

National Indian Gaming Association + marijuana Conference
San Diego, California
March 29-April 2, 2015

I attended Marijuana: The Next Big Thing in Native American Economic Development? on March 30. This was an all-day, pre-conference meeting put on by Native Nations Events. The DOJ recently announced a policy shift but did not change the law that allows Native Americans to grow and manufacture cannabis products but it is recognized that many states have legalized, or are looking into legalizing, marijuana. It is important for tribes to continue to keep an eye on this change so that we can make educated decisions on how to move forward with the production of cannabis products. The biggest takeaway from the meeting was this: If a tribe decides to allow any facet of the cannabis industry on their land, they should not be the owners of that business but rather have an outside business run it, and tax it heavily.

As a member of the Gaming Enterprise Board, I volunteered to go to NIGA as the official representative. I attended all of the NIGA membership meetings, which took up most of the day. The majority of these meetings focused on updates in gaming in Indian Country, including chairman and treasurer reports.

I also attended the Chairman's Leadership Award Luncheon, the Cultural Reception, and the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award Banquet, as well as walked the floor of the Indian Gaming Trade Show.

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