



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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NEWS RELEASE

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Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Launches Website
Focused on Land Settlement, Boundary Resolution Benefits
Tribe signed MOU with New York State, St. Lawrence County last week

AKWESASNE, NY – With an all-important first step in resolving its 32-year land claim behind them, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is turning its focus on articulating the benefits of a negotiated settlement.

The tribe announced today that it has launched a new website – www.ResolveTheBoundary.com – to help the community-at-large understand a proposed settlement to boundary discussions that stretch back more than three decades.

“Questions related to the status of our boundary have lingered for 32 years – that’s a lifetime for many of our people,” said Chief Beverly Cook of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council. “Throughout that entire time, there have been rumors and speculation about what resolving this issue would mean for the Tribe and for our neighbors in Franklin County and St. Lawrence County. We’ve created a resource that will help people see and understand the facts behind a proposed settlement.”

The launch of the website comes on the heels of an historic moment in the ongoing boundary discussions. Last week, leaders from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council and St. Lawrence County met with Governor Andrew Cuomo to sign a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) outlining terms of a settlement between the Tribe, the county and New York State.

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According to the MOU, a final settlement agreement would permit the Tribe to acquire, only from willing sellers, identified lands in St. Lawrence County and return them to the Tribe's territory. Local governments will receive payments from New York State covering any lost property taxes for the lands the Tribe is able to acquire. St. Lawrence County will also receive one-time payments of \$2 million and \$1.5 from the State and the Tribe as well as annual payments of \$4 million from New York State to be paid in perpetuity. The funds would be unrestricted, allowing the County to use them as it sees fit. The agreement also clarifies matters related to jurisdiction and building codes.

The identified lands in St. Lawrence County which the Tribe may acquire on the open market, from willing sellers include acreages in the Town of Brasher and in the Town of Massena.

"The MOU with St. Lawrence County is an important first step," Chief Paul Thompson said. "Now, we need our friends and neighbors from Franklin County to work with us, as the leaders of St. Lawrence County have, in this same spirit of cooperation. While we are not yet at the finish line, last week's announcement is proof that we can move forward together. After 32 years, it's time."

A complete settlement cannot be enacted without support and sign-on from Franklin County, followed by local, state and Congressional approval.

"Our Tribe's recent history has been marked by business growth and success. The benefits of our success have permeated the economy of the entire North Country," Chief Ron LaFrance added. "Finalizing a settlement of our boundary matters can also yield important benefits for our tribe and for our neighbors for generations to come."

"Under the MOU terms, we will have the ability to ensure the education of our young people, less expensive power and further, we achieve protection for landowners that have already lost their title for non-payment of taxes. Under a final agreement, this returns rightful ownership," states Chief Cook.

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