

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

E-commerce in Indian Country Conference

Phoenix, Arizona - January 20, 2017 - From tribal lending to selling tribal and individual Indian goods and services, e-commerce is the future for successful tribal economies. Tribal leaders, directors and citizens must have a better understanding of why e-commerce is important to their reservations and how the internet can expand a tribe's and Indian entrepreneur's market.

The Indian Legal Program at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at ASU and the Rosette, LLP Economic Development Program are holding a conference on February 2-3, 2017 on e-commerce in Indian Country entitled "*Sovereignty and E-Commerce: Innovating and Reshaping the Borders of Indian Country*" at Gila River Indian Community's Wild Horse Pass Hotel and Casino. The conference includes keynote speaker The Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar, the 50th United States Secretary of the Interior for the Obama administration; as well as Chairman Brian Cladoosby, President of the National Congress of American Indians; and the outgoing Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs for the Department of the Interior, Lawrence S. Roberts. The goal of this event is to share information about how to navigate the tribal e-commerce environment. Conference participants will hear from speakers on how a change in the administration may affect business opportunities, as well as the legal and jurisdictional changes affecting tribal business decisions.

Why is e-commerce important?

Very few Indian reservations have functioning economies in which residents can be employed, purchase products and services, and find adequate housing on the reservation. Reservation residents typically have to travel to distant cities to find banks, businesses they can patronize, higher education, livable wage jobs, and quality housing. This situation is a disaster for building reservation economies and community stability, as well as addressing poverty, unemployment, and other issues that Indian nations face. E-commerce is a promising avenue that tribal governments, Indian entrepreneurs, and communities can utilize to address these problems.

Robert J. Miller, Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Rosette LLP American Indian Economic Development Program with the Indian Legal Program, states that "evidence demonstrates (for example, Amazon's enormous online impact on brick and mortar retailers) that tribal governments and Indians engaging in business on reservations have to consider using e-commerce to diversify and strengthen tribal economies".

E-commerce can assist in keeping dollars on reservations

Indian reservations rapidly lose the money that residents receive because of the absence of a variety of

businesses where people can spend money. This leads to the loss of an enormous amount of economic activity and employment for Indian country. Economists use the word “leakage” to define this situation where money leaves a local community or economy before it can circulate within a community. A solution to this problem is for tribal governments and reservation-based entrepreneurs to increase the number of businesses operating in Indian Country by utilizing e-commerce.

A second economic principle that supports the development of reservation based e-commerce is called the “multiplier effect.” This defines the situation where every dollar that is spent by one person ends up as profit and salary in the hands of others. This new person then also spends that one dollar and passes it on to others who will also spend it. In this fashion, one dollar echoes, or “multiplies”, throughout an economy and becomes pay, profit, and spending money for a greater number of people as long as the dollar stays within the local economy. The only way for reservation communities to benefit from the multiplier effect and to keep dollars circulating within their economies is to create more reservation-based businesses.

Developing tribal and entrepreneurial e-commerce businesses on reservations

Governments play a crucial role in developing a private, free market economic system. They protect the public interest, ensure fair competition, maintain law and order, and create laws and judicial systems that help enforce contracts and property rights. Governments create and enforce the rules that ensure a fair system that attracts investors to invest their time and money. Tribal governments play this important role for reservation economies. Tribal governments can encourage businesses to locate on reservations by adopting these kinds of laws and creating stable and fair court systems and efficient bureaucracies. In addition, tribes can use taxation and regulatory strategies to attract private investments and new businesses to reservations. These same strategies can be used by tribal governments and reservation-based entrepreneurs to increase the number of e-commerce businesses located on reservations.

Attend the conference *Sovereignty and E Commerce: Innovating and Reshaping the Borders of Indian Country* in Phoenix on February 2-3 to learn more about tribal government e-commerce opportunities, concerns, risks, protection, in diverse industries including tribal lending, information technology, digital marketing, call centers, tribal telecom, I-Gaming, Fantasy Sports, eSports, as well as many native products and services. More information at: <http://conferences.asucollegeoflaw.com/ilp-ecommerce2017/>

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