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Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Celebrates 30 Years of Sovereignty

On September 21, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi [celebrated](#) three decades of official sovereignty, first recognized through signing of an act in 1994 by President Bill Clinton.

Tribal Chair Matt Wesaw emphasized that while the tribe's status was initially acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution, treaties had reduced their land over the years. A 1934 law restored some of this land, culminating in the reaffirmation of full sovereignty in 1994. This status has allowed the tribe to establish its own government and services, including a police department, tribal court, social services, housing, and healthcare.

“We essentially have every basic kind of department that any other government has,” Wesaw said. “We have our own police department, our own tribal court. We’ve got social services. We’ve got a treasury. We’ve got housing. We’ve got our own clinic. We provide the same services that any other government would provide for their citizens.”

Wesaw shared that the tribe drafted its constitution shortly after gaining sovereignty, focusing on critical areas such as healthcare, education, and housing. He recounted a memorable moment in 1994 when a large group of tribal members gathered in Washington, D.C. for the signing ceremony, leading to an iconic interaction with President Clinton.

Today, the Pokagon tribe serves approximately 6,200 citizens and has become a significant economic player in Southwest Michigan, with land in several counties and serving as the region's second-largest employer. Looking ahead, Wesaw aims to revitalize the Pokagon language and expand housing opportunities for tribal members.

MGCB Takes Action Against Illegal Gambling

The Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB") has [issued](#) a cease-and-desist letter to Israel-based Papaya Gaming for operating illegal gambling activities in Michigan. This follows an investigation prompted by an anonymous tip, which found that Papaya Gaming's mobile apps—21 Cash, Bingo Cash, Bubble Cash, and Solitaire Cash—allowed players to buy in and win real money without proper licensing.

The MGCB also [issued](#) cease-and-desist letters to Ace23 and Ace Per Head, both based in Costa Rica, for illegal gambling activities. Ace23 operates the website Ace23.ag, functioning as a sportsbook and casino service provider for agents and bookies. While claiming to be part of the Ace Gaming Network, Ace23 is not licensed to operate in Michigan. An investigation revealed that the site allows account holders to establish bookmaking operations with various "skins," where agents accept wagers and handle payouts.

Executive Director Henry Williams stated, "The Michigan Gaming Control Board firmly believes in a regulated and safe gaming environment. Illegal gambling is not tolerated in Michigan, and we will take all

necessary actions to protect our residents from such unlawful practices," reinforcing the MGCB's commitment to a regulated gaming environment. Papaya Gaming's actions violate multiple Michigan laws, including the Lawful Internet Gaming Act, which mandates that only licensed operators can offer internet gaming, and the Michigan Penal Code, which prohibits unauthorized gambling.

All three companies have 14 days to cease operations targeting Michigan residents or face legal consequences. The MGCB encourages anyone with information about illegal gambling to report it via phone at 1-888-314-2682 or email MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov.

Residents are advised to verify the legality of online gaming sites, with a list of licensed providers available at Michigan.gov/MGCB.

Emerging Leaders of Gaming 40 Under 40 Honorees Announced

The Innovation Group and Global Gaming Business magazine have revealed the 2025 class of the Emerging Leaders of Gaming 40 Under 40, honoring young professionals making significant contributions to the casino gaming industry.

"The latest class of honorees well reflects the modern gaming industry, with a record number of individuals already holding impressive, senior-level positions and a noticeable increase in professionals leading the critically important areas of compliance and government affairs," said Michael Soll, president of The Innovation Group.

“The quality of this year’s Emerging Leaders class is really extraordinary,” said Roger Gros, publisher of GGB. “Their accomplishments at such a young age are an inspiration to all who strive for excellence in our industry.”

Class of 2025 Honorees:

- Timothy Aguilar, Vice President Business Development, Caesars Digital
- Jonathan Aiwazian, CEO, idPair
- Kyle Anderson, VP of Property Marketing, Yaamava' Resort & Casino at San Manuel
- Gabrielle Angle, Business Development Director – North America Gaming & Licensing, GeoComply
- Andrew Baca, Executive Director, Global Head of Product, Gaming, J.P. Morgan
- Mark Barrath, Director, Retention & Monetization, Golden Hearts Games
- Boris Borisov-Lukov, Vice President of Finance, Caesars Entertainment
- Cassie Brickman, CEO, Betting Hero
- Stephanie Bruckner, Executive Director, Global Portfolio Strategy – Gaming, Light & Wonder
- Joe Casole, Vice President, Legal & Regulatory Affairs, IC360
- Jody Collins, Vice President, Global Development, MGM Resorts International
- Darryl DeRaedt, Vice President of Operations, Everi
- Jocelyn Fietkiewicz, Deputy Attorney General, New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement
- Ben Freedland, General Counsel, Minnesota State Lottery
- Kasra Ghaharian, Director of Research, International Gaming Institute, UNLV
- Jeremy Hirst, Director of Casino Optimization & Analytics, Tangam Systems
- Akshay K. Khanna, Co-founder and CEO, Jackpot.com
- Clint Koehn, Vice President of Gaming Operations, Gaming Capital Group
- Alesha Konskey, Gaming Operations Specialist,
- Anthony Kosturos, Chief Financial Officer, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
- Jordan M. Maynard, Interim Chair, Massachusetts Gaming Commission
- Ashley McCulloch, Director Account Management – North America, Inspired Gaming Group
- Geneva Mojado, Vice Chair, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
- Jeff Morales, Vice President of IT Operations, Cordish Gaming Group
- Sarah Murray, Food and Beverage Shared Service Manager, River Spirit Casino Resort
- Megan Nation, VP of Professional Services & Sales, Wondr Nation
- Paul Parry, Senior Engineering Manager, Gaming Laboratories International (GLI)
- Karolina Pelc, Founder BeyondPlay, VP BeyondPlay, FanDuel
- Declan Raines, Senior Director – US Gaming, TransUnion
- Presley M.C. Redeye, Councilor, Seneca Nation Council
- James Seils, Co-Founder and CTO, BettorEdge
- Lisa Singer, VP Brand & Strategy, High 5 Games
- Ashley Skeen Unga, Senior Director of Customer Success, Gaming Analytics
- Jonathan Smith, Senior Director Sales Operations and Strategy, IGT
- Jo'Elle Thompson, Compliance Officer, National Indian Gaming Commission
- Rickard Vikström, CEO & Founder,

Internet Vikings

- Julia Weygandt, Chief Operations Officer, G Gaming Ltd
- Kassi Yellowitz-Melton, Vice President of Sales, Gift & Go
- Tres, York, Senior Director, Government Relations, American Gaming Association

The Class of 2025 will be celebrated at the Emerging Leaders of Gaming Networking Reception on October 9 from 4 to 5 PM at the G2E Networking Lounge (Booth #5649).

These emerging leaders are paving the way for the future of the gaming industry, demonstrating innovation and leadership.

Winners of 24th Annual GGB Gaming & Technology Awards Announced

The Global Gaming Business (GGB) magazine has [unveiled](#) the winners of the 24th Annual GGB Gaming & Technology Awards, honoring innovation and excellence across the gaming industry. This year's competition saw hundreds of entries, highlighting groundbreaking technologies designed to enhance customer relationships and create a transparent gaming environment.

"The technology associated with the quality of the nominations for the GGB Gaming & Technology Awards is groundbreaking," says Frank Legato, editor of Global Gaming Business magazine. "The innovations presented in this year's submissions are designed to create a closer relationship with customers and build a business environment that is transparent and intuitive."

The awards will be presented at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E), taking place October 7-10, 2024, at the Venetian Expo in Las Vegas.

Award Winners:

Best Consumer Service Technology

Gold: Foundation HQ - Acres Manufacturing
Silver: Slot Marker - IGT

Best iGaming Product

Gold: PAM+ platform - Playtech
Silver: Aristocrat Interactive Platform - Aristocrat Interactive

Best Productivity-Enhancement Technology

Gold: Agilysys Spa Powered by guestsense.ai - Agilysys, Inc.
Silver: ENGAGE AI - Light & Wonder

Best Slot Technology

Gold: Tiger and Dragon - IGT
Silver: Whisker Wheels - Aristocrat Gaming

Best Sports Betting Product

Gold: iFrame Betting Solution - Oddin.gg
Silver: IGT PlaySports Solution - IGT PlaySports

Best Table Game Product or Innovation

Gold: Smart Pit - Interblock
Silver: Bonus Spin Xtreme for Poker Rooms - AGS

Nominations for the 2026 GGB Gaming & Technology Awards will open in May 2025, focusing on new products set to launch in 2025 or 2026.

The GGB Gaming & Technology Awards remain a key platform for recognizing advancements in gaming technology and customer service, continuing to highlight the industry's commitment to innovation.