

Tribe faces \$1.7 million reduction in federal dollars



**DENISE CHASE, DIRECTOR,
UNIT IV**

I went to Washington, D.C., to attend the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST). While there, our schedules and agenda were quite full. While in Washington, your board reps spent time to educate the decision makers and their staff on tribal sovereignty rights, treaty rights, government-to-government relationships, etc. We also reminded them of the need to protect IHS from cuts. We met with the congressmen or their staff and told them how our membership would be hurt by the budget cuts and sequestration. Myself, Chairman Payment and Director McKelvie

grouped together and met with the following: Congressman Dan Kildee – staffer John Blair; Congressman Mike Rogers – staffer Shannon Brown; Congressman Dan Benishek (all board members at MAST attended), Congressman Fran Pallone, and Mary Pavel – staff director of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

Now that sequestration has occurred, this year the tribe is looking at \$1.7 million in reductions of federal dollars. The board, chairman and staff have met to identify savings that will not affect direct services to the membership.

TWO PERCENT

At press time, we still have not received the dollar amount we will have to distribute this spring. The 2 percent applications were due by March 31. Unfortunately, because revenues are down in our casinos during the winter months, the dollar amount available for distribution in the spring is much less than in the fall. We will update you when we get the final dollar amount we have to work with for Unit IV, and what types of projects awarded.

Again, the time was not scheduled to review the long-term 2

percent agreements that are expiring, which would free up some funding to be more fairly divided among all units. So this discussion will have to occur before the fall distributions.

PARENTING MONTH

I attended the March parenting month activity held at the Manistique Tribal Center. The activity is held to share with the parents tips and ideas to do with their children, for the month of March and year round. There was a good turn out, children had craft items to do, coloring activities, cake-walk, face-painting, snacks of hot-dogs, juice, cookies and popcorn. Health had a table available with the various health info pamphlets on it, and you could also get your blood pressure and blood sugar checked. ACFS had a huge table of parenting activities and helpful parenting tips for parents to take home. They ended the day by distributing door prizes to parents and kids who attended. Thanks to the dedicated individuals who volunteer their time to hold these community events for the families and their children.

HEATING PROGRAMS

There are three heating programs as long as funding is avail-

able.

1. The Elderly Heating Assistance Program assists the elderly population of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, who are determined to be ineligible for assistance from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The program is open from Jan. 1-Dec. 31 or as long as funding is available. Applicants must be 60 years of age to apply and must meet program eligibility requirements.

2. LIHEAP is available to assist low-income tribal households meet their home heating energy burden. Heating assistance was available this year from Nov. 1, 2012, to Sept. 20, 2013, as permitted by available funding on a first-come, first-served basis. This program offers financial assistance to tribal members who are in need of energy fuels.

3. LIHEAP-Crisis Energy Assistance is available from Jan. 2 through Sept. 30, as permitted by available funding on a first-come, first-served basis. Crisis Energy Assistance offers financial assistance to tribal members, who fall within one or more categories of the target group listed below:

— Those who meet the income

guidelines for the crisis program and are elders aged 60-plus, disabled individuals or a household with a child 5 or younger. To find out if you're eligible for any of these programs or to get an application call the following numbers and talk to a direct services worker: Manistique — 341-6993 or (800) 347-7137, Munising 387-3906, Sault — (800) 726-0093 or 632-5250.

OTHER

The Manistique powwow will be held June 8-9. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, call Viola at 341-3819.

There will be a spring clean-up of the Indian Pointe Cemetery in Nahma, at 10:30 a.m. on May 25. If you would like to help out, please bring rakes, leaf blowers and gloves.

During the month of February, I spent 170 hours attending various tribal meetings and traveling. And during March, 142 hours were spent doing the same. This does not include my time spent on phone calls, face-to-face contacts with constituents, reading and sending emails or reading paperwork.

Thank you. If you need to reach me call (906) 322-3819.

Denise Chase, vice-chair