

## White Earth announces \$18 million judgment in casino case - Minneapolis Star Tribune

Written by Administrator

Monday, 20 December 2010 12:26 -

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The White Earth Band of Chippewa won an \$18 million Tribal Court judgment from a Pittsburgh-based gambling company that conspired with former Chairman Darrell "Chip" Wadena to steal profits from the Shooting Star Casino.

But Angelo Medure and his company, Gaming World International (GWI) Ltd., have appealed the decision to the Tribal Appellate Court and a hearing is

scheduled next month. Medure didn't return messages left at Medure Development in New Castle, Pa.

A tribal news release said the judgment caps a 14-year fight by the band to collect from Medure, who invested \$42,000 to remodel temporary bathrooms at the Mahnomen casino but took nearly \$11 million from the tribe. The amount of the judgment reflects interest since 1996.

Under Medure's watch, Wadena and others "committed misapplication of tribal funds, theft, bribery," the news release said.

Tribe lawyer Zenas Baer said he believes Medure still has assets. "Am I optimistic that he will fork it over and say, 'When can I write the check?' No. He's had 14 years," Baer said, adding that he expects Medure to appeal the tribal decision to the federal courts.

In June 1996, a federal jury convicted Wadena and two other White Earth leaders of a pattern of corruption, much of it centered on the tribe's Shooting Star Casino. Wadena, Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Rawley and Council Member Rick Clark were found guilty of conspiracy, embezzlement, bribery in connection with the casino.

According to the latest judgment, Wadena and GWI required Medure to provide management services for construction, development and operation of the Shooting Star Casino. GWI had no employees at the casino, but was paid \$10 million in profit distributions, the news release said.

The band said it will seek to collect all assets of GWI and Medure.

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Former U.S. Attorney Tom Heffelfinger said Monday, "The tribe has a reasonably good chance at attempting to collect." Increasingly, he said, state and federal courts easily accept the judgments of sovereign tribal courts.

The band said Medure remains an active businessman in Pennsylvania.

Baer said he already has begun proceedings in Becker County District Court to have the judgment recognized by Minnesota courts so the tribe can go after Medure's assets.

If the case lands back in the federal courts, Baer said the court's review will be confined to whether Medure was given a fair opportunity to present his case and whether the decision was reasoned.

The case has been pending since 2000. The tribe has a news conference scheduled at 11 a.m. Tuesday at the casino to discuss the judgment.

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