

White Earth Reservation Business Committee

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News Release

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White Earth Reservation Business Committee continues commitment to Ojibwe Language

WHITE EARTH, MINN. – In 2010, the White Earth Reservation Business Committee (RBC) declared Ojibwe as the official language. At a quarterly meeting held Sept. 6, the RBC reaffirmed its commitment to language revitalization on the reservation. A taskforce will be created to develop a strategy which will include an immersion school to increase Ojibwe proficiency skills in tribal youth.

Rob Tibbetts, a White Earth enrollee, discussed the idea with an RBC member and was asked to make a presentation at the quarterly meeting. He stated the tribe is losing fluent Ojibwe speakers and our greatest intellectual treasure, our language. Tibbetts was selected to lead the taskforce primarily due to his extensive knowledge and background on the subject.

“Some of these kids will be our future leaders,” said Tibbetts, who has taught Ojibwe language the past three years at the Niigaane Ojibwe Immersion School on Leech Lake Reservation. “I saw what language immersion did for the kids,” said Tibbetts. “It gave them an identity.”

Tibbetts said this will be a slow process, but a substantial investment in White Earth communities with the likelihood of a 20-year language revitalization plan being developed.

“I’m all for it,” said District I Representative Raymond Auginaush Sr. “Our language is slowly slipping away. It’s who we are – it’s our heritage.”