

Booming Business: Tulalip Casino

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Summary: Despite all rules and taxes that Tulalip Tribe members receive, the casino, resort, and Tulalip reservation land has prospered and continues to grow creating new jobs and more revenue to create many improvements on and off of the reservation.

My casino and tribe is Tulalip from the Washington Team. When beginning my research I found that the casino page was a very popular page compared to Tulalip's tribal page. Tulalip Casino and Resort had over 73,000 fans on Facebook, where the tribal page had only 73 . Tulalip Casino had a Twitter page, where the tribe did not. While looking at the casino page I found that there was hardly anything that advertised the actual tribe, almost seemed to have left the culture out of the page. Clicking on the about me page brought up a link that just took me to the tribal website, but the actual history on the tribe or even the contributions made from the casino back to the tribe were not mentioned on the page.

The Tulalip casino did have an orca as their logo that was the same representation that was seen on the cultural site. When traveling to the casino there is also a huge orca water fountain as you enter the casino, along with a large canoe that is placed by the resort side of the casino. The canoe was one method that ancestors used to travel which was mentioned on the cultural page. There is a small link located at the bottom of the tribal page with a link to the casino, but it is hardly visible.

The tribal website contains information on how they give back to their community. Several ways include funding for education, language to restore and maintain their culture, improving living conditions, and funding for the environment. The tribe consists of about 4,000 members and is still growing. The Tulalip Indian Reservation is 22,000 acres located north of Everett and the Snohomish River and west of Marysville, Washington. Their language is called Lushootseed and this is practiced and maintained by tribal members. Also, every

week new phrases are added to the website to renew the culture for people who want to learn (Tulalip Tribes). The Lushootseed have their own website. There are songs that can be downloaded, apps for phones, and even Lushootseed fonts and keyboards. The purpose of this webpage is to restore the culture and promote the language for everyday use within the tribal communities (Tulalip Lushootseed). They also help out the community by doing things like being involved in the Marysville Boys and Girls Club. They helped paint the facility and helped budget for that since the club did not have the funding to do so.

The Tulalip tribes also have a cultural center which purpose is to share their culture with others, but also preserve culture for the Tulalip tribes. It is called the Hibulb Culture Center & Natural History Preserve. The cultural center is around 23,000 feet and contains a 50 acre natural history preserve. There is a classroom, main exhibit, temporary exhibit, a longhouse, research library, and a gift shop. "The Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve mission is to revive, restore, protect, interpret, collect and enhance the history, traditional cultural values and spiritual beliefs of the Tulalip Tribes who are the successors in interest to the Snohomish, Snoqualmie and Skykomish tribes and other tribes and bands signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott(Hibulb Cultural Center)".

The Tulalip Resort and Casino has one major stereotype that I found. They call it the "Cultural Package" which is a room that is meant to create a cultural feel, yet the rooms look modern with no Tulalip culture present. They also have another room called the "Orca suite" with the same type of décor. It is interesting because there are cultural decorations in the casino such as salmon, totem poles, and orca

decorations, but yet the website does not explain the culture. The casino uses the space for various events as well including concerts and shows. Tulalip Casino allows alcohol and smoking within the casino. They also have a buffet, deli, and two restaurants one including a Salmon smokehouse named with a tribal phrase under the English name.

Casinos in general have stereotypes as well. These stereotypes consist of taking money from players, increased alcohol and tobacco use, higher crime, and drug use.

On August 2, 1991 the Tulalip Tribes of Washington and the State of Washington entered a Class III Gaming Compact. Both parties agreed that under the conditions of the Either Amendment Class III Gaming would benefit the tribes and the state and would protect the members of the tribe and citizens of the state with the IGRA and the compact. Despite all rules and taxes that Tulalip Tribe members receive, the casino, resort, and Tulalip reservation land has prospered and continues to grow creating new jobs and more revenue to create many improvements on and off of the reservation.

The tribal population is at about 4,000 and growing. About 2,500 members live on the reservation that is located north of the Snohomish River and Everett and west of Marysville, Washington.

Sovereignty is the most valued asset to the people of the Tulalip Tribes. “With the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 Tulalip Tribes expanded their tribal rights through the gaming industry (Tulalip Tribes).” This gaming industry has created new ways for growth and success. “The Tribes operates two large casinos, which in turn have helped fund a new health clinic, new department buildings, and myriad of

new and expanded community programs (Tulalip Tribes).”

Out of more than 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States, Tulalip Tribes has been the first and only tribe to establish a federal recognized city. “The Quil Ceda Village’s city status was a hard fought victory in the battle of tribal sovereignty and the recognition of inherent rights. By being a forerunner in the advancement of Native Americans’ rights the Tulalip Tribes has set a precedent for Native peoples everywhere (Tulalip Tribes).”

The Tribal Board of Directors discovered that the housing on and near the reservation are not well maintained and there is a shortage of reliable and decent housing. Therefore the Tulalip Tribal Housing Department is responsible for helping tribal members find reliable and decent housing.

The Tribal Gambling Association has the right to ban members from gambling if they have a gambling addiction. They might be allowed to work in the casino if they are an employee there, but cannot gamble. Anyone working at the Tulalip Casino must have a license and must meet all state requirements prior to employment (Tribal State Compacts).

The Tulalip Board of Directors consists of seven members that serve three years at a time where there is an election every two years for two of the board members (Tulalip Tribes). The Tribal Board of Directors has the power to negotiate with the government, Federal, and the State to represent the tribe. They also have the ability to preserve the tribal culture and arts and crafts. Any tribal member eighteen years or older is able to vote in the election for the tribal council elections. Tribal land has to be leased by the Board of Directors, and has to be approved by the State of Interior with an

inclusion that is permitted by law (Tulalip Tribal Codes).

The Tulalip's predecessor tribes were among the signers of the Treaty of Point Elliot which was created with the United States in 1855. Within this treaty tribes gave up thousands of square miles of land in exchange for permanent protection from the United States government and a small amount of money (Tulalip Tribes Natural Resource Development). Along with these treaties, it also specified that the tribes preserve fishing and hunting rights. "The mission of the Tulalip Natural Resources program is to carry out the tribes' co-management responsibilities in a manner consistent with treaty rights as well as protection and perpetuation of the resources upon which the people have depended for other ten thousand years (Tulalip Natural Resource Development)."

The Tulalip tribes facilitate a gaming operation that provides revenue and is follows the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The revenues may be used to provide per capita payments to the tribe, fund government operations for the tribe, provide general welfare for the tribe and its members, to promote economic development on tribal lands, and to donate to charitable organizations.

Tulalip tribe is growing and the revenue being taken in is also growing vastly. Due to this large amount of intake of revenue, all minors have their per capita distribution put into a trust fund until they turn eighteen. Distributions can be given to minors on certain circumstances such as if a child is diagnosed with a terminal illness and needs long term care.

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The Tribe is charged taxes on retail items. There is an excise tax on the sale of real estate. Tribal members are taxed and have to pay licensing fees as well.

Although the revenue from gaming has increased drastically over the years, this money is also being distributed in positive ways that are helping not only the tribal members, but the general population as well. According to a Taylor Policy Group Study, Washington State Tribes contributed more than \$3.5 billion to Washington's gross state product. Washington Tribes purchased more than \$2.4 billion in goods and services from private companies. \$1.3 billion was paid in wages and benefits to 27,300 employees which included 18,000 who were non tribal members. State and local taxes were calculated at \$255 million (Community Investment Report).

Washington's tribal governments invested \$259 million in 2010 towards capital projects which consisted of the construction of hotels, retail facilities, libraries, schools, health care facilities, roads, and utilities (Community Investment Report). Millions of dollars of tribal gaming are being invested in forest products, restaurants, agriculture, retail, and transportation. Washington tribes heavily fund for salmon preservation.

Despite all stereotypes on casinos, Tulalip tribes have proved to be a positive influence on surrounding community and a thriving business for the tribal communities.

The revenues from the casino and resort have made it possible for the Tulalip casino to help with various charities and also improve the tribal communities.

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