

## Casino Connection

Vol. 3, No. 5 May 2007

### Diversity Strengthens Gaming

*Major companies recognize benefits of encouraging multiculturalism*

by **Bill Bible**



When I attended elementary school in Maryland 50 years ago, segregation was the norm throughout the United States—Nevada casinos included. There are infamous stories of African-American entertainers who were not allowed to patronize the establishments in which they performed. Patrons of color were turned away at the front door and forced to go elsewhere. This is a history the gaming industry is not proud of, but to ignore the past is to ignore the truth. It took the courage of a few people to change these practices. In doing so, Nevada's gaming industry has become a national leader in encouraging diversity in its employment, business partners and patrons.

In recent years, many of the industry's largest companies, including MGM Mirage, Harrah's Entertainment, Station Casinos and Boyd Gaming, have made extensive efforts to not only diversify their workforces but also to diversify those with whom they do business. Each company has programs encouraging diversity in their worker base, management and career ladders in place for all employees to climb.

Diversity extends beyond social consciousness, it is good business. People like to have fun and relax regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender or race. Individual personal definitions of these activities may differ, but again, that is not determined by age, sexual orientation, gender or race. When walking through a casino you see people of every shape, color, height and age represented. Gaming demonstrates complete equality among all players: Everyone has the same chance of winning.

One gaming company's diversity mission statement includes, "Our uniqueness as individuals is what makes us stronger together, giving us a competitive advantage." Even though this is a corporate philosophy and strategy, it also reflects the philosophy of the industry as well.

Nevada's history is replete with national and state activist groups railing against gaming, most without really understanding what Nevada gaming is or means.

Nevada gaming provides opportunities to anyone who is willing to work hard and contribute to a common goal and a common good.

Diversity is a competitive advantage that Nevada's gaming companies are aware of, but more importantly they know it is the right thing to do. Each company strives to be the best practitioner and create the most inviting environment for workers and customers alike. However, they cannot achieve this goal without each of you doing your best to work with and serve those who are different from you. As the statement goes "Our uniqueness as individuals is what makes us stronger together."

*Casino Connection Nevada contributing editor Bill Bible is the president of the Nevada Resort Association. Bible has a long history with the state of Nevada and the gaming industry. He has served as a controller for Nevada, the chairman of the state Gaming Control Board, and a member of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission.*