



THE NAVAJO NATION

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Indian Gaming is critical to upholding Statewide Programs and Services says President Begaye

AK CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY- Through revenue sharing, Arizona gaming tribes directly impact statewide programs and services, said President Russell Begaye at the Arizona Indian Gaming Association Tribal Leaders Meeting held at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino on Friday, Oct. 9.

“Revenue sharing from gaming tribes in Arizona continues to support education statewide. The revenue we share contributes to increasing teacher’s salaries,” President Begaye said. “We provide funds to help students stay in school and not drop out. Our gaming dollars go toward improving instruction in Arizona school classrooms.”

When state voters passed Proposition 202, gaming tribes in Arizona agreed to volunteer a portion of shared gaming revenues with the state of Arizona and local governments to support specific state and local programs.

Twelve percent of the total monies is directed to city, town and county governments for government services benefitting the general public. An additional 9% funds the State’s regulatory expenses.

The remainder is contributed to the Arizona Benefits Fund. Of that fund, 56% of the shared revenues is directed to educational programs and needs; 28% funds emergency services and trauma centers; 7% funds wildlife and habitat conservation; 7% funds statewide tourism promotion; and 2% supports the education, prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

Since 2002, Tribal Gaming has contributed over \$1 billion in total revenues to Arizona.

“We should be proud of this and people across the state need to remember this. They need to know that Indian tribes are supporting their programs, services, schools and hospitals,” President Begaye said.

During the Tribal Leaders Meeting, discussion focused on the Tohono O’odham Nation’s proposed Glendale Casino. Tribes spoke on both sides of the issue with consideration toward how the outcome will affect Indian gaming in the state.

“Tribes themselves benefit from Indian gaming, even those without casinos. Through Indian gaming, tribes have more money than they had before Proposition 202 came about,” President Begaye said. “Sometimes we lose focus and start to look inward at what we might lose rather than how we can increase revenue to share with the state. This revenue is critical to promoting economic development, employment and contributing to statewide programs and services.”

Through gaming, tribes have been able to provide, or supplement, funding toward their own programs and services. Within tribal lands, gaming money benefits tribal education, health programs, housing, public safety and employment among many other services.

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