



AMERICAN INDIAN BUSINESS NETWORK

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American Indian Business Network Panel Discussion AT Indian Gaming 2010, April 6-9, 2010 in San Diego, CA.

Among the various presentations during the week, was the American Indian Business Network (AIBN) panel discussion which examined the importance of "Buy Indian."

San Diego, CA (April 2010) - The panel discussion at Indian Gaming 2010 was facilitated by Margo Gray-Proctor, President of the Horizon Companies. Gray-Proctor opened the panel by paying her respects and recognizing the late Wilma Mankiller. Mankiller was the first female Chief of the Cherokee Tribe whose leadership paved the way for many women and broke the glass ceiling. "She's a hero of mine," Gray-Proctor said. "Let us recognize each other's strength and support one another."

Jamie Fullmer, CEO of Bluestone Strategy Group and AIBN Coordinator, cut to the chase and said, "I'm here today to talk about the 'Buy Indian' concept. It's been around for years and has evolved into building tribal communities now." Fullmer encouraged member tribes of NIGA to look into their business-to-business relations to see if they are working with Indian entrepreneurs. "Are you buying Indian? Do you have buy Indian policies? Do you enforce them?" He asked. "Buying Indian simply means economic growth and diversification, while stimulating tribal economies and supporting native entrepreneurs at the same time," Fullmer added.

"AIBN has received its 501 (c) 6 status and is owned and operated by NIGA. The board of directors is in place and the network is moving forward with a membership and funding drive. You have the resources and opportunities in Indian Gaming," Fullmer said. "You are role models to other tribes out there. Commit to each." Fullmer stated that the board has also completed a tribal survey and is currently working on instituting an organizational structure. Other considerations for the board include: redefining the AIBN website to include a procurement arm, creating an inclusive environment for both tribal and non-tribal businesses, and assisting and supporting the development of "Buy Indian" across Indian Country.

Peter Homer agreed and stated, "AIBN is a commitment to invigorate tribal and individual business investment, while promoting and hiring Native American businesses in the tribal casino business arena." Furthermore, Homer explained that AIBN is also developing an investment program to enhance Buy Indian Contracting. "The single most important component is funding," explained Homer. "AIBN will

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seek funding from tribal businesses, non-profits, tribal corporations, and other organizations for contributions to establish this program. Plans for a trial business database of Indian businesses providing goods and services intrinsic to Indian gaming are on the horizon,” he added.

Homer mentioned the endless possibilities and he identified potential business opportunities within Indian Gaming that could benefit from the “Buy Indian” concepts. Goods and services from Indian businesses working in the industries include: valet parking, maid service, laundry service, childcare, maintenance, convenience stores, spa management, room amenities, hair shops, hot dog stands, Indian jewelry, cigarette and cigars stores, etc. “These are businesses that can be created right away,” stated Homer.

Gray-Proctor stated there are other examples throughout Indian country that illustrate the dynamic growth of Indian - owned businesses gaining strength nationally. “This year, at RES 2010, our three-day conference had over 3000 attendees and over 2,000 meetings in three days from our matchmaker appointments. At RES 2010, we generated over \$1 billion in contracts from Indian Country businesses. Just think of how much we can do if we work together and invest in Indian Country. That’s the power of Indian Country. It’s in your hands to do this,” Gray-Proctor concluded.