

## **NIGC Bids Farewell to Associate Commissioner Dan Little**



*After serving as an Associate Commissioner of the National Indian Gaming Commission for over five years, Dan Little stepped down May 30. Little was initially appointed to the Commission in 2010 for a three-year term by then Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. In 2013, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell reappointed Little to a second term.*

*During his time at the NIGC, Little championed the 2011-2012 Tribal Advisory Committee. The TAC provided important feedback and advice to NIGC's on-going regulatory review, which resulted in the adoption of 17 final rules and amendments and the repeal of one. Associate Commissioner Little also helped to reform the NIGC's process for consulting with tribes including the new NIGC Consultation Policy adopted in 2013.*

*In an interview by the NIGC, Dan Little shares some insights with Indian Gaming Magazine.*

### **What do you hope you achieved at the NIGC?**

I have always had a goal of finding ways to do my part to help the Indian gaming industry and tribal economic development. This subject has always been very close to my heart and it has been the focus of my career path since I first came to D.C. over 15 years ago. Gaming is but just one piece of the larger puzzle for tribal economic development, self-determination, and the protection of values and way of life. I'm sure I can speak for everyone at the NIGC when I say we hold solemn our role as partners with tribal regulators to help ensure the integrity of the industry to preserve public confidence, protect tribal assets and promote a safe and fair environment for all people who interact with the industry.

### **What is one of your biggest accomplishments?**

The accomplishment is really that of the agency, but developing stronger communications and relationships with the regulated community; tribes, elected officials, Congress, and other regulating agencies. Identifying all practical methods to enhance compliance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires an openness to work with and listen to relevant stakeholders.

When I started, this was one of the Commission's priorities. I believe we have and continue to strengthening relationships and are improving our communication with tribes and tribal regulators.

### **How has the Commission changed over the years?**

It has been only 25 years since the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was passed and this makes us still a very young agency comparatively. During the last decade we saw fast growth of the Indian gaming industry and the Commission worked hard to keep pace. Today, the industry is stable and the NIGC is adjusting our internal capabilities to the ever-changing technology landscape. Just this March, the NIGC announced the formation of a new technology division focused on providing increased and integrated technology for enhancing its regulatory mission and supporting tribes and tribal regulators. My hope is that the creation of the Technology Division signals to the Indian gaming industry that the NIGC is embracing technology to improve the way we do business.

### **What has been the best part of working at the NIGC?**

The greatest asset of the Commission is the staff and their knowledge and skills. The NIGC staff on a daily basis demonstrates their commitment and dedication to the integrity of the Indian gaming industry. It has been a privilege to work with this highly skilled and motivated team. Having great staff not only benefits the Commission, but it also benefits the industry as a whole.

### **How have you enjoyed working with tribal nations from across the country?**

It has been an honor working with each of our tribal stakeholders. Tribes have and continue to lead the way in

innovation, technology and business operations. I have learned that gaming does not define Indian tribes; gaming is the economic development tool that tribes use to help support and develop their communities, for their people.

**As the NIGC continues its work in an ever evolving industry, what do you think the NIGC needs to keep pace with the industry?**

Both Chairman Chaudhuri and I are firm believers in the sound, sensible regulation of the Indian gaming industry. Sound regulation is an essential cornerstone of support for the critical avenue to self-determination and self-sufficiency that Indian gaming has proven to be for so many tribes. The NIGC must continue to ceaselessly work to identify and employ all practical methods to support the industry while maintaining compliance with IGRA.

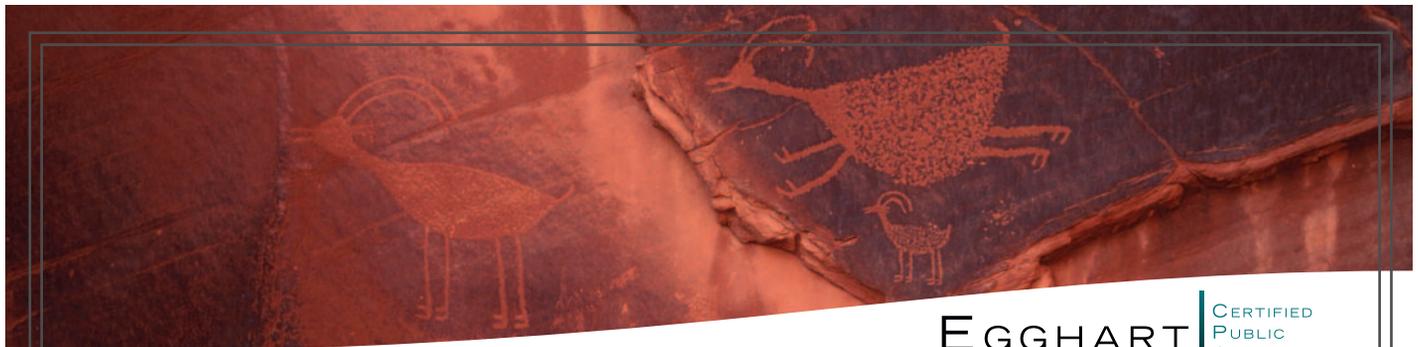
**What is the hardest part of leaving the NIGC?**

The hardest part is definitely giving up the partnerships I've developed with tribes, tribal regulators and the NIGC staff. The cooperation of the more than 5,400 tribal gaming

regulators in the field has strengthened Indian gaming and furthered statutory compliance with IGRA. I also see a bright future for NIGC and I have been thankful for my efforts with newly appointed Chairman Chaudhuri. The Chairman's commitment to Indian Country is palpable in the execution of his daily obligations to the agency and I will miss not being a part of NIGC's continued effectiveness under his leadership.

**What is one of your favorite memories of the NIGC?**

My favorite memories are those visits to Indian communities where I had the opportunity to listen, explore and understand. During my first couple of years, I traveled to a number of tribal casinos. I had the opportunity to see first-hand the impacts of tribal gaming revenue. I visited state-of-the-art hospitals and health care facilities, youth and elder care programs and child development centers. Through sound regulation, the NIGC is helping to achieve compliance and protecting the Indian gaming industry, which has become a vital economic development tool for so many tribes. To me, that is the best part of the NIGC. ♣



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