

January 29, 2009 6:59AM

Pokagon Fund benefits area Michigan schools, local entities

Tribune Staff Report

NEW BUFFALO — Area schools, New Buffalo Township and the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce are the latest entities to benefit from the Pokagon Fund.

Enabled by the Dowagiac-based Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and funded by a 2 percent share of electronic gaming revenue from the Four Winds Casino Resort, the fund will cover eight projects at a total cost of \$183,301, officials announced this week. The latest round of funding puts the total payout since the program began in November 2007 at more than \$3.4 million.

Included is a \$15,000 partnership with the Executive Service Corps of Chicago to provide capacity building opportunities to organizations that receive fund grants.

The program includes an assessment survey to determine strengths and weaknesses and the implementation of workshops to address needs, said Mary Dunbar, executive director of the Pokagon Fund.

Other Pokagon funding allocations and the entities receiving them are:

\$8,965 to St. Mary of the Lake and New Buffalo schools to implement a national program known as Girls on the Run. The 12-week program is designed to instill confidence in third- to fifth-grade girls and includes a 3.1-mile competitive run in May.

\$4,500 to the Harbor Country Chamber to underwrite a five-year strategic plan.

\$7,750 to New Buffalo Sports Inc. for its 2009 season. Also, the organization will receive a \$500 unsolicited gift for scholarships for young athletes whose families have difficulty paying registration fees.

\$3,500 to New Buffalo Township for additional work amending zoning regulations in the township's master plan.

\$136,486 to New Buffalo Township for police protection in January, February and March. The funding takes the form of a loan and will be paid back when funds from the Local Revenue Sharing Board become available.