



Rebuilding
Communities
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Media Release

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NIGA Tradeshow Opens with Ribbon Cutting by Celebrities and Dignitaries

San Diego — April 9, 2010 — Movie star Adam Beach and National Congress of the American Indian President Jefferson Keel together wielded a pair of giant scissor and cut the red ribbon, officially opening the National Indian Gaming Association's 2010 Tradeshow.

"In this tough economy the dedication so many people have had to walk our way through, and still we are here opening this tradeshow that is dedicated to the success of this industry," said NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr.

Stevens joked with Beach who tried to hide in the back of tribal leaders, asking those watching, "Do you want Adam Beach in the front or in the back?" Front, the crowd called. "Our other celebrity we kind of have to keep in the back and guess why? He's 6-foot, 11," as Stevens introduced NBA great Bill Walton.

Dignitaries included Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, and Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. "Senator Campbell has done so many things as a sitting senator. He wore a full headdress as he finished his days in the U.S. Senate, and he is one of the true warriors of all of Indian Country."

Other dignitaries included former Oneida of Wisconsin Chairman Jerry Danforth and former NCAI President Sue Masten were among those leaders of Indian nations and organizations, who walked with Stevens onto the tradeshow floor for his customary stroll of the floor.

In the tradeshow gaming machines buzzed and whirred while vendors rolled out the carpet for 5,211 conventioners at the 25th annual convention of the Nation Indian Gaming Association. Others among the more than 450 vendors sold everything from smart-looking uniforms and the latest sound equipment to muffins and coffee offered at booths made to look like mom and pop restaurants.

Managers from some of the 237 Indian nations in 28 states that operate Indian gaming facilities explored the potential of new products to attract customers, including those on staycations who find affordable luxury at Indian gaming facilities with resorts, hotels, restaurants and entertainment complexes.

Hospitality services are part of the economic multiplier efforts undertaken by gaming tribes to keep revenues in Indian communities longer. Indian gaming provides 626,000 direct and indirect jobs across the United States.

The high level of attendance at the 25th Annual NIGA Convention demonstrated the commitment of gaming tribes to building their industry, despite the economic downturn. Stevens said, “We’re helping not just Indian Country but America.”

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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.