

The 2016 Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention Comes to a Successful Close in Phoenix, AZ

Washington D.C. (March 30, 2016) - Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention, the National Indian Gaming Association's annual gathering, wrapped up on March 16th with great success in Phoenix, AZ. With over 4,700 gaming professionals in attendance and 326 exhibiting companies-- an increase from the last time the event was held in Phoenix -- the event brought together the interests of tribal gaming in a forum for progress, tribal sovereignty, education, and industry celebration.

Over the four day event, attendees and industry leaders came together for networking events, educational seminars, awards ceremonies, and evening celebrations. With the program change this year to reduce scheduling conflicts between the conference and tradeshow, attendees were able to maximize their time both in education sessions and on the show floor meeting with exhibitors. Tuesday and Wednesday saw strong traffic on the tradeshow floor, which buzzed with excitement around the diverse product offerings, numerous first-time exhibitors, cash prize drawings, celebrity guest appearances, and live fights at the King of the Cage mixed martial arts cage, to name a few.

The success of this year's show was in large part thanks to industry sponsors and supporters, including the Adobe; Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians; Ainsworth Game Technology; Aristocrat Technologies, Inc / VGT; Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers (AGEM); Atrient, Inc; Bank of America Merrill Lynch; BlueBird CPAs; Capital One, NA; Engaged Nation; First Data Corporation; Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation; Foxwoods Interactive powered by Greentube Pro; Gaming Laboratories International (GLI); GiGse; Gila River Casinos; ICE; IGT; JCM Global; Key Bank - Native American Financial Services; KlasRobinson QED; Legends of Wrestling, LLC; Millennium Logo Glove; Moss Adams LLP; Navajo Gaming; Novomatic Americas; Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians; Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Preferred Public Relations; REEL Games; Rymax Marketing Services, Inc.; San Manuel Band of Mission Indians; Scientific Games; Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians; South Beach Casino Resort; Talking Stick Resort; Tribal Business Journal; Tribal Financial Advisors; Wells Fargo; and Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino.

Highlights throughout the week included:

The **Chairman's Welcome Reception** was held this year at the Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino and sponsored by Gila River Casinos. Governor Stephen Lewis of the Gila River Indian Community shared opening remarks for this event. The annual event welcomes all attendees and exhibitors to the show in a celebration of the industry. The reception included cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, dancing, and a concert by 38 Special. The event also honored native entrepreneur Richard Tall Bear Westerman by presenting him with the Charlie Hill Spirit Award for his entrepreneurship and proactive community vision. Richard has continued the work of his father, who himself brought attention and ultimately opportunity to Indian communities across the country. Richard's companies have helped to advance the economic, social, and cultural interests of tribes across the country.

"Richard has demonstrated a strong commitment to bettering the lives of Indian people in the communities he's served," said NIGA Chairman Emeritus Rick Hill. "He's someone who had a vision and made that vision come to life, and in doing so he shows that you can achieve your dreams."

Governor Stephen Lewis of the Gila River Indian Community shared opening remarks for the **NIGA Annual Membership Meeting**. He said, *"Gaming is an economic engine that has improved*

circumstances for us all, our industry is in a tremendous growth mode, maturing every day. When we stay united, our industry will continue to rise and continue to provide for our communities."

The NIGA Annual Membership Meeting provided opportunities for updating Tribal Government officials on the current political and legal landscape of the industry. Along with reports from the Executive Officers and Executive Director were updates from partner organizations and federal agencies. A series of panels on the Legislative Prospectus for 2016, Diversifying Tribal Economies, Youth Perspectives, and the 2016 Elections were also presented. Chairman Terry Rambler from San Carlos Apache summed up the membership meeting in this statement: "*We must continue to stand together with dedication, commitment and passion so that we can fully protect our way of life.*"

This year's **Pre-Conference Program** featured tracks dedicated to Leadership & Development, The Slot Academy, and What's Hot in Tribal Gaming. Lucien Wijsman returned this year with the Slot Academy to deliver an engaging program focusing on all features of marketing in your casino. The Leadership & Development track included presentations by experts in human resources, management, leadership, and motivational coaching. This year's What's Hot in Tribal Gaming touched on issues that are top-of-mind for everyone involved in Tribal Gaming. Presenters were top thought leaders from all corners of the industry, and topics included The Legalization of Recreational Cannabis: Impacts for Gaming Tribes, The Legal Landscape of 2016, Asian Tourism, and Pursuing Commercial Gaming Licenses.

The **Conference Program** on Monday was new and improved this year and sought to keep attendee needs as the primary focus. For the first time, the program was taken off the tradeshow dates, allowing attendees to maximize their time spent both in attending educational seminars as well as in meeting with exhibitors on the tradeshow floor. The program brought together panelists with expertise in all areas of the industry and with diverse perspectives that both commercial and Tribal gaming attendees could relate to and learn from.

New for 2016, the conference featured a track dedicated to Women in Tribal Gaming -- a feature that will continue to grow and develop in future years. The Tribal Gaming Women's Initiative sought to pay tribute to the women who have served in leadership roles throughout the history of Tribal Gaming with the "Importance of Women in Leadership Roles" panel. They also looked to the future by discussing how to foster the next generations of women leadership in the industry with their "Looking Forward" panel. The Initiative partnered with Global Gaming Women, who hosted a session entitled, "Poised for Leadership -- Learn How with Lean In Circles" and welcomed both male and female attendees to a frank and forward-looking discussion of female leadership.

One of the most popular features of the 2016 conference program was the focus on Millennials. The program presented sessions across five different tracks that educated attendees on this upcoming generation as customers, consumers, employees, co-workers, and future leaders. These sessions included Marketing to Millennials, Millennials & Integrated Resort, The Millennial Problem: How to Connect with the Next Generation, Four Generations -- Four Approaches to Work: Increasing Engagement, Food Sovereignty in the Millennial's Age: The Benefits of Promoting Tribal Goods and Services in the Gaming Food Industry, and Learning from Arcades: Getting Millennials to Gamble

In addition to the new features, the conference brought back long-standing favorites, such as sessions by the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Tribal Gaming Protection Network. Other tracks included Enterprise Development & Finance, Casino Operations, iGaming & Fantasy Sports, Marketing, Human Resources & Management, Regulation & Compliance, Information Technology/Security & Surveillance, and Legislative/Policy.

The addition of new features and the extensive conference agenda did not stop the leadership from meeting on the many issues impacting the tribes in various difficult subjects. All in all we felt the interaction within the leadership was very successful and productive.

Two special **keynote presentations** were delivered during this year's event. On Tuesday morning, attendees gathered to hear from Acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Larry Roberts and Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, Jonodev Chaudhuri, who each gave updates on their respective federal agencies. Roberts emphasized the "new tone" that has been set by this Administration in respect to the Government to Government relationship with Indian Country and the pro-active settlement vs litigation approach that has been taken. Settlements have not only brought age old disputes to an end, they have also created opportunities for creative solutions that honor the trust responsibility of the Federal Government to Indian Country. Chaudhuri shared an exciting announcement of the appointment of Kathryn Isom-Clause to the NIGC. He thanked the Tribal Leadership for asserting the importance of having a fully functioning Commission to ensure that Indian Gaming is being properly regulated.

On Wednesday morning, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Chairman Brian Cladoosby moderated a panel entitled, "It's More than Just Winning; It's About Success -- The Future of Indian Gaming," which was a discussion of where Indian Gaming is heading, what the industry hopes to accomplish in the coming years, what challenges might arise, and what solutions might serve to overcome those challenges. Panelists were Rosemary Morillo, Chairwoman, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians; Russell Begaye, President, Navajo Nation; and Mark Macarro, Chairman, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians. Words of advice for the future from our panelists: be ready for the digital age, be ready to engage with customers in real time, continue to develop experts in Indian Country, and create your own resort destination experience. Chairman Cladoosby exclaimed, "*Let's continue to honor the prayers of our Elders. Let's be accountable to our Tribal Members and move the Indian Gaming Industry forward.*"

NIGA continues to stress the need for Indian Country to use gaming as a platform to springboard into other areas of economic development. Mr. Brad Simmons, Gaming Commissioner of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, moderated the Economic Diversification panel, "Identifying Opportunities for Diversifying Tribal Economics," which covered topics by representatives from various organizations. He opened with an overview of best practices and success stories that tribes have employed to further expand their economies. One of the speakers, Tony Day, Tribal Council Member of the Nottawaseppi Huron band of The Potawatomi, said, "*The panel brought up the need for Tribes to consider diversification from just the Casino industry.*" He went on to caution that whatever business development a Tribe engages in, to be sure it has a sound business plan.

Ms. Margo Gray of the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) spoke of the Native Edge, which launched in 2015. Native Edge is an online portal that provides a host of business opportunities for Indian Country, including information and opportunities for hiring, networking, training, education, and more for Native Americans. Native Edge is helping expand NCAIED's efforts to spotlight Indian Country entrepreneurs, encouraging more Americans to Buy Indian and to advance economic development and business development in Indian Country. Emerson Vallo of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association discussed the Economic Benefits of Tribal tourism and destination resorts. He provided a detailed and thorough analysis on tourism and some of the comparisons that bond our prospective industries. Mr. Vallo said that combined with Indian Gaming, tourism is a viable source of economic diversity for Tribes. Panel moderator, Brad Simmons closed out the session by calling for Tribes to come together in one voice to remind the US government that Indian Country combined is a strong political voice, and being in multiple business ventures is a good first step in getting that done.

The **Chairman's Award Luncheon** served up delicious, tribally-caught salmon donated by the Nisqually Indian Tribe and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) Salmon Marketing

Program. As always, the event recognized an extraordinary leader who works with and through Indian people for the long-term benefit of Indian Country. This year, the Chairman's Leadership Award was presented to LaDonna Harris, Founder and President of Americans for Indian Opportunity. LaDonna is referred to as a remarkable stateswoman and national leader who has enriched the lives of thousands. She has devoted her life to building coalitions that create change and has been a consistent and ardent advocate on behalf of Tribal America. Chairman Stevens said, *"Her commitment, her energy and her ability to effectuate change are remarkable and the work she has done can be felt throughout all of Indian Country. She sets an example for the rest of us. She is an iconic woman leader in Indian Country and we are honored to recognize her contributions to the building of many Native Leaders for this modern age."*

The **2016 Cultural Reception** was an engaging celebration of Native culture -- an integral and defining part of the mission of the National Indian Gaming Association. Tribal dances were performed by several groups, including the Yaaw Tei Yi Dancers from Alaska, who include NIGA Treasurer Andy Ebona; the Ak-Chin Ba'ban Keihina Group; and the Apache Crown Dancers. An Oneida Nation of Wisconsin Smoke Dancer, Kendrick Crouch-Powless, and Chairman Ernie Stevens Jr.'s grandson, also performed an Oneida Warrior dance to honor the recipient of the Timothy Wapato Sovereign Warrior Award. The award was presented to Daniel Tucker, former Chairman of the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, California Nations Indian Gaming Association and Vice-Chairman of NIGA in recognition of his work to increase opportunities and quality of life for his community while preserving tribal culture, language, and heritage.

"Chairman Tucker has been an avid Warrior of Tribal Sovereignty in the thirty years that he has served Indian Country," said Chairman Stevens. *"Chairman Tucker played a very significant role in bringing the NIGA Team together to create a powerful gaming presence in Washington DC and in the State of California. The National Indian Gaming Association is appreciative of Chairman Tucker's leadership role in advocating for Tribal Sovereignty on the Hill and throughout the Country. We thank him for his tireless efforts and his significant contributions to the protection of Tribal Sovereignty."*

The Tradeshow itself was a great success. Despite the interruption of a rally for Bernie Sanders, candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, adjoining the NIGA Tradeshow, our Vendors and Exhibitors felt the show was well attended and a lot of business took place. *"The show was a great success for HBG,"* said Dike Bacon, Principal/Partner at Hnedak Bobo Group. *"We had a lot of very positive responses from our clients, potential clients, and industry friends that attended NIGA this year [...] We had considerable foot traffic at our booth. As we discussed, many thanks to NIGA and to Urban for not scheduling sessions on Tuesday. Great decision! We think this contributed to noticeably more traffic on the floor on opening day."*

The most prestigious event of the week, the **Wendell Chino Humanitarian Awards Banquets** saw further recognition of outstanding individuals. Two honorees were recognized at this year's banquet: Chairman Jose "Moke" Simon III of Middleton Rancheria, CA and Chairman John Berrey of Quapaw Tribe, OK. Both leaders have given outstanding service to their communities and have greatly improved the lives of citizens in Indian Country. Berrey, Chairman of the Quapaw Business Committee, was selected for his leadership in helping to foster tremendous progress within his tribe. Under Berrey's watch, the Quapaw have expanded their economic development, and increased employment among tribal members and community as a whole. In addition to the economic growth, Berrey has also led efforts that have increased the tribe's land base, expanded social services, provided health insurance to all members and improved housing on the reservation. *"The leadership like that of Chairman John Berrey provides a model for success for future generations,"* remarked NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. *"His vision and determination are what we all strive to achieve. We recognize and thank Chairman Berrey for his contributions in making Indian Country a better place."*

Simon, who is Chairman of the Middletown Rancheria, has provided leadership in some of the most disastrous times for the tribe. During his tenure, Simon led his community through what is now referred to as The Valley Fire. The fire was one of the most destructive fires in California history, burning 76,067 acres in September 2015. Under his leadership, Simon helped set up temporary housing for its members and employees, and provided 260 beds for community members displaced by the fire. The Middletown Rancheria came together with their non-Indian neighbors to weather one of the worst disasters in the state's history. *"We applaud Chairman Simon and his community for their humanitarian efforts in such trying times. Despite the enormous devastation they were faced with, Chairman Simon provided the courage, leadership and strength needed to bring the community together,"* said Chairman Stevens, Jr.

In addition to presenting the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Awards, the evening was full of celebration and entertainment and featured a concert by Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees The Temptations.

This year's event also included the **Sovereignty Golf Tournament**, the **Vice Chairman's Golf Tournament**, and the **Chairman's Golf Tournament**. The three tournaments were hosted by premier, nationally-renowned and tribally-owned golf clubs. Both the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's tournaments were sponsored by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and held at the We-Ko-Pa Golf Clubs. The Sovereignty Golf Tournament took place at the Whirwind Golf Club at Wild Horse Pass.

The winners of the tournament were:

Chairman's Tournament -

1st place, Team KlasRobinson, 2nd place, Team Zubella, and 3rd place, Team Swinomish.

Vice Chairman's Tournament -

1st place, Team Fort McDowell, 2nd place, Team Fort Belknap and 3rd place, Team Mount.

Sovereignty Tournament -

1st place, Team ITGA, 2nd place, Team Pojoaque Pueblo and 3rd place, Team Navajo Gaming 1.

The next Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention will take place April 10 - 13, 2017 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA.

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ABOUT NIGA

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), established in 1985, is a non-profit organization of 184 Indian Nations with other non-voting associate members representing organizations and businesses engaged in Tribal Gaming. The common commitment and purpose of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian peoples economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational, legislative and public policy resource for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information visit www.indiangaming.org.