

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Names Jill Benedict Tribal Gaming Commission Executive Director



Jill Benedict

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Gaming Commission recently announced that tribal member Jill Benedict has been selected as Executive Director. Benedict took the place of Todd Papineau, who was named Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort General Manager in May 2018 after 16 years with the commission.

“I am honored and appreciative of the opportunity to utilize my skills, as well as my passion for Indian gaming, to oversee the Tribal Gaming Commission and compliance of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s gaming enterprises,” said TGC Executive Director Jill Benedict. “I look forward to applying my knowledge of the tribe’s gaming staff, procedures, and understanding of internal control standards to safeguard the integrity of the tribe’s casino and bingo operations.”

As the Tribal Gaming Commission Executive Director, Benedict will be in charge of ensuring a safe, fair and honest play at the gaming establishments in accordance with tribal laws, federal regulations and the Tribal-State Compact. She is also tasked with overseeing efforts to ensure the success of the tribe’s gaming enterprises by training and developing highly competent individuals to protect the tribe’s assets and maintaining the public’s confidence in the integrity of the gaming enterprises – Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort and the Mohawk Bingo Palace.

Benedict joins the Tribal Gaming Commission following 15 years as the Director of Compliance for the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort. Her experience includes enforcing compliance in coordination with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and gaming regulators. She also oversaw the anti-money laundering compliance program and investigations, as well as the development of policies and procedures that enhanced financial oversight.

In her new position as Executive Director, Benedict will direct the Tribal Gaming Commission; a wholly independent department of the tribe created by the Tribal Gaming Ordinance; in conducting background checks and hiring of all tribal employees requiring a gaming license and oversight of the gaming operation’s internal audit, surveillance, gaming networks, and gaming inspectors. The Tribal Gaming Commission also investigates internal and external criminal activity, as well as policy and procedural violations in protecting tribal assets.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council expressed its congratulations to Jill Benedict on being named Tribal Gaming Commission Executive Director in saying, “It is

always a privilege to see an Akwesasne Mohawk willing to apply their experience and understanding of gaming regulations for the ongoing benefit of the community. We extend our appreciation for your dedication and commitment to help strengthen the tribe’s gaming operations in your new position.”

Benedict is an enrolled member and lifelong resident of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe.

New Executive Leaders Named at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek and Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood



Steve Bonner

Seminole Gaming recently announced new executive leaders at three of its Florida casinos, including Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek and Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood.

Steve Bonner has been named President of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, replacing Joe Lupo, who was recently named property President of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. Bonner was President of Seminole Casino Coconut Creek in North Broward County, FL.

Larry Buck has been named President of Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, he was General Manager of Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood, FL.

Edward Aguilar has been named General Manager of Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood, FL. He is among the highest ranking Seminole Gaming executives who are also members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Aguilar was Assistant General Manager/Vice President for Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee.

The announcement was made by James F. Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming, which operates all three casinos for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. “It’s gratifying to promote from within our organization, because of the extraordinary accomplishments of these three individuals,” said Allen. “We want to acknowledge their hard work and the results they have achieved, as we support them in their new positions.”

Steve Bonner has headed Seminole Casino Coconut Creek in Broward County since 2002. During that time, he has been responsible for managing the evolution of what was a small gaming facility into a major South Florida casino, dining and entertainment destination, with nearly 2,000 slot machines, five restaurants and the 1,200-seat Pavilion event center for concert and comedy performances. Bonner has a knack for identifying creative casino publicity, marketing and promotional opportunities. He has three decades of gaming

industry executive experience, including previous positions with Black Hawk Gaming & Development Company in Black Hawk, CO, and Hemmeter Enterprises in Denver, CO.

Larry Buck has been General Manager of Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood, FL since 2012. Under his leadership, the full-service casino has undergone significant improvements and continued its track record of success in catering to South Florida casino players. Buck is most proud of his ongoing community support of the American Cancer Society, including the organization's annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk, which has attracted more than 150 team members from Seminole Classic Casino. Buck's career progression has included positions with Caesars Entertainment, Pinnacle Entertainment and Players International. He began his gaming career in 1982 in Atlantic City, where he held multiple positions at Harrah's Atlantic City.



Larry Buck

Edward Aguilar previously held the position of Assistant General Manager/Vice President for Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee, east of Naples, FL. He is an enrolled member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and is one of the highest-ranking tribal members in Seminole Gaming management. He joined the Tribal Career Development Program in February, 2013, and excelled through its cross-training opportunities at Seminole Gaming operations. In May, 2015, Aguilar was named Assistant Director of Slot Operations for Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee. He was promoted to Assistant Director of Casino Operations in February, 2016. Aguilar began his gaming career in 2001 as a lead Seminole Gaming Commission Officer at Seminole Casino Immokalee. During his time with the Seminole Gaming Commission, he assisted with the openings of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. In 2006, Aguilar was promoted to Assistant Compliance Officer at Seminole Casino Immokalee. He later worked for several years at the Immokalee office of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., the non-gaming business development arm of the tribe.



Edward Aguilar

Roy Corby Joins Spa Resort Casino as Senior Vice President and General Manager

Spa Resort Casino recently announced that respected gaming industry veteran Roy Corby has been named Senior Vice President and General Manager of the downtown

Palm Springs property. Reporting to Agua Caliente Casino Resorts Chief Operating Officer Saverio Scheri III, Corby will oversee all activities and operations for Spa Resort Casino.

"We are proud to welcome Roy Corby to the Spa Resort Casino team," Scheri says. "Roy's vast experience makes for a perfect fit for our future endeavors as we look ahead toward further enhancing and refining the guest experience at our downtown Palm Springs property."

Corby got his start in the gaming industry more than 30 years ago working as a craps dealer and slot attendant in Atlantic City. His career has since taken him across the country to 10 states and multiple jurisdictions, including serving as Chief Operating Officer at Acres 4.0 in Las Vegas and Vice President of Casino Operations for the five-star property The Greenbrier in West Virginia, a more than 200-year-old historical resort. Spa Resort Casino marks the ninth tribal property Corby has worked for in leadership roles, most recently serving as General Manager of Casino Operations for Sandia Resort and Casino in Albuquerque, NM.

"The strong leadership team, quality of the team members, and commitment of the Tribal Council has made the Spa Resort Casino a signature property and will continue to help us grow," Corby says. "I look forward to working with a wonderful team that is focused on guest service and am excited to bring the tribe's vision to reality."



Roy Corby

Hard Rock International Names Mark Birtha President of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain



Mark Birtha

Hard Rock International recently announced the appointment of Mark Birtha as President of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain. In this new position, Birtha will hold overall responsibility of the premier gaming, dining and entertainment destination.

Birtha is a seasoned veteran in the gaming and hospitality field with more than 25 years of experience, most recently as the president of Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park where he oversaw the operations for the market-leading and award-winning property.

"Mark's experience and passion for the brand make him the ideal leader for Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain," said Jon Lucas, Chief Operating Officer of Hard Rock International. "While working with Mark over the past few years, I have witnessed firsthand the talent

and devotion that make him an industry leader, and I am confident he will continue that track record of success in this new endeavor.”

Since the start of his career, Birtha has been dedicated to operations and development at leading casino and hotel companies across the U.S., including Hard Rock International, Mirage Resorts, Las Vegas Sands, Station Casinos, Marriott International and Starwood. He has also managed operations in destination, regional and local markets, as well as Native American gaming enterprises.

Prior to joining Hard Rock International, Birtha was Vice President and General Manager at Station Casinos, the leading provider of gaming and entertainment in the greater Las Vegas area, operating nine major hotel-casino properties. Before his tenure with Station Casinos, Birtha was President of Sol Casinos and the AVA Amphitheater, where he focused on the strategic vision for the organization. In addition, he oversaw the design, construction and operations of Casino Del Sol’s \$130 million Four Star/Four Diamond hotel resort expansion development.

Along with leading Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain, Birtha will also take on the important role as the main point of contact in the new partnership between The Seminole Tribe of Florida, owners of Hard Rock International, and Enterprise Rancheria – marking a historic partnership between two Native American tribes.

“As an industry leader, Mark is the perfect candidate to bridge the exciting collaboration between the two tribes,” said Glenda Nelson, Tribal Chairperson of Enterprise Rancheria. “We are pleased to unite with one of the most exciting and authentic gaming, hospitality and entertainment leaders in the world and can’t wait to see what the future holds.”

David Heath Hired as Director of Security for Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa



David Heath

Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa recently announced David Heath, a casino resort safety industry veteran with more than 20 years of experience, has joined the team as Director of Security. Reporting to Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa Vice President and Assistant General Manager Robert Maloney, Heath will be responsible for the overall security of the casino and hotel, including safety and risk management.

“David’s proven experience leading security teams at several resorts and casinos throughout the country coupled with an unwavering commitment to providing a safe atmosphere for our guests and team members makes him an excellent addition to our organization,” Maloney says. “We couldn’t be more pleased to bring David aboard in a role that

is of utmost importance to Agua Caliente.”

Heath brings nearly 20 years of experience in casino and hotel security. He began his career in 1999 as a Security Officer at MGM Grand Detroit before being promoted to Security Manager. During his tenure at MGM Grand Detroit, he assisted with the development of customer service standards for the security department. In 2010, he became the Director of Security for MGM Grand Las Vegas. He most recently served as Director of Safety and Security for the former Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, where he had been since 2012.

Gun Lake Casino Names Jeff LaFrance as New Director of Marketing



Jeff LaFrance

Gun Lake Casino recently announced the addition of Jeff LaFrance as its new Director of Marketing. In his new role, LaFrance will oversee all marketing efforts, including promotions, advertising, rewards program, public relations, and the gift shop.

“We are pleased to welcome Jeff to our Gun Lake Casino team,” said Sal Semola, President and Chief Operating Officer for Gun Lake Casino. “His extensive gaming and marketing experience will make him a valuable asset to build upon our current marketing programs.”

LaFrance brings more than fourteen years of gaming experience to his new role. He previously worked at various casinos and gaming companies throughout Michigan, including Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, FireKeepers Casino Hotel, Greektown Casino-Hotel, and most recently Jack Entertainment. He has held roles that include director of marketing events, vice president of marketing, corporate vice president of marketing and public relations, among others.

LaFrance has received multiple awards for advertising efforts in television and radio.

Aruze Gaming America Announces Josh Collins as Vice President of Sales

Aruze Gaming America, Inc. recently announced Josh Collins as Vice President of Sales at Aruze Gaming America. As Vice President of Sales, Collins oversees all sale functions throughout the U.S. and Canada.

“Josh is a true asset to Aruze and this promotion reflects his dedication and commitment to our continued sales growth and customer satisfaction. He has shown commendable performance by consistently exceeding sales goals while developing and maintaining strong relationships with our business partners. Josh’s extensive experience in the gaming



Josh Collins

industry proves he's a leader in developing strategic sales plans, consistently exceeding goals, and driving a culture of success that builds a great customer experience. His ability to motivate his team has led to his and Aruze's continued success," said Rob Ziems, President of Aruze.

Collins' career in the gaming industry started in 2000 where he has worked in both casino operations and the supplier side of the business. For eight years, Collins held positions in casino operations where he managed a highvolume slot operation before moving to the supplier side of the industry. Collins joined Aruze in 2008 and has recently held positions as Director of Sales throughout the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean.

"Ultimately, my goal is to provide quality products for our partners while making it a win-win for both sides. For a true partnership to work, both sides must feel good about what we are doing. I plan to work closely with Product Management in order to continue providing quality products for our partners," said Collins. "Aruze is a great company with some of the best people I've worked with and I have no doubt we will be able to expand on that." Collins added, "Driving the company culture here at Aruze is very important to me. I want our team to love what they are doing as this directly reflects in how well we service our customers and perform in our jobs."

Eclipse Gaming Names Industry Veteran Tim Minard as Chief Executive Officer

Eclipse Gaming recently announced that gaming industry veteran Tim Minard has joined the company as Chief Executive Officer.

An accomplished leader with a track record of working with high growth technology companies, Minard brings more than twenty years' experience in the gaming industry to Eclipse. As a senior executive and officer of Cadillac Jack, a global manufacturer of electronic games and systems, Minard oversaw all aspects of finance and accounting, sales and marketing and human resources. His strategic vision was instrumental in the growth of the company as a rising star in tribal gaming. Minard also served as President of Sales for the Video Lottery Terminal and Gaming division at GameTech International, a global leader in interactive gaming equipment, systems and terminals.

"We are pleased to welcome Tim as CEO and are confident that his extensive experience and achievements in gaming and high-tech companies will propel Eclipse to the next level," said Greg Drew, Principal Owner of Eclipse Gaming. "Tim is a dynamic leader who brings a great mix of industry knowledge, inspiration and operational excellence to Eclipse. His commitment, vision and innovative ideas will drive



Tim Minard

the company's growth strategy going forward and lead our company and our customers to greater levels of success."

"I'm excited to build upon the strengths and momentum that have already been established at Eclipse," said Tim Minard, Eclipse Gaming's Chief Executive Officer. "We have a strong foundation in place and I look forward to working with our great team to further elevate our products, and to forging strong relationships with our partners and our customers as we enter this new chapter in Eclipse's evolution."

Minard has also built several successful companies, including Sports Challenge Network (SCN), which has customers across the U.S. and throughout nine countries. He has been recognized as Business Person of the Year by *BCM* magazine and has also been recognized as an entrepreneur of the year, as well as, one of the Top Twenty Technology Executives to Know in Atlanta.

Corin La Pointe-Aitchison Joins Galanda Broadman



Corin La Pointe-Aitchison

Corin La Pointe-Aitchison has joined Galanda Broadman as an Associate in the firm's Seattle office. His practice focuses on litigation involving tribal governments and enterprises, and Indian civil rights.

"Corin understands and shares our tribal values," said Gabe Galanda, the firm's managing lawyer. "We are excited that he's joined our team."

Corin received his law degree from the Lewis and Clark School of Law in 2017, where he served as President of the Native American Law Students Association. He moved from Portland, OR to join the firm. His prior practice focused on personal injury, contract, and insurance law. During his time in Oregon, he worked with the multiple non-profits focused on improving the lives of urban Native Americans.

Corin is a Koyukon Athabaskan descendant whose family hails from Nulato, AK.

AGS Announces Appointment of Geoff Freeman to Board of Directors

AGS recently announced Geoff Freeman has been appointed to its Board of Directors. Freeman, who stepped down from his role as President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Gaming Association (AGA) in August, is now the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Grocery Manufacturers Association, the leading



Geoff Freeman

representative of the \$2.1 trillion food, beverage, and consumer products industry.

AGS President and Chief Executive Officer David Lopez said, “We are excited to welcome Geoff as a new Independent Director to the AGS Board. Not only does he have a proven track record of effecting significant positive change in our industry, he is a recognized and respected business

leader who brings deep strategic, operational, and market development experiences that span across multiple industries. Geoff is an extraordinary executive and a great cultural fit who brings a new perspective to our Board and will be invaluable to the continued growth and success of AGS.”

During his five-year tenure at the helm of the AGA, Freeman led the trade organization to monumental successes, including expanding the organization’s membership by 200 percent; overturning the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (PASPA), which led to legalized sports betting in the U.S.; significantly improved relationships between tribal and commercial gaming operators; spearheading the AGA’s Get to Know Gaming campaign focused on the economic benefits of gaming; and delivering a successful campaign to prevent the IRS from lowering the reporting threshold on slot winnings.

Freeman said, “I’m honored to join the AGS Board of Directors at such an exciting time in the company’s growth journey. Having worked closely with David Lopez and the entire AGS leadership team on numerous initiatives, including their annual GameON Customer Summit, I’m excited to help this passionate, experienced, innovative, and intelligent team take the company to the next level. I have tremendous respect for the AGS Board, and I look forward to working with them to help AGS continue its momentum.”

Before joining the AGA in May 2013, Freeman served in numerous high-level roles, including Chief Operating Officer for the U.S. Travel Association; Vice President, Issue Management for APCO Worldwide; Director, Government Affairs and Strategic Outreach for Freddie Mac; and Director, Strategic Planning and Public Affairs for the American Association of Health Plans.

VizExplorer Appoints David Patent as Chief Executive Officer

VizExplorer recently announced that the company’s Board of Directors has appointed David Patent as Chief Executive Officer. He will assume the day-to-day leadership of the company and will also join VizExplorer’s Board of Directors. A veteran of the gaming industry, Patent has nearly two

decades of professional experience, including C-Level management and strategy roles.

“I am excited and honored to help lead VizExplorer in the next chapter of its growth. VizExplorer has made impressive strides in the gaming industry, becoming an established brand with a comprehensive software platform that powers efficiency, productivity and profitability for casino operators,” said David Patent.

“A seasoned leader with a proven track record in this space, the Board and I believe David is the right person at the right time to build on our growing momentum. We are confident in his vision and ability to take decisive action to transform the business,” said Ian Bonner, Executive Chairman at VizExplorer.

Patent began his slots career at Harrah’s Entertainment and moved through a number of operational roles before leaving the company to become the President and COO of Rush Street Gaming in 2009. During his time at Rush Street, Patent grew familiar with VizExplorer products and services and has continued working with a range of data analytics and software entities since leaving the organization.

Industry Veteran Trevor Taylor Joins VizExplorer

VizExplorer recently announced that it has hired Trevor Taylor, a senior executive in the gaming and hospitality industry, to grow its consulting and managed services portfolio. Taylor will oversee the definition and delivery of services to VizExplorer’s tribal and commercial gaming operators, among other clients. Under his leadership, VizExplorer will establish a comprehensive, industry-leading consulting practice featuring expert analysis and custom strategy development. From collaborative software operation to strategic consulting on large-scale casino projects, VizExplorer Consulting and Managed Services will prioritize accelerating the return on a casino’s investment in VizExplorer software.

“We welcome Trevor and we’re excited to watch him build our consulting practice into an integral division of our company. He brings to the role a wealth of relevant experience building profitable businesses, and his high energy and passion for leading people is a great addition to our stellar team,” said Garrett Stolle, VizExplorer’s Chief Commercial Officer.

“VizExplorer’s software platform is powerful. I’m eager to pair cutting edge technology with our consulting team’s world-class expertise. For customers, it’s a win-win that ensures our software is utilized at the level to which it is most effective, and helps realize a positive financial impact more quickly,” said Trevor Taylor on his appointment. ♣