

PRESS RELEASE



**NATIONAL
INDIAN
GAMING
ASSOCIATION**

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Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Opens New Cedar Lakes Casino Hotel



National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr., joins the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe leadership at the ribbon cutting activities officially opening the new Cedar Lakes Casino in Cass Lake, Minnesota.

Cass Lake, MN – August 08, 2019 – The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Council hosted their grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting of the \$50 million expansion of the Cedar Lakes Casino Hotel on Thursday, August 8, 2019, in Cass Lake, Minnesota.

In May 2017 the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe voted to move their Palace Casino Hotel closer to the city of Cass Lake. This \$45 million construction project began in December 2017 and was finished in August 2019. The Palace Casino was closed July 22.

In total, Cedar Lakes will employ 400 people, an increase from the Palace, which had a staff of about 300. Those employees will have a variety of roles for the casino, as the building includes slot machines, blackjack, a 100-room hotel, a food court, a brewpub, gift shop, arcade, indoor pool and event center. Of the 400 employed, 75% are from the Leech Lake Band.

National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr., joined the celebration as a keynote speaker. Stevens said, "I want to congratulate the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribe on this beautiful tribal gaming property. I envision great things ahead for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribe and the future of this gaming enterprise and beyond. Today, we take a giant forward in Indian gaming."

"It is nice to see the tribal elders and youth in attendance, enjoying the grand opening festivities. Stevens added that many of the young tribal members in attendance are employees of the Cedar Lakes Casino. He said, "It is great to see the professionalism and pride they have to be part of the new facility in Cass Lake, Minnesota."



Stevens presented a National Indian Gaming Association Chairman's Leadership award to Helen Bryan, who is an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Stevens said, "It is the Bryan v. Itasca County Supreme Court case that played a significant role in the legal proceedings centered around early gaming development. Former National Indian Gaming Association Executive Director Mark Van Norman was on hand to give a quick, informative analysis and overview of these recognitions of tribal sovereignty in the Supreme court."

"Legal struggles aside," Stevens said, "The best result here was a clear understanding of what tribal sovereignty and government-to-government relationships meant. Which, on a majority basis - to have mutual service agreements and a clear understanding of rights, responsibilities, and roles in tribal government gaming."

The overall economic impact of Indian Gaming in 2018 was just over \$87 billion – this represents an economic output of over \$23 billion directly on reservations where casinos are located.

The Indian Gaming Industry, in 2018 directly transferred almost \$14 billion to their tribal owners for governmental program spending and investments, helping to meet gaps in federal funding for Indian programs.

Since government spending is largely wages and employment benefits, the majority of that spending stays in the region.

On a national level, Tribal Gaming Operations and Ancillary Facilities supported almost 309,000 ongoing jobs in 2018.

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About the National Indian Gaming Association

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), established in 1985, is a non-profit organization of 184 Indian Nations with other non-voting associate members representing organizations, tribes and businesses engaged in tribal gaming enterprises from around the country. The common commitment and purpose of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian peoples economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational, legislative and public policy resource for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development.



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