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WE-KO-PA CASINO RESORT CELEBRATES ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The state-of-the-art facility has experienced rapid growth during its first 12 months

FORT McDOWELL, Ariz. – Oct. 20, 2021 – On October 29, the [We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort](#) will celebrate its one-year anniversary of offering excellence in gaming to Valley residents and visitors to the area.

Opening in 1984 as the first casino in Arizona, Ba’Ja Bingo was renamed twice over the ensuing 37 years – as the Fort McDowell Gaming Center, and later, Fort McDowell Casino. The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation’s historic 1992 standoff against federal agents who attempted to seize their slot machines paved the way for Indian gaming and enabled the tribe to build a strong community for their members.

Three years ago, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation committed to building an entirely new smoke-free facility to better reflect its brand and provide an elegant, contemporary ambiance for gaming enthusiasts and restaurant guests.

Rising to the challenge of unveiling a state-of-the-art 166,341-square-foot facility during a global pandemic, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and their dedicated employees worked tirelessly to open the new casino while ensuring the health and wellbeing of all who worked and played there by adhering to all CDC recommendations and implementing personal protection measures throughout the property.

The result was a new facility that raised the bar for casinos in the area, boasting an impressive array of slot machines, bingo, tables and gaming amenities; fine- and casual dining outlets; live entertainment; and Native American design elements reflected throughout the property.

A year of growth and change

Here are the key milestones achieved over the past 12 months

- We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort was named “Best Casino” for 2021 in PHOENIX Magazine’s popular “Best of the Valley” Reader’s Choice section.
- Unified the casino and hotel, that were previously separately managed and operated enterprises, under one entity to build a more cohesive brand, maximize efficiencies, and achieve economies of scale.
- Ember, the casino’s fine-dining steakhouse, achieved the illustrious Wine Spectator “Best of Award of Excellence” for 2021, recognizing its excellent breadth across multiple regions and significant vertical depth. Ember is one of only seven restaurants in the state to receive this award.

- Partnered with Betfred Sports, recognized leaders in the US sports betting market. We are finalizing our plan to build a Las Vegas-quality retail sportsbook to bring sport betting to Arizona residents.
- Signed Tribal Gaming Compacts, along with the legislative changes required to enact them, after years of good faith negotiations with their sister tribes toward a modernized Compact with the state of Arizona.
- Introduced two new table games: Roll To Win Craps™ (a semi-autonomous craps game that lets players shoot real dice across a 12-foot LED playing field screen), and Blaze Roulette (featuring an LED Lightbox-lit gaming surface that displays eye-catching animations and game prompts).
- Unveiled new Dining Studio, featuring scratch-made food from around the world at Dragon Wok and Noodle (authentic Chinese specialty items) and Las Tapas (traditional Mexican favorites).
- Added approximately 75 of the latest, cutting-edge slot machines in the newly named The Mint slot room.
- Released a user-friendly app that shows room rates, highlights promotions, and showcases upcoming entertainment events, plus allows users to book accommodations and reservations at Ember steakhouse, enroll in the Fortune Club, and learn more about meeting venues.
- Was named a finalist for AZRE Magazine’s annual Real Estate and Development (RED) Awards, as one of the state’s top projects, architects, contractors, developers and brokers in 2020.
- WKP Sports & Entertainment, the casino’s sports bar-themed restaurant, joined the Untappd app to introduce the Valley drinking community to their wide range of draft and local beers. We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort was the first casino in the state to offer this innovative way for beer enthusiasts to discover new beer styles while tracking and rating brews already tried.

“For more than 37 years, our tribal nation has taken great pride in offering excellence in gaming, and we’re thrilled to continue this legacy in our beautiful new facility,” said Bernadine Burnette, president of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. “Our future plans include launching a new sportsbook facility with Betfred Sports, as well as opening Amore – the newest addition to our Dining Studio that will feature traditional Italian fare.

“We’d like to invite everyone to celebrate our one-year anniversary and experience the magic of We-Ko-Pa for themselves.”

About We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort

Owned and operated by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, the spectacular 166,341-square-foot [We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort](#) boasts state-of-the-art gaming, a variety of specialty fine and casual dining restaurants, and live entertainment. The attached AAA Four Diamond hotel offers 246 luxurious guestrooms and suites; 25,000 square feet of meeting space; relaxing spa treatments at the Amethyst Spa; and two resort-style outdoor pools.

The new casino resort’s proximity to the two highly acclaimed courses at We-Ko-Pa Golf Club and numerous outdoor activities at Fort McDowell Adventures make it the ideal destination for a vacation, business function or special event.

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is an 889-member Native American tribe that calls Central Arizona's upper Sonoran Desert home. Located to the northeast of Phoenix within Maricopa County, Arizona, the 40-square mile reservation is a small part of the ancestral territory of the once nomadic Yavapai people, who hunted and gathered food in a vast area of Arizona's desert lowlands and mountainous Mogollon Rim country.

For more information about the new casino, visit www.wekopacasinoresort.com.

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