

# TRIBAL NATIONS TOOLBOX TOURS

## SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA COMMUNITY

3084 HWY 55, Crandon, WI  
11/13/2025



SOKAOGON  
CHIPPEWA  
COMMUNITY

Mole Lake Band

### AGENDA

- 9:00am - Welcome from Tribe
- 9:15am - Overview of Event
- 9:20am - Tribal Intros & Expectations
- 9:30am - Resource Provider Intros
- 10:15am - Breakout Sessions
- 11:45am - Wrap up and Next Steps
- 12:00pm - Lunch

### OPENING STATEMENTS

HR DIRECTOR and David opened the event and talked about what is important to Mole Lake – what resources are brought to table. There were Forest County Potawatomi businesses participating in the event as well. Next, introductions by the 14 attendees were made. WEDC indicated that both Forest County and Mole Lake are part of their efforts.

Aina Vilumsons discussed Marketplace and said she will send the resource list to those registered. Fern Orie of WIHEDIC talked about the AICCW Chamber, HUBs [made initial connection], financing including CDFIs [Fern had handouts] housing and financial literacy with more information available.

### TOPICS DISCUSSED

#### ACCESSING CAPITAL: NAVIGATING FINANCING AND TRIBAL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Maria reviewed their office and their strategy and encouraged participation. There are PSC relationships, potential grant applications, past work with RC on solar grids, and a \$5k event grant related to energy. The other projects include board games on energy sustainability and efficiency and connection to the network. A Mole Lake rep asked about DOE \$4mill Net Zero grant that was put on hold.

Alex talked about what opportunities and certification options are available and what it means to be Certified. A tribal inspector in the audience talked about the need to rebuild homes for their tribal members.

Solar for All is not around anymore. FCP members are looking to do more in energy and Maria mentioned NREL. There were questions asked about out of state like CA energy programs which encourage Energy Sovereignty. Fern Orie mentioned Climate United, which then everything went to litigation. Maria mentioned her Focus on Energy and that they will be making adjustments to solar offerings. Fern mentioned Tribal Renewal with Seminoles at a conference she attended.

Kelly wants to see what is out there. She has a son who has a business but does not receive a lot of support for new businesses from their tribe. She is happy that there are many resources available. Phoua wants to assist with HUB creation and as the HR director, wants to beef up services to members. Courtney wants to charter as CDFI / Credit Union to have inclusion in cannabis banking and move to multi state solutions. They can operate as Credit Union now. David suggested reaching out to the WI Credit Union League.

Fern mentioned issues with CDF and her connection with Rob Pero of both IBG and Cannabis as well as PeroDigm companies. MI tribes are doing some financing of green space and Courtney discussed the strategy for the tribe. 3 new people came in just after 10am and indicated they are working with WisDOT and getting training thru the 131-union facility.

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Dillon/ Caleb / Cassandra represented the tribes' roads department. They are getting new equipment on Monday. ACCESSING Capital through native CDFI's, financial literacy on an individual level can grow out the ecosystem.

Question on housing on tribal land which led to Fern talking on funding on tribal land with affordability, housing stock, Housing Coalition. David added that WHEDA has opportunities with several of their programs and encouraged folks to reach out to Fern and learn about her programs. Fern talked about housing in her housing report. David talked about need to have date to do applications for loans or grants.

Courtney mentioned their last feasibility study was done in 2015. GLITC has a person to help with CEDS and other economic development strategies, training, and business development. David talked about WEDA and their Governor's conference. He talked about their work with GLITC and their technical assistance.



## BUSINESS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE NATIVE-OWNED ENTERPRISES

Mole Lake program reviewed their business development which is minimal and has fallen by wayside because there was no supportive funding. He gave an example of trucking company which has 0 to 3 trucks and is succeeding.

Tribe wants to update Administration building, housing, more capital for the youth center, elderly. One tribal member mentioned their biggest problem indicating that they don't do the "first steps" like writing a plan but instead get an idea and just do it. If it fails, they might take a hit on personal finances. Alex talked about getting the right resources he mentioned KC and his ties to WisDOT. David talked on what was at LCO. Maria mentioned sustainable BD resources.

From tribe -Work coming up on fiber project – doing some training now – encouraging start-up businesses to support – want utility contractor to teach process and how to bid. Tribe just got funding to start work in spring – no prime yet.



## MARKETING AND NETWORKING: GROWING VISIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Aina talked about networking both virtually and in person. Maria mentioned Climate Action Navigators Networks. David talked about native tourism conference June 24 – 26, and other stuff happening in WI, Indigenous Biz Con, REZ national conference, NACO at Potawatomi, WI Tribal transportation conference, DBE WisDOT annual conference Feb 25-26 2026. He also mentioned SCORE.

Alex mentioned startinwi.com – Small Business Academy and David mentioned SB Academy to host in person in at Mole Lake. Fern talked on Housing, the housing survey, housing facets and dismantle obstacles. The are socio economic issues and referenced current housing initiatives revealing success with Mavid and the need to put in "sweat equity"

Breaking away from HUD? Fern talked about removing tribal silos and referenced quarterly tribal leadership meetings where they work together. David is setting up Section 17s.

## ATTENDING RESOURCE AGENCIES



## ATTENDEES

Cassandra Krusenstema	TLAC	sondra.krusenstema@scc-nsn.gov
Noel Vandiver	SCC - Tribal Roads	noel.vandiver@scc-nsn.gov
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