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Strategic Leadership, Investment, Marketing Events Catapult Circling Raven to New Heights
Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Brand Re-Invigoration Program Begun in 2018 Continues to Pay Dividends

(Worley, Idaho; November 9, 2021) – After the last putt was holed on the last day of the 2021 season (Halloween), the staff members at Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel and Circling Raven Golf Club were finally able to take a deep breath. They had just completed the most ambitious year in club history. And despite running hard virtually non-stop from February through October, plus staging a professional tour event that challenged the operation with countless additional tasks, record business numbers were achieved along with other goals set.

These include:

1. Surpassing \$1 million in golf shop merchandise sales for the first time
2. Increasing the number of rounds played and revenue while maintaining superb playing conditions
3. Undertaking some course and supporting facility improvements
4. Regaining the No. 1 public course ranking in Idaho and climbing in Top 20 Casino Courses list nationally
5. Garnering praise from the professional tour players who competed in the augural Circling Raven Championship
6. Promoting cultural tourism activities offered by the casino resort and mesh them with golf package messaging
7. Leveraging golf to empower youth and Native Americans while operating in a manner that honors Tribal values

The high-water marks accomplished this season originated from strategic plans begun in 2018. Led by Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel executive team and the industry leading Coeur d'Alene Tribe that owns and operates the resort and golf club, it was determined that as Circling Raven approached its 15th anniversary at the time, a revitalization program would benefit the business enterprise and position it well for the next 15 years.

Mission accomplished.

Named for a seminal Tribal Chief, Circling Raven flexes its mighty wings greater than ever. The casino resort and golf club led the state and region, and in some cases the nation, in crucial areas. It was the first casino in America to reopen safely after the pandemic hit in 2020. It invested millions in a casino resort renovation completed in 2019. It was named Tribal Destination of the Year for its cultural tourism offerings that carry on Tribal tradition and give guests and visitors unique, inspiring experiences. It rewards drive-market consumers and generates tremendous repeat business through reward programs (both for the casino and golf club). It also appeals to visitors outside the drive market through its national reputation, unique value propositions, and the cultural themes and DNA that are the lifeblood of casino resort and golf club.

The substantial investment to reinvigorate the golf brand is the Circling Raven Championship presented by KXLY News 4 Now. A Symetra “Road to the LPGA” Tour event, it brought in top professional women golfers from around the globe. They competed for shares of a \$200,000 prize purse over three days last August. The spend was a risk, albeit a calculated bet based on a proven entity with 15-plus years of successful track record.

Yet and still, a wager is a wager, not a guarantee. The course, casino resort and their staffs had to execute against it, all while shouldering many more demands on staffing and other resources. Director of Golf Dave Christenson and Superintendent Brian Woster and their teammates, countless casino resort staff, hundreds of volunteers, and Symetra TOUR staff worked Herculean hours before and during the championship.

Not only did the event shine an international spotlight on Circling Raven (designed by course architect Gene Bates) spurring demand, but the TOUR and its players heaped praise on the golf layout, conditions, casino resort, and Coeur d’Alene Tribe – unbiased credibility worth its weight in sale and marketing gold.

Eight players who competed at Circling Raven went on to secure their LPGA TOUR memberships for 2022, the highest level of women’s golf in the world. Everyday golfers love playing courses where the pros play, particularly when professionals – experts in their field – express appreciation for them. This has driven more demand to play Circling Raven than ever before.

There are two years to come in the 3-year agreement with the “Road to the LPGA” pro golf tournament. There are more capital improvement plans for outlined for the golf course. These began last year with enhancements to the course’s practice putting green, the expansive driving range and instruction area, 10th hole tee boxes. An aggressive public relations and marketing program fans the flames of national and international interest, as well as brand awareness. And the Advantage Card program for regular players at Circling Raven grows with each passing year, generating more pre-sold revenue whilst adding benefits year over year.

“We know there was a great opportunity to grow our casino resort and golf club businesses,” said Laura Penney, CEO, an avid golfer and tribe member who has been working for the CDA Casino Resort Hotel for more than 25 years. “We just had to ensure that we made smart decisions and then did the necessary work to make them succeed. We look forward to building on our reinforced foundation.”

The exceptional business performance stands out given that it is being accomplished during a pandemic, a time when Circling Raven froze playing fees at below peak season rates. This management decision was designed to lessen the burden for patrons who are seeking a safe, healthy recreational outlet amid the course's 620 acres, ideal for social distancing.

"This has been a win-win for the golf club, the casino resort, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe," said Circling Raven Director of Golf Dave Christenson, PGA, who along with wife, Jennifer Christenson, spearheaded the record retail shop revenue in 2021. "It wasn't easy – an incredible amount of effort and resources went into reaching our goals – but the saying is true – anything worth accomplishing is worth working hard for. None of this would have happened without the vision, strategy, and leadership of the Tribal Council and executive team at Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort. They saw the opportunities and they pursued them beautifully. And it's only the tip of the iceberg."

Visit www.cdacasino.com/golf for more information on golf and other resort options.

About Circling Raven Golf Club and Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel

Owned and operated by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Circling Raven is in the scenic Idaho panhandle approximately 55 minutes from Spokane International Airport (GEG). Measuring 7,189 yards from the rear tees, the 18-hole layout sprawls magnificently through 620 acres of woodlands, wetlands, and Palouse grasses. Its gleaming white sand bunkers are large and strategically placed and its hole variety ingenious. The course will host the Circling Raven Championship in August, a Symetra "Road to the LPGA" Tour event.

Other Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel amenities and activities include the full-service Spa Ssakwa'q'n (pronounced Sock-wock-en); 300 hotel rooms; bars, restaurants, lounges, and eateries; cultural immersion options; and more. The casino completed a \$15 million renovation of its gaming floor and Events Center in 2019. Circling Raven has garnered numerous best-in-kind honors since opening, including being rated a Top 100 Resort Course, Best in State, and a Top U.S. Casino Course. Its golf shop has won national and regional awards for its excellence and its variety of products, displays, and performance.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Dan Shepherd, danshepherdpr@gmail.com, 703-403-5317

Yvette Matt, ymatt@cdacasino.com, 208-500-9989