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TribalNet Recognizes Three Outstanding Information Technology Teams with Industry Awards.

Dec 9, 2019 – Three Information Technology (IT) teams were recently recognized during the 20th Annual TribalNet Conference and Tradeshow in Nashville, TN. TribalNet has been officially recognizing IT teams for exemplary work since 2008. TribalNet had called for nominations earlier this summer and each application was reviewed by the TribalNet Advisory Boards, made up of technology decision makers and executives in Tribal Enterprises, Gaming, Government and Health. This peer-to-peer recognition has become a long standing tradition and one that marks a high level of prestige.

First the Soboba Casino Resort's IT Department was selected as an award recipient based on the integral role they played in opening the replacement Soboba Casino Resort Facility, which was a 12-year initiative that finally came to fruition. Furthermore, they implemented all the backbone fiber and computing infrastructure for a new Fire Station, Health Clinic, and Commodities Centers. Along with providing all tribal residences full broadband internet to allow the ease of access to telemedicine, job employment, and business opportunities to continue to improve their tribe. The Soboba IT team has matched all of the tribal leadership initiatives with innovative technology that they believe will continue to serve the tribal members for years to come. Steven Nino, CIO at Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, had this to say in response to the award, "I am delighted to receive this prestigious 2019 TribalNet Industry Award. Being recognized for this award is a great indication that our technology roadmap is being again recognized as appropriate and supported by a genuinely reputable and respected organization in the Tribal Government and Gaming world in TribalNet. This recognition speaks volumes for the efforts that we make to understand our stakeholders and deliver business/stakeholder satisfaction by using key technology partnerships such as Synergy Information Solutions to build our infrastructure. As a tribal government and gaming/hospitality facility, our IT infrastructure and digital transformation efforts are key to the success of our gaming and hospitality business along with our government initiatives geared to help build a long term future for Soboba."

Next was the Cherokee Nation Health IT Department who took home an award. In the past two years, the Cherokee Nation Health IT department has been heavily involved in planning, advising and seeing to fruition the largest tribal outpatient health facility in the nation, as a state of the art, high tech place for patients to receive health care. This facility has more than 240 exam rooms, two MRI machines, an ambulatory surgery center, 34 dental chairs and specialty health services not previously offered. The facility will bring over 800 additional jobs into Cherokee Nation over the next few years including an additional 100 physicians. From the health IT perspective, the installation, deployment, trouble-shooting

and overseeing of anything related to health IT has been accomplished by this highly motivated Health IT group. An opening of this magnitude would normally take a much larger staff, but was successfully accomplished by a concerted effort to make services available to the citizens that are served by this and other facilities. The work for this new facility was done while continuing to maintain the standards and services expected throughout Cherokee Nation Health. By bringing the latest technology to the Cherokee Nation the IT department has helped increase patient access, allowing more patients to be seen sooner with shorter wait times. Improved data integrity allows focused reports to be analyzed for improved performance and quality. By providing reliability and building trust that the department team members will follow through and assist staff members at all levels has made a huge impact on relationships and satisfaction from healthcare staff. Donnie Parish, CIO at Cherokee Nation Health said, "To bring this award back to the Health IT department is quite an honor. It definitely takes a *team* to be able to accomplish any project whether large or small, and our team is always up to the task! As this is also the largest joint venture project with Indian Health Service, a lot of effort, planning and coordination went into every day, and every day everyone showed up ready to meet the day's goals. Our healthcare system is growing and expanding to meet the needs of the patient's we serve, and to take part in that is so exciting."

Finally, the Ho-Chunk Nation was recognized with one of this year's awards. When asked what makes this team deserving of recognition for excellence, their response painted a vivid picture of the day to day challenges they face and their commitment to *slaying IT dragons* day in and day out. IT Supervisor, Bobby Bird says, "Technology is an ever changing, living, almost breathing structure of a beast; our department is equivalent to the warriors that battle the beast. The sheer expanse of area that we cover can be overwhelming, throw in the diversity of programs and departments that we service and we could now be considered wizards of industry." The team is leveraging industry research and best practices to systematically improve IT maturity and ensure they achieve their goals. Furthermore, the Ho-Chunk Nation has multiple casino locations and IT leadership is implementing the same best practices across locations thereby ensuring processes are streamlined. IT has the ability to gather data from the businesses/departments, take that data and identify areas that need improvement. Finally, they map those results based on importance and combine the data points to establish priority. Having their core processes established and uniform allows them not to always be fighting the beast, yet work with the beast as a partner to drive the business forward.

TribalNet plans to announce the call for Industry Award nominations in the Spring of 2020. Recipients will be recognized at the 21st Annual TribalNet Conference being held Nov 9-12 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, TX. Nominations and recommendations can come from anyone as we will be seeking teams in Tribal Gaming, Government and Health who are showcasing impactful and innovative mindsets. Teams that can tell their story of implementing or using technology to enhance the lives of their communities or improve their employee or customer experiences should apply.

About TribalNet: Through the annual conference, year-round membership, magazine and industry partnerships, TribalNet, a division of TribalHub, is an industry resource connecting technology leaders at tribal organizations, health facilities, casinos and enterprises nationwide with technology solution providers specific to the industry. For more information, visit TribalNet online at: www.tribalnetonline.com