



***“We Mean Business for American Indians”***

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### **National Center's INPRO 2009 Business and Recognition Event a Tremendous Success**

**TULSA, OKLA.** - The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Indian Progress in Business Event, or INPRO 2009, was a tremendous success. INPRO 2009 took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Tulsa on Sept. 16-18, 2009.

INPRO hosted by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) is the oldest and most prestigious Native American awards celebration in Indian country. For 34 years, this black-tie event is has been steadfast fundraiser for student scholarships where acknowledgement of the accomplishments and contributions of Native American business owners and those who support American Indian business and economic endeavors.

Presenting sponsors for INPRO 2009 included Corporate Sponsor, Raytheon, Tribal Sponsor, The Chickasaw Nation, and the Entertainment Sponsor, Cherokee Nation Entertainment.

Margo Gray-Proctor, NCAIED Board of Directors Chairwoman said that this year's theme "Celebrating Achievement at the Crossroads of Indian Country", held true as attendance was vast from throughout Indian country. "It was exciting to see Native people from Alaska to New York and tribes throughout the West join the three day event."

INPRO 2009, which provided dynamic business networking opportunities with the movers and shakers of Indian Country and Fortune 500 companies, was expanded to include many more elements this year and was increased from 1 day to 3 days. "The National Center made INPRO a multi-faceted event, we expanded the event to include learning sessions, business opportunity fair and our traditional awards banquet," Gray-Proctor said.

"The Native American 40 Under 40 Reception" was a new facet, honoring 40 Native Americans, in the business arena, under the age of 40 making a positive impact throughout Indian Country."

Attendees were treated to dynamic learning sessions coupled with high profile networking opportunities to get the best return on their marketing dollars. The Business Opportunity Fair, Artisans Marketplace and Matchmaking sessions gave business owners a chance to do more than just mingling. The INPRO 2009 Fall Classic Golf tournament was another new addition that added more great opportunities to connect with the community, with other Indian businesses, Tribal Enterprises, and with large corporations.

### **Jay Silverheels Achievement Award**



Recognizing the achievements of Native American business owners and entrepreneurs is a central component of INPRO and this year was no different. The presentation of the prestigious 2009 Jay Silverheels Achievement Award went to Bill Anoatubby, Governor of The Chickasaw Nation.

Anoatubby's dedication as loyal public servant and to tribal leadership focused on healthcare, education, quality housing and economic development easily led to his

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selection for the award. His efforts and foresight for the financial future of the tribe elevated The Chickasaw Nation to a 12,000-plus workforce and over \$350 million in capital outlays.

Governor Anoatubby said, “I am honored to be recognized. The Chickasaw Nation has come a long way and I am proud of our success. It is really great to be part of the event that recognizes all aspects of Indian business. I can see the dedication of not only the National Center, but all involved who are all too willing to impact the crucial knowledge towards seeing businesses succeed, as well as, fostering opportunities to assist and acknowledge the future business leaders of Indian country.”

### **First American Entrepreneur Award**



Former Chairman of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and now President & CEO of Red Arrow Homes Development Tex G. Hall received the First American Entrepreneur Award for his work with Red Arrow Home Development, which has worked extensively with tribes in Arizona.

“Red Arrow Homes is excited to be recognized, I know housing is one of the most critical needs all throughout Indian country. We simply work to help meet that need,” Hall said. “We really like the positive direction that the National Center is going by recognizing our Native companies.”

### **First American Corporate Leadership Award**



The First American Corporate Leadership Award was presented to Oracle, for their technology solutions provided to American Indian businesses leading to successful commerce.

Lori Winfree, Application Sales Manager, Native Tribes & Casinos, accepted the award on behalf Oracle. Lori said, “As a Native American employee of Oracle, I am proud of the solutions that Oracle delivers in Indian Country and the commitment we have to be a part of the Native American Community. I am honored by NCAIED’s recognition of that commitment.”

### **INPRO Scholarships**

Eight (8) student scholarship awards were also presented at INPRO. The 2009 NCAIED Scholarship award winners were: Fiona Teller, Navajo, American University, who received the 2009 Joseph C. Angello Scholarship award; Jennifer Kolden, Arikara/Sioux, Augsburg College; Heather Biel, Tsimsian, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Joel Smith, Caddo, University of Colorado at Denver, who received the American Indian First Entrepreneur Scholarship; Jordan King, Yurok, University of Arizona; Justin Bennett, Cayuga, Canisius College, who received the Lockheed Martin Native American Scholarship award; Rafael Tapia Jr., Pasqua/Yaqui, University of Arizona, was presented the Macy’s Native American Scholarship award; and the IBM Native American Scholarship award was presented to Kristine Thomas, Navajo, Arizona State University.

Without doubt, the excitement of the Native American 40 Under 40 Recognition Reception was a highlight of INPRO 2009, magnifying young Native American’s taking their profession to the next level.



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The Native American 40 were selected based on their demonstration of leadership, initiative and dedication in propelling Native businesses toward further progression throughout Indian Country.

“We have young tribal leaders that we needed to recognize and encourage,” Gray-Proctor said.

A complete listing of the INPRO award winners is available at the National Center’s website at [www.ncaied.org](http://www.ncaied.org). Gray-Proctor said all too often, young business leaders are not recognized for their efforts in the business-world and the Native American 40 under 40 changed that.

Keynote speaker for the INPRO event was “Famous Dave” Anderson. Famous Dave opened up the INPRO event on Thursday morning with an inspirational and motivational presentation which discussed his life and his journey to success as an American Indian entrepreneur. Master of Ceremonies for the INPRO awards black-tie banquet, INPRO Learning Session Instructor, and 40 Under 40 Awardee was James Anderson (son of Dave), Vice President of Training, Lifeskills Center for Business Leadership. James contributed his many talents to the event including his expertise in Business Leadership training.

Featured speakers for the 2009 INPRO awards event were David Hinson, Administrator of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in the United States and John D. Harris II, Vice President of Contracts and Supply Chain for the Raytheon Company.

INPRO 2009 had a little something for everyone, living up to its reputation as the premiere black-tie event for Indian Country.

“We all want the Native American dream,” Gray-Proctor said. “We all walk in two worlds. On behalf of the NCAIED board of directors, we thank all of you for attending INPRO 2009.”

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