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NIGA AND PAWNEE NATION COLLEGE FORM AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE TRIBAL GAMING EDUCATION



L to R; Top Row: Marshal Gover, Council member seat #4, George Howell, Pawnee Business Council President, Buddy LoneChief, Pawnee Business Council Vice- President, Gwen Shunatona, Trustee Board member of Pawnee Nation College, Elizabeth Blackowl, Council Member seat #2 and Christi Modlian, Board member of NIGA. Bottom Row: Ernie Stevens Jr., NIGA Chairman, and Dr. Todd Fuller, President of Pawnee Nation College.

TULSA, OK– August 13, 2009 – The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and Pawnee Nation College in Pawnee, Oklahoma, have partnered together to establish a program that will provide tribal gaming instruction and education to tribal members and employees at the college. Through the partnership, Pawnee Nation College will be the first tribal college in the nation to offer such a program.

Pawnee Nation College will offer student instruction in the areas of tribal gaming, business, hospitality and other gaming-related derivatives as stipulated in the College's Mission and the College's Tribal Gaming Regulatory Initiative (TGRI). The primary purpose of the partnership is to promote the

professional advancement of Indian people in the Indian gaming industry through educational opportunities for current and future tribal gaming employees.

The partnership was made official through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by NIGA Chairman, Ernie Stevens, Jr. and Pawnee Nation College President, Dr. Todd Fuller at a meeting held at the college campus in Pawnee, Oklahoma. The Memorandum also recognized the invaluable contribution of tribal colleges on promoting, community, social, cultural, and economic development in tribal communities.

Upon the signing, Chairman Stevens stressed the impact that tribal colleges have had on his families' education and on Indian education as a whole.

"I am an educator by heart and by trade." Chairman Stevens reflected. "Tribal colleges, for me, are the best place in the whole world. I have five kids and all of those kids are completely educated through the tribal college system. If we can do more through tribal colleges, then our people are better and our communities are stronger."

Chairman Stevens also expressed his gratitude at being apart of the Indian education movement.

"This is an honor. To be here today, to move this agreement forward, to promote and advance education, that is my life's goal," Chairman Stevens told the College. "Today, being here with you folks, this is one of the best moments. If I can help you educate the young, that is my goal."

Pawnee Nation President George Howell welcomed Chairman Stevens to the College and thanked NIGA for their assistance with the program.

"We hold education as a high priority. I really appreciate you coming and helping us with this agreement. We're looking to make good things happen in Indian Country with this agreement," said President Howell.

Pawnee Nation College President Todd Fuller also spoke at the meeting and expressed his excitement about the partnership and having the NIGA aboard to support the program.

"What we believe with this partnership and this agreement, is that it becomes a very attractive opportunity for people once they know that the National Indian Gaming Association is affiliated with the College and that we have a partnership like that," said Fuller. "The credibility that it creates for us as an institution is just tremendous."

Both Chairman Stevens and President Fuller also fielded questions from tribal council members and college employees about the partnership.

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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.