

Steve Burke
President & Publisher
(425) 885-6997

Anne Burke
VP of Operations
(425) 885-3922

Nicolle Meyers
VP Business Development

AJ Naff
Editor
(425) 885-6006

Brian Drozdov
Advertising Director
(425) 922-3890

Crystal Mossman
Marketing Director
(425) 885-2682

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Art Designer

Rebecca Rodenbush
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Advertising Sales
(425) 922-3890

Main Office
(425) 519-3710 phone / (425) 883-7209 fax

Circulation
(425) 885-3922

www.indiangaming.com

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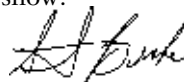
At the recent WIGA show, Anthony Miranda, Chairman of the California Indian Gaming Association, noted some very positive highlights of the past year. He mentioned that in California, Indian gaming has created over 50,000 tax-paying jobs and that the benefits of gaming on tribal lands extends far into the surrounding communities, constituting a major economic engine for the state. Another notable highlight is the evaluation of the impacts of Indian gaming in California released by the Center for California Native Nations at the University of California at Riverside. In this issue we feature a comprehensive overview of this groundbreaking study authored by Dr. Kate Spilde Contreras.

The new year has also presented Indian Country with many challenges. The recent Abramoff lobbying scandal has left many in Washington, D.C. pointing fingers at tribes. John McCarthy, Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, also addresses the Abramoff issue, clarifying many facts that have been skewed in the national media. In addition, U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD), Vice Chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee and a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, makes clear that this is a lobbying scandal and not a tribal scandal.

According to Miranda, Indian gaming has never faced as many credible legislative challenges as it does today. Legislation has been proposed that would amend IGRA and the chairmen of the committees overseeing Indian affairs have expressed their intent to do so. The Department of Justice has set its sights on amending the Johnson Act, threatening Class II gaming. These issues not only strike at the core of Indian gaming, but at the heart of tribal sovereignty. They are issues that need to be addressed aggressively.

We have many exciting plans for the coming year. We have recently completed the printing and shipping of the 2006 Indian Gaming Buyer's Guide & Directory. My thanks go out to the casino marketing departments for all of their hard work in ensuring its accuracy.

This month we head to the 9th Annual Southwestern Indian Gaming Conference and Expo, held February 13 - 15 at the new Radisson Fort McDowell Resort & Casino in Scottsdale, Arizona. This is the first year the event has been held in Arizona and marks the second year that the Arizona Indian Gaming Association and the New Mexico Indian Gaming Association have co-sponsored the event. I hope to see you at the show!



Steve Burke, Publisher

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