

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Yakama Nation Gaming Commission

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The primary objective of the Yakama Nation Gaming Commission's regulatory processes and procedures to assure the Yakama Nation, the Washington State Gambling Commission, the National Indian Gaming Commission and the public that the Yakama Nation Legends Casino is operated in compliance with tribal, federal and state law and this is a safe environment. Our regulatory responsibilities preserve the Yakama Nation's integrity and ability to continue offering fair and honest gaming activities.

The Gaming Commission's primary responsibility is to protect the Yakama Nation's gaming assets (money, goods, employees, patrons). The Gaming Commission must assure that there is total compliance with the Tribal-State Compact, Gaming Ordinance of 1994 and all applicable federal and tribal regulations and control standards. The process of regulation is achieved through:

- Creating regulations and standards that must be complied with by all licensees associated at the gaming facility;
- Per the Gaming Ordinance, the Tribal-State Compact and 25CFR, performing internal compliance audits, physical inspections, surveillance monitoring and conducting investigations and interviews;
- Conducting criminal and financial background investigations for licensing; and
- Suspending or revoking a gaming license if all other efforts to ensure compliance have not been successful. The Gaming Commission conducts administrative appeal hearings on licensing denials, suspensions and revocations.

The Gaming Commission staff reports all activity and findings and results to the Gaming Commissioners. The final authority on all gaming regulatory issues is decided by the Gaming Commissioners.

The Gaming Commission will take regulatory action whenever regulatory standards or law have been violated. The Gaming Commission may not:

- Hire and fire casino personnel;
- Create casino controls, policy and procedures;
- Initiate casino expansions; and
- Establish or approve the casino budget.

In addition to the day to day regulatory activities, the Gaming Commission works to keep on top of legislative issues impacting the Yakama Nation. When legislative concerns arise, the Gaming Commission will forward all relevant information to the Tribal Council. Current legislative activity at the federal government level could have an adverse impact on the Yakama Nation's gaming activities if the proposed legislative changes are approved. The National Indian Gaming Commission is seeking amendments to IGRA that would grant the NIGC broad authority over all Tribes. The National Indian Gaming Association's (an independent tribal gaming advocacy organization that opposes the expansion of NIGC authority) Chairman Stevens remarked that the IGRA amendment "*will grant broad new authority to the National Indian Gaming Commission going far*

*beyond the minimum Internal Control Standards. Their provisions will tread on states' rights and tribal sovereignty by giving them the ability to override existing tribal-state compacts."*

The Gaming Commission continually seeks ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory operations. Currently, we are working towards becoming a self-administering tribal program that is directly reportable and accountable to the Yakama Nation as was approved by T-012-03. Our current structure of reporting to Tribal Administration impedes efficiency and is inconsistent with the intent of GC-05-94.

Gaming Commission regulatory responsibility should not be confused with authorities and responsibilities reserved for casino management. Casino management is responsible and accountable to the Overall Economic Development Committee that currently serves as the Legends Board of Directors. According to the Gaming Ordinance, Casino management oversight is responsible for ensuring the profitability of the gaming operation and forwarding the net revenues to the tribal government for distribution. The Gaming Ordinance, Section 7.b outlines acceptable use of net revenues as:

- (1) To fund tribal government operations and programs;*
- (2) To provide for the general welfare of the Nation and its members;*
- (3) To promote economic development for the Nation;*
- (4) To donate to charitable organizations; or*
- (5) To help fund operations of local governments.*

The Commission welcomes all concerned community members to contact our office any time. We would appreciate the opportunity to share our daily activities with you. Additionally, the Commission has an established policy for complaint reporting. If you would like to file a complaint regarding potential regulatory violations; please contact the Commission's Administrative offices at 865-5322 ext. 5180.