

For Immediate Release



A.C. Green, Adam Beach, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Brian Cladoosby, Virgil Hill, Rosemary Morillo, Patti Hart, Bernadine Bernette. Chairman Stevens, Dennis Hendricks and AC Green.

GREAT SHOWING AT INDIAN GAMING 2014 RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY

29th annual tradeshow hosts impressive new attendance record of over 5,700 during ribbon-cutting.

San Diego, CA (May 13, 2014) - Although the convention has been underway since Sunday with the Chairman's Welcome Reception hosted at the USS Midway, the 29th Annual, National Indian Gaming Association 2014 Tradeshow really kicks off at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Tuesday, May 13th.

During the meeting at the San Diego Convention Center, tribal government gaming commissioners will get certified, and industry officials will discuss Internet gaming, gain knowledge on the latest gaming technology, see gaming forecasts, and meet and surpass casino compliance.

The Association's Chairman, Ernie Stevens, Jr., presided over the ribbon cutting. At that time, he shared that over 5,700 tribal leaders had registered for the convention.

"Today, we have filled the 90,000 square foot tradeshow floor with over 450 world-class exhibits, who are our friends in the gaming industry and Native-owned businesses that are eager to build their brands. This is a \$29 billion industry, and we welcome you," Stevens said. The purpose of the tradeshow and convention is to build a positive venue for Indian gaming industry professionals to reposition their facilities to better serve their communities, better serve their customers, and stay competitive at the highest level. These leaders will discuss the future of the industry as well as opportunities to pursue economic development beyond gaming.

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Despite a tough economy, Indian gaming has continued to grow. The industry has seen increases in gross gaming revenue for each of the last two years as well as significant increases in job creation across the board. Indian gaming continues to be a powerful engine driving the economic recovery in this country. The challenge now is to increase the momentum for the years ahead.

Joining the Chairman on the stage were; CEO of IGT Patti Hart, basketball legend A.C. Green, professional rodeo announcer Ray Champ, hall of fame boxer Virgil Hill, Olympic gold medal winner Denean Howard-Hill, Law and Order SVU Actor Adam Beach, world champion hoop dancers from the Pueblo of Pojoaque, and retired U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell.



Jerry Danforth, NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Sycuan Chairman Daniel Tucker, Buffy St. Marie. (Photos by Dennis King)

More than 1,000 attendees aboard the ship enjoyed food, drinks, and performances by Sycuan Tribal Chairman Daniel Tucker's DT and the Love Po'Shun and country comedy duo Williams and Ree.

There was a special ceremony honoring military veterans by Rocket Gaming's Jerry Danforth, who served in the United States Navy from 1964 - 1994, including service in Vietnam and Desert Storm. Mr. Danforth along with Chairman Stevens called to the stage Pakagon Navy Veteran, Scott Brewer.

"This is a moment to reflect on of how interconnected we are to our many generations who have served and those who are currently serving," Chairman Stevens said. "This honor is not just for Scott Brewer and Jerry Danforth, but also for all of you who understand the challenges of being a military family. We are all there for you and we will always grateful of our service members."

The evening also acknowledged the passing of Charlie Hill and the Chairman invited to the stage family members of the comedy legend and longtime friend to Indian country.

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"We honor Charlie's memory who was always there for us, taking us to a better, happier place, interrupting the mundane and historical bitterness through his comedy. As a stand-up comedian Charlie's quick wit, Indian humor and Native wisdom touched all of our spirits and reminded us that we could change the world one laugh at a time. Charlie always advocated for Native American artisans to be in more involved in Indian gaming."

With the Hill family, Chairman Stevens announced that the National Indian Gaming Association would create the "Charlie Hill Entertainer of the Year Award," in recognition of Native artists and entertainment industry experts who have shared their passion and continued support of Indian country.

This year, the Charlie Hill Entertainer of the Year Award went to Cree singer-songwriter, musician, composer, and social activist Buffy St. Marie, who surprised the audience when she took the stage.

"Charlie wanted to let us know that he loved his life, and that he loved us, and I thank you all very much and this now will be a treasure in my life," Buffy St. Marie said.

As the sun set over the bay, Buffy St. Marie gave an amazing performance in honor of Charlie Hill.

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