



## **NIGC Makes Substantial Progress on Regulatory Review Consultations and Plans for Future**

by Tracie Stevens

*"The Commission's efforts to consult effectively with tribes have been amply reciprocated in the form of thoughtful, substantive comments on draft regulations, which have been invaluable to the NIGC in conducting its regulatory review."*

Since embarking on an aggressive regulatory review schedule, Commissioners, NIGC staff and tribal leaders and representatives from approximately 180 tribes have met and discussed 20 regulations or potential regulations. These collaborative efforts have resulted and will continue to result in better regulations and open, candid communications between the NIGC and the tribal gaming community. As the NIGC finishes reviewing comments on draft regulations and continues to publish Final Rules, the Commission looks toward the future with improved training and technical assistance, continued regulatory review and consulting on the Agency's strategic plan.

Fostering candid and productive communication between tribes and the NIGC remains one of the Commission's top priorities. The Commission's efforts to consult effectively with tribes have been amply reciprocated in the form of thoughtful, substantive comments on draft regulations, which have been invaluable to the NIGC in conducting its regulatory review.

Since January 2011, the Commission has held numerous consultations as part of its regulatory review process. Over 2,000 individuals attended and participated in these consultations and the Commission has received hundreds of written and verbal comments from tribes regarding potential regulatory changes. The Commission reviewed and considered every one of the comments received, after which it published seven proposed rules and approved six final rules.

Currently, the Commission is reviewing comments on eight proposed rules and anticipates that final rules will be published shortly. Two proposed rules are currently open for public comment: 25 CFR Parts 543 and 547. The comment period for these proposed rules will close on August 15, 2012.

The Commission believes that its regulatory review will streamline the regulatory process and ultimately assist both tribes and the NIGC in maintaining the integrity of Indian gaming. The regulatory review process underscores the

benefits of effective communication and a government-to-government dialogue, as it takes into account tribal views regarding effective regulation and the needs of the tribal gaming industry. The Commission applauds the efforts of tribes and the public to provide meaningful comment regarding NIGC regulations, and the NIGC will continue to seek input as it moves forward with the regulatory review.

As new regulations become effective and are implemented, training and technical assistance will remain a core component of maintaining the integrity of tribal gaming.

The Commission believes that a well-trained workforce is integral to the success of tribal gaming. The NIGC will continue to offer up-to-date training and technical assistance to tribal governments, tribal regulators and gaming operations personnel. Since this Commission was appointed, the NIGC has offered 51 different types of training. As we increase training opportunities, we expect attendance to continue to rise.

The NIGC will continue to provide technical assistance and training to tribes to ensure compliance with IGRA and to maintain the integrity of gaming operations and strong regulation. Additionally, we will work to offer a more diverse course catalogue as new and revised regulations become effective. By providing training and technical assistance, we can address potential issues before they arise, which will serve to preserve the integrity of tribal gaming and preempt enforcement actions.

In maintaining the integrity of Indian gaming, it is imperative that the NIGC utilize its resources efficiently and effectively. To do so, we have examined and revised many areas within the Agency, such as adopting or revising internal policies to provide clarity to our employees, fully utilizing existing contracts with other agencies and reducing workflow silos or duplication. This means a smarter, better-equipped Agency that is more responsive and better adapts to its



regulatory responsibilities and needs of the tribal gaming industry.

In addition to the Commission's other efforts over the last two years to improve efficiency, we are in the process of formulating our strategic plan of NIGC's priorities for 2014-2018. The plan will detail processes and methods by which the NIGC will achieve its goals, including performance

measurements to assess the agency's progress. Further, we continue to examine how to promote the cost-effective use of resources, including the hiring of staff to build upon NIGC's capabilities to perform functions efficiently.

The NIGC also has continued its commitment to transparency by holding public meetings. Our most recent public meeting was held on May 23, 2012 in Prior Lake, Minnesota. These meetings provide tribes, as well as the public, an opportunity to learn about Commission business and to address the Commission. We will continue to hold public meetings to inform the community of the NIGC's progress toward achievement of its four priorities and other operational issues.

The substantial progress of our regulatory review is the direct product of meaningful and substantive consultation with Indian tribes. As the NIGC continues to develop its training programs, and completes the Agency's strategic plan, tribes and the public will continue to see positive changes. By working with tribal, state and federal agencies to achieve our goals, together we will maintain the integrity of this vital industry.

The Commission encourages tribes and members of the public to review the proposed rules and to submit comments prior to the deadline. Comments may be submitted in one of two ways: by email, to [reg.review@nigc.gov](mailto:reg.review@nigc.gov); or by U.S. mail to Attn: Reg Review, National Indian Gaming Commission, 1441 L Street NW, Suite 9100, Washington, D.C. 20005.

To request training, tribes may contact their NIGC regional office, or fill out a training and technical assistance form located on our website at [www.nigc.gov](http://www.nigc.gov), and email the form to [training@nigc.gov](mailto:training@nigc.gov). ♣

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