

SMSC Announces \$52 Million in Economic Development Loans

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a leader in promoting tribal sovereignty through economic development loans and grants. The nature of Indian trust land makes it unavailable for use as collateral and complicates lending through traditional banking structures. Tribal government processes and organization can further complicate matters. For these reasons, in fiscal year 2009 the SMSC made \$129 million in loans to Indian tribes for economic development projects. For fiscal year 2010, which began October 1, 2009, the SMSC has already approved \$52 million in loans to two out-of-state Indian tribes and to one Minnesota tribe for economic development projects.

The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Tribes, formerly known as the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, was approved for a loan for up to \$30 million for several economic development and community infrastructure projects. It will include refinancing of outstanding tribal debt to decrease debt service, improve the tribal operating budget, and retire all casino revenue secured debt. The loan will fund new working capital needs to retain and create tribal government jobs as well as provide funding to support government operations for two years.

The Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota was approved for a loan for \$13 million to build a new casino to replace the Fort Randall Casino, which opened in 1991. The new facility is slated to be part of a multi-phased development project designed to make Fort Randall Casino one of South Dakota's premier destination resorts. Phase one will feature a new gaming floor. Additional slot machines will be added along with upgraded blackjack, poker, and bingo areas. New and improved entertainment and foodservice amenities will enhance customer visits and provide a full-service gaming venue.

Tribal officials are hoping that phase two of the development plan will occur within the next year or two. This phase will include a 100-room hotel with amenities such as a swimming pool/fitness center, a convention center with meeting rooms, and an RV park. The ultimate goal of the project is to compliment the area's current sports and tourist attractions with a full-service destination resort that attracts additional visitors and economic development to the region.

Fort Randall Casino is the primary place of employment for Yankton Sioux Tribal members as well as the largest employer in Charles Mix County where the reservation is located. The casino offers slot machines, blackjack, poker, bingo, live entertainment, a gas station/convenience store, a restaurant, snack bar, gift shop, and lodging.

A loan for \$9 million and a grant for \$1 million was approved for the Upper Sioux Community for a casino and hotel project which will add a new wing to their hotel and enlarge gaming space at Prairie's Edge Casino & Resort. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2010 on the development project. Close social and cultural ties have existed between the two communities for generations. The SMSC has given the Upper Sioux Community more than \$10 million in grants since 1997.

"The Upper Sioux Community would like to thank the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community for their continued support of our Nation. Through your generosity and commitment to assist other tribes, our casino/hotel project can move forward and will allow the Upper Sioux Community to better attain our financial goals, thus improving the quality of life for our Nation," said Upper Sioux Chairman Kevin Jensvold.

The Upper Sioux Community has a tribal population of 482 on a land base of 1,440 acres near Granite Falls, Minnesota. Known as the Pejuhuatazizi Oyate, the place where yellow medicine is dug, the Upper Sioux Community owns and operates Prairie's Edge Casino Resort, Prairie's Edge Convenience Store, Prairie View RV Park & Campground, USC Propane, and the USC Telecommunication Project.

Since its formal designation as an Indian community, Upper Sioux has struggled with poverty, substandard housing, inadequate health care, and the subtleties of racism. Tribal leaders continually strive to improve the standard of living and the quality of life on the reservation.

Paragon Casino Resort Contributes Over \$120,000 in Community Support

The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe recently announced that over \$120,000 has been distributed to organizations for community service projects. The following organizations received funding through the donations program in the 2010 first quarter: Louisiana 4-H Foundation, Marksville Fire Department, AARP, Cenla Roadrunners, Central Louisiana Arts & Healthcare, Disabled American Veterans, El Karubah Shrine Oriental Band, Food Bank of Central Louisiana, River Oaks Arts Center, and United Way of Central Louisiana.

Organizations who received funding through the sponsorship program in the first quarter are: Louisiana Ice Gators, Louisiana Public Broadcasting, Acadiana Symphony, St. Jude's Hospital, Northwestern State University, Christus St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, Cenla 4-H Livestock Show, Bikers Against Child Abuse, City of Alexandria-Que'in on the Red, Susan G. Komen Foundation, Goodwill Industries, Cajun Riding Club, American Heart Association, Team Bass Tournament Trail, and the Town of Mansura Celebration.

"We are proud to support the local non-profit organizations in Louisiana who provide services to at risk constituencies. We are proud to salute organizations who improve the quality of life in our communities," commented Tunica-Biloxi Tribal Chairman, Earl J. Barbry, Sr.

Pala Team Members, Pala Band of Mission Indians Donate \$11,000 to Red Cross for Haiti Relief

The team members of Pala Casino Spa & Resort together with the Pala Band of Mission Indians donated \$11,000 to the American Red Cross for Haiti Relief to help the country and its citizens recover from the devastating earthquake and aftershocks that struck Haiti in January.



Chairman Robert Smith, center, of the Pala Band of Mission Indians and Bill Bembenek, center right, Chief Executive Officer of Pala Casino Spa & Resort, present a check for \$11,000 to Dr. Rick Hinrichs, center left, Director of Emergency Operations for the American Red Cross San Diego/Imperial Counties to benefit the Red Cross Haitian Relief Fund, as Pala Casino management and team members and tribal members participate.

Pala Casino team members and the tribe participated in a Haiti Relief campaign at the casino during the last two weeks in January. Pala Band of Mission Indians Chairman Robert Smith, Pala Casino Chief Executive Officer Bill Bembenek, members of the Pala management team and a number of Pala team members presented a check to Dr. Rick Hinrichs, the emergency operations director for the American Red Cross San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter. The donation will be utilized in the ongoing Haiti Relief effort.

“The idea for a campaign to raise money for Haiti originated with our team members. We didn’t just write one check. This is the result of individual donations. We are proud today of our team effort and I thank everyone who participated and made a contribution,” Bembenek said.

Dr. Hinrichs said the Pala donation would immediately be given to the Red Cross Fund for Haiti. “Pala is the first Southern California casino to make a donation to our Haitian relief efforts. We are very thankful,” he said. ♣

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