Meal service reductions

To the editor:

This is in reference to the proposed reduction in senior meal service by DICSA beginning Oct. 1.

DICSA Executive Director Jeff Heino states, “The cuts are the result of funding issues. DICSA is facing a $16,884 funding loss for the remainder of fiscal year 2011 and a $12,000 funding loss for the fiscal year 2012. Nothing is really changed from a financial perspective,” he said.

Pat Gasperini of the Iron River Senior Center urged DICSA to meet the senior centers halfway by making some administrative cuts. DICSA and the DICSA Governing Board have continued to oppose any cuts in administration.

The following payroll figures were furnished to me upon request under the Freedom of Information Act by DICSA Executive Director Jeffrey Heino.

Iron Mountain Administration Offices, 800 Crystal Lake Blvd, Iron Mountain, MI. 49815 – 23 employees – annual wages (without fringe benefits) $637,161.85. This averages out to $27,702.69 per employee – 15 of these employees receive fringe benefits at approximately $178,571.41 or $11,904.71 for each employee.

The Senior Centers: Iron Mountain, Kingsford, Norway, Felch and Sagola in Dickinson County, and Iron River, Crystal Falls, Amasa and Alpha in Iron County – 43 employees (eight with fringe benefits) $499,184.30. This averages out to $11,608.94 per employee.

When Executive Director Jeffrey Heino states nothing has changed from a financial perspective, he should explain to the seniors and the public how the community service director, who is drawing $43,160 plus fringe benefits while her duties become less because less seniors are eating, found it necessary to hire a (new position) assistant community service director at $27,040 plus fringe benefits.

You do the math. Pat was right. If the administration would eliminate the unnecessary new assistant community service director, the past $16,884 loss and future $12,000 loss would be eliminated.

Further the Agency on Aging suggests that administrative costs should not exceed 10 percent of total costs. Ten percent of $1,138,346.10 is $113,834.61. NOT the $637,161.85 it is now.

We are still requesting that the executive director of the U.P. Area Agency on Aging, UPCAP Services Inc., get involved with the Iron County Board of Commissioners to correct this problem before Oct. 1.

This information should be of special interest to all state employees and teachers who are being told they will take a cut in wages and benefits and all local unions who have been and are negotiating contracts.

This information should also be of interest to Governor Snyder and Director Maura Corrigan of the Department of Human Services Agency in Lansing.

-s- Gerald McCole
Channing