

Efficiency audit completed



**DENISE CHASE,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

I would like to wish a happy and healthy new year to you and your families. Director Morrow and I were busy throughout the month of December, attending all the Christmas events. We worked on and organized two children's Christmas parties

along with Viola Neadow. The children had a great time, they ate pizza, chips and cookies. They saw Santa Claus and his elves and received a gift and a candy cane. They really enjoyed themselves, it was so nice to see their little smiling faces as they told Santa what they wanted. Chi megwetch to all the volunteers who helped out at both parties, I am not going to try and list names because I do not want to leave anyone out.

Marquette elders organized their children's Christmas party at NMU, I heard they had a successful party also. Megwech for all their hard work. We attended the Escanaba and Manistique area elders Christmas dinners. The dinners were really nice, Escanaba's was at the Chip Inn

Casino and convention center and Manistique's was at the tribal center and catered by Manistique casino. Both elder groups had a good time visiting and ended the night with door prize drawings. Marquette had their holiday dinner in November, directors Carr-Anderson, Morrow and myself attended, everyone had a good time visiting and they also ended the night with door prize drawings.

Casino efficiency audit

The tribe recently paid over \$130,000 to hire Innovative Gaming Solutions (IGS) to conduct an efficiency audit on our five casinos. In the first round, they audited three areas: food and beverage, Kewadin market-

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ing and Human Resources. IGS presented the board with an executive summary and operational findings. What was identified in their written action plans were their priority levels, areas of concern, risk and recommendations. The COO of our five casinos meets with the board of directors twice a month to report on his action plan, time-line and how he is going to implement the recommended changes to improve all five casino operations.

Any workforce decisions and seasonal cuts are being made by the COO of Kewadin Casinos. The board is not involved in making the reductions. We approved the 2014 casino budget, not operational changes. The tribe has never made the necessary adjustments that could fix how our casinos run. It was also identified that the tribe has grown into a corporate-sized business that we

are trying to run mom and pop policies and procedures. We paid for an outside audit that found many areas of concern (Most of the board already could identify the same ones). So we need to let the COO move forward on implementing his action plan.

Fall 2 percent short term distributions

Under the current agreement with the State of Michigan for gaming revenue sharing, 2 percent of the tribe's gaming revenue is set aside and made available to local units of government as determined by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Director Morrow and I reviewed the fall 2 percent short term applications and selected a variety of projects throughout our unit. The 2 percent funding amount available for projects selected below was \$61,997.90.

Distribution: Rapid River Schools, Dale Thomas Center,

\$7,804; Big Bay de Noc School, C.U.P. baseball, \$2,000; Manistique Area Schools, Native American education, \$3,558.78; Ishpeming School District, Title VII, \$3,558.78; Escanaba Schools, Title VII, \$3,558.78; Gladstone Area Schools, Title VII, \$3,558.78; Bay College, YMCA, \$5,000; Manistique High School, pool, \$1,000; Schoolcraft County, Christmas baskets, \$3,000; Nah Tah Wahsh Public, community/tutoring meeting School Academy Place/Willow Creek, \$25,400.

There was not enough 2 percent available to fund all projects. Projects are awarded funding based on a number of factors, the availability of funds at the end of each 2 percent cycle, the project merit and the potential benefit to communities. There may be other factors considered as well as project sustainability.

I mentioned in the last report

that there was a long term 2 percent agreement that had expired and the board would be having a discussion at a workshop to decide if the funding would be distributed evenly among the five units. The outcome of the vote was a majority of the board members didn't agree with dividing the funding evenly among the five units.

During my various conversations with constituents calling for services, I found out that most were not aware of the new/allowable deductions that they could use to deduct from their gross income while applying for the USDA food commodities program.

If you applied before for USDA food commodities and were denied, there have been some changes to the program which now allows the following deductions and income guidelines.

— Day care and child support: Deduct full amount of what is paid out of pocket.

— Shelter/utility: \$400 allowable deduction, no matter what out of pocket expense is.

— Medical expense: Out-of-pocket expense in excess of \$35 for elderly and disabled.

These are the current income guidelines since Oct. 1, 2013: Family size/monthly income: 1/\$1,110; 2/\$1,445; 3/\$1,780; 4/\$2,126; 5/\$2,489; 6/\$2,852; 7/\$3,187; and 8/\$3,522

Sault Tribe USDA food applications are available at all Sault Tribe satellite offices or by calling the following telephone numbers, to have one mailed to you: Sault Tribe USDA, 635-6076 or (888) 448-8732; Manistique ACFS, 341-6993 or (800) 347-7137; Escanaba health office.

Thank you,

Denise Chase, vice chair, (906) 322-3819, dchase@saulttribe.net.