

Casino's revenue and tribal support dollars down



**LANA CAUSLEY,
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

We have held many special board meetings this past month and into September to go through our 2015 budgets. We are facing struggles as usual to keep up with key services and making our revenue at the casinos.

As you are aware, we have estimated a consistent amount each year for programs and services from the profits at the casino. We have seen a decline in our casinos throughout the years as well. Many factors are apparent and necessary changes and discussions are taking place to handle our financial needs on the casino side.

The total tribal support dollars we will receive from the casino revenue in 2015 is projected at \$18,476,146. This, in no way, is near enough to accommodate the members and services needed just in the seven-county service area.

When going over our estimated budgets, I keep in mind

the priorities I've discussed with members. I've advocated for many years a factual, streamlined presentation of our budget review process, requesting performance measures and members served with each program to which we provide tribal support dollars. This has been one of my greatest concerns when planning for a coming year. We do not see the true picture of how our support dollars are spent and prioritizing is difficult. I've discussed with the chair and the entire board my requests and thoughts on a more accurate picture of our budgets. The chair has assured me that he is steering our budget department in going this way for presentation purposes and discussion for our priorities.

I'm looking forward to next years budgets being presented in this manner as this will assist in making decisions where our dollars go, that service the most members and where priorities show. I plan to bring a resolution forward this coming year if we do not act in this manner, when profits decline and service needs increase we will need all the factual assistance we can get to meet the most needed services.

Below is a breakdown of the tribal support dollars we provide in each program.

- Anishinabek Community and Family Services, total budget \$6,197,088 with \$755,979 in tribal support.
- Chi Mukwa Recreation Center, total budget \$1,653,085 with \$824,012 in tribal support.

- Cultural Department, total budget \$486,265 with \$449,665 tribal support.

- Education Department, total budget \$3,319,454 with \$828,137 in tribal support.

- Elders Services Department, total budget \$833,749 with \$566,355 in tribal support.

- Employment programs, total budget \$140,492 with \$76,292 in tribal support.

- Fisheries programs, \$886,568 with \$24,023 in tribal support.

- General funds (property management, debt, gaming commission), total budget \$6,936,131 with \$6,799,031 in tribal support.

- Governmental programs (enrollment, chair's office, children's Christmas parties, board of directors, executive office, admin offices), total budgets \$5,689,668 with \$1,233,123 in tribal support.

- Health Division, total budget \$29,560,988 with no tribal support (IHS funding and third party revenue).

- Housing Department, total budget ranges around \$4,700,000 with \$75,000 in tribal support. We have set aside funds for building the new elders' complex as well and projected planning.

- Internal services (Northern Travel, purchasing, shipping and receiving, accounting, newspaper, telecommunications, consolidated construction, MIS, human resources, insurance), total budget \$28,294,884 with \$4,097,218 in tribal support.

- Law Enforcement,

\$3,765,172 with \$689,112 in tribal support.

- Legal Department, total budget \$1,870,347 all tribal support.

- Tribal Court, \$1,170,218 with \$183,654 in tribal support.

As you can see, our total governmental budget is close to \$94,000,00. We receive restricted and unrestricted BIA funding, internal revenue, third party billing and grant awards to supplement (not enough) our yearly budgets. As explained above, prioritizing programs and reducing spending other than services is imperative in planning. Our budget meetings will continue throughout this month and then our casino budget will begin for 2015.

As explained in the above, we are discussing changes in the structure of our casinos. The board (gaming authority) is meeting weekly to plan and take care of our much needed deficiencies at all our businesses.

I've had to address many rumors that members and employees have heard and the latest was that we planned to close down casinos. This is completely untrue, I've asked that each manager speak with team members to defuse the rumors. It's hurtful when people spread these as stress rises and people become scared about their employment. Again, we do NOT plan on closing any casinos or any mass layoffs. Planning efficiently is my only goal and that is good business practice

and must be done in all areas of any business. If you hear rumors, contact your managers for re-assurance, the message should always be the same. I truly hope that will stop the rumors and let us focus on prosperity for our places of business.

I had the pleasure of attending the 11th annual Newberry powwow this past weekend. It gives me great pride to sit and visit with everyone, as this was the first request that was presented to me when I became a board member. Elder Sally Burke requested and was an advocate to make sure this happened for her area, we begged, borrowed and put together the first powwow and it seemed like they had been holding one for years. A few years later, we built an arbor and, through community involvement and a lot of hard work on Newberry's part, this powwow is a special time of year and I'm thankful so many enjoyed the day. I miss Sally and her kindness and know she is smiling when we get together in her area for our traditional practices.

In closing, please keep our cancer victims and their families in your prayers, it seems like many families are struggling and it's heartbreaking to hear of the effects this disease has on our people. Prayers can get people through the most difficult times and miracles happen every day.

If you would like to meet or discuss anything, please contact me at (906) 484-2954, 322-3818 or lcausley@saulttribe.net.