

Shannon O'Loughlin

Chief of Staff National Indian Gaming Commission

1. Shannon, you bring very unique professional experiences to your new role as Chief of Staff to NIGC. How do you see those experiences benefiting you and our Tribal Gaming Regulators, in this new position?

First, I consider myself a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a mother and a wife. Second, I have been fortunate enough to go to school and was the first in my family to graduate high school. I received a Master's degree and Juris Doctorate at the University of Arizona in the Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program. I have practiced law in Indian Country working with Indian Nations, Indian Nation owned businesses and not-for profits for the past 15 years. My upbringing, my education and my work in Indian Country have all taught me that what I do is not for myself, but for the generations after me. I look at my work with the NIGC team and the amazing Tribal regulators in Indian Country as an extension of those values.

In my career as an attorney for Indian Nations, I have had the privilege of seeing how Tribal governments utilize gaming revenue for the health and welfare of their citizens. As in house and outside counsel for Indian Nations, I have worked on housing, healthcare, children and family matters, tribal courts, energy, environmental and cultural resource programs; I have assisted Tribes that have not been presently acknowledged by the U.S., worked on treaty rights and land rights issues, and was appointed by Secretary Sally Jewell to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee. My experience on the ground in Indian Country and my hands on approach with Tribal representatives and stakeholders, I believe, support everything I will do with the NIGC.

In fact, Chairman Jonodev O. Chaudhuri hand picked me to serve as his Chief of Staff to assist the Commission with continued development of Chairman Chaudhuri's initiatives that support the integrity of Indian gaming and do away with gamesmanship on the backs of Tribes. Tribal gaming revenue – unlike non-Indian gaming – is heavily regulated, purposed specifically for Tribal governmental services to benefit Indian Nation citizens. I hope that my work at NIGC will support Tribal regulators to make sure that Indian people will always be the beneficiaries of gaming revenue.

2. What are the key responsibilities you have in your new role as Chief of Staff?

In my role as Chief of Staff, I will work closely with the Commission and Chairman Chaudhuri to provide support in implementing the Commission's priorities. These priorities focus my efforts on addressing and mitigating activities that jeopardize the integrity of Indian gaming and the valuable self-determination tool that it represents; acting effectively and quickly on anything that jeopardizes the health and safety of the public at gaming establishments, including employees and patrons; engaging in sound regulation without unnecessarily stymieing the entrepreneurial spirit of Tribes; and protecting against anything that amounts to gamesmanship on the backs of tribes. I will further lead the day-to-day management of the Commission operations, including compliance, finance, public affairs and the recently created technology divisions. So, I'm keeping busy!

bmm north america, inc.

815 pilot road, suite G, las vegas, nevada 89119 t +1 702 407 2420 f +1 702 407 2421

a2la accreditation: ISO 17025 – 2549.01. & ISO 17020 – 2549.02

3. What do you believe are the most critical issues NIGC faces in facilitating their Indian gaming regulatory mission?

If it ain't broke, don't fix it! There are many things that NIGC does well and Tribes and Tribal regulators tell us so, and we are grateful for those successes. We have also listened to how we can improve our regulatory and enforcement functions to enhance compliance with IGRA. The agency is currently working to develop a comprehensive approach to technology within the agency and in the gaming industry. Earlier this year, we announced the formation of a new technology division focused on enhancing our regulatory mission.

I am particularly excited about the new IT vulnerability assessment testing we are offering to tribes and TGRAs at no cost, which has the potential of saving a tribe thousands of dollars. The new service provides tribes with a more complete vulnerability analysis of their IT system. This new service also augments our Internal Control Assessments which we have been conducting for tribal gaming facilities for the last several months. I encourage tribes and TGRAs to contact us if either of these new services can be beneficial to their operation.

NIGC has been consulting with Tribes about whether NEPA compliance is necessary for agency approval of management contracts and implementing the Buy Indian Act within the agency. These are important issues that came directly from Tribes and Tribal regulators.

I think the most critical issue is how NIGC will carry forward Chairman Chaudhuri's principles that support the integrity of Indian gaming and enforce against gamesmanship on the backs of Tribes. The agency is currently reviewing its processes on how it reviews sole proprietary interests, management contracts, and other statute and regulatory obligations. Stay tuned!

4. What is the most important message you have for the Tribal Gaming Regulators you will be working with in your role as Chief of Staff?

NIGC, Tribes and Tribal regulators have a shared goal of ensuring compliance and strengthening Indian gaming so that it continues to be an economic engine for Tribes. I would ask that Tribal Regulators – as well as Tribes – let us know how we are doing and how we can do better. Under this Administration, we have a renewed commitment to consultation, training and technical assistance and we remain committed to working with the over 5,400 tribal regulatory partners. I am confident with the ongoing and collaborative efforts among tribes, tribal regulators and the NIGC, that we together are helping to achieve compliance and protecting the Indian gaming industry, which has become a vital economic development tool for so many tribes.

5. Can you share with our readers a bit about Shannon?

I am grateful for my grandmother who always told me to go to school and "be of use to our people." Without her love and attention, I'm not sure my journey would be in the same wonderful place that it is today. I do my best to focus everyday on how I can best be of service to my family, my workplace and Indian Country. Oh – and I love bacon on everything!