

Chickasaw Nation Sponsors Creativity World Forum and Puts Creativity Into Practice



As one of the major sponsors and participants in the 2010 Creativity World Forum, the Chickasaw Nation is helping carry the message of Oklahoma's creative potential beyond the state's borders. The Creativity World Forum was a two-day conference that examined how creativity drives commerce, culture and education. The forum held in Oklahoma City, was hosted by Creative Oklahoma, a nonprofit organization formed in 2006 to promote and catalyze creative idea generation in individuals and institutions. The goal is to transform the state of Oklahoma through initiatives that lead to a more entrepreneurial and vibrant economy along with a better quality of life for its citizens. Other Districts of Creativity are located in Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Catalonia (Spain), Flanders (Belgium), Karnataka (India), and Lombardia (Italy) to name a few.

Under the direction of Governor Bill Anoatubby, the Chickasaw Nation has established itself as a champion of innovation and creativity, particularly in business. "Continuing our track record of success requires more than hard work and determination," said Gov. Anoatubby. "Creativity is a key element of our quest to develop new business opportunities and expand existing businesses. This creative approach to economic development is an important part of our core mission to enhance the overall quality of life of the Chickasaw people."

Due in part to the Nation's support of Creative Oklahoma and Creativity World Forum, Oklahoma has become a "District of Creativity," which is part of an international network of delegates. It consists of 14 regions around the world that have been working together in the field of creative innovation policies since 2004. The Creativity World Forum agenda focused on the relationship between creativity and business, education, technology, and art, and attracted some of

the best and brightest ideas and minds from around the world.

One of the most exciting and creative programs developed by the Chickasaw Nation is the creation of Revenue Enhancement Teams within the Chickasaw Nation Division of Commerce (CNDC). Formed in mid 2009 to improve the financial performance of the CNDC, teams were formed around six initial goals: 1) Improve Gaming Performance; 2) Better Utilize Technology; 3) Develop New Products and Services; 4) Reevaluate Reinvestment in the Customer; 5) Improve Rated Play; and 6) Develop Standard Promotional Measures and Methodology. The initial teams were reorganized a year and a half later and two teams were added in 2011: Employee Communications and Casino Amenities.

In December of 2009 the 40 employees who make up the six teams held a two-day retreat to review progress, identify areas for improvement, discuss future initiatives and brainstorm creative ways to far exceed the competition. In the past two and a half years individual teams have met twice a month to work on their objectives. All teams report progress on these objectives once a month to the Revenue Enhancement Steering Committee, which also acts as a liaison with the Chickasaw Nation Gaming Commission for new products and services that must be reviewed and approved before implementation.

"As exciting as it is to watch the steady progress of the teams, it's also rewarding to be in the same room with a cross-section of employees, from marketing directors, operations, finance and IT applications managers to the HR chief director and assistant general managers of the casinos, and watch the creative solutions come to life," said Bill Lance, CEO of the Commerce Division of the Chickasaw Nation. "Our multi-disciplinary approach has produced some incredible results."

Some of the major achievements of the Revenue Enhancement Teams in the past two years include:

- Carded players at the Nation's largest casino increased by 83 percent. This goal was accomplished with input from several Revenue Enhancement Teams, but was the primary focus of Team 2. This Team set about to improve the patron experience through better use of technology and procedures at the facility, which in turn improved patron loyalty and return visits. One example of improving technology and customer loyalty was the implementation of a Passport Rewards program that allows patrons to download credits at the game and/or redeem the points at shops, restaurants and other locations in the facility.

- Revenue per square foot increased by 16 percent. Another goal shared by Revenue Enhancement Teams 1 and 2, the work behind this goal included the installation of popular electronic games, the decrease of downtime for all electronic games on the floor, a decrease in the time it takes for employees to respond to jackpots and the implementation of additional marketing tools and programs that can be generated at the game.

- Hotel occupancy at the Nation's largest casino increased from less than 50% in 2008 to 99.4% in 2011. A goal of Team 6, this achievement was made possible by focusing not only on the marketing and promotions of the gaming facility but also the overall patron experience. The development of amenities such as restaurants, entertainment and retail at each gaming location increases the value to the patron and therefore increases the length of stay at each location.

- Coin-in increased by 16 percent. This was another result of the actions noted above. Overall in the past two years, as teams worked to improve the customer experience at every level and touch-point, coin in

at the facilities increased as a result.

- The Nation has instituted a common way to measure return on investment for its promotion efforts and uses this information to plan future promotions. This was the methodical work of Team 4, which works alongside each Revenue Enhancement team to determine the methods and tools needed to measure the success of each initiative.

Technology, systems and processes such as those created and implemented by the Nation as a result of the Revenue Enhancement Teams are the driving force behind increasing revenue. These innovations have also helped the Division of Commerce streamline processes, cut expenses and ultimately create better products and experiences for our customers.

"The Revenue Enhancement Team program is an illustration of the type of creative approach which has long been a key to our success," said Gov. Anoatubby. "We believe it will help fuel continued success for years to come." ♣

For more information about the Chickasaw Nation, please visit www.chickasaw.net.

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