

Networked with tribes, congressmen at MAST



**DARCY MORROW, DIRECTOR,
UNIT IV**

During the month of February, 157 hours, and in March, 149 hours were spent attending meetings; this time does not include constituent phone calls, emails or reading material.

During February, I was able to attend the MAST (Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes) Impact week in Washington,

D.C. This was an awesome experience for me as a new board member. I was able to network with many members from other tribes and listen to them as they shared some of the same issues we deal with as a tribe. The board members who attended from our tribe broke into three groups so we could personally meet with as many congressmen as we could.

My group made contact with the offices of Congressman Dave Camp (R-MI), Congressman Justin Amash (R-MI), Congressman Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and our complete group of the Sault Tribe Board of Directors met with Congressman Benishek. Some of the topics discussed were the farm bill, wolf hunt, health care act and the big one we wanted to drive home was the impact sequestration will have on our tribe.

Sequestration has made a negative impact of \$1.7 million

on the federal dollars we receive. The board has been meeting with division directors to come up with areas they can find efficiencies in or where a function is not justified or cannot sustain itself, where changes need to be made.

I see the need to look at areas that are not a necessity and are funded by tribal operations. One of those areas would be the Sault Big Bear. It costs the tribe \$1,672,047 to run Big Bear year round. We are looking at a \$1.7 million decrease in federal dollars with sequestration hitting us from the health division, law enforcement, Head Start and Early Head Start and Elder Care division, to name a few. To me it doesn't seem like we have board support to close down Big Bear. Until we have an increase in revenue at the casino I see the need to close this facility down. As a board member I will not cut membership services until this area and others are looked at.

With sequestration having

such an impact, we need to make big changes at our five Kewadin Casinos. I myself have worked at three of the five casinos. I was also in management at Christmas and the Shores in St. Ignace. It is amazing to me how all the hard work to make them a team and a family is gone. I have talked to a lot of workers and they have informed me of how they just hate to go to work.

As a board member I feel it is our duty to protect our team members. And if that means dealing with situations that have always been pushed under the rug, then it is time people are held accountable and responsible for their actions or inactions. The only way we can turn this around is to fix the problems that have continued to get worse through the years. I believe we need to get team members involved ask them what we need to do better with them and the customers. Through the years as a manager I have gotten really good input and

marketing ideas from team members. They are on the floor every day hearing what our customer complaints are, they are a wealth of knowledge just waiting to be tapped into.

We will be holding our drug task force, Tribal Action Plan (TAP) community forums the month of April and May, April 21 at the Manistique Tribal Center, Manistique, Mich., 4 to 6 p.m., and May 19 at the Willow Creek Building, Escanaba, Mich., 4 to 6 p.m. We will be providing snacks and drinks at the events. We hope to have a lot of community input from every age group. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at my number below.

Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Thank you,

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