

On speaking up



**DARCY MORROW,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

As I continue to write my unit reports, I feel like I can never say what needs to be said for fear of retribution to Unit IV and the tribal members who live there. The proof is in 2008 when they shut down Marquette and Escanaba's health centers, but kept open the Sault's Big Bear hockey rinks at an est. of \$800,000. That, in itself, says enough!

Anytime a grant with funding for new jobs, new programs or services, etc., comes up and the western end: Units IV and V ask what and if we are going to be part of this grant, etc. I have had Denny McKelvie tell me we are just greedy on more than one occasion. Greedy, look at what we have in the western units, it's a pittance of what units I and III have. Unit IV is actually the second largest unit, so how does that equation work out that we are so greedy on the western end. If I were the members of Unit IV, I would start carpooling to the meetings and voicing their opinions on how greedy we are on the western end.

For the members who don't feel we speak up at the board table for our members and communities, we speak up constantly, but the western end is still out-numbered. We have discussed a

midjim (tribal gas station) being built in Manistique, Escanaba, Munising, Marquette, Hessel, but never a new one in St Ignace. I would hope we would not build in any of those areas until due diligence was done and to start with a feasibility and traffic study. This needs to be done on all areas, not just the one unit that needs an election promise.

We were blindsided and out-numbered when they decided they were building a new midjim in St. Ignace, because people couldn't find it. Very simple and cheap fix, put directional signs at each exit pointing towards the Midjim. Mystery solved! This would be an example of you know it's a bad idea going in ex. building a new midjim in St. Ignace vs fixing the old one. Without any feasibility or traffic study the board was ready to vote on it the very first time it came to the table! They actually had the seven votes they needed that night to build this new midjim without any studies. But once Director Hoffman did his own homework, the item was tabled for that night. That is just one example, I could write so many you would think I was writing a fiction novel. More to come next month.

We lost a great elder from our community in Escanaba this last month. Jerry Miller, was a great man and will be missed by many. Jerry was one of the original members on the Escanaba elders board and committee.

Feb. 21, 2015, in Escanaba the Caring for Our Elders Winter Powwow will take place on the Escanaba fairgrounds at the Ruth Butler building. Schedule of events: Grand entry at noon and potluck at 6 p.m. Hope to see many dancers and spectators there!

Thank you,
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