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Indian Gaming in Washington

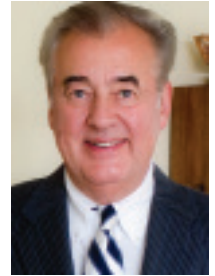
BY STEPHEN DOW BECKHAM

The State of Washington has 29 federally-recognized tribes. All have Class III gaming compacts. Twenty-one of the tribes operate 32 casinos and bingo halls. Indian gaming and its related enterprises have significant impacts on the state's employment, turn-over of capital, and destination tourism. Both job creation and salaries have helped thousands of the state's Native Americans secure better lives, health, housing, and education.

Geographical distribution of gaming is a function of 19th century federal Indian policy. The tribes of Puget Sound and the northern coast of the state secured ratified treaties in 1854-55. The agreements identified a number of small reservations. The majority of these tribal lands are located on Puget Sound and are convenient to the largest concentration of population in the state. For nearly three decades southwestern Washington—where there were no ratified treaties—had no major casino. In 2017 after sixteen years of

negotiation and litigation, the Cowlitz Tribe opened the Ilani Casino on Interstate 5 twenty-five miles north of the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area. The southern Columbia Plateau—a vast inland area east of the Cascade Range—is the location of the Yakama Nation's Legends Casino. The northeastern part of the state is the setting for seven casinos operated by the Colville, Spokane, and Kalispel tribes.

In the twentieth century primary Native American employments were fishing, logging and lumbering, and agricultural labor. Competition from non-Indian commercial fishing, sports fishing, declining fish runs, and repeated efforts by the State of Washington to regulate seasons, bag limits, licensing, and other aspects of fishing significantly diminished the ability of tribal members to exercise their treaty-protected rights. That situation was corrected in 1967 by the rulings of Judge George Boldt that affirmed the tribes had an entitlement to up to 50% of the available fish. By the 1960s, however, fish resource depletion was so significant



Stephen Dow Beckham

that many Indians fished only for subsistence.

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988) significantly changed economic opportunity for Washington tribes. Having land in trust both for tribes and individual allotments, the tribes were ready to find financial partners and embark on gaming. Among the pioneers were the Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Puyallup. Some started modestly with bingo parlors and Speed Bingo (Keno). Securing investors initially was a huge challenge. The Muckleshoot went to England to enlist capital from British American Bingo, a subsidiary of the Bass Group, to establish their gaming hall in Auburn, Washington. Enterprising families like the Turnipseeds who had a trust allotment at Fife about two miles from downtown Tacoma opened their own gaming business—B.J.’s Bingo.

In 2018 Washington tribes are a major players in the state’s economy. In 2014—a year for which statistics are available—the tribes employed 27,000 Washington residents and paid \$1.3 billion in pay-

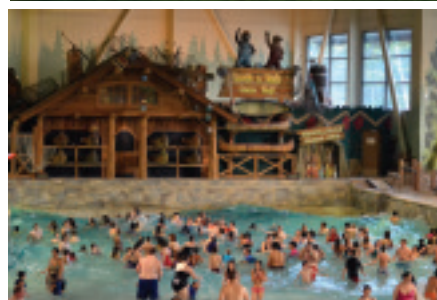
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To promote, protect and preserve the general welfare and interests of Indian tribes through the development of sound policies and practices with respect to the conduct of gaming activities in Indian country.
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—Statement of Purpose,
Washington State Indian
Gaming Association

roll. Tribes purchased \$2.4 billion in goods and services and, that year, invested \$259 million on facilities construction. In 2015 the Cowlitz Tribe with financial backing of the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut embarked on phase one of the Ilani Casino—an investment of \$510 million. This sprawling facility opened in April, 2017. It has 2,500 slot machines, 75 table games, a 2,500-seat performance venue, 15 restaurants, and several bars and stores. It is projected to attract 4.5 million visitors annually and earn \$200 million for the Cowlitz Tribe.

Several Washington casinos offer multiple attractions: gaming, entertainment, food services, and lodging. For those wanting to stay overnight the casino hotels, motels, and RV parks provide many attractions ranging from rooms and RV hook-ups to swimming pools, spas, and picnic areas. The Tulalip Hotel has 370 guest rooms; the Puyallup Emerald Queen Hotel has 102 rooms.

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The Chehalis Tribe operates the Lucky Eagle casino (left) on its reservation fifteen miles west of Interstate 5. It has constructed Gray Wolf Lodge (above), a hotel-resort and indoor water park at Grand Mound on the freeway.



Muckleshoot Casino in Auburn, WA, culminated its landmark 21st anniversary celebration on April 30, 2016 with a record-breaking event - the world's largest slot tournament, officially certified by Guinness World Records.



Muckleshoot Casino

Association (WIGA) is a non-profit organization of tribal government leaders of federally recognized tribes. WIGA's Board of Directors is composed entirely of appointed representatives of the governing bodies of the member tribes. Among its programs is the annual WIGA Scholarship. In 2017-18 thirty-eight Native American students received financial assistance for community college, undergraduate, or graduate education.

Indian gaming is a vital and growing sector of the recreation and tourism economy of the Washington State. Its reach extends from the shores of the Pacific east to the mountains along the Idaho border. Tribal investments have created jobs and had significant impacts on employment among Native Americans and non-Indians as well. ❁

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The Chehalis Tribe operates the Lucky Eagle casino on its reservation fifteen miles west of Interstate 5. It has constructed Gray Wolf Lodge, a hotel-resort and indoor water park at Grand Mound on the freeway. The hotel has 56,000 square feet for indoor water recreation. In 2017 the Yakama Nation opened a 200-room hotel near Toppenish, part of a \$90 million capital investment connected to its Legends Casino that opened in 1998. Legends casino-hotel employs over 700 people.

The Washington State Gambling Commission is charged with keeping gaming legal and honest. Founded in 1973, it today has 160 employees. Licensing, Indian gaming, state lotteries and games, regulation, enforcement, and education are among its missions. The Washington State Indian Gaming

Stephen Dow Beckham earned his M.A. and Ph.D. at UCLA in history. He taught college students for forty-three years, and for many years was the Pamplin Professor of History at Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon. He is the author of numerous books and articles, is a former "Oregon Professor of the Year," and winner of the American Historical Association's Distinguished Teaching Award. He has been retained as an expert witness in thirty-seven cases. Most of his legal work relates to Indian gaming, treaty rights, and land claims. His consulting has involved the Delaware Nation, Eastern Pequot, Duwamish, Cowlitz, Chinook, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua, Quapah, Ottawa Nation, Karuk, Mechoopda, Chemehuevi, three bands of Pomo of California, Chinook, and other tribes and bands.

Washington Indian Gaming

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| 7 Cedars Casino, Squim, WA | Muckleshoot Indian Bingo, Auburn, WA | Silver Reef Hotel, Casino, Spa, Ferndale, WA |
| Angel of the Winds Casino, Arlington, WA | Nisqually Red Wind Casino, Olympia, WA | Skagit Valley Casino Resort, Bow, WA |
| Chewelah Casino, Chewelah, WA | Nooksack Northwood Casino, Lynden, WA | Snoqualmie Casino, Ferndale, WA |
| Coulee Dam Casino, Coulee Dam, WA | Nooksack River Casino, Deming, WA | Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, Suquamish, WA |
| Emerald Queen Casino I-5, Tacoma, WA | Northern Quest Resort & Casino, Airway Heights, WA | Swinomish Casino & Lodge, Anacortes, WA |
| Emerald Queen Hotel & Casino, Fife, WA | Okanogan Bingo Casino, Okanogan, WA | The Point Casino, Kingston, WA |
| Ilani Casino, LaCenter, WA | Quil Ceda Creek Nightclub & Casino, Tulalip, WA | Tulalip Bingo, Tulalip, WA |
| Little Creek Casino Resort, Shelton, WA | Quinault Beach Resort & Casino, Ocean Shores, WA | Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip, WA |
| Lucky Dog Casino, Shelton, WA | Shoalwater Bay Casino, Tokeland, WA | Two Rivers Casino & Resort, Davenport, WA |
| Lucky Eagle Casino, Rochester, WA | | Yakama Legends Casino, Toppenish, WA |
| Mill Bay Casino, Manson, WA | | |
| Muckleshoot Casino, Auburn, WA | | |