

# A Big Gamble That Paid Off—and Gives Back

Employees at **Eureka Casino Resort** don't just work for a family business—they own it.



**IN 2015 EUREKA CASINO AND RESORT**, located in the beautiful Red Mesa region of southern Nevada, took a gamble on selling the company to its employees through an employee stock-ownership plan (ESOP). “For years in our company, people felt like they were all part of one big family running our business together. After the ESOP was created, they owned the family business,” says Eureka chairman Gregory T.H. Lee, who founded the company with his parents in 1997.

The result of this gamble is a flourishing company that earned a spot on *Fortune's* Best Medium Workplaces list this year. “Our employees have learned that their livelihood, their enjoyment of work, and

their daily happiness are all tied together,” says Lee, who adds that he feels humbled to have been named to the list.

For the employee-owners, the deeper investment in the company they work for has fostered a deeper connection to the work they do. “As an owner, it is not just what you do, it is how you do it and the impact of the work you



do. As we say, success is when you add value to yourself; significance is when you add value to others,” says COO Andre Carrier.

This idea not only fuels the internal culture of the company but also guides Eureka employees' work in their communities. The Eureka Community Initiative, for instance, looks for distinctive ways to improve quality of life in the places the company operates. Through the program, the company provides essential financial and volunteering support for an intensive summer reading program at local elementary schools, among other charitable works.

This year, the company doubled down on this mission. It purchased an OTB (off-track betting) and casino facility in New Hampshire, a state where 35% of casino revenue must go directly to local charities. Eureka's mission to build the largest charity casino in America is well underway.

Carrier is determined to inspire others to follow Eureka's lead. “We always advocate for other companies to evolve their business through employee ownership,” he says. Lee echoes this sentiment: “As an employee, you often have a passive understanding of your company's business, but as a part owner, you have an active one.” ■

