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TRIBES RECEIVE MILLIONS IN HUD FUNDS

UPPER PENINSULA — Two U.P. tribes will have the opportunity to enhance their housing options for tribal members after being awarded \$6.8 million in federal grant funds on Dec. 10.

Bay Mills Indian Community received a \$1.8 million boost from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Program, which will be utilized to construct a senior housing development on the reservation near Brimley.

BMIC plans include construction of eight homes in Bay Mills, approximately 900-square feet each. The two-bedroom, two-bath homes will be located near community resources on the reservation, such as the new health center and Bay Mills Police Dept.

“The homes will be located in close proximity to supportive services,” said Councilperson Rachel Burt, who authored the grant. “There will also be a central gathering place for the residents. The housing plan is designed to keep our elders in their homes as they get older, but with access to the services they need.”

Work with a project manager will begin in the first quarter of 2020, with an anticipated project completion date at the end of 2021.

The eight new homes will be income-based rental units for those age 55 and up. Bay Mills Housing Authority will maintain the homes and the grounds.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians received \$5 million for a four-year project to construct 40 units on its housing development, Odenaang. Ojibwe for “a place of many hearts,” Odenaang is a 300-acre development just south of the city limits that was purchased in 1996.

According to Housing Authority Operations Manager Veronica Beaumont, the 40 units will be a combination of two-bedroom and three-bedroom modular and stick built single-family homes, along with a multi-family four-unit “quad,” and will be going up throughout 2020-2023 project term. Of those, eight units are planned for

elders, three units will be completely handicap accessible, and 26 units will be low-income units, two of which will be used for transition recovery housing.

All the homes will be furnished with Energy Star appliances, LED lighting and high efficiency water conservation plumbing fixtures, said Beaumont. Sault Tribe Housing Force Account crew, comprised of all Sault Tribe members, will construct the stick built homes.

The Housing Authority leveraged just under \$1.7 million to obtain the grant. Total project cost is \$6,666,667 for the projected 40 homes. The leveraged funds are Indian Housing Block grant monies and Housing Authority program income.

“The treaties with Indian tribes provide for “health, education and social welfare” into perpetuity. The Sault Tribe and Bay Mills Indian Community, along with three other tribes, ceded 14 million acres of land in 1836 that allowed Michigan to become a state in 1837,” Sault Tribe Chairperson Aaron Payment said. “The recently awarded HUD grants to provide for safe and affordable housing is the federal government fulfilling their treaty and trust responsibility. I am grateful to our housing team for their successful efforts to secure these funds competitively.”

HUD awarded nearly \$200 million to 52 tribes and tribal housing programs across the country for new construction under the Indian Housing Block Program. More than 200 tribes applied for HUD funding.

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