

## Spotlight on Gaming and Giving Back

This month, we spoke to six tribal leaders about key initiatives and priorities for their tribes and gaming operations; winning formulas for their success in gaming; new economic development opportunities being pursued; and community outreach. Here is what they had to say...

### W. Ron Allen, Chairman/CEO Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

7 Cedars Resort & Casino in Sequim, WA

[7cedarsresort.com](http://7cedarsresort.com)

[jamestowntribe.org](http://jamestowntribe.org)



W. Ron Allen

**KEY INITIATIVES:** For the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and our 7 Cedars Resort & Casino, our top priority is the 100 room 4 star facility and the supporting infrastructure essential to the project. Since the recession, our property has continued to have a strong upward swing in performance. Our market is a very rural one but has a strong tourist upswing in the spring/summer months. We just completed a

renovation upgrade of our primary buffet restaurant that we call 7 Brothers and it has been extremely well received.

**WINNING FORMULA:** The most important factor in our gaming success is the continuity of our operations leadership. Our CEO Jerry Allen has been with the operation since 1995, when we opened. He has built a team that has been with him for many years. One of the successful actions they have installed is an employee leadership training program they called "The 7 Cedars Way." It provides the employees a thorough understanding of the tribe's identity and cultural practices, while reminding them of their role with our patrons. It instills an amazing positive attitude on the floor where our patrons interact with the staff.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** The first phase of our resort venturing into the hospitality industry to compliment the casino started on February 4th and will be complete in the spring of 2020. The 2nd and 3rd phases include an additional 200 rooms, additional conference space, entertainment facilities and a spa/fitness center. We are hopeful to complete these phases within 5-7 years of completion of the 1st phase. We have additional upgrades planned for our Cedars at Dungeness Golf Course as well.

**OUTREACH:** Jamestown and 7 Cedars are very active in providing philanthropic support for the local community. We provide support for: the local schools; their sport programs; senior centers; Boys & Girls Club; YMCA expansion projects;

Olympic Medical Center to reduce health care costs; and countless other local non-profits. Annually we dress up our tribal and 7 Cedars properties with approximately 2.6 million Christmas lights that enhance the Christmas spirit in our community.

### Bill John Baker, Principal Chief Cherokee Nation

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa in Catoosa, OK and nine additional Cherokee Casinos in Roland, Sallisaw, Tahlequah, Fort Gibson, Ramona, South Coffeyville, Grove and Claremore, OK

[hardrockcasinotulsa.com](http://hardrockcasinotulsa.com)

[cherokeecasino.com](http://cherokeecasino.com) / [cherokee.org](http://cherokee.org)



Bill John Baker

**KEY INITIATIVES:** Our gaming operations are known for being top of market. The goal is to always deliver the best experience for our guests, and we do that through listening to our guests and making strategic investments to remain the market leader. We recently opened a 65,000 sq. ft. expansion at our flagship property, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa.

The new, two-level casino features 450 new electronic and table games, a poker room and a multipurpose event center. One of the key elements is a live music dance hall, Track 5. The new venue is home to a stage designed for live entertainment that accommodates an array of national, regional and local artists. In the Cherokee Nation capital, Tahlequah, OK, we are building a new 92,000 sq. ft. entertainment destination that is opening in the next few months. The new property will feature 525 electronic games, a 144-seat restaurant, a grab-and-go café and a live music venue. In addition, the new destination will offer more than 33,000 sq. ft. of convention and meeting space. The tribe made the decision in the '90s to pursue gaming as an economic development tool in northeast Oklahoma. It was a way for our tribe to create a consistent revenue stream, strive towards self-sufficiency and create jobs for Cherokee Nation citizens. These properties provide thousands of jobs and give us the opportunity to invest in services for our people and

infrastructure in our communities and to be a force in the regional economy.

**WINNING FORMULA:** Cherokees are known for being hospitable, and we try to leverage that characteristic in our entertainment endeavors. As we continue to create good jobs and fill them with Cherokee Nation citizens, we are enhancing our gaming and hospitality properties. It ensures our guests are getting first-class service. When you combine that level of service with our entertainment and amenities, it's a winning strategy.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** We leverage our gaming and hospitality expertise and profit to diversify and grow our businesses outside of gaming. Today, we operate more than 30 businesses and are doing work around the globe. We are a driving force in the regional economy, partnering with local, regional and state economic development teams to attract national brands to northeast Oklahoma. Bringing thousands of jobs to our region creates career opportunities for Cherokee families close to home. Cherokee Nation and its businesses have a \$2.03 billion economic impact on the State of Oklahoma and employ more than 11,000 people.

**OUTREACH:** The success of our businesses allows us to make significant investments in infrastructure that improves the lives of Cherokees and our neighbors. There are a number of examples where we have made investments that have created jobs, improved a community's ability to attract new business, and given cities or towns the opportunity to better serve their residents. We also collaborate with area nonprofits to touch the lives of those they serve, whether that is serving hot meals or delivering Valentine's cards to our Nation's veterans. All of these things are possible only because of our businesses' success and our dedicated workforce.

## J. Michael Chavarria, Governor Santa Clara Pueblo

Santa Claran Hotel Casino in Espanola, NM  
[santaclaran.com](http://santaclaran.com)

**KEY INITIATIVES:** The revenues generated from the Santa Claran Casino provide financial support for the tribal government operations. Through such operations, tribal funds are then used to provide services to our entire community – for educational opportunities, infrastructure development, housing, elder and handicap services, leveraging federal and state funding and most important, land acquisition. Diversifying our economic portfolio is critical in maintaining a positive economic return of our entire community of Santa Clara Pueblo.

**WINNING FORMULA:** In order to differentiate our businesses in an extremely competitive market, the Santa Claran Hotel Casino has focused on providing the best guest experience in the area. From our front line guest service initiatives to luxury car giveaways, we have provided our patrons and community with an experience unrivaled in the northern New Mexico valley. By aligning our property with our guests hospitality



J. Michael Chavarria

needs, we have continuously increased our database totals for five consecutive years.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** The Pueblo of Santa Clara through its business arm, the Santa Clara Development Corporation, is working towards diversifying its current holdings over the next several months. Currently, the Pueblo owns and operates the Santa Claran Hotel Casino, Black Mesa Golf Course, Kha'p'o

Construction Services, and the Santa Clara Retail Enterprises, which are centered in the northern New Mexico valley. Over the next 24 months, the Santa Clara Development Corporation will begin developing an 80 acre mixed use site consisting of new hospitality experiences not currently available in the area.

**OUTREACH:** While 100% of the profit sharing and taxes generated from the Santa Clara Development Corporation are reinvested in the Santa Clara Pueblo community, many of our initiatives directly impact the surrounding communities. The development corporation donates over \$30,000 annually to non-Santa Clara Pueblo community groups providing funding assistance to everything from local youth sports to STEM related middle and high school events. The Santa Clara Development Corporation also provides \$5,000 in college scholarships each fall and spring semesters to students in the northern New Mexico valley.

## John Christman, Chairman Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians Viejas Casino & Resort in Alpine, CA [viejas.com](http://viejas.com) / [viejasbandofkumeyaay.org](http://viejasbandofkumeyaay.org)



John Christman

**KEY INITIATIVES:** The key priority for our tribe has always been sustainability for our people. Even before economic development, we were taught that all decisions should be made with regard to each other and to the collective future of the tribe. As for key initiatives in the tribe's gaming operation, it is our priority to preserve our place in market share and secure our future through continued reinvestment.

**WINNING FORMULA:** The winning formula has been the tribe's commitment to provide our guests with the best gaming experience around. That commitment became reality last year with the opening of our new Willows Hotel luxury resort and gaming floor.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** We recently completed a luxury hotel product that had a major impact on not only the tribe's economic development, but also the economy of the surrounding area. At this time, our focus will be on the continued success of that business venture.

**OUTREACH:** Viejas is proud of the relationships that we have built with our neighbors. We believe in the importance of giving back to the community and will continue to do so through contributions and support of the local community as well as the greater San Diego area.

**Virginia Cross, Tribal Council Chair  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe**

**Muckleshoot Casino and Muckleshoot Bingo  
in Auburn, WA**

[muckleshootcasino.com](http://muckleshootcasino.com) / [muckleshoot.nsn.us](http://muckleshoot.nsn.us)

**KEY INITIATIVES:** The Muckleshoot Tribal Council has always focused on building a better life and stronger future for all of our members through our investments in education, health care, housing, elder care, employment opportunities and similar programs and services. These vital investments are made



Virginia Cross

possible by the revenues generated by our gaming operations. In fact, every dollar our casino makes goes towards those and other important programs and services for the Muckleshoot community.

**WINNING FORMULA:** An important priority for our tribe has been continual improvement of our casino operations and providing our customers a first-class experience. Since opening in 1995 in a 13,000 sq. ft. tent, the

Muckleshoot Casino has undergone a series of successful expansion and improvement projects that have earned the casino the reputation as the premier entertainment destination in the region. The Tribal Council recently approved another significant upgrade and expansion to our casino that includes a 20,000 sq. ft. events and conference center, new dining and bar offerings, additional gaming space and a cultural center that celebrates the history and journey of the Muckleshoot Tribe. This latest expansion and improvement project will bring our casino to almost 328,000 sq. ft. and help keep our business strong, ensure our customers continue to get great value for their entertainment dollar and enable us to continue meeting our responsibility to our community members. Finally, the popular Muckleshoot Bingo, located directly across the street from our casino, offers games, slots and eateries 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** Pursuing economic development opportunities has always been an important priority for the Muckleshoot Tribal Council. Emerald Downs, the most recent addition to our family of entertainment venues, is a world-class racing and gaming destination providing hundreds of local jobs and millions of dollars to the Washington State economy. Our White River Amphitheatre, a 20,000-seat outdoor entertainment venue, managed for the tribe by Live Nation, offers world-class entertainment in a scenic setting. The tribe also recently completed a significant upgrade of our iconic Salish Lodge and Spa, one of Washington's most popular destinations for locals and visitors. Finally, a new hotel near the casino is on the drawing board and will soon be yet another piece of the tribe's economic development portfolio.

**OUTREACH:** The Muckleshoot Tribe enjoys strong government-to-government relationships with the state, county, local municipalities and the Port of Seattle. We work in close collaboration with those governments on a variety of projects through regular meetings and frequent communication. Through our Charity Fund we support many non-profit organizations, schools, churches and government agencies. Our funding priorities include education, health and human services, communities of color, environmental programs and civic and community advocacy.

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## Stephen Roe Lewis, Governor Gila River Indian Community

Vee Quiva Hotel & Casino in Laveen Village,  
Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino in Chandler,  
and Lone Butte Casino in Chandler, AZ  
[playatgila.com](http://playatgila.com) / [gilariver.org](http://gilariver.org)



Stephen Roe Lewis

**KEY INITIATIVES:** The Gila River Indian Community has over 23,000 community members, and just like any other Indian nation, we have significant needs that any municipality, state, or sovereign nation has such as housing, education, infrastructure and healthcare. Our gaming operations are critical to providing the revenues and resources to address those needs. Historically, we have been an agricultural farming commu-

nity. Our first significant business before signing our gaming compact with the State of Arizona was Gila River Farms. We are proud of this agricultural tradition. We won our water rights back in 2004 with the Arizona Water Settlements Act – the largest water settlement of its kind. As tribes know, water is life from a cultural, agricultural business and survival sense. For economic development and gaming, water is critical.

We want to make sure that we have a very strong organization. We've always been self-managed since our first gaming compact was signed in the '90s. We provide employment opportunities for our community members, especially in the gaming sector through Gila River Gaming Enterprises. Kenneth Manuel, a community member, is CEO of Gila River Gaming Enterprises. We have a number of middle management and upper management community members as well who've worked their way up and gotten their education. Some have gone to the UNLV School of Gaming & Hospitality, including Jeff Martin, who is one of our top-level management personnel within the gaming leadership. Carolyn Thompson, also a top level General Manager and community member, attended the University of Arizona.

**WINNING FORMULA:** We are proud of our employees and community members, and the ability to provide them employment. That was initially, and still is, a goal of our community. Our employees are so important. They are the backbone of our operations and make our operations successful.

We've been fortunate to have a location right off of the I-10. Even 20 years ago, we were a very rural community, and the metropolitan Phoenix area has grown across along the I-10 and beyond since then. The Gila River Indian

Community has been right in the middle of that development. Our Wild Horse Pass development area was set aside tribally owned land for economic development, initially for our gaming enterprises. We now have Whirlwind Golf Club there and a Sheraton Grand Hotel and Spa as well. We also have the Rawhide Western Town at Wild Horse Pass, which is a Western district. We've created a destination area with amenities that complement and support Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino. Right across the I-10, we have Lone Butte Casino, which was our first casino. We also have Vee Quiva Hotel & Casino, which is on the west side of our reservation. These three casino properties make up the family of Gila River Gaming Enterprises, and they each have their distinct clientele and market base and branding, but all reinforce the Gila River Gaming Enterprise and its connection to the Gila River Indian Community. With regard to brand promotion, we also have a number of important sports partnerships including with the Arizona Diamondbacks, Arizona Cardinals and Arizona State University – the MLB, NFL and NCAA, respectively.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** Entertainment is such a positive pull for our customer base and for new customers. At our Vee Quiva location this summer, George Lopez's Chingon Kitchen will be opening. It's a great modern Mexican food concept. We're going to have George Lopez's name attached to that as well as opportunities to bring him out and to perform. We're looking at those types of opportunities to continue to build our food and beverage amenities. We're also looking at further expansion as well. We are always looking at gaming as a way to diversify our economic development opportunities. As our elders have always said – gaming is a stepping stone to other economic development opportunities. We are proud of where we've come from, and we are excited about where we want to take our gaming enterprises in the future. We are in exciting times now with technology and where gaming is headed in this next chapter.

**OUTREACH:** We are very proud of our philanthropic efforts. Just recently we provided some new law enforcement vehicles to a neighboring city. We have great relationships with and support a number of national efforts including: the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; the National Kidney Foundation; the Muscular Dystrophy Association; as well as the Boys and Girls Club. We actually have two Boys and Girls Clubs on our reservation. We support various local endeavors including St. Vincent de Paul here in Phoenix, which serves the homeless food, and provides shelter and services. Our casino employees and leadership help with Thanksgiving dinner and volunteer opportunities as well. We've really put a commitment behind that. We've also helped to fund hospitals, hospital wings and support the law enforcement of our local communities as well. ♣