; reflected is the critical increase of the Architecture and Engineering fund to expand our clinic. The largest budgetary expense is always wages and benefits. We are fortunate to have a robust team of 650 people and proudly share that 77% of our employees are tribal members.”

“Our Procedures Act requires the Finance Department and Tribal Administration to provide full transparency concerning financial information to the community. We are committed to providing open forum updates and look forward to inquiries as we approach the end of our open comment period on December 5, 2014,” shared Barbara Montour, Chief Financial Officer. Public comments forms are available at the Community Building reception area.

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