

Tribal Affairs Newsletter



November 2023

Staff Announcement



Photo Credit: Native Governance Center

Rita Karppinen joined the Office of Tribal Affairs in mid-October as its new Tribal State Relations Training Specialist. Karppinen brings experience in tribal engagement, event planning and collaboration to her new position. Most recently, she worked in the communications division for Fond du Lac, one of the 11 federally recognized tribes in Minnesota. You can contact Rita at Rita.karppinen@state.mn.us

“Boozhoo (hello), I am excited to be joining a team that is built on education and strengthening relationships! Feel free to reach out, I look forward to getting to know you all better,” said Karppinen.

Highlights



National Transportation in Indian Country Conference 2023

In late September, the Office of Tribal Affairs and District 1 District Engineer Duane Hill participated in the National Transportation in Indian Country Conference. NTICC is the best forum to gain access to training and an opportunity to engage with federal officials and Tribal transportation peers regarding Tribal transportation issues and challenges. NTICC provides information and resources for all who are committed to improving the transportation infrastructure of Indian Country and the safety of those who live, work, and travel the roadways of Alaska Native and Native American lands. “The NTICC was a great opportunity to learn about federal tribal programs, get technical assistance, and network with federal and tribal leaders on tribal transportation topics,” said Hill.

The conference included over 700 participants from Tribal, federal and state officials, non-profits and consultants. Five federally recognized Tribes from Minnesota were represented. Key topics included pedestrian and roadway safety, project management and partnerships, workforce development, transit, intergovernmental partnerships, transportation policy, and funding opportunities. New funding opportunities were identified for CDL scholarships, safety, and infrastructure improvements.

MnDOT Tribal Affairs and District 1 presented on Tribal-State relations in Minnesota, access to workforce development, and improvement of infrastructure in Indian Country. Participants shared and learned from successes in improving safety, crash data gathered by Stanford University with innovative tools (apps), using drone, participative safe route to school partnerships, and converting data into impactful positive results.

“I’m proud to see both Tribal and MnDOT officials showing a unified front at a national level and how important it is to work together,” said Levi Brown, MnDOT Office of Tribal Affairs Director.

Tribal-State Relations Training marks 10-Year Anniversary

Tribal-State Relations Training celebrated 10 years with an exclusive training opportunity for executive leadership. In 2013, the first TSRT was hosted by Prairie Island Indian Community. This October, TSRT returned to Prairie Island to celebrate! Attendees included Minnesota State Agency Commissioners, Deputy and Assistant Commissioners, Minnesota House of Representatives, Minnesota Senate, and U.S. Congress Members from Minnesota.

There have been many milestones in the past 10 Years of Tribal-State Relations training. There have been over 6,000 State of Minnesota employees trained, Minn. Stat. 10.65 has been codified, and the training is now being offered 11 times per year.

The TSRT would like to thank the Tribal Liaisons, Tribal and State leaders for their ongoing support during the past 10 years!

Events

Event: Minnesota Indian Affairs Council Meeting

Date: Nov. 20-22, 2023

Hosting Nation: [Mdewakanton / Shakopee Sioux Community](#)

Details: See [MIAC website](#)

Event: Quarterly ACTT Hybrid Meeting

Date: Dec. 4 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Location: MnDOT Central Office

Details: Contact [Jen Parshley](#)

Feedback

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