

# Sorenson makes comprehensive unit report



**BRIDGETT SORENSON, DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

On Nov. 5, we had financial reviews and some interesting facts are we can hold 25 kids at a time in the Juvenile Detention Center, but the average is 12-14 kids per day. We budget for \$5,000 per powwow for areas in Hessel, Munising, St. Ignace, Manistique, Kinross, Sugar Island and Newberry. The Fourth of July powwow in the Sault is budgeted for \$50,000-\$55,000. We will need to replace all of our computers that are older than 2008 because we need to be off of XP by 2014.

On Nov. 5, I attended the Inland Hunting and Fishing Committee meeting. There were many issues discussed such as having problems with hunters not reporting a bear harvest within a 72-hour time frame. There was discussion on whether to issue fines or to affect future license opportunities. The committee has been working on guidelines for the youth hunting mentor program.

On Nov. 6, we had our work-

shop and meeting in Escanaba. Some of the local fisherman came to voice their opinions on some of the fines and treatment they have experienced with law enforcement and tribal court. It seems that not everyone is being held to the same standard. At the meeting Director Chase brought it forward to approve for up to \$5,000 to be used for meals, travel and hotel rooms for members of the ad hoc committee (past Constitution Committee members, Elders Advisory Committee and the board) that are reviewing the proposed constitution for Nov. 8, 9 and 10 in the Sault.

On Nov. 8, the United Tribes of Michigan held a meeting in the Sault to discuss the possible sequestration and Obama Care. There was a great turnout from many area tribes.

On Nov. 8 and 29, our tribal Action Plan Advisory Board met and we are moving forward with volunteers being trained on conducting focus groups. In January or February, we will be coming into communities to have focus groups to learn about addictions and how they are affecting our communities and what we can do to combat the issues.

On Nov. 9, we had our first day of our ad hoc constitution review committee meeting. It did not go well because not all were in agreement for the review to be live streamed and video taped to be aired on the Sault Tribe Guide website when we already had the tribe's entertainment department recording it. There were committee members, the Constitution Committee chairman and four board members,

including myself, who walked out of the meeting. We were not afraid of being recorded as we are used to this during our meetings, but we felt that it was not fair to some employees or committee members to possibly be scrutinized for what their opinions may have been. I was very disappointed that we did not respect our elder, John Causley Jr., who was the chairman of the Constitution Committee, when he stood and stated he did not want to be taped. The other argument was that if the tribe records it, it is the property of the tribe not for individuals to do whatever they want to with it. The four board members did return after lunch to take part in the actual start of the review.

On Nov. 10, I did not attend the review as planned and attended my son's hockey games in Cheboygan.

On Nov. 11, I attended for 2.5 hours in between my son's hockey games in the Sault.

On Nov. 9, we had a conference call with other tribes and a representative of the governor's office to discuss the wolf hunting proposed legislation. The tribes feel it is a violation of our Consent Decree and the state did not allow the tribes to testify, only the DNR. The tribes are continuing to pressure the state into stopping the wolf hunt.

On Nov. 13, we had a workshop in which we discussed ways of changing long term allocation of 2 percent funds for 2013. This will be a long process because each unit fights for its own share of the funds for their communities.

On Nov. 20, we held our workshop and meeting in Marquette and voted to purchase 71 acres with a newly constructed building in Huron Township in the vicinity of the Detroit Metro Airport.

On Nov. 26-28, we had our second set of Constitution review meetings. We had a lesser turn out than the initial review. The meeting was live streamed and also video taped by the tribe. Out of the six days we have met so far, we have only been able to get through six pages of the proposed 22-page document. We will be meeting again Jan. 7-9 from noon to 8 p.m. at the Sault casino. We need to make sure we don't make the document too restrictive.

On Nov. 27, we had a workshop and had a presentation from DeVere Construction as a possible mentor under the 8(a) status mentor program. The mentor program is a nine-year program and it is divided into development and transitional stages. Terri Fitzpatrick, vice president of the Tribal Business Development of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation also gave a presentation of her partnership with the tribes. This is an opportunity the tribe needs to capitalize on.

On Nov. 28, I attended a Native American Housing and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) training. The act was signed into law in 1996 and provides tribes with block grant dollars. The primary objectives of the program are to assist and promote affordable housing, give better access to mortgage markets, promote self-sufficiency, plan and integrate infrastructure

and to promote the private capital markets. Our block grant is \$4.7 million for 2013. This was an interesting training and we are a very fortunate tribe to be able to access such grants.

In closing, I would like to say that I realize that there needs to be amendments made to our current Constitution, but I would like to see us prioritize our needs as a tribe. Business should be one of our top priorities as we use the revenue for programs and services. I wish we would spend as much time and effort on this area as we are dedicating to the proposed Constitution. Hope everyone has safe and happy holidays!

If you have concerns, please email [bsorenson@saulttribe.net](mailto:bsorenson@saulttribe.net), or call (906) 643-2123 (office) or 430-0536 (cell).