*Sent to all Members*

February 16, 2025  
  
Dear {%FName%},

Concluding the first half of the Rotary year seems an appropriate time to summarize progress, hopes and expectations.

District membership, under the leadership of Brian Monroe, has stabilized and is growing. If everyone would simply invite one potential member to join Rotary our membership challenge would be solved. So, action step number one is to find a friend to bring to Rotary.

When you visit another club or attend a district or international conference, your Rotary experience is significantly enhanced. Please consider attending [TriCon](https://www.rotarywglconf.org/register) in Brookfield, WI on April 25th and 26th. *(see registration link below).*

There is life beyond our own clubs that profoundly impacts the Rotary experience. Action step number two is to attend [TriCon](https://www.rotarywglconf.org/register) or the [International Convention](https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/) in Calgary in June *(see link below)*. All are welcome to join those of us attending.

We continue to show respect, build goodwill and foster friendship with our Indigenous neighbors by starting meetings with a land acknowledgment statement, inviting tribal leaders to speak at club meetings and supporting the Mole Lake Sakaogon Chippewa tribe’s Public Service Commission grant application for fiber extension in Forest and Florence Counties.  Action Step number three is to implement use of an acknowledgment statement, invite Indigenous neighbors to speak at your club and write a letter to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in support of the Mole Lake grant application. (s*ee address on page 2*).

My hope is that we make Rotary a safe place for discussion of important, perhaps controversial issues, with respect and civility. Our weekly programs may be one of the most effective educational tools available to restore civility to our civic discourse…but only if we use it.

And may more say “yes” to filling the leadership roles that are essential for membership growth and continued service above self. If you share my belief that we are among the luckiest people in the world by chance of birth, please use Rotary leadership as a mechanism to pay back for the goodness and blessings we experience by living in the United States of America.

TriCon Registration - <https://www.rotarywglconf.org/register>

International Convention Registration: <https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/>

***Rotary Minute: Civility Modeled in Mole Lake Is An Impressive Example***

The civility modeled by the Sakaogon Chippewa Community on the Mole Lake Indian Reservation in Forest County is an impressive example for Rotary International and our state and federal governments to follow.

Civility may be the missing ingredient in our civic discourse, but not on the 1,500-member reservation led by tribal chair Robert Vanzile, Jr.

The Sakaogon Chippewa Community is forming an impressive coalition of Native and Non-Native representatives of government, education, health care, economic development and natural resource protection. The immediate goal is to extend high speed internet through fiber optics connections to some of the most rural, poor, and underserved parts of Forest and Florence Counties.

Almost five thousand Native and Non-Native residents of Forest and Florence Counties do not have access to fiber or high-speed internet. Tribal leaders recognize extending fiber to the most underserved, poverty-plagued parts of our state opens opportunity for both tribal members and non-native neighbors.

The collaboration and civility modeled by tribal leaders are building positive relationships between people often divided by long-lingering tensions.

Beneficiaries of the cooperation will be students impacted by distance learning, senior citizens who can be both diagnosed and treated for medical conditions from the comfort of their rural homes, and unemployed workers who can find the dignity and self-respect by holding well-paid positions only possible with working remotely. Indigenous language preservation, natural resource protection, affordable housing, economic diversity and research are among the additional benefits.

Rotary International is committed to promoting economic development, environmental protection, education, and health care.

Respecting and supporting what is being modeled on the Mole Lake reservation by the Sakaogon Chippewa Community is worthy of support.

May every Rotarian view what is taking place on the Mole Lake reservation as an opportunity to build goodwill and better friendship with our Indigenous neighbors.

**Please stand with me endorsing the Sakaogon Chippewa Community grant application pending with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. Approval of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund grant application will change lives, build better relations and continue modeling civility.**

**Contact the WI. Public Service Commission to Support Mole Lake Tribe of Sakaogon Chippewa Indians Broadband, Equity, Assess and Deployment (BEAD) Program grant application.**

**Mention** *“I write in support of the Sakaogon Chippewa Community Consortium BEAT grant application.”*

**Wisconsin Public Service Commission**

**P. O. Box 7854**

**Madison, WI 53707-7854**

Thank you.

ROGER UTNEHMER  
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District Governor 2024-25  
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