

Case Study: **Tribal Government**

Client: **Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**



## **Client Has No Reservations About Controlling Utility Costs**

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation lies in northeastern Minnesota, adjacent to Cloquet, Minn. While the Black Bear Casino Resort may be its most recognizable facility, the band owns and operates numerous other buildings, as well. They include a tribal center, school, human services center, Center for American Indian Resources, community centers, and more—plus a second casino in nearby Duluth, Minn. It is a complex organization with extensive telecom, energy, and utility needs.

Recently, the Fond du Lac Band hired The Evergreen Energy Group (TEEG) to audit telecom and energy services on the reservation and in the city of Duluth, hoping to streamline, organize, and manage these areas more efficiently.

“We were looking for TEEG to be a go-between with our utility providers, making sure we were getting the right services at the lowest costs,” said Fred Underwood, MIS director, Fond du Lac Reservation. “I expected them to find we were paying for services no longer in use but was very surprised by the amount of just plain billing errors.”

The process identified and corrected telecom and energy billing issues that recovered almost \$200,000 in overcharges and could save the band more than \$1 million over the next five years. They included TI circuit overcharges, duplicate Internet services, and billing for nonexistent telecom services and features. On the energy side, TEEG identified duplicate billing of natural gas, electrical rate and tariff errors, and monthly charges for nonexistent lights.

“We are a large organization, but we don’t have the expertise to ferret out the billing errors that TEEG was able to find,” Underwood said. “I would highly recommend TEEG to anyone.”

Call TEEG at 800.608.5341 or visit us online at [www.teeg.net](http://www.teeg.net).



## Utility Cost Management

### STRATEGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT

- Energy and utility audits, including review of billing, rates, and tariffs; taxes, fees, and surcharges; and demand charges and power factors
- Onsite electric, gas, and water meter inspection and verification
- Recovery of past overcharges and correction of billing errors
- Comprehensive utility service inventories
- Rate negotiation and procurement services

### STRATEGIC TELECOM MANAGEMENT

- Comprehensive telecom service inventory, itemizing all accounts, vendors, and charges
- Onsite verification of all telecom lines, trunks, circuits, and networks
- Telecom audit, including evaluation of tariffs, rates, taxes, fees, and surcharges
- Call record and traffic study assessment
- Network mapping and diagramming of wide area network (WAN) and site-specific connections
- Recovery of past overcharges and correction of billing errors

Customized, ongoing service packages also available.

Contact:  
**TEEG**

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## Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

### CHALLENGES

- Streamline, organize, and strategically manage the complex telecom, energy, and utility needs of a reservation with multiple facilities and service providers
- Reduce telecom, energy, and utility costs to free up tribal resources for reinvestment in new facilities, equipment, and human services

### SOLUTIONS

- Provided telecommunications and utility audits to analyze accounts, identify billing errors, recover overcharges, eliminate unnecessary services, and secure the best available contracts and rates from providers

### RESULTS

- Identified and recovered more than \$105,000 in telecom refunds and credits for overcharges, duplicate services, and billing of nonexistent services and features
- Corrected telecom billing errors for ongoing savings of \$97,600 annually
- Discovered and corrected duplicate natural gas supply charges, resulting in \$57,973 in net credits and ongoing savings in excess of \$200,000 per year
- Identified and corrected billing error for lights removed prior to 2002. Secured credits for a 36-month period of overcharges and ongoing savings of nearly \$9,000 per year
- Found electrical rate and tariff issues at multiple facilities that could result in significant future savings; working with the Fond du Lac Band and electric utility to correct and collect overcharges
- Identified water and sewer billing issues and usage inconsistencies; recommended additional investigation

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***“It would have taken a lot of staff time for us to audit and inventory telecom and utility services ourselves, and we probably would not have discovered all of the overcharges and potential savings that TEEG found.”***

**Fred Underwood, MIS Director  
Fond du Lac Reservation**

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