

Michael G. Rossetti's Recap of the 2021 National Indian Gaming Association Tradeshow and Convention



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Last week I had the opportunity to join thousands of tribal leaders and tribal gaming officials as they met in Las Vegas to talk about the resumption of Indian gaming across the United States. The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and the Reservation Economic Summit (RES) held their respective meetings at the same time to maximize the ability of tribal leaders and gaming interests to meet to address common challenges and experiences encountered during the Pandemic.

In addition to traditional gaming issues, the conferences addressed issues of broader significance to Indian Country, such as congressional and administration priorities, workforce development, tribal agriculture, cannabis, among others. Several conference speakers addressed the practical implications of the Pandemic to the way in which Indian Country views the potential expansion of internet gaming, and how that idea may move forward now that H.R. 4308, a bipartisan bill to sanction certain mobile wagering on Indian lands, has been introduced. And, as the topics addressed suggests, there remains keen interest in ensuring that the economies in Indian Country have other robust economic development opportunities, beyond the important opportunities afforded them by Indian gaming.

Tribal leaders and gaming officials also took the opportunity to meet with their colleagues from other Indian Tribes to share their experiences since the Pandemic forced them to close their gaming facilities, talk about best practices, the effectiveness of the federal response and funding, ongoing unmet needs, and other issues of common interest.

I was honored to present on a panel that explored the state of Indian Country as Indian gaming facilities have reopened, or are now reopening, and to hear from many tribal leaders and tribal business leaders about the harrowing year and a half that they have surmounted through sheer grit and determination.

The NIGA tradeshow occupied two giant convention halls and was a huge success. Among those showing their wares were traditional gaming vendors and other companies who should be very relevant to Indian gaming tribes, including Google Cloud, NEC America, and the Astria Compliance Group, to name a few. Google Cloud participated in an excellent panel regarding cybersecurity, addressing best practices and other important considerations for protecting against system incursions.

I look forward to NIGA's 2022 tradeshow to be held in Anaheim, California.