

Massaway attends National Indian Gaming Conference as a delegate for the Sault Tribe



**KEITH MASSAWAY,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

I had the honor of representing the tribe as a delegate to the National Indian Gaming Association at the annual National Indian Gaming Conference last month. At this

conference, we work on national regulatory policies and gaming regulations that are in effect and those that are proposed to go into effect in the near future. We have guest speakers and notable leaders who give insights into how gaming is progressing and changing in Indian Country.

A keynote speaker this year was the Assistant Secretary of the Interior Mr. Kevin Washburn. He is a very strong advocate of Indian Country and helps us in so many ways with the red tape we run into nearly every single time we work with the federal government. He gave a very poignant speech that touched on everything from Native child adoption to land into trust and how he is working with the tribes to better streamline and clarify all processes for the tribes' benefit. He mentioned the visit the pres-

ident of the United States made to a reservation and how he was moved by the hardships and lack of infrastructure available to the indigenous people there. He stated the president was especially moved by the young adults and children as they told their stories of living on the reservations. The president then made an edict that he gave to all his cabinet members that they all must visit a tribal reservation in the next year. For the tribes to get that message and respect, meant a lot to all the leaders who were there.

I attended a lot of breakout sessions that included titles like working in today's casinos and customer service. A truly inspiring session was the fantasy sports betting conversation. We have all heard of Draft Kings and similar sites on the Internet.

We are currently exploring opportunities this might present to our casinos, to expand our offerings of fun new games for a totally new crowd of customers. There was also a trade floor where all the vendors are from every facet of the gaming industry. New slot machines and table games are prevalent, but over half the booths deal with new technology in customer service, food items, construction, fixtures and infrastructure for casinos. There are also many vendors who have groundbreaking ideas in every category, some of which are not applicable to our customers, but some are, bringing back those to the tribe and letting the management vet the pros and cons of the ideas is another reason we go.

This month, I will be attending the Tribal Technical

Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on behalf of all the tribes of the Midwest. This is a federally appointed position and all costs are paid for by the federal government. We basically work with consultation from the tribal perspective on addictions, suicide and mental health — three things that are huge problems in our Native society. The federal government works with us to better apply the standards of care and new ways to facilitate better budgeting to be more effective and help more people.

I want to thank everyone for the cards and e-mails.

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