

I am Joseph “Zeke” Rupnick and I am running for Tribal Council Chairperson. I am the oldest of five children born to Mamie Wahwassuck Rupnicki and Joe Rupnicki. There isn’t a typo, I don’t have an “i” at the end of my name. (It was left off of my birth certificate!) I have been living on our reservation since 1995 when I got out of the Army, after serving honorably for 13 years as a Cavalry Scout.

My formal education includes completion of a Bachelor of Business Administration from Baker University where I graduated with honors (Magna Cum Laude), Master of Business Administration from Baker University, and a concentration in Health Care Administration from Ottawa University. I also completed additional accounting courses to meet the requirements to become the Chief Financial Officer of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical hospital if I chose to go that route.

I began working for the VA in 2009 as a Budget Analyst, transitioning over the years to my current position as a Senior Management Analyst. I work with the Executive Leadership from the hospitals in the Heartland Network, including those at Columbia and Kansas City (MO), and Topeka, Leavenworth, and Wichita (KS). I analyze data on productivity, efficiency, cost reduction, revenue generation, and strategic planning for the medical center leadership. My assessments help them to make informed decisions concerning improved patient care. My experience at the VA has increased my awareness about the importance of safeguarding public funds. As an elected official, I feel it would be my obligation to ensure fiscal responsibility, meaning that all employees working for The People must ensure money is spent appropriately following all laws and regulations.

In the various positions I have held, I have always been a leader that has looked for solutions to benefit all. I feel that many misunderstandings are the result of some parties not knowing the facts. If elected, I would do everything possible to provide the information needed for our members to make decisions. I believe an informed General Council is a strong General Council and one that will help with the complex issues facing our tribe. Some of the issues facing the tribe today are Shabenay, our water and its protection, economic diversity, enrollment, and state/local jurisdiction. While this list is not all-inclusive, we need to seriously address these concerns to ensure the strength and survivability of our Tribe.

I have served in leadership roles in the many positions I have held throughout the years. Those that have worked with me in the past can tell you that I am fair and consider all options before making a decision. While most of my working career has been with the government, I have been taught and still believe in the traditional values passed down from my grandparents and my mother. My elders’ advice to me was **“Learn as much as you can and use that knowledge to help The People.”** I feel that I have learned much and developed many skills that I can use to help strengthen our Nation.

Together with General Council, I feel that we can make a difference today, leaving behind a strong Nation for our youth. I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting and encouraging me to represent The People, and I welcome further discussion on issues we face as a tribe.

Thank you for your time and I ask for your vote.