

# INDIAN LEAP NEWSLETTER

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## ANNUAL HARVEST GATHERING

The Annual Harvest Gathering was held on Sunday, November 21st, at the Preston Fire House, Preston, CT. There was plenty of food thanks to the efforts of Linda Donovan and Orren Weber and others who brought many tasty delights.

After everyone had an opportunity to finish their meals, the meeting was called to order by Eleanor.

Donna Shank (Big Duck) was asked talk about the new club that has been organized for children 4 to 12 years of age. The purpose of the club is to involve our children in activities that teach them their Mohegan history and culture. The club, Gung Skeedumbork (Young People) meets every second Saturday, from 9-11AM at the UCFS building in Norwichtown, across from Stop & Shop. Donna is assisted by Ruth Sweet, Darlene Currier, and Roger Corey, Sr.

The children presented Eleanor Fortin, Roger Corey, Sr., and Frank Cook with gifts that they made in recognition for the contributions made by them to the club.

The Annual Native American Mohegans "Volunteer of the Year Award" presentations were made by Donna Shank and Elizabeth Corey, last year's recipients. The 2004 "Volunteer of the Year Award" was presented to Linda Donovan and Martha Jalbert for their continued efforts in the support of the Tribe.

The meeting portion of the gathering then adjourned and everyone returned to the tables for more refreshments and pleasant conversation.

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## 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE

Tribal Council would first like to thank all Tribal Members for their financial support through 2004. As a result of your support, we were able to maintain our Tribal Office, publish and mail the quarterly newsletter, pay for the function halls we use for meetings and gatherings, get a "jump start" on preparations for our 2005 Powwow, and launch the culture club for our children.

In the past, many members have requested that they be reminded when it was time for paying dues. In keeping with this request, Tribal Council sent out letters to all members 18 years of age and older with the exception of those "Lifetime" members and those members who are exempt. If you do not know where you stand with respect to your dues obligation, call Toni Cook at (781) 944-3580. Send your dues (\$36) to Toni at the address below.

Tribal Council continues to offer "Active" Tribal Members an opportunity to purchase a "Lifetime" membership. No more worrying about whether your dues are paid up, no more worrying about future increase in dues.

In order to qualify today, your dues must be paid-up through the end of 2005. Then for a one-time fee of \$150, you can become a "lifetime" member of the Tribe. Just send a simple note requesting a "Lifetime" membership along with a check made out to the Native American Mohegans to:

Mrs. Toni Cook  
94 Salem Street  
Reading, MA 01867

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

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***Native American Mohegans' Annual Intertribal Powwow  
June 11 and 12, 2005***

Lebanon Fairgrounds, Mack Road, Lebanon, CT

We need volunteers to help with the preparations. If you would like to volunteer, call (781) 944-3580, or send email to fecook@nativeamericanmohegans.com.

With your help we can have another successful Powwow!

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***Winter Social  
Preston City Congregational Church, February 6, 2005***

Our annual Winter Social will be held at the Preston City Congregational Church on February 6, 2005, from 1:00-4:00pm. The Preston City Congregational Church is located at the intersection of Route 164 and 165 in Preston across the street from the Preston Firehouse. Please bring a dish to share.

Please come and enjoy the Winter Social. It's great to get together with our Mohegan families. Hope to see you there.

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**NATIVE AMERICAN MOHEGAN COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

In order to get a better understanding of the quality of life of Native American Mohegans, the Tribal Council sent out a survey to 250 members of the tribe. 80 people completed the survey, a 32% response rate. Eastern AHEC has collected the results into an initial "raw data" report and NAM and Eastern AHEC have begun the analysis. Here are the results of that survey. If you have an opinion on any of these survey results, mail them to the office or email them to info@nativeamericanmohegans.com.

**Demographics of Respondents**

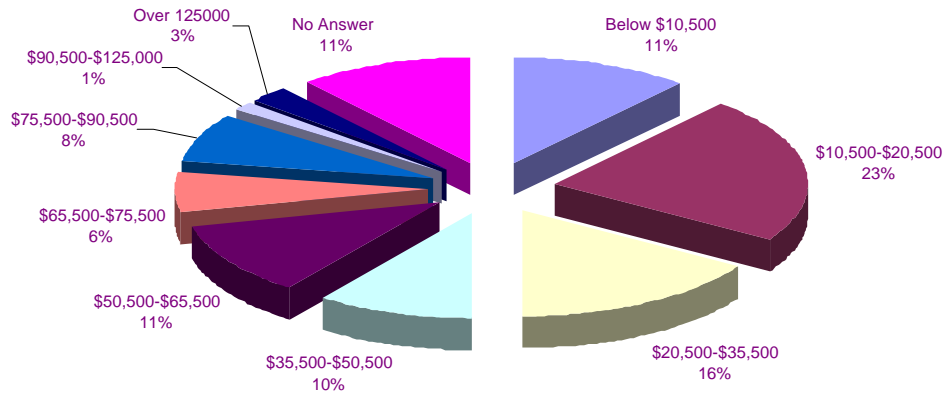
A majority (58) of members completing the "Needs Assessment" were from Connecticut. Other states where respondents live included New York (4), Maine (3), Massachusetts and Florida (2 each), California, Colorado, Delaware, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington (1 each). There was a wide variation in the age of respondents, ranging from 22 to 82, with a fairly even distribution of ages in between. 58% of respondents were female and 41% were male. In terms of education, 46% responded that 12<sup>th</sup> grade was their highest grade completed, while 20% said their highest grade completed was lower than 12<sup>th</sup> grade (6<sup>th</sup> grade and higher). 26 % completed some form of college and 3% went on to grad school. 63% of respondents indicated that they had a spouse and 53% indicated having a child.

**Family Income and Occupation Levels**

The distribution of family income levels and the occupation levels of household members are shown in the following charts. 65% of the income levels are lower than the Connecticut 3 year (2000-2002) yearly average of \$53,325. 34% of the income levels are below the \$18,400/year poverty level. 13% of respondents indicated that their household included someone who was unemployed or an adult student and 30% indicated that someone was retired in their household. This might help explain the lower than average income levels among respondents. Respondents were also asked to list the job titles of those in the household. Labor-related professions included

mason, welder and carpenter. Semi-skilled and skilled professions included truck driver, electrician, and hairdresser. Professional jobs included engineer, realtor, and certified public accountant.

Family Income Level



### Housing and Medical Issues

Respondents were asked if their household has adequate housing and if everyone in the household has medical insurance. 73% (59) of respondents said they had adequate housing and 63% (51) had adequate medical insurance for everyone in the family.

Respondents were also given a list of medical problems and concerns and were asked to circle any that applied to someone in their household. The following chart shows the responses to this question.

The “other” category included the following chronic conditions: thyroid disease, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, back problems, migraines, seizures, heart disease, and pneumonia.

### Services

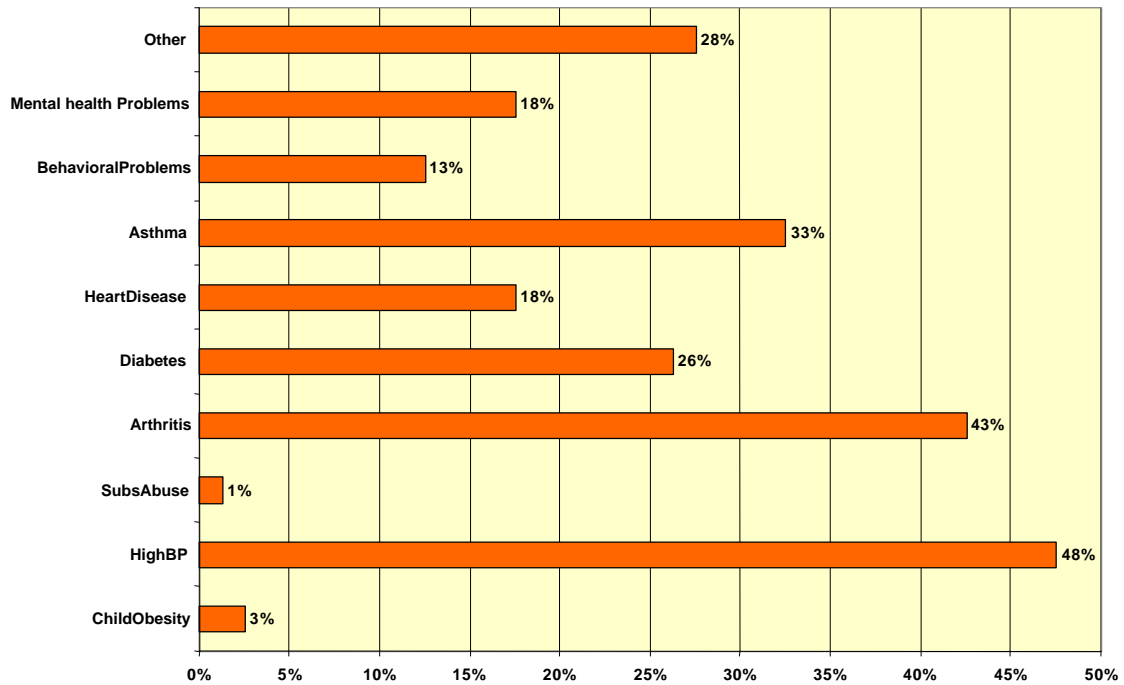
Respondents were asked a series of questions related to services. They were asked if there is anyone in the household receiving a variety of different services. The following chart shows the responses to this question.

Other services identified included Medicaid, HUSKY, and food stamps.

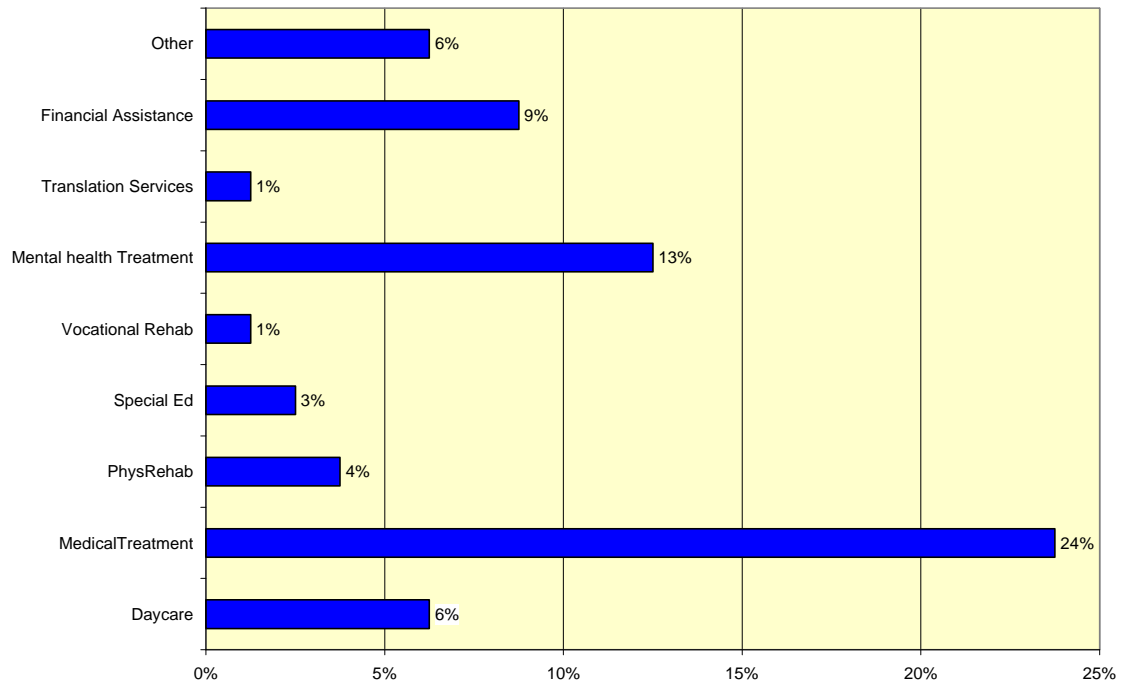
Respondents were also asked if anyone in the household was on a waiting list for special services. Very few people responded that they were on a waiting list for any services. 3 respondents each said they were on a wait list for day care or medical treatment of any kind, 2 each said they were on a wait list for physical rehabilitation or special education, and 1 said they were waiting for case management or outreach services. Other services people were on a wait list for included elderly housing, eye doctor, dental and orthodontic.

When asked to rate the quality of services they receive, most respondents ranked them “excellent” or “good”. Services listed included dialysis, speech therapy, mental health counseling, daycare, rehabilitation, OB/GYN services, medical services, and well-child visits. 4 people ranked their medical services as “poor” or “fair”, 1 person ranked their mental health services as “poor”, 1 person ranked their dental service as “poor” and 1 person replied that their special education service was “fair.”

### Medical Problems



### Is there anyone receiving services in the household?

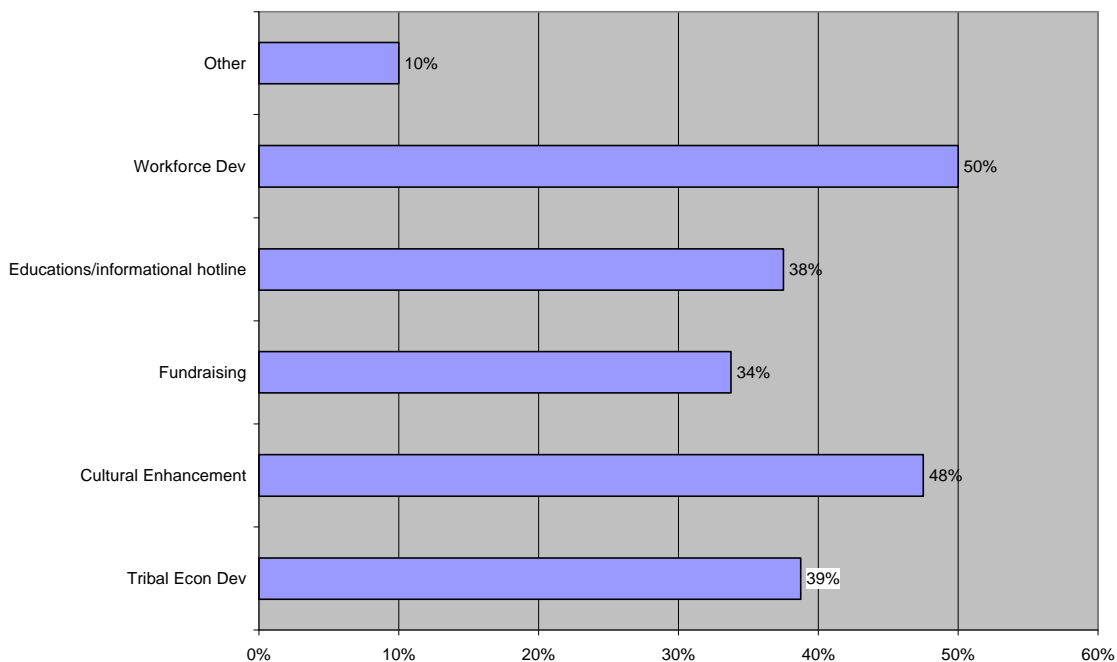


Respondents were also asked whether they thought the Tribal Council should offer substance abuse treatment services. A majority (69%) responded “yes” while 20% said “no” they should not offer such services. 11% did not answer the question.

### Tribal Council

There were several questions on the “Needs Assessment” related to people’s opinions of the Tribal Council. When asked “Do you agree that membership dues are necessary to fund office expenses and activities?”, 91% said “yes” they do agree while only 9% said “no” they do not agree. Respondents were also asked if they felt they were kept informed of tribal activities, to which 76% replied “yes” and 23% said “no.” Responses were pretty evenly split when asked if they know who the Tribal Council members were, 49% said “yes” and 46% said “no”. 60% of respondents felt they have access to Tribal Council and 36% said no. Those who replied that they did not feel they had access to Tribal Council were asked to provide suggestions for ways to improve communication between Tribal Council and members. Some of the suggestions that were made included: having more member meetings and having new member meetings, making the newsletters more informative and perhaps including a column from the Tribal Council in the newsletter, using the internet and e-mail to save time and money in communicating with members. Other comments that were made included people stating they do not receive the newsletter, that the Tribal Council is unresponsive, and that they live out of state so it is hard to keep up to date on what is going on.

**What types of projects or opportunities do you think Tribal Council should coordinate for member involvement?**



Respondents were also asked what types of projects or opportunities they would like Tribal Council to coordinate for member involvement. “Other” opportunities that people listed included: college scholarship program, day care, housing, more gatherings to create a sense of community, and a group that people could contact

**Other Comments**

Several people commented that they would like to see housing and health benefits offered to members. Others said they would like to see the tribe work together more as a team and would like to be kept better informed of the tribe’s recognition status. One person said to consider an economic development plan that does not include gaming or casinos.

**BOOK REVIEW**

EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY:  
REFLECTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY

INDIGENOUS WOMEN  
by Wilma Mankiller

Author and activist Mankiller has garnered the thoughts of 19 Native women on questions such as the meaning of spirituality, the importance of sovereignty, and what it means to be an indigenous woman today. Mankiller chose her participants well, for these women--a physician, an attorney, ranchers, professors of American Indian studies, an urban planner, a cultural anthropologist, artists, poets, musicians, and an Onondaga Clan Mother--really do have something to say. Spirituality, which connects all indigenous peoples, means respect for the earth and all living things. Land is crucial to all tribes, as shown by the Dann sisters, Shoshone ranchers struggling to defend the sacred ceremonial grounds of their ancestors, and Sarah James, who fights for her Gwich'in tribal rights to protect caribou birthing grounds from oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Profound yet simple words from strong women working hard to perpetuate their culture, and who have a lot to share, and who need to be heard. *Deborah Donovan*

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## TRADITION !

### WAMPUM (PART 2)

Wampum from Middle and Late Woodland periods (beginning around AD 200) had a robust shape, about 8mm in length and 5mm in diameter, with larger stone-bored holes of more than 2mm. Wampum beads of the mid-1600's average 5mm length and 4mm diameter with tiny holes were bored with European metal awls average 1mm. Seneca's in New York after European contact during the late 1600's had increasing numbers of shell beads, which measured approximately 7mm length and 5mm diameter, having metal-drilled holes with a diameter of just under 2mm.

The word "Wampum" comes from the Narragansett word for 'white shell beads'. Wampum beads are made in two colors: white ("Wòmpi") beads ("Wompam") from the Whelk shell ("Meteaùhock"), and purple-black ("Súki") beads ("Suckáuhock") from the growth rings of the Quahog shell ("Suckauanaùsuck").

“The quahog shell used to produce purple wampum and other shell pendants is exclusively the species with the Latin name 'Mercinaria mercinaria'

There are several types of Whelk used to make the white beads and pendants with the Latin name 'Busycon'. In southern New England beads are often manufactured from two local species: Busycon canaliculatum (Channeled Whelk) and Busycon carica (Knobbed Whelk), which both inhabit the waters from Cape Cod southwards to Florida. Early historic Iroquois wampum also originates from the species Busycon sinistrum (Lightening Whelk) along the coast from New Jersey through Florida around through the Gulf, and also from the species Busycon Laeostomum (Snow Whelk) who's habitat ranges from New Jersey down to Virginia” (Pendergast 1983: Essays in St. Lawrence Iroquoian Archaeology).

Some early historic documents contain inaccurate references to the shells being of periwinkle or muscle shell, sometimes mistaking the beads themselves for porcelain or bone. The periwinkle shell was not even introduced to the New England coastline until the late 1800's (Krepcio 2001: personal communication).

European traders and politicians, using beads and trinkets, often exploited gift exchange to gain Native American favor or territory. With the scarcity of metal coins in New England, Wampum quickly evolved into a formal currency after European/Native contact, it's production greatly facilitated by slender European metal drill bits. Wampum was mass-produced in coastal southern New England. The Narragansetts and Pequots monopolized the manufacture and exchange of wampum in this area.

“The intense hardness and brittleness of the materials made it impossible to wear, grind, and bore the shell by machinery alone. First the thin portions were removed with a light sharp hammer, and the remainder was clamped in a scissure sawed in a slender stick, and was then ground into an octagonal figure, an inch in length and half an inch in diameter. This piece being ready for boring was inserted into another piece of wood, sawed like the first stick, which was firmly fastened to a bench, a weight being so adjusted that it caused the scissure to grip the shell and to hold it securely.

The drill was made from an untempered handsaw, ground into proper shape and tempered in the flame of a candle. Braced against a steel plate on the operator's chest and nicely adjusted to the center of the shell, the drill was rotated by means of the

common hand-bow. To clean the aperture, the drill was dexterously withdrawn while in motion, and was cleared by the thumb and finger of the particles of shell. From a vessel hanging over the closely clamped shell drops of water fell on the drill to cool it, for particular care was exercised lest the shell break from the heat caused by friction" (Jennings 1976: 93-94).

A fathom (six feet of strung beads) of white wampum was worth ten shillings and double that for purple beads. A coat and Buskins "set thick with these Beads in pleasant wild works and a broad Belt of the same (Josselyn 1988: 101)" belonging to King Philip (Wampanoag) was valued at Twenty pounds. Even in the 1600s there was noted distinctiveness of Native-made wampum and the inability of others to counterfeit it, although attempts at imitations included beads of stone and other materials.

"Strung money was known as wampumpeage, or merely peage. Customarily arranged in lengths of one fathom (6 feet), which contained anywhere from 240 to 360 individual beads, depending not only on the size of the beads but on their current worth, for "fathom" soon came to denote a specific monetary value. Individual strands were then worked into bands from one to five inches wide, to be worn on the wrist, waist, or over the shoulder, ... Occasionally the Indians fashioned great belts containing over ten thousand beads" (Vaughan 1979: 120 - 124).

With the increased manufacture after European contact, these beads were carried inland along indigenous trade routes as far as the Great Plains and as far south as Virginia. By the 1700's the Dutch Europeans began to fabricate vast quantities in factories such as the Campbell wampum factory New York.

"The use of wampum as money, even among the English, continued until the American Revolution. Important matters such as treaty agreements were likely to be marked by an exchange of Wampum belts, with designs in two colors, which thereafter served as visual reminders of the event itself, and to call to memory the arrangements agreed on" (Russel 1980: 185).

Mr. James K Sajkowicz, Jr. and Ms. Martha Newell of Uncasville, CT, would like to announce their plans to marry on July 29, 2005.

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*(If you have any announcements you would like printed in the next newsletter, send them to the office at P.O.Box 1066, Norwich, CT, 06360-1066 or call (860) 892-1039 or email to:*

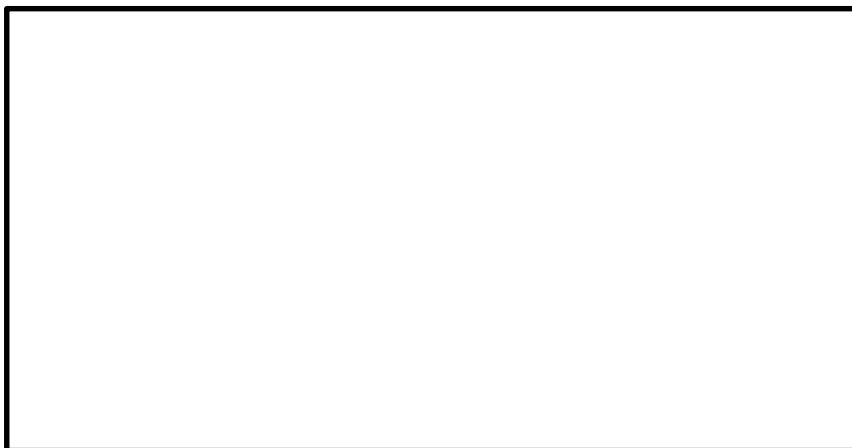
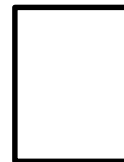
*info@nativeamericanmohegans.com.)*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Native American Mohegans, Inc.*  
P.O.Box 1066  
Norwich, CT, 06360-1066



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