



Rebuilding  
Communities  
Through Indian  
Self-Reliance

# Media Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NBA Legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Sycuan Chairman Danny Tucker provide opening remarks at Indian Gaming 2010 in San Diego**

**San Diego — April 9, 2010** — NBA Los Angeles Lakers legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Danny Tucker, Chairman of the Sycuan Band of Kumeyaay Indians and Chairman of the California Nations Indian Gaming Association (CNIGA), kicked off the Indian Gaming 2010 Trade Show and Convention by welcoming tribal leaders and participants to the event at the San Diego Convention Center.

Abdul-Jabbar, the 7-foot-2 inch center who dominated the basketball court for two decades and holds the NBA All-Time Leading Scorer record, now works to reduce poverty through his Skyhook Foundation. Skyhook promotes academic and athletic excellence among teens.

“It’s very important what you have been able to do with gaming,” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar told 5,210 registrants on the convention’s opening day.

“One aspect of this vision is making it possible for the families in your communities to develop and strengthen strong bonds,” Abdul-Jabbar said. “Family is something that has not always been a thriving aspect of our communities, but that is changing, and the bonds you have with your children and the opportunities they have now to educate themselves will allow your communities to grow into the future.”

Across the United States 237 Indian nations in 28 states use Indian gaming to build local economies, creating an estimated 628,000 direct and indirect jobs and funding essential government services including children and elder services.

“The victories continue to mount every time we open a new facility, every time we reach out a hand to protect an Indian gaming enterprise and every time that we take on a challenge, our victories mount,” NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. told tribal leaders.

Still, Stevens said that it is imperative that tribes look back and understand the foundational decisions of the modern Indian gaming movement, including the 1987 California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians decision, which affirmed the sovereign right of tribes.

Danny Tucker said that there are still challenges to the sovereign rights of tribes. Tucker said, “We are in a war still. We won a couple battles, but we seemingly went home for a little while and forgot where

those battles were. We still have to get together, and fight together in unity; that is what made Indian country what it was today.

The battle for economic livelihoods of Indian nations remains at the forefront of discussions at the NIGA convention, as Abdul-Jabbar has observed since he brought his Skyhook Foundation youth empowerment programs to Indian reservations.

“It’s very important,” Abdul-Jabbar said, “what you have been able to do with the funds and the jobs created by the Indian gaming industry in your various communities.”

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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](http://www.indiangaming.org).