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NIGA CHAIRMAN STEVENS HONORS INDIAN COUNTRY'S LEADERS AT INDIAN GAMING '09

PHOENIX, AZ. APRIL 14, 2009 – National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Chairman Ernest L. Stevens honored the recipients of the Chairman's Leadership Award at a luncheon held at the Phoenix Convention Center during NIGA's Indian Gaming '09 Trade Show & Convention. This year's award recipients included Indian gaming attorney Jesse D. Green, Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp, the Seminole tribe of Florida, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC), and the Sycuan Gaming Commission.

The NIGA Chairman's Leadership Award honors individuals and tribes who have contributed and advocated for tribal sovereignty and economic development. The Leadership Award is presented at NIGA's annual trade show and convention.



"I truly appreciate this honor and I'll continue to give 110% to not only the Quinault Nation, but to all tribes throughout the world," Quinault President Sharp told the crowd. In addition to her duties as tribal president, Sharp is recognized for her tribe's initiatives for addressing climate change.

Joe Osceola of the Seminole Indian tribe of Florida accepted the award on his tribe's behalf. The Seminole Indian tribe has been engaged in a 22-year battle with the state of Florida over a compact issue. Chairman Stevens praised the Seminole for their perseverance and resiliency in advocating for Indian gaming.



"[The Seminole] are literally on the front lines right now. The things that they are doing in Indian Country are phenomenal. At the same time, it's ironic that they still stand and fight," said Stevens.

An emotional Osceola told the crowd, "I accept this award for the Seminole tribe of Florida. I'm proud to be a Seminole and I am grateful for everything that we have accomplished. It has been a tough road, but we've come a long way and we still have a long way to go."



Secretary/Treasurer of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Keith B. Anderson accepted the honor on behalf of his tribe. The SMSC were honored for their donations of over \$145.5 million to native and non-native communities, schools, programs, and organizations. Upon acceptance of the award, Anderson presented a check to NIGA in the amount of \$100,000 from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

Sycuan Gaming Commissioner Jackie Tucker accepted the honor on behalf of the Sycuan Gaming Commission, which is the first commission in Indian Country to be composed entirely of female leaders.

“On behalf of the Sycuan band of the Kumeyaay Nation and the Sycuan Gaming Commission, we are humbled that the nations of NIGA, a strong organization that has successfully fought for sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and economic development, are honoring us today,” said Tucker.

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About the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) - The National Indian Gaming Association is a nonprofit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate member. The mission of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian people – economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational legislative and public policy resources for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information, visit www.indiangaming.org.