

FireKeepers Casino celebrates a successful 2010 - Indian Country Today

Written by Administrator
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BATTLE CREEK, Mich. – [FireKeepers Casino](#) in Battle Creek, Mich., owned by the [Nottawas eppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi](#), celebrated a successful 2010.

Calhoun County

Employment

FireKeepers Casino hired 1,500 team members in 2009 to successfully open the \$300 million facility. Since the Aug. 5, 2009 opening, FireKeepers has effectively maintained workforce levels at 1,500 team members, making the property one of the largest employers in Calhoun County. Interest in employment with FireKeepers has remained high with nearly 16,000 applications received in 2010.

FireKeepers Casino has worked diligently toward maintaining team members and providing benefits for employment. April 29, 2010 marked a key moment for FireKeepers with the opening of an on property health clinic exclusively for its 1,500 team members. The health clinic is part of a partnership with Borgess Health and is designed to take care of team members during work hours, as well as after work hours.

Economic Impact

In addition to generating 1,500 permanent jobs in the region, NHBP distributed nearly \$2 million to the FireKeepers Local Revenue Sharing Board in February 2010 for a five-month operating period ending Dec. 31, 2009. Under the tribe's Class III Gaming Compact with the state of Michigan, NHBP has agreed to provide an annual two percent payment of net slot win to the LRSB. The units of government serving on the LRSB are the NHBP, Calhoun County, Emmett Township, City of Battle Creek, City of Marshall and Athens Township.

NHBP has made a concerted effort to focus FireKeepers Casino on supporting local businesses and suppliers and extend contributions to the local economy beyond the LRSB. NHBP's commitment to local spending has resulted in awarding contracts in excess of \$22.7 million within the State of Michigan in 2010. Over \$16.1 million of this has been spent within a 50 mile radius of FireKeepers Casino.

- Greater Calhoun County region – \$4.7 million
- West Michigan – \$4.2 million

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- Lansing – \$7.2 million
- Metro Detroit – \$5.5 million
- Other – \$1.1 million

Some of the largest items purchased in 2010 by FireKeepers include:

- 11,627 pounds of asparagus
- 13,200 pounds of Canadian snow crab legs
- 28,775 pounds of Yukon potatoes
- 41,325 pounds of prime rib

Promotions and Jackpot Awards

In addition to local economic spending, FireKeepers has distributed money to casino goers through the form of fun and vibrant promotions. Key events include:

- March 31, 2010 – “Win a House on the House” where a Kalamazoo, Mich. resident won a 1,300-square-foot home, which was custom built by Summit Building Services, LLC of Battle Creek, Mich.
- May 30, 2010 – “Official Pace Car Giveaway” where FireKeepers Casino partnered with Michigan International Speedway to give away the official pace car of the June NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Heluva Good! Sour Cream Dips 400. Deborah Hoffman of Bloomfield Hills, Mich. was the official winner and rode in the car during the June 13 race in Brooklyn, Mich.
- May 10, Aug. 7 and Oct. 31 – “Monster Bingo” events where more than \$60,000 in cash was distributed to Bingo participants.

Through 2010 FireKeepers had more than 340 jackpots of \$10,000 or more worth a total of \$6.4 million. Some of the largest awards include:

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- Feb. 27, 2010 – Marshall, Mich. resident Donald Kujawa struck the third largest jackpot since FireKeepers' opening in August 2009 by playing a one cent Super Grand Hotel Monopoly game. Kujawa's total award was \$274,000.
- June 26, 2010 – Coldwater, Mich. resident Greg Woodward hit a \$138,371 table game progressive jackpot while playing Crazy Four Poker. Woodward made a \$1 side bet into the progressive jackpot, which is linked to three other carnival games.
- Sept. 19, 2010 – Leslie, Mich. resident, Geraldine Klingbeil, won \$100,000 while playing an IGT "Double Diamond Strike" progressive slot machine.
- Oct. 17, 2010 – A Kalamazoo, Mich. resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, hit a \$369,893 jackpot while playing "Monopoly Jackpot Station," a penny machine.

Tribal Celebration

On Aug. 1, a Tribal Celebration was held for NHBP and guests in honor of the casinos one year anniversary. The event began with a large tribal ceremony in the casino parking lot. Following the ceremony, a 22-mile Torch Run was held from FireKeepers Casino in Emmett Township to the Pine Creek Reservation in Athens Township. The Torch Run signified the return of the flame that was carried from the Pine Creek Reservation to FireKeepers Casino in 2009 during opening ceremonies. About 30 tribal members ran legs of the run, which lasted about five hours.

Midwest Gaming & Travel Reader's Choice Awards

Midwest Gaming & Travel honored FireKeepers with 20 awards in its first year of operation. First place honors were given for "Best Video Poker," "Friendliest Dealers," and "Most Friendly Staff." Awards were distributed for other entertainment amenities including two of FireKeepers' dining outlets. FireKeepers Casino has five dining options, from Amazen Blazen Grab & Go to Nibi, FireKeepers' fine dining restaurant, which took third place in Midwest Gaming & Travel Readers' Choice for "Favorite Fine Dining." Nibi is a contemporary take on the classic upscale dining option. Mijem Buffet also took a third place award in "Best Casino Buffet."

500,000 Red Hot Rewards Club Members

Prior to FireKeepers Casino opening its doors on Aug. 5, 2009, more than 70,000 people had already signed up for the Red Hot Rewards Club. FireKeepers' Red Hot Rewards Club is a customer loyalty program that gives guests benefits when they play with their Red Hot Rewards card. In just over a year of operation the Red Hot Rewards Club grew to 500,000 members. FireKeepers' 500,000th Red Hot Rewards Club member was Kathryn Setzler, resident of Clyde, Ohio. Setzler received \$500 and an automatic upgrade to the Sizzlin' card which grants her exclusive access to Aurora Lounge.

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Charitable Events

Continuing the concerted efforts to spend locally, FireKeepers Casino also participated in local charitable events including:

- Aug. 17, 2010 – FireKeepers Casino and Greenleaf Hospitality Group, owner and manager of the Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites in Kalamazoo, Mich., partnered to host a benefit dinner with all proceeds going to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo. The benefit dinner, named “Culinary Clash,” was a faceoff of five of Greenleaf Hospitality Group’s head chefs against five of FireKeepers Casino’s head chefs.

- Nov. 11, 2010 – FireKeepers Casino donated 800 turkeys to four local food banks, 200 to each food bank during the Thanksgiving holiday season. The turkeys were from Norman Foods, a local food supplier from Battle Creek, Mich.

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