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## Tribe disburses more than \$3.7 million

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Local school and government leaders celebrated Thanksgiving a little early Tuesday when they received more than \$3.7 million from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

"Just as our ancestors have brought us up in the past...we're building foundations for tomorrow," Tribal Chief Fred Cantu told repre-

sentatives from 13 schools and municipalities who were on hand for the presentations at the Tribal Operations Center. "Part of our culture, our heritage is to share with our communities."

Terms of a 1993 consent agreement requires the Tribe to distribute 2 percent of its net profits from electronic gaming at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort to local schools and governments in lieu of taxes.

The payments are made twice a year and the Tribal Council determines who gets the money. This past June the Tribe distributed \$3.6 million.

The Tribe has historically used those funds to support local programs for senior citizens and education, Cantu said.

Students are "our future leaders" and our elders have passed on their "culture and traditions," he added.

A total of about \$2.4 million went to seven local municipalities and \$1.3 million to four area schools.

Mt. Pleasant Public Schools received the largest allocation - \$1.27 million.

"Our number one goal is to increase the knowledge of kids," Superintendent Joe Pius said. "I'm in awe and humbled by this donation. Our

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# Disburse

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students and staff will use this wisely.”

Much of the money will go to upgrade technology.

Shepherd Public Schools was awarded \$30,305, Beal City Public Schools \$8,636 and Chippewa Hills Schools \$1,290.

The Gratiot-Isabella Regional Education Service District was given \$14,344 to help support the Forest Hill Nature Area in Gratiot County that is used by all area schools for field trips and educational programs.

Isabella County was allocated \$890,767. That total includes \$450,000 for the Commission on Aging.

“This will go a long way in sustaining the quality of life we enjoy in Isabella County,” County Administrator Tim Dolehenty said.

The city of Mt. Pleasant received \$596,639.

“It’s great to see these two communities working together,” Mayor Jon Joslin said. “We truly appreciate the support you show toward us.”

About \$345,000 of the city’s portion will go to the PEAK after school and summer youth program.

In 2005, the program lost its federal funding and Tribal contributions have enabled it to continue operating, Director Nate Lockwood said.

Chippewa and Union townships received a combined \$336,621 the municipalities will use to upgrade a portion of Summerton Road that runs through both jurisdictions.

Others awarded funding were Isabella Township, \$232,594; Deerfield Township, \$229,233; Denver Township, \$59,233; and Notawa and Wise townships, both \$24,233.

Most of that money will also go toward road construction and repair, township leaders said.

“As Tribal leaders it’s an honor and privilege to be able to give back to our communities,” Cantu said. “It’s very enlightening to see how our community and the greater community continue to grow.”