



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## PRESS RELEASE

For release:  
Enniska/February 7, 2012

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### **Mohawk Tribe Moves Ahead with Casino Expansion**

*Tribal Council Assigns Construction and Compliance Managers to Project*

**Akwesasne Territory** – Colleen Thomas, Construction Manager for the tribe's Planning and Infrastructure Department has been assigned to the construction management team to represent the tribe to provide tribal oversight on the day-to-day operations of the casino expansion. Thomas, a Mohawk tribal member, has an extensive background in architecture, construction and project management. "I have been assigned to this project by Tribal Council to help ensure successful completion of the casino expansion and hotel and to make certain Tribal interests are met," said Thomas.

The tribe interviewed several companies to provide construction management services on the expansion project. After extensive interviews, they decided that Encompass best meets the needs and requirements of the tribe. Individuals assigned to this project from Encompass have many years of construction management experience. Encompass also guaranteed a budget and a schedule that met the Tribe's expectations and requirements.

The Mohawk Preference Policy also requires that the Tribe's Compliance office monitor compliance with the policy. In addition to the Mohawk Preference Policy, Tribal Compliance Director Elliot Lazore and inspector Charlie Thompson will also oversee building codes and site expansion compliance. They have been working on the project since the beginning of the expansion project. Lazore and Thompson have attended meetings with Encompass and reviewed design plans to ensure they meet code standards. "Assigning the Mohawk preference policy to the Compliance Department was an easy decision as we are already involved," remarked Lazore. Inspections are conducted for codes and now also the Mohawk preference policy. Reports will be generated monthly. Requests for companies' certified payroll lists are also included in the inspection process.

"The intent of the Mohawk Preference Construction Policy has two goals," commented Lazore. "Those are to put Mohawks to work and to provide contracting opportunities to qualified Mohawk-owned construction contractors." This monitoring involves requiring certified payroll, to ensure that Mohawks are being hired and maintained as employees, monitoring of the bid process and the evaluation of bids to ensure the application of Mohawk preference in all relevant decision-making. Lazore added, "If a qualified Mohawk owned firm or a qualified Mohawk has any concerns about how the policy applies to them or in general, the Tribe's Compliance Department is happy to assist in addressing those concerns."

*Continued*

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In hiring, the policy requires all contractors and sub-contractors to hire a minimum of 40 percent Mohawk workers. There is an exception for “key employees,” those management employees that the contractor requires to provide oversight and management. This exception must be approved by the Tribe. To assist contractors to meet this requirement, the Tribe has directed the Akwesasne Employment Resources Center to establish a list of individuals seeking employment in various construction trades and fields. This list is provided to contractors. All contracts with for the project must include an agreement to abide by the Mohawk Preference Policy.

In contracting, the policy requires that all qualified Mohawk-owned firms are provided an opportunity to bid on various phases of the project. In addition, financial preferences are provided to Mohawk-owned firms in an effort to allow them to be competitive with larger, non-Mohawk companies. These preferences are intended to cover additional bonding, or insurance requirements that smaller, less established firms may encounter.

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