



# 60 ways

**We Have Strengthened Our Tribal Nation  
in the Four Years Since Federal Recognition**

**A Detailed Report to the Citizens  
of the Monacan Indian Nation  
from Chief Kenneth Branham  
and the Monacan Tribal Council**

**January 2022**

Dear Citizens:

The Monacan people have always been sovereign. In January of 2018, however, with the passage by Congress and the signing by the President of the Thomasina A. Jordan Act, the United States government, at long last, recognized that fact.

The subsequent four years have been a whirlwind. Along with members of our Tribal Council, I write to you to provide this detailed report of 60 wonderful ways in which, hand in hand with you, we have strengthened our people and our government.



Our returning strength is a tribute to our ancestors, whose struggles and hopes kept the flame of our culture burning. Our returning strength is a gift to our grandchildren, to whom we owe a better world than the one we inherited.

You have every right to be proud and to celebrate the accomplishments of the last four years. The challenges before us were and remain great, including the vast demands of the changed government-to-government relationships with the United States and Virginia, the daily needs of our 2,612 people, and the severe threats of a global pandemic. These achievements are therefore astounding in their depth and breadth. Most importantly, they point to the beautiful progress yet to come.

I have been truly blessed and humbled to serve as your Chief on several occasions since I was a young man. I am no longer young, but the opportunities before us energize me, and I pray they likewise inspire you in this New Year. Let us continue to join together to realize the destiny of the Monacan Indian Nation.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Branham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth Branham, Tribal Chief

With Tribal Council: Pamela Johns Thompson, Assistant Chief, Daniel B. Branham, Dean Branham, Eric Branham, Timothy Branham, Bertha Riley, and John Sparks

# Building Our Capacity to Serve

*The work of supporting a robust and modern tribal government requires steady leadership, trusted partners, and physical spaces in which to support significantly increased services. Together we...*

**1. Acquired, renovated, and opened a full-service Tribal Office campus in Madison Heights, VA that is more centrally located to our citizens.**



2. Opened a satellite Tribal Office in Amherst, VA to serve a cluster of citizens who reside there.
3. Set up a Community Hall as our first large, dedicated meeting space, available for use by all Monacans.
4. Grew our enrollment to 2,650 citizens, now served by an official Enrollment Office.
5. Established a strong tribal leadership team of Chief, Assistant Chief, and Tribal Council who are working in close collaboration with a focus on the needs and the future of the full Tribal community.
6. Assembled a highly qualified and dedicated Tribal Administration team who professionally staff the vast demands placed on newly federally recognized Tribal Nations.
7. Retained internationally respected legal counsel to help ensure our efforts are strategic and lawful to advance our state and federal policy priorities in Richmond and Washington, D.C.
8. Retained the top accounting firm in Indian Country to ensure our financial management practices are 100% ethical and consistent with the highest standards.
9. Strengthened our daily working relationships with the leaders of the other six federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth, to give us greater strength on common causes and to collaborate on programs for efficiency and cost-savings.
10. Built partnerships of trust with the leaders of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) on shared interests.



# Housing Our People

*The welfare of our people begins with a safe, quality, and affordable place to live. We...*

- 11. Grew and improved the tribal housing program by increasing our staffing, capacity, and efficiency so that it is now the largest tribal housing program in Virginia.**
12. Provided emergency rental assistance to 98 families.
13. Provided home mortgage, down payment, and housing purchase assistance to 59 families.
14. Weatherized 13 homes, with plans to expand service to at least 10 more in 2022.
15. Provided free well and septic services to Monacan homes and installed rainwater catchment tanks.
16. Renovated the Tribal Cabin for use as emergency housing, at the old Tribal Center installed a new cement disability ramp, added ADA bathrooms and a new kitchen.
17. Created a program that provides accessible bathrooms for citizens with disabilities and mobility restrictions, regardless of home ownership.
18. Built a playground for Monacan children at the Tribal Center.
19. Purchased 2 houses as emergency accommodations for citizens in need.

## Providing Food, Education, Technology

*After shelter, must come sustenance for Monacan bodies and minds. We...*

### **20. Established and funded a Food Bank serving 300+ families monthly.**

21. Provided MiFi wireless broadband services to 49 citizens to support distance learning.
22. Developed a successful program to serve hot meals to elders.
23. Created a Meals on Wheels program launching this year.
24. Established a backpack program that provides free school supplies to Monacan children.
25. Developed a program that provides free GED classes to our citizens.
26. Created a foster care assistance program for Monacan children.



27. Created a program that provides free computer lab classes to tribal citizens.
28. Established a Christmas gifting program to assist families during the holidays.
29. Introduced a bill to the Virginia legislature to give Monacan students living out of state in-state tuition at Virginia colleges.
30. Accepted \$125,000 contribution from Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC to the Monacan Scholarship fund.

## Protecting Our Health

*It is not enough to help shelter, feed, and educate our citizens: we must help sustain their physical and mental health over their lifetimes, especially in the face of threats like the global pandemic. Together, we...*

**31. Negotiated to open a state-of-the-art, \$10 million Tribal Clinic (using Indian Health Services funding—not Tribal funds) that provides primary care, and specialized care for behavioral health, dental, diabetes, community care, and substance abuse. Here we can address the health needs of our people for generations.**

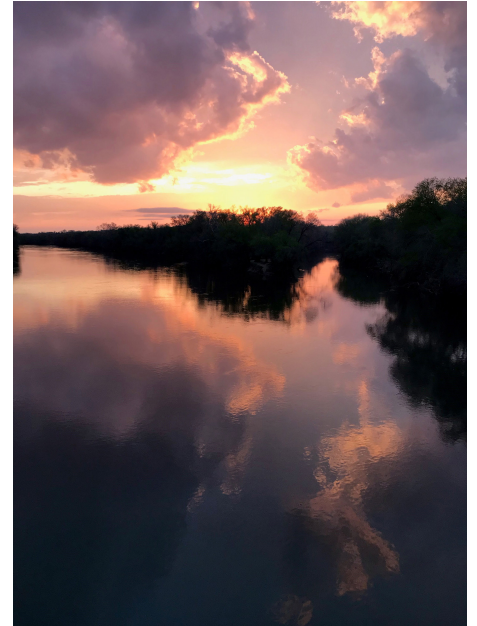


32. Provided more than \$3.3 million in direct support to tribal citizens during the pandemic.
33. Vaccinated 180 citizens for COVID-19 and distributed thousands of items of personal protective equipment.
34. Created a transportation program to support meet medical and disability needs.
35. Established a program providing home health services to our citizens.
36. Building a state-of-the-art, 5,700 square foot Senior Center, widely anticipated to be one of the best new senior centers in Virginia. Due to be completed in April 2022.
37. Establishing several programs supporting daytime activities for elders.
38. Created a senior transportation service to sustain the mobility of our elders.
39. Secured an opinion by the Attorney General of Virginia instructing all state agencies and courts to honor the aims of the Indian Child Welfare Act, which prioritizes adoption placements of Indian children within the Tribe.

# Protecting Our Culture & Environment

*When we lose our history, culture, and environment, we lose a part of what it means to be Monacan. Protecting these irreplaceable resources has been a top priority, and our successes have been many. We...*

**40. Are on the verge of winning the four-year battle to protect our historic capital at Rassawek. We raised awareness about the threat nationwide., We won designation of the site by The National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's most endangered historic places. We persuaded the State to disqualify the developer's archaeologist. The developer is now poised to accept our demand to move construction two miles away from Rassawek. Soon the Tribe will regain regular access to—and perhaps partial ownership of—Rassawek. This will be the biggest modern victory for preservation of Native sacred sites in Virginia and a model for future fights.**



41. Created an Environmental Protection Department.
42. Stood up to developers of two natural gas pipelines that failed to properly consult us about potential impacts to our historic and cultural resources, resulting in winning millions in financial penalties. (One pipeline was then cancelled, and parts of the second are likely to be cancelled).
43. Secured a groundbreaking Executive Order by Virginia Governor Northam requiring state agencies to consult with us before granting permits for development projects that may impact our cultural, historic, or environmental interests.
44. Developed our own consultation policy, setting the terms by which we expect to be consulted by federal and state agencies and developers going forward.
45. Introduced a 2022 state budget amendment seeking \$35 million to enable the seven Tribal Nations in Virginia to re-acquire ancestral lands stolen from us.
46. Built stronger relationships with Virginia's U.S. Senators, members of Congress, state officials and agencies to ensure respect for our ancestral lands and cultural values in their decision-making.
47. Won a grant to renovate and expand our museum celebrating Monacan culture, creating a better resource to tribal citizens and to better educate the public.
48. Secured funding to hire a Monacan tribal member to staff the museum.
49. Educated the public about the Monacan people in dozens of positive news stories in local, state, and national news outlets including print, television, radio, and social media.



50. Renegotiated the unfair terms of our relationship with the state parks to better control the Monacan village exhibit at Natural Bridge.
51. Helped establish a language preservation program to reinvigorate the language of our ancestors for benefit of our future generations.

## Developing Our Own Economy

*We know that economic self-reliance is vital to the long-term wellbeing of our Nation, so we have strengthened our financial management and begun building tribally owned businesses. Together, we...*

52. Applied to acquire spectrum from the Federal Communications Commission, which would allow us to provide free broadband services to citizens, but also generate revenues for the Tribe by licensing the spectrum to non-Tribal entities.
53. Purchased Laurel Cliff Farm, which includes 1,300 acres of prime farmland, to support food security and exciting economic developments to come.
54. Created an Economic Development Program to identify opportunities to generate earned income for the Tribe and jobs for our citizens.
55. Successfully lobbied Congress to allow pandemic relief funds to be used by Tribal Nations to build longer-term economic resilience.
56. Established a tribally-owned healthcare business – Monacan Daily Touch – that provides health services at home for our citizens.
57. Developed a plan to provide health services through our medical clinic to nontribal citizens during down time to generate revenues to support Tribal citizen needs.
58. Partnered with Virginia's other Tribal Nations to pursue a Department of Commerce grant to collaborate on heritage- and eco-tourism opportunities.
59. Avoided taking on any financial debt while substantially expanding services to citizens.
- 60. Earned successful audits every *single* year even as we have been challenged to manage greater funds under highly complex regulations. The US government requires us to be subject to a thoroughly detailed review of our every expenditure. In 2021 we achieved the almost impossible: a perfectly clean audit with no negative finding—confirming we have spent Tribal funds ethically and legally. Great credit is due to our accounting, bookkeeping, and legal teams' hard work.**



**Virginia's Monacan tribe uses new federal status to take a stand for what could be its long-lost capital**

**Monacan Indian Nation celebrates groundbreaking of health clinic in Amherst**

**Northam orders state to consult with tribal nations when considering permits**

**Monacan Indian Nation opens new tribal complex in Madison Heights**

**On Monacan land:  
A three-part series**

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE A 'HISTORIC EVENT'  
**Virginia's federally recognized tribes begin drafting a sovereignty accord**

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*Your feedback is incredibly valuable to our future planning.*

Email the numbers of your 5 favorite accomplishments from the above list to [Accomplishments@monacannation.com](mailto:Accomplishments@monacannation.com) by February 15, 2022. We will place the names of all entrants on slips of paper, place the slips into a bowl, and randomly draw three names, each of whom will receive a \$250 gift card. We will total all entries and share the collective top picks in a future newsletter.

**Monacan Indian Nation, 111 Highview Dr., Madison Heights, VA 24572**