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## Tribe's lobbyist has powerful connections

By MARK RANZENBERGER  
Sun Staff Writer

Jack Abramoff knows a lot of powerful people, and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe is spending millions of dollars behind-the-scenes to get to those powerful people.

According to Tribal and government documents, the Tribe spent at least \$2.55 million hiring Abramoff's influence to work on Washington.

Washington insiders call Abramoff one of the best.

"He definitely has a reputation for being one of the best-connected lobbyists in Washington," said Michael Gerber, who covers lobbying for The Hill, a weekly Capitol Hill newspaper.

The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe won't talk about how it works to win battles and influence people.

"I don't have any comments on the Tribe's proprietary business," said Chris Petras, director of legislative affairs for the Tribe.

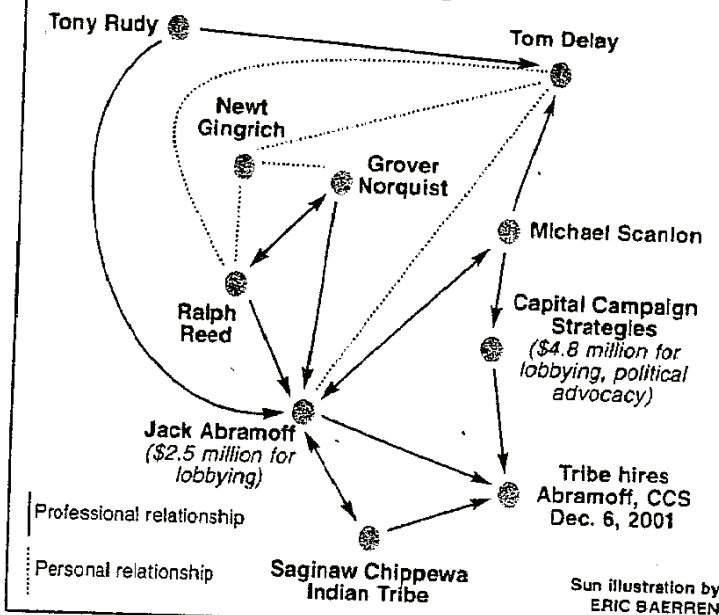
Abramoff also did not return repeated telephone calls asking about his work for the Saginaw Chippewas.

Abramoff is one of the most expensive mouthpieces in Washington. The Saginaw Chippewas signed an initial contract, beginning in December 2001, that called for Abramoff to be paid \$150,000 a month. That contract was renewed by the Tribal Council in December 2002 for \$180,000 a month, according to documents obtained by the Morning Sun from a confidential source.

More typically, lobbyists charge their clients anywhere from \$2,000 to \$30,000 a

(See Abramoff, Page 8A)

### Connections in Washington



By MARK RANZENBERGER  
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On Dec. 6, 2001, the new Chippewa Tribe had just taken on among the issues it was facing was its image.

That day, the congressional Washington law firm of Berg Traurig and its lobbyist, Jack Abramoff, a public relations firm named Capitol Strategies.

The price tag for affairs services, as outlined in a Dec. 6, 2001 letter: \$1 million over the next year.

Once a retainer fee was added in, the bill came to at least \$4.8 million.

"A lot of large corporations don't make that investment in communication," said Kolt, the chief executive

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