

Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise begins layoffs

Written by gallupsun
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The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise announced, it has been forced to temporarily layoff 1,120 team members, 776 of whom are Navajo tribal members.

In early November, NNGE leadership had warned about the possibility of layoffs. (See Gallup Sun VOL. 6, ISSUE 294, Nov. 13, 2020)

Brian Parrish, Interim CEO of NNGE said, "Due to the extended closure, since March 17, 2020, our business operations have been severely impacted and as a result, we must make very difficult financial and personnel decisions."

"We remain focused on seeking every viable option to stabilize the salary and benefits of more than 1,000 Navajo families and to protect the \$460 million investment the Nation has made in gaming facilities and resources," Parrish said.

One hundred-sixty-five employees will remain to ensure that essential functions are performed.

"We intend to recall staff as soon as practicable, either by approval to reopen, or approval by the Board of Directors to return team members to administrative leave with pay."

Permanent closure would come at a cost of \$460 million to the Navajo Nation for the first year.

Subsequent years will reflect continued losses of approximately \$219 million due to the elimination of interest revenues, gaming distribution fund revenues, tax revenue payments, and

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business site lease income, as well as, the economic output currently shared across the Navajo Nation reservation.

A permanent closure would also hurt communities by the immediate loss of more than \$807,000 that NNGE provides each year for local police, fire and emergency services.

NNGE leadership remains focused on finding a resolution before the end of January.

“We believe we can responsibly reopen, at a reduced occupancy with the implementation of first-in-class safety protocols. We have studied the science and reviewed the best guidelines at each stage. We have consistently laid out our step-by-step plans to strike the right balance and have detailed the catastrophic consequences of continued closure,” Parrish said.

