



Rebuilding
Communities
Through Indian
Self-Reliance

Media Release

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AIBN BOARD OF DIRECTORS HOLD SECOND MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – July 23, 2009 – The second official meeting of the American Indian Business Network (AIBN), a venture of the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), kicked off in Washington, D.C. at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill on July 23, 2009. Following a period of reassessment and restructure, the AIBN is quickly emerging as one of the strongest networks for Indian business owners in Indian Country.

AIBN board members and Indian entrepreneurs attended the second meeting, which focused primarily on the future development of the business network.

NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the AIBN board members.

“So many of our Indian people have so much quality product to offer in this industry, this has to be a top priority.” said Chairman Stevens. “NIGA believes it is important to continue to move forward and provide Indian owned businesses with the tools they need to secure viable business opportunities in the Indian gaming industry. Fostering economic opportunities for all tribes on a regular basis is a priority of the AIBN. Anyone who benefits from the Indian gaming industry; be it Indian or non-Indian, should be a part of supporting AIBN. Together, we can work towards developing solid partnerships that will continue to build upon the Indian country economy.”

Margo Gray-Proctor, a member of the AIBN Board of Directors, Chairwoman of the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, and President of Horizon Engineering Services, also welcomed members and attendees.

“If we re-write this history, what is going to be strong is when we re-invest back into our community using these gaming dollars. That has always been the goal of NIGA – to create economies and keep the gaming dollar from bouncing out,” echoed Gray-Proctor.

The meeting proceeded with the approval of minutes from the inaugural AIBN meeting in May 2009 and roll call.

Jamie Fullmer, former Chairman of the Yavapai-Apache Nation and CEO of Blue Stone Strategy Group and AIBN Coordinator then made a presentation about the core focus points of the AIBN, such as partnering and joint venturing, developing co-ops for increased buying power, creating opportunities for vertical integration, and information sharing between tribes and tribal enterprises and Indian businesses.

Fullmer also led the discussion about AIBN's next steps in development and priorities with AIBN members sharing feedback and ideas. Marketing strategy was a hot topic among the members, with many proclaiming the use of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter as essential to expanding the AIBN into the young Indian entrepreneur market.

Fullmer also provided members with information on an AIBN sponsorship and membership drive. Fullmer discussed an outreach plan for sponsorship aimed at high-level corporations to start investing in Indian businesses. In addition, Fullmer also introduced the idea of a membership drive to showcase the value of participation in the AIBN and to recruit more tribes and businesses to the AIBN.

"To move to that next frame, I think what we need to do is drive the sponsorship level and drive the operations effort. Those two things will help catapult us to the next level," said Fullmer.

The next AIBN meeting will be held at the NIGA Mid-Year Membership Meeting on September 15-16 at Buffalo Thunder Resort and Casino in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

AIBN was created by NIGA in 2003 as a forum for Indian businesses to showcase products and network with other business owners and customers and provides qualified Indian businesses, and those seeking to contract services from them, with an opportunity to make a difference in the economic success of Indian Country. Since its inception, AIBN has subscribed to a vision of "buy Indian" to encourage members, gaming industry officials, and tribal governments to help their own by buying goods and services from Indian businesses and entrepreneurs.

For more Information: **www.americanindianbusiness.net**

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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.