

31st Annual Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association Conference and Trade Show

Breakout Sessions

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

8:30 am – 9:15 am

General Assembly

Room: 302

The State of Tribal Gaming: A National Update

Moderator: Matthew Morgan | Chairman, Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association

Panelists:

James Siva | Chairman, California Nations Indian Gaming Association

David Bean | Chairman, Indian Gaming Association

This essential update is a discussion by our national leaders on the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities facing the Tribal gaming industry across the United States.

9:30 am – 10:30 am

Breakout Sessions 1

Stewards of Tradition, Architects of Change: A conversation with Oklahoma Tribal Leaders

Room: 208 AB

Moderator: Ted Strueli | Executive Director, Oklahoma Watch

Panelists:

Jacob Keyes | Chairman, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Billy Friend | Chief, Wyandotte Nation

Michael McClane | President, Delaware Nation

In this powerful session, distinguished Oklahoma Tribal leaders come together to share their unique perspectives on what it means to honor centuries-old traditions while guiding their Nations through contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Legacy of Sovereignty: Oklahoma Tribal Gaming Through the Years

Room: 204

Moderator: Geoffrey Standing Bear | Principal Chief Executive Officer, Osage Nation

Panelists:

Gary Pitchlynn | Managing Attorney, Pitchlynn Law, PLLC

William Norman | Partner, Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker, LLP

Kirke Kickingbird | Of Counsel, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker LLP

Participants will journey through pivotal moments—from the early days of bingo halls to the negotiation of tribal-state compacts and the emergence of world-class casinos.

Beyond the Game Floor: Designing Amenity-Driven Casino Resorts

Room: 203

Panelists:

Matt Robinson | Founder & Principal, KlasRobinson QED

James Klas | Founder & Principal, KlasRobinson QED

Matt Klas | Partner, KlasRobinson QED

Whether you're a gaming executive, developer, marketer, or designer, join us to explore how the future of casino resorts is being shaped—by creating memorable experiences that go beyond the game floor.

Ready for the Future: Digital Compliance in Casino Financial Reporting

Room: 206 AB

Moderator: April Bacon | Partner, Wipfli

Panelists:

Christian Fenner | Director of Revenue Audit, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Keisha Roland | Chief Financial Officer, Osage Casinos

Drew Word | Client Success Manager, Casino Cash Trac

As casinos embrace digital transformation, the landscape of financial reporting is rapidly evolving. This session explores the emerging requirements and best practices for digital compliance in casino accounting.

NIGC Leadership Discussion "Special Emphasis"

Room: 205 AB

Moderator: Steven Brewer | Training Manager, National Indian Gaming Commission

Panelists:

Tom Cunningham | Chief Compliance Officer, National Indian Gaming Commission

Gena Caviness | Audit Supervisor; Steve Steiner, CJIS Audit Unit, National Indian Gaming Commission

Tim Cotton | Chief Technology Officer, National Indian Gaming Commission

The National Indian Gaming Commission's Programs and Division Leadership discussion on the agency's operational priorities for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2026 and the upcoming Fiscal Year 2027. This session will provide tribal gaming regulators, operators, and industry partners with timely insight into the NIGC's strategic focus areas, emerging regulatory considerations, and cross-divisional initiatives.

The Digital Age of Gambling and Digital Responsible and Problem Gambling Solutions

Room: 202

Presenter: Wiley Harwell | Dr., Executive Director, D.Min., LPC, ICGC-II, BACC

The gambling industry is rapidly evolving to include new forms of digital access, such as prediction markets, daily fantasy sports, and off-shore online casinos. As these options continue to grow, we will focus on supporting those who develop problems, promoting responsible play, and providing digital resources for help.

The Traffic Multiplier: Affiliates & Influencers in the Digital Marketing Ecosystem

Room: 209 AB

Moderator: Eric Flores | Chief Operations Officer, Trilogy Digital

Panelists:

Sarah Sabo | Director of Affiliate Marketing, BetMGM

Jason Rosenberg | CEO, American iGaming Solutions

Kevin Murphy | Chief Marketing Officer, Trilogy Network

Firsthand examples and industry insights, this session empowers marketers to move beyond one-dimensional traffic generation. Creating a thriving digital ecosystem where affiliates and influencers become true multipliers for your online success.

Mastering the Build: Casino Project Success Amid Evolving Economic Influences

Room: 207 AB

Moderator: Art Martinez | LED and AV Design Consultant

Panelists:

Joel Carr | Managing Director - Tulsa, Connect Advisors LLC

Deidre Brady | AIA, NCIDQ, Principal, Project Manager, HBG Design

WC Gernandt | President, Direct 2 Completion

New challenges that stretch beyond the drafting table - from fluctuating material costs and supply chain disruptions to external markets. This session explores strategies and best practices for achieving project success

10:45 am – 11:45 am

Breakout Sessions II

Legal Frontiers: Navigating Laws and Legislation in Prediction Markets

Room: 208 AB

Moderator: William Norman | Partner, Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker, LLP

Panelists: Femila Ervin | Staff Attorney of Gaming, Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

Danielle Schelble | General Counsel, Arizona Department of Gaming

Mike Dreitzer | Chairman & Executive Director, Nevada Gaming Control Board

Panelists will analyze landmark regulatory cases, recent legislative efforts, and ongoing debates at the Tribal, State, and Federal levels.

Unmasking Exploitation: Human Trafficking Awareness in the Casino Sector

Room: 204

Panelists:

Frances Alvarez | Chairwoman, Tribal Gaming Protection Network

Kendra Clements | Owner & CEO, We The People Consulting

Whitney Anderson | Co-director, Dragonfly Home

Recognizing and combating this hidden crime is both a moral imperative and a regulatory responsibility for the gaming industry. Listen to the various perspectives on battling it.

The Heartbeat of the Casino

Room: 206 AB

Presenter: Nick Ippolito | Casino Player Development Leader | Casino Host Sales/Casino Player Development & Casino Customer Service Educational Leader at Nickippolito

The players club and rewards center are often treated as transactional service points, not the heartbeat of the casino experience. Explore how loyalty rewards, and player recognition connect the entire property around the guest. Create a property-wide culture where recognition extends beyond casino player development and becomes part of every guest's journey.

Investing in the Future: Tribal Investments in Gaming-Related Enterprises

Room: 209 AB

Moderator: Kristi Jackson | Chief Executive Officer & Chair, TFA Capital Partners

Panelists:

Dan Boren | Secretary of Commerce, Chickasaw Nation

Derrick Watchman | Chief Information Officer, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise

Blake Kerley | Vice President - Investment Product Specialist, First United Bank

Forward-thinking tribes are exploring new opportunities and diversifying their portfolios beyond traditional casino operations. In this insightful session, industry experts will examine how strategic investments in gaming-related enterprises can drive long-term economic growth.

NIGC: Parts 556 Background and 558 Licensing

Room: 205 AB

Co-Presenters:

Sam Wetzler | Compliance Training Specialist, National Indian Gaming Commission

Miranda Page | Compliance Officer, National Indian Gaming Commission

This information-packed session is designed exclusively for TGRA staff, Gaming Commissioners, and Tribal Leadership who want to elevate the strength, credibility, and integrity of their regulatory oversight. Dive into NIGC Regulations 556 (Background Investigations) and 558 (Licensing) through a fast-paced session that connects the regulations directly to your day-to-day decision-making and long-term regulatory responsibilities.

High Stakes Partnerships: The Convergence of Casinos and Sports Sponsorships

Room: 207 AB

Moderator: Sheila Morago | Chief Executive Officer, Trilogy Group

Panelists:

Erica Kosemund | Chief Brand Officer, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Nate Holobowski | Chief Casino Marketing Officer, Chickasaw Nation

Peter Arceo | Chief Gaming Officer, Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

Explores the dynamic and rapidly growing intersection between casinos and sports sponsorships. From naming rights and jersey logos to in-stadium activations, fan engagement campaigns, and integrated betting platforms.

Fiscal Resilience: Navigating Financial Stewardship in Tribal Casinos and Governments

Room: 203

Moderator: Caleb McDaniel | Senior Vice President, Tribal Banking, Sovereign Bank

Panelists:

Che Downes | General Manager, Thunderbird Entertainment Inc

Marcus Yoder | Managing Director, Gaming Technology, Innovation Capital

Judy Barnes | Treasurer, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

In the face of economic uncertainty, maintaining robust financial practices is more vital than ever for Tribal casinos and governments. This session delves into strategies for building fiscal resilience, regardless of external pressures.

Smart Training for Stronger Casinos: A GM Roundtable with OSU

Room: 202

Moderator: Dr. Marc Tower | Assistant Dean for Innovative Education and Growth, OSU Spears School of Business

Panelists:

Ryan Whitlow | Director of Talent Development, Cherokee Nation Entertainment

Luke Freeman | Managing Director, Purpose & Performance Group

Emmanuel Bezzel | Director of Operations, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Gaming Enterprises

An interactive roundtable discussion between casino general managers and Oklahoma State University, focused on identifying and addressing casino training and education needs. The session will explore strategies for assessing needs, selecting appropriate vendors, and effectively customizing programs to meet organizational goals.

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Breakout Sessions III

From Connections to Qualifications: Reforming Casino Purchasing Practices I

Room: 203

Co-Presenters:

Stephanie Duckworth | Director of Tribal Development, PMI Tribal Services

Carl Long | President & Chief Executive Officer, PMI Tribal Services

In the past, decisions have been influenced by informal networks and personal connections—often referred to as the “good ol’ boy” system. This session challenges the status quo by exploring how casinos can transition to a qualifications-based procurement model that emphasizes fairness, transparency, and merit.

Oklahoma in Focus: Legislative Recap for 2026 and Insights for 2027

Room: 208 AB

Panelists:

Fred Jordan Jr. | Jordan Street Strategies LLC

Vivian Morris | State Government Relations Specialist, Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Jennifer Gray | Senior State Policy Analyst, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Get up to speed on the most important legislative actions and policy shifts from Oklahoma’s 2026 and 2027 sessions. This panel will highlight key bills, analyze their impacts, and offer insights into emerging trends.

All In on Integrity: Casino Background Screening and Licensing Explained

Room: 202

Co-Presenters:

Julie Hakman | President, Managing Partner, InstaHire Check, LLC

Reilly May | Background and Licensing Assistant Manager, Chickasaw Nation

Learn how thorough vetting and licensing protect both casinos and communities and gain insights on recent trends and challenges in casino compliance. Ideal for regulators, casino operators, and anyone interested in understanding the safeguards that keep gaming fair and trustworthy.

Raising the Stakes: Justifying Comprehensive Cybersecurity Training in Casinos

Room: 205 AB

Panelists:

Melissa Aarskaug | Executive Vice President of Strategy and Growth, DruvStar

Manjit Singh | Chief Executive Officer, DruvStar

Robin Villareal | Chief Information Officer, Gila River Hotels & Casinos

Robust cybersecurity is not just an IT concern; it's a casino-wide responsibility. This session explores why comprehensive cybersecurity awareness and training are essential for every employee, from the gaming floor to the executive suite.

Intelligent Regulation: AI Tools for Enhancing Casino Integrity

Room: 204

Panelists:

Rudy Stevenson | Senior Government Relations Executive, Gaming Laboratories International LLC

Jeff Brooks | Chief Information Officer, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Casinos

Crystal Houston | Regulatory Compliance Assistant Manager – Audit, The Chickasaw Nation

Whether you are a regulator, operator, IT professional, or compliance officer, this session will offer actionable strategies for integrating AI into your regulatory framework.

Homegrown Advantage: Building Casino Brands in Rural Communities

Room: 207 AB

Panelists:

Walter Boyd | Account Executive, Zoche LLC

Ashley Bradford Clark | Marketing Director, Rock & Brews Casino

Wendi Long | Marketing Director, Indigo Sky Casino

This session explores the distinctive opportunities and challenges of marketing rural casinos, where forging lasting relationships and leveraging local culture are key to building trusted, resilient brands.

Class II Goes Mobile: Roadmap for Digital Expansion

Room: 206 AB

Moderator: Jeremy Tyra | Partner, Kyprock Capital

Panelists:

Emmanuel Bezzell | Director of Operations at Muscogee (Creek) Nation Gaming Enterprises

Richard Sagman | SVP Product Management, EVERI

Randy Simpson | Slot Manager, Prairie Band Casino & Resort

James Acres | President, Miai Inc.

This session provides a comprehensive guide for tribal operators, technology specialists, and regulators who are considering or actively implementing Class II mobile gaming solutions.

From the Ground Up: How Tribal Professionals Reach the C-Suite in Gaming

Room: 209 AB

Moderator: Christine Eddington | Principal, Eddington Communications

Panelists:

Darius McGee | Chief Operating Officer/General Manager, Kiowa Casino Red River

Bruce McClure | General Manager, Rock & Brews Casino

Melanie Heskett | General Manager, Indigo Sky Casino and Bordertown Outpost Casino

Join us as our panelists share personal stories, practical strategies, and lessons learned throughout their professional journeys. Accomplished leaders who have successfully navigated the unique challenges and opportunities in tribal gaming on their path to the top.

10:15 am – 11:15 am

Breakout Sessions IV

Global Gaming Women Presents: The Relationship Advantage

Room: 209 AB

Moderator: Melissa Cox | Vice President of Marketing & Customer Relations, Gaming Capital Group

Panelists:

April Herring | Director of Slot Systems, Choctaw Nation Casinos

Hillary McAfee | Owner & Host, Maxbet Podcast

Molly Hart | Director of Licensing and Compliance, Gaming Capital Group

Desiree Treeby | Vice President Gaming - Leasing Partnerships and Operations, Texas Slots & Gaming & Affiliated Companies

In today's business environment, partnerships are often measured by immediate revenue, short-term wins, and transactional outcomes. Yet the most impactful collaborations are built on something deeper: trust, shared values, long-term vision, and authentic relationships. This panel brings together women leaders who have successfully built strategic partnerships by leading with connection, credibility, and community.

Beyond the Ballot: Tribal Implications of the Midterm Elections

Room: 208 AB

Panelists:

John Tahsuda | Principal, Navigators Global LLC

Jason Giles | Executive Director, Indian Gaming Association

Joe Dorman | Chief Executive Officer, Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

This session will examine how shifts in Congressional power, state-level outcomes, and emerging political dynamics may affect everything from economic development and gaming to healthcare, natural resources, and education in Tribal communities.

Connected Play: Optimizing the Slot Floor with On-Premise Mobile Solutions

Room: 205 AB

Moderator: Paul Pope | Regional Sales Director, Eclipse Gaming Systems

Panelists:

Tom McDonald | Sr. Director of Cage Credit & Digital, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Quincy Raven | Vice President of Business Development US, iGaming & Sports

Russ Witt | President, Boing Gaming

Blending the excitement of the slot floor with the convenience and engagement offered by on-premise mobile technology.

Balancing the House: Best Practices in Casino Accounting and Audits

Room: 202

Co-Presenters:

Doug Parker | Tribal Business Advisor & Compliance Department, F&C CPAs

Kandi Link | Senior Manager, CAS Gaming, REDW Advisors & CPAs

In the high-stakes world of gaming, maintaining financial integrity is crucial to the success and reputation of every casino. This informative session explores the essential practices and latest strategies that ensure casino accounting and audits are accurate, robust, and compliant with ever-evolving regulations.

The New Playbook: Sports Betting Compliance for Tribal Casinos

Room: 203

Co-Presenters:

Rudy Wambgans | Commissioner Chairman, Tunica-Biloxi Tribal Gaming Commission

Jason Nichols | Executive Director, Forest County Potawatomi Gaming Commission

Learn about key compliance requirements for launching and managing Tribal sports betting operations. Along with strategies for developing robust internal controls, risk management protocols, and responsible gaming measures

From Download to Loyalty: Effective Marketing for Mobile Gaming

Room: 204

Moderator: Chris Garrow | Director of Gaming, Prairie Band Casino & Resort

Panelists:

Justin Culp | Senior Director of Gaming Marketing

Megan Nation | Vice President of Professional Services & Sales, Wondr Nation

Ken Maguire | Chief Marketing Officer, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Gaming Enterprises

Achieving long-term success requires more than simply getting players to download your game—it demands a strategic approach to marketing that turns first-time users into loyal fans.

Ready, Set, Bet: Navigating the Challenges of Sportsbook Management

Room: 206 AB

Moderator: Gene Johnson | Executive Vice President, Victor-Strategies

Panelists:

Patrick Tarnay | Sr. Business Development Manager, BetMGM

David Bretnitz | Vice President of Sales, Americas, Kambi

Adrianna B. Jiron | Interim Chief Executive Officer, Isleta Resort & Casino

Calvin Jiron | Table Games Director, Isleta Resort & Casino

Launching a successful sportsbook is both exciting and complex. With new regulations and rapid technology shifts, today's sportsbook managers must be prepared. And have some fun!

11:30 am – 12:30 pm Breakout Sessions V

Veterans provide valuable leadership, discipline, and teamwork skills to the gaming industry, making them an important part of Gaming

Room: 204

Co-presenters:

Daniel Kustelski | Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Chalkline

Tony Amormino | Chief Executive Officer, Legacy Reserve Holding Company

The evolution of veteran involvement in gaming, celebrating their achievements, and addressing the challenges they face as they transition from military service to the fast-paced gaming space and loud environments. Topics will include mental health and well-being, building inclusive communities, leveraging transferable skills, overcoming stereotypes, and accessing career opportunities.

Eyes on Innovation: The Latest in Casino Surveillance Technology

Room: 203

Panelist:

RaeLynn Pena | Surveillance Department Manager, Downstream Casino Resort

John Underwood | Protective Services Director, Cherokee Nation Entertainment

Todd Stuart | Surveillance Investigator, Osage Nation Gaming Commission

This session explores the newest advancements that are transforming how casinos safeguard assets, ensure fair play, and maintain regulatory compliance.

Bridging Tradition and Tomorrow: Culturally Mindful Tribal Casino Projects

Room: 207 AB

Moderator: DG Smalling | Master Artist, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Panelists:

Shauna Williams | Executive Director of Communications, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Mike Carter | TBE Architects, Director of Client Development

Joe Scibetta | Senior Vice President & General Manager, Harrah's Oklahoma

Casino projects have the power to become much more than entertainment venues—they can serve as educational resources for cultural identity and heritage.

Workforce 2.0: Shaping the Next Generation of Regulatory Professionals

Room: 206 AB

Moderator: Kelly Meyers | Director, Governmental Affairs, Gaming Laboratories International, LLC

Panelists:

Kelli Weaver | Principal Owner, KDW Consulting Group

Tracy Burris | Executive Director, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Public Gaming

Jamie Hummingbird | Chairman, National Tribal Gaming Commissioners & Regulators

This session explores the strategies and best practices needed to build, train, and inspire the next generation of casino regulators.

Beyond the Bonus: Profitable Promotion Strategies for Casinos

Room: 202

Panelists:

Justin Shank | Principal & Chief Executive Officer, Shank Marketing

Misty Twoguns | Marketing Manager, Cimarron Casino Enterprises

Ashley Bradford-Clark | Director of Marketing, Rock & Brews Casino

Innovative payment technologies—from cashless systems and digital wallets to cryptocurrencies—are transforming the casino experience for both operators and guests.

Digital Dollars: The Evolution of Casino Payments with Cashless and Crypto

Room: 208 AB

Moderator: Sue Schnieder | Co-founder, Defy the Odds Startup Launchpad

Panelists:

Tom McDonald | Senior Director of Cage, Credit & Digital, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Kayleigh Thompson | Vice President of Business Development, Pavilion Payments

Andrew Crowe | Vice President Omnichannel Americas – Gaming, Nuvei

How casinos can design and execute promotions that not only excite guests but also drive meaningful revenue, strengthen brand loyalty, and deliver a measurable return on investment.

The Maker's Mindset

Room: 205 AB

Moderator: Kelli Smalling | National Board of Directors - Member, AISES

Panelists:

Benjamin Barnes | Chief, Shawnee Nation

James Starr | President, VGT, an Aristocrat Company

Hector Fernandez | Chief Executive Officer, IGT

Stephen Crystal | President, SCCG Management

Can gaming become the stabilizing force in STEAM education and workforce development in Oklahoma?