

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians – First Steps to Human Capacity Building



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Background

- The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) is a Federally Recognized Tribal Nation located in Manistee, Michigan along the shores of Lake Michigan.
- Our people are the descendants of nine Ottawa bands whose leaders were signatories to the 1836 Treaty of Washington and the 1855 Treaty of Detroit.
- For over 100 years, succeeding generations of Ottawa leaders protested these treaty-related matters with the federal government. The U.S. Congress finally passed legislation that reaffirmed the status of the Little River Band of Ottawa as a federally recognized Tribe, which was signed into law by President Clinton on September 21, 1994. (P.L. 103-324)
- In the last 17 years, the Tribe moved quickly to develop a governmental infrastructure and service delivery system necessary for rebuilding a sustainable Tribal community in Manistee, MI. In 1994 the Tribal government employed (3) people...we now have 200 employees.
- In 1999 the LRBOI opened the Little River Casino Resort that is currently the largest employer in Manistee County with over 1,100 strong.

LRBOI Background continued...

- In 2005 our Ogema by Executive Order formed the “Green Team.” The Team was composed of 9 staffers and was excited to get something rolling.
- In previous years the Tribe was approached to pay 1 million for a large wind project which really only provided a negative experience and thus stalled any activity and created a large hurdle to move any other projects forward.
- By 2007 the Green Team really hadn’t gotten anything done.
- It appeared our biggest hurdle was having staff and elected officials informed with the basics of energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- The Little River Band applied for a grant from the DOE under ARRA funding and was awarded a planning grant for it’s new government center.
- Having been awarded the grant renewed the drive to become energy efficient and to explore renewable options.
- When the First Steps grant became available it appeared the perfect time to build our internal capacity and educate staff, elected officials and tribal citizens.
- Our elected officials were in full support of the application.
- Although there didn’t seem to be much interest, a Energy Planning and Assessment Study was adopted by Tribal Council in 2008.

Project Goal

- This project will assist the Little River Band in fulfilling its commitment to caring for the earth by only taking what we need, giving back and taking care of our land, water, and air. This project also assists us in asserting our sovereignty and strengthens self governance.
- We will conduct activities to increase our capabilities, skills, base knowledge, awareness and expertise.
- We strongly believe that once relevant staff, elected officials and tribal citizens are all on the same level of understanding, only then can we move forward with a Tribal Strategic Energy Plan.

Project Objectives

- Provide introduction to renewable energy systems and energy efficiency training for relevant staff, elected officials and Tribal Citizens and introducing the LRBOI Renewable Energy Planning and Assessment Study. By providing introductory training on renewable energy systems, the importance of energy efficiency and how to achieve it and finally reviewing, discussing and planning to implement the action items in the Study, the LRBOI will achieve this project objective.

Project Objectives continued..

- Energy Auditor training for relevant staff...2 government staff, one resort staff, 2 tribal construction company staff and 3 tribal citizens, to become certified to perform energy audits. By providing this training it allows the Tribe to build internal capacity, to save money and to increase the ability of our construction company to generate revenue. It also allows for tribal citizens to assist the tribe and better themselves.
- Purchase the necessary equipment for the Energy Auditors to perform the audits that will be Tribal property and shared with certified auditors. After the auditors become certified they will need the necessary equipment to perform energy audits on tribal buildings, customers of our construction company, for local units of government and much more.

Project Objectives continued

- Conduct Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency train the trainer style so that staff and Tribal Citizens can offer workshops at our semi annual Membership meetings, for local units of government, school systems and other interested parties. We strive to be a good neighbor to the non-tribal community by sharing what we have. Providing RE and EE workshops are another way that we can do that and make a significant impact on the future.
- Attend mandatory DOE trainings such as this one.

And finally...

- Develop Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency informational materials specific to the tribal and non-tribal community. The Little River Band desires to provide in-hand materials that can be passed out at workshops and meetings.

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- Great thanks!
- And an extra thanks to the Building Science Academy (BSA) for assisting with the grant application.