

Pokagon Band Chairman Matthew Wesaw Selected as Tribal Leader of the Year



Matthew Wesaw

Pokagon Band Chairman Matthew Wesaw has been selected by the Native American Financial Officers Association to receive the Tribal Leader of the Year Award.

“Out of more than 550 tribes in the United States, Pokagon Band caught the attention of experts for its solid finances and enterprise expansion plans,” said John Warren, Pokagon Band treasurer. “Bankers have told us that some countries should take note on how we manage financial resources.”

A retired Michigan State Trooper, Matthew Wesaw has spent his career devoted to public service. He served as Vice-Chairman of the Pokagon Band’s Tribal Council, and was elected in 2009 to serve as Chairman. Wesaw, who lives in Lansing, is the recipient of three gubernatorial appointments, serving on the Michigan Community Service Commission, as past chairman of the Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, and as only the second Native American to be appointed to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. He now serves as that commission’s Chairman. In 2009, Wesaw was elected by the leaders of the Midwest’s 37 federally recognized tribes to serve as area Vice-President for the National Congress of American Indians, the oldest organization serving Native Americans in the country.

“It is such a privilege to honor and recognize the excellent work Chairman Wesaw is doing to benefit Indian Country,” said Bill Lomax, NAFOA President. “He is truly an innovator and an inspiration.”

Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa & Spa Resort Casino Names Rob Puhalski New Director of Guest Services



Rob Puhalski

In an effort to create the highest level of service at its properties, Agua Caliente Casino • Resort • Spa in Rancho Mirage and Spa Resort Casino in downtown Palm Springs have announced Rob Puhalski Director of Guest Services.

Puhalski is a native of New Jersey, having spent more than 30 years in the casino business. He has held positions as Director of Player Development, Senior Director of Marketing and Director of Operations. He has worked at Resorts International and the Sands Casino in Atlantic City, as well as Hollywood Casino in Louisiana and, most recently, at the Borgata in New Jersey.

As Director of Guest Services, Puhalski will oversee guest interaction at both resorts, increasing customer communication and satisfaction, analyzing data to identify trends, and will also oversee player development. Puhalski says he can’t wait to get started. “I’m thrilled to be a part of the team here, and plan to show our guests we are the best of the best.”

Potawatomi Bingo Casino Names Kelly Skindzelewski Public Relations Director



Kelly Skindzelewski

Potawatomi Bingo Casino has named Kelly Skindzelewski as its Public Relations Director. In her new position, Skindzelewski will oversee all functions of the public relations department, which includes the areas of Internal Communications, External Communications and Public Affairs.

Skindzelewski has been with the casino as Public Affairs Manager since 2007. She has more than 20 years of communications and public relations experience, including serving as Community Affairs Director at WITI FOX 6, Public Relations Director for Banc One Wisconsin Corp. and Public Relations Director for Hyatt Regency Milwaukee.

She currently serves on the board of directors for the Public Relations Society of Southeastern Wisconsin, Menomonee Valley Partners and the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling.

Cherokee Casino Chef Kevin Feemster Earns Statewide Recognition



Kevin Feemster

A “Star of the Industry” is delivering star service to guests dining at Cherokee Casino & Hotel West Siloam Springs. The Oklahoma Hotel and Lodging Association named Casino Sous Chef Kevin Feemster, 40, Outstanding Food and Beverage Employee of the Year during its Star of the Industry awards. The awards are designed to honor Oklahoma’s outstanding hospitality professionals for their service and commitment to guest service and the industry.

“Not only is this award acknowledgment by my colleagues for the work I put in to get here, but also recognition of their mentorship, trust and support that helped me get to this point in my career,” said Feemster. “Cooking has been a lifelong passion, but it wasn’t until after a life-changing accident that I really considered pursuing a culinary career.”

Feemster had been driving a truck for more than 15 years when an accident changed his life. He was injured and knew he wouldn’t be able to return to his previous job. While recovering, he saw an advertisement for culinary

school and began taking classes in April 2010 and was looking for an apprenticeship by that December.

“As a Cherokee Nation citizen, the first place I thought of was Hard Rock,” said Feemster. “Ironically, before my accident I was hauling the concrete to help build The Joint.”

Feemster was hired by Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa to work in the buffet, but his career with the company quickly progressed. Throughout his first year, he earned a variety of positions in the main kitchen and then McGill’s, the property’s premier steakhouse. Nearly a year later he was named sous chef at Cherokee Casino & Hotel West Siloam Springs.

“Kevin’s passion and determination to providing our guests with the best experience has quickly advanced his career of cooking professionally,” said Tim Westergard, property executive chef at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa. “He leads by example, brings new ideas to work and completes every task with excellence and pride.”

Pala’s Pastry Chef Wins Best in Show at SDYS’ Creations in Chocolate



NBA Hall of Famer Bill Walton congratulates Pala Executive Pastry Chef Albert Cruz for his Best in Show award at the SDYS Creations in Chocolate.

Pala Casino Spa & Resort Executive Pastry Chef Albert Cruz won “Best in Show” honors when he and ten other San Diego-area master pastry chefs and chocolatiers helped raise funds for at-risk youth at the recent (March 8) San Diego Youth Services 6th Annual Creations in Chocolate at the McMillin Event Center in Point Loma, CA.

This year, chocolate creations recognized the theme “Stand Tall for Youth” and the career and community activism of National Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Walton, a San Diego native.

Chef Albert’s “Best in Show” is a five-foot tall trophy tribute to Walton’s career. It was created with 300 pounds of white, dark and milk chocolate and features four photographs from Walton’s collegiate and NBA career when he played basketball for the UCLA Bruins, the Portland Trailblazers, the Boston Celtics and the then San Diego Clippers, along with a chocolate champagne bucket and champagne bottle. Everything is edible, including the photographs that are printed on rice paper.

Chef Albert said it took 30 hours to create, sculpt and build the display. All the creations in chocolate were auctioned to the highest bidders to benefit SDYS programs.

Walsh Bishop Associates Promotes John Hinton, Jay Peirsol and Manda Morales to Vice Presidents



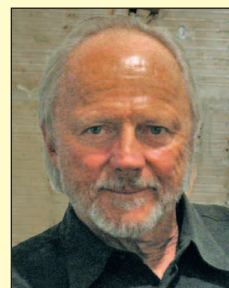
John Hinton

Walsh Bishop Associates, an architectural and interior design firm, recently announced three promotions.

John Hinton, promoted to Vice President, has been involved in the Native American market since 1994. His career has grown over the years to a national status in the programming, planning, designing, and construction management of facilities throughout the United States. Hinton markets

Walsh Bishop services and is hands on caretaker of the professional services represented. “I strive to provide economic success and creative value for the tribal communities”

Jay Peirsol has been promoted to Vice President. An architect, Peirsol has explored, developed and practiced in Mexico, Europe, North America, the Middle East, and has focused on Native American facilities in the U.S. since 1994. Peirsol has a national reputation in the programming of gaming facilities and the required additional spaces needed to support the gaming enterprise. His expertise has expanded in deferred maintenance, code evaluations, and failure investigations.



Jay Peirsol

“My goal has been to deliver the best value for their dollars with the state-of-the-art construction.”



Manda Morales

Manda Morales, also promoted to Vice President, is an interior designer with a deep passion and knowledge of hospitality, convention, and entertainment facilities. She approaches each project with innovation, environmental sensitivity, and design creativity developed from diverse personal experience and continuous research. Her knowledge of management requirements, design standards, and market fashions leads to successful experiences for the clients.

“My goal is to make an unforgettable guest experience and long lasting impression that brings a guest back while maintaining a keen sense of awareness of operational issues and property functionality.”

Walsh Bishop’s continual commitment to the design of

Native American facilities is embodied in our staff, their quality, integrity, passion and their desire to serve the Native American tribes.

Konami Gaming Announces the Promotion of Eduardo Aching to Vice President International Sales



Eduardo Aching

Konami Gaming, Inc. is pleased to announce the promotion Eduardo Aching to Vice President, International Sales. Aching joined Konami in 2008 as Director of International Sales and was promoted to Senior Director, International Sales in 2011. He brings a broad range of international sales, project management and operations experience within and outside the gaming industry. Aching and his team have

worked hard over the past three years to execute sales opportunities, which have resulted in year-over-year growth in the international market. In this role, he will continue to ensure that Konami is well positioned to grow their international customer base in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe.

Steve Sutherland, Chief Operating Officer at Konami Gaming, Inc., said, “We are pleased to see Eduardo’s continuous career progression at Konami. His extensive knowledge in the market has grown Konami’s footprint globally.”

Eduardo Aching has lived and worked on four continents and is multilingual in German, Spanish and Portuguese.

Senior Operations Consultant Joins Gaming Market Advisors



Joseph DeRosa

Gaming Market Advisors (GMA), a gaming consulting firm with offices in Las Vegas and Denver, recently announced the appointment of Joseph DeRosa as Senior Operations Consultant. DeRosa brings 35 years’ experience in table games and casino operations management to the Gaming Market Advisors’ team.

“Joe DeRosa’s casino knowledge has a breadth and depth we couldn’t pass on,” said Andrew Klebanow, Las Vegas-based principal. “GMA is committed to providing the best services we can to our clients and he has hands-on experience with everything from the gaming floor to finances to player development, as well as auditing of gaming activities. That sharpens our edge.”

DeRosa holds a degree in Mathematics as well as key gaming licenses in four states. Previous positions include

General Manager & CEO of major gaming enterprises, in traditional gaming markets as well as Native American properties. Previous employers include Centaur Gaming, Resorts International, Hilton and Trump Entertainment. Additionally, DeRosa has conducted seminars at the college level for individuals involved in the oversight, inspection, investigation and auditing of gaming activities.

iView Systems Announces Promotions and New Team Members



L-R: Nick Hewitt, Mike Pulgese, Tony Day, Jonathan Fields.

iView Systems, a leading provider of security and surveillance software, is pleased to announce the appointments of familiar and new faces.

Tony Day has been promoted to Senior Account Executive, Gaming. Day specializes in strategic sales to the gaming industry, working with customers to ensure business goals are met with the highest ethical standards. He brings more than 20 years of experience within the Security and Surveillance industry, including both uniform and management roles.

Prior to joining iView Systems, Day spent 13 years in gaming security. He was a member of the opening team at Casino Windsor and Casino Niagara. He was also a member of the start-up team for the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, where he played a key role in the opening of 11 casino facilities. During his tenure in the gaming industry, Day has been responsible for implementing and administering access control and incident reporting systems. He has also played a significant role in developing and implementing training programs within the gaming industry.

Nick Hewitt has moved into the new role of Technical Account Manager. Hewitt will facilitate feedback between customer product requirements and product development. He will work closely with sales, marketing and product development teams, channelling feedback on product features and functions internally and externally through customer outreach programs, training and events. This is a natural progression from Hewitt’s role as Technical Services Manager, in which he managed, developed and implemented processes, systems, technology and training to support and

enhance technical and customer support.

Now filling Hewitt's former role of Technical Services Manager is Mike Pulgiese, who will carry out the technical and customer support requirements.

iView Systems also welcomes Jonathan Fields, Sales Manager, to the team. Fields' fundamental role will be to develop and grow customer and partner relations, as well as provide vision, direction and leadership to the iView sales team. Prior to joining iView Systems, Fields was the Director of Sales at Commissionaires security company and is already familiar with many customers and accounts.

"I am looking forward to working with the sales team to further strengthen the iView brand," said Fields.

Urban Design Group Names Scott Norman as Associate Principal



Scott Norman

The Principals of Urban Design Group (UDG), a multidisciplinary architectural firm, are pleased to announce the promotion of Scott Norman, AIA, LEED AP, Atlanta Studio Director, to the position of Associate Principal with the firm.

As an Associate Principal, Norman will be involved in all aspects of firm management from operations to design and practice management, as well as business development. Norman will be involved in strategic business planning and helping the firm set policy. He will also work to ensure high standards in design and contract documents.

"It is with extreme pleasure we announce the promotion of Scott Norman to the position of Associate Principal," said Donald C. Buenger, AIA, LEED AP, and Principal with UDG. "As the Principals of UDG look to the future, we have unanimously voted to acknowledge and appoint Scott to this pivotal leadership position. For many years, Scott has demonstrated his extensive professional knowledge as well as his extreme dedication and leadership abilities to our firm. We are proud to recognize him for his increasing role in strategic planning, firm management, building client relationships and in shaping the future success of our organization."

Norman has over 30 years of experience in the architectural industry. His vast portfolio includes work with clients in many sectors including: entertainment/gaming, hospitality, convention/civic centers, religious, education, office and retail/mall projects. Norman holds both a Bachelor of Architecture degree and a Bachelor of Environmental Design degree from Auburn University. He is a registered Architect in the state of Georgia and is a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and is a LEED Accredited Professional.

Tony Abeyta Honored with 2012 Native Treasures Living Treasure Award



Tony Abeyta

The organizers of *Native Treasures: Indian Arts Festival* in Santa Fe are pleased to announce the 2012 recipient of the Native Treasures Living Treasure award: noted painter and jeweler, Tony Abeyta (Diné). The Native Treasures Living Treasure Award acknowledges both the body of work by an artist and the participation of that artist in the community at large.

Abeyta is considered one of the finest young, contemporary painters today. He depicts complex Navajo beliefs – evoking the notion that there is power in everyone and everything – in a distinctive, modernist painting style. He has also recently branched out into jewelry-making. He has supported many non-profit organizations through the donation of his work to their fundraisers and he served on the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture's (MIAC) development committee.

"One of the reasons we chose Tony is that, despite his success as an artist, he has never fallen back on a 'formula' for his work," explains Jane Buchsbaum, Artist Chairman for Native Treasures. "He continues to experiment and innovate in his media, his images, his technique, and his style. The fact that he has just taken on the challenge of translating his visions into jewelry is a perfect example." Abeyta is represented locally by Blue Rain Gallery.

Raised in Gallup, surrounded by the Navajo (Diné) and Zuni reservations, "I always had a sense that there were other places to be," he says. He started his journey to explore those places when he left Gallup at the age of 16 to study at the Institute for American Indian Art (IAIA) in Santa Fe. School opened up many opportunities for him to travel and study further, including the Studio Arts Center International in Florence, Italy; the Art Institute of Chicago; and finally at NYU, where he received his Masters of Fine Arts. Currently, Tony lives in both Santa Fe and Chicago. "Living in a city, there is this whole discourse of culture, thinking, music, and international art," he explains. "I consider myself a regionalist, accepting that much of what I do is tied to a Native culture and place."

"We are delighted to give this award to Tony," says Shelby Tisdale, Director of MIAC. "Not only does he create powerful, rich work inspired by Navajo culture, but he also has a long history with this museum." A monumental mural by Abeyta graces the gathering space within the museum.

"I'm very surprised and honored to be receiving this award," says Abeyta. "It means a lot when museums recognize your work and I feel my efforts to continue to diversify as an artist are being appreciated." ♣