

Addressing OSEU 7 with Cheryl Medearis

I'll speak to that from a perspective of what tribal institutions have done for the people in not just our area, but the tribal college movement is probably, in my perspective, one of the strongest movements that ever occurred. From a personal basis, I may never have gotten a college education. I don't know that. It may have taken me even longer had Sinté not been where it was when it was. And I date back to Sinté-Gleska College when the institution wasn't really trusted to be on its own.

So my diploma reads the University of South Dakota because they proctored and granted the degrees and helped develop the curricula. But that's been one of the strongest impacts that I see. We're able to put teachers into schools that are educated, whether they're non-Indian or non-Indian, into schools with a whole different understanding than the teachers that were there previously, people in businesses, in all different walks of life. So it's been very strong.

Economic development is a continual struggle on the reservation, but one person at a time, one program at a time, again, we have to look forward to that next generation. And that understanding is one that will continue way beyond us. It will continue on and on if we do our job to build what we have today.