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Belcourt, N.D.

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# Turtle Mountain Times

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## New Projects Coming to Turtle Mountain

TM Community Innovation, Research, & Development department set to have a busy summer ahead with various projects on their agenda

By Dave DeCoteau Jr.  
TM Times News Staff

BELCOURT – Turtle Mountain Community Innovation, Research, and Development department is set to have a busy summer in 2026, a summer that includes multiple projects on the horizon that will ultimately shape the landscape of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Reservation.

Erin Belgarde and her staff at TM Community Innovation, Research, and Development made a series of announcements last week via Facebook which included a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Turtle Mountain Fire Hall and Emergency Response Center near Tribal Headquarters, along with a proposed scenic byway project, titled, “White Buffalo Scenic Byway,” and finally, the “Siipiisng Park” which is the splash pad park that’s been in the works for a couple of years now.

The Times released an article on

the Turtle Mountain Firehall and Emergency Response Center after the announcement was made by Belcourt Rural Fire Department Chief, AJ Laducer, informing the community that funding was secured for this multi-million-dollar project. According to Belgarde, the Turtle Mountain Tribe, Belcourt Rural Fire Department, and the Turtle Mountain Community Innovation, Research, and Development team will meet with Turtle Mountain State Bank to finalizing all the funding for this project. Belgarde also noted that the team will interview for a construction manager at risk this week, with four different companies being interviewed.

As far as the groundbreaking ceremony goes, that’s slated for Tuesday, June 9, 2026 on location just east of Tribal Headquarters right off Ojibwa Indian School road. A community meal will be served at 12:00 p.m. with a presentation of the project to follow. Belgarde said sitework for this major project will start immediately after the groundbreaking

ceremony and blessing of the grounds.

Now moving east towards Belcourt just a hop, skip, and jump away, is the all-new White Buffalo Scenic Byway project, a project that has hundreds of community members and tribal officials excited to get this thing going.

According to Belgarde, the White Buffalo Scenic Byway project is currently in design phase and will be put out to bid soon. Amenities include a unique scenic byway sign to enter the parking lot, picnic tables, binoculars, a kiosk with Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa history, and a foam white buffalo for kids to take pictures with. There will be two fences for public safety and the byway will be open year-round, Belgarde said. Another cool feature is the shape of visitor area will look like a turtle on Google Earth.

“We are excited to share some graphics of our new upcoming

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on pg 4A

## >>> May's >>> Monthly >>> Meeting



TMBCI Tribal Council Hosts Monthly Open Public Meeting at Headquarters

TM Times News

BELCOURT - The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Tribal Council held its monthly Open Public Meeting this past Thursday at Tribal Headquarters West of Belcourt.

As with each Open Public Meeting, the Council and Chairman offered their monthly reports, which include updates on current and future projects, events and more.

The Council also offered their thoughts and condolences to those in their time of need currently.

Also, as with each OM, the Chief Financial Officer provides a report and review of the Tribal finances for the month.

That report, which was the case this past week, often raises questions from community members that are listening either on KEYA Public Radio, or viewing the OPM online on the Turtle Mountain Tribe Facebook page.

As the financial report was being read, some community members raised questions online as to why it seemed like money was being spent when we ‘are in the red’.

However the Council offered an explanation in real-time to the question that was raised on their live video feed.

“I see on the board we had (a comment) that said ‘if the Tribe is in the red why are we giving so much money out’, I want to let everybody know that these are our monthly budgets,” said TMBCI Tribal Chairman Jamie

Azure. “Some months, like right now we’re paying for the Pow-Wows, we’re paying for the Youth Programs, we’re paying for a lot of the bigger summer programs that are just kicking off. So, some months will be in the ‘red’ but that does not signify that the Tribe is in the ‘red’ for the year. Every year we will have these types of months . . . so the Tribe does disperse a little bit more money than other months. We’re gearing up for the summer and a lot of those funds are going right back into the community with our kids, and elder programs to put our elders and youth to work - it’s a great thing for this Tribe.”

Also at this past week’s OPM, the Council reviewed and approved (after one adjustment) minutes from the February 26th Open Public Meeting, and regularly scheduled meetings from throughout April and May. Eva Azure also gave a report on behalf of her program - the Tribal Scholarship Program - which extended their signup period into June due to a lack of signups.

As part of New Business, Tribal Attorney Alysia LaCounte brought forth completed comment period issues pertaining to: Title 25, Tribal Gaming Code - to add sections 25.03.070 (would exempt tribal internal controls for small and charitable class II gaming operations) and 25.03080 (would exempt from Tribal Minimum Technical Standards for charitable Class II gaming operations); and Title I, Criminal Procedure, Section 1.08.03

amend to issue search warrants via telephone testimony with paper follow-up for administration of justice.

The latest issue now open to a comment period pertains to proposed revisions to Traffic Code, Title 38, which is stated as follows.

### PUBLIC NOTICE (May, 2026)

The Tribe is proposing revisions to Traffic Code, Title 38, to provide clear citable locations of fire lanes for law enforcement and fire officials to provide notice and to clarify and create a clear citation and forfeiture amount for parking in a fire lane. The Tribe is placing the proposed Tribal Code amendments to Title 38 in their entirety, out for a thirty (30) day comment period. Copies of the proposed amendments are available for review on the Tribal Records Dept Facebook page, on the website at: [www.tmchippewa.com](http://www.tmchippewa.com), or can be obtained in writing by request. Written comments can be made in the comment section at <https://tmchippewa.com/tribalrecords/> and can also be submitted by mail to PO Box 900, Belcourt, ND 58316 or by fax at 477-0916. Please contact the Tribal Records Dept at 477-2602 if there are any questions.

To Be added to Title 38.  
This revision is designed to clarify

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## The Boys of Summer Get the Call

Belcourt band set to play ND Country Fest on Thursday, July 9, alongside headlining acts Billy Currington, LOCASH & The Bellamy Brothers



By Dave DeCoteau Jr.  
TM Times News Staff

BELCOURT – The Boys of Summer from Belcourt, North Dakota have had the pleasure of playing some bigtime gigs over the course of the band’s tenure, a hometown trio that has found success locally, across the state of North Dakota, and beyond.

Later this summer, the Boys of Summer will fulfill every North Dakota band’s touring dreams – an appearance on stage during the state’s biggest country music festival of the year, ND Country Fest.

The boys got the call from ND Country Fest management recently and made the huge announcement via Facebook last Thursday. It was a call the band had been waiting for, as band

members Ross Zaste, Brennon Davis, and Seymour “Pooner” Page Jr. get set for a massive summer ahead.

Here’s what Zaste last week after the announcement was made on social media: “Having the opportunity to play at one of the fas-

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