



# Casinos & Communities Michigan




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“I think the casinos really started the renaissance of Detroit... Other investors and people coming to the city saw that the casinos weren’t going anywhere so it gave that viability for people to come, put down roots, and open a business or even live down here.”

*Joe Oliver, Account Manager,  
Allied Eagle Supply Company*

## Gaming in Michigan by the Numbers

27

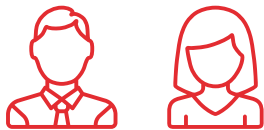
commercial and  
tribal casinos

\$1.3B

generated taxes & tribal  
revenue sharing annually

\$6.3B

total annual  
economic impact



37,911

jobs supported



\$2.1B

total supported wages  
annually



“The casinos helped the city of Detroit in many ways, not just by revenue, but by entertainment, by tourism. In my view, it has been a good experience for the city of Detroit.”

*Brenda Jones, President,  
Detroit City Council*

# History of Gaming in Michigan

1993

Seven tribes sign Michigan's first tribal gaming compacts

1994

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe opens the first tribal casino in Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

1996

Michigan voters authorize three commercial casinos in Detroit

1999-  
2000

MotorCity Casino Hotel, MGM Grand Detroit, and Greektown Casino open their doors

2018

Detroit's three casinos rank among America's 20 highest revenue-generating commercial properties outside Nevada

2019

State lawmakers legalize sports betting and internet gaming

In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *California vs Cabazon Band of Mission Indians* that states cannot prohibit many tribal gaming activities. The following year, Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to regulate the conduct of gaming on tribal lands. Today, Michigan has 12 tribes that operate a total of 24 casinos throughout the state.



# Laying the Foundation for an Economic Comeback

Michigan has seen a renaissance since the darkest days of the Great Recession. An estimated 800,000 jobs were lost between 2000 and 2009, and the Great Recession of 2008 delivered another series of blows to the Great Lakes State, culminating in the City of Detroit's 2013 bankruptcy filing. "It was the most desperate big city in the United States a number of years ago when it went into bankruptcy," said Michael O'Callaghan, former Executive VP and COO of the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Center. Yet, during the same period, the casino industry established itself as a new engine of economic growth, creating jobs and bringing hope to communities across the state. "Now [Detroit] is out of bankruptcy and getting healthier," said O'Callaghan, "and the casinos contributed to that."

Brooks Lumber, one of the oldest retailers in the city, has operated out of its Corktown location for more than 100 years. Corktown was, according to Ray Formosa, owner and president of the lumber yard, an area other retailers wouldn't consider until the casino industry made a bet on the neighborhood. After Tiger Stadium closed, Illitch Holdings' MotorCity Casino Hotel "came into town, and it put a seed in the ground for economic development," said Formosa, whose company has also benefitted from business with MGM Grand Detroit and Penn National Gaming's Greektown Casino. "When the bubble burst a number of years ago, the amount of construction in the area dried up. But thank goodness for the casinos, because they were consistent." Today, the area is booming, with boutique stores, offices, residential buildings, and a range of restaurants open for business up and down Michigan Avenue.

Allied Eagle Supply Company, a family-owned provider of janitorial supplies, is another local casino supplier that has flourished over the last 20 years. Account manager Joe Oliver attributes their success to the purchasing power supplied by casino clients, which allowed the company to increase their bulk purchasing and expand into other markets. In another part of the city, Fred Del Bene, co-founder of Del Bene Produce also cited the volume of business that comes from supplying casinos as invaluable. "Without them, I would have to lay off some people," said Del Bene.

Beyond the immediate economic impact, gaming increased the quality of life for Michiganders employed at the properties. Casinos provide "different levels of jobs from entry-level, janitorial, cashier to pit bosses to managers to working for a company that is not only local, but maybe even national and international," said Michigan State Representative Tyrone Carter, whose district includes all three Detroit casinos.

For Detroit City Council President Brenda Jones, the impact of casinos boils down to one word: "opportunity." MGM Grand Detroit, MotorCity Casino Hotel, and Greektown Casino are among southeast Michigan's largest employers, with approximately 7,600 team members between them, two-thirds of whom are minorities and half of whom are women. In all, Michigan's casino industry supports nearly 38,000 jobs statewide.

Economic revitalization, small business growth, and job opportunities – these are the community benefits of gaming.



"The resurgence of this neighborhood started with the emergence of the casinos."

*Ray Formosa, Owner and President, Brooks Lumber*



# Communities Coming Together

Every industry touts promises of good corporate citizenship, but gaming's commitment extends to all corners of the local community, not only generating the tax revenue necessary to fund local projects and services, but also by maintaining an active presence in local civic life.

"They support everything we do because they know the impact it has not just on the people we serve, but also on the broader community," said David Sampson, CEO of Mariners Inn, a substance abuse treatment and recovery center. MotorCity Casino Hotel has a longstanding relationship with Mariners Inn, helping with everything from the annual fundraiser and providing meals, to donating interview clothing. "They don't just come and give us these things and say goodbye, they stay and talk to the guys about how they can succeed."

Casinos across the city invest time and resources in helping people in need. City Council President Brenda Jones has seen the casinos use their resources to aid the city's fight against homelessness and support underprivileged children. In the past 20 years, MGM Grand Detroit distributed more than 40,000 coats, hats, and gloves to children at more than 30 Detroit schools and agencies.

**Did you know gaming industry employees nationwide contribute more than 422,000 volunteer hours per year? At MGM Grand Detroit, nearly 1,900 team members volunteered 28,000 hours of their time over the last seven years.**

Similar to casinos' support for local business growth, they also increase many nonprofits' capacity to serve. Gleaners Community Food Bank increased its food distribution from 34 million to 46 million pounds a year, supported by gaming industry commitments. CEO Gerry Brisson has watched as casinos "really put their heart and soul into it, activating their teams down here, helping their people understand the importance of the work and the impact."

Beyond the many causes the casino industry and its employees are involved with, casino-generated tax dollars support projects that strengthen Detroit and improve all residents' lives. In 2019, the city received nearly \$170 million from gaming taxes. "When you're talking about a city that five years ago was in bankruptcy, that money definitely helps," said Council President Jones.

Detroit's casinos are true partners for the community – unwavering during the city's darkest days and equally committed to building a brighter future for everyone.



**"Some of our biggest supporters have come from the gaming industry. It's literally been hundreds, and it might even be thousands by now, of volunteers who have taken their time to give back to the community."**

***Gerry Brisson, President and CEO, Gleaners Community Food Bank***



# Supporting Michigan's Tribal Nations and Communities

Detroit's commercial casino market is thriving, but it only represents one aspect of the broader gaming community in the Great Lakes State. Across Michigan, 24 tribal casinos are helping thousands of Native American families, businesses, and communities prosper, diversify, and build for the future. Owned and operated by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, FireKeepers Casino Hotel is a case in point. Located just outside Battle Creek, tribal and non-tribal residents alike have benefitted from the casino.

Derek King, Calhoun County Commissioner, grew up in the area and watched the Pine Creek Indian Reservation change dramatically as a result of gaming. "Now they have built some of the most state-of-the-art facilities, buildings, and health departments" and the tribe is better able "to take care of and enable its members."

When it comes to economic benefits outside tribal lands, Battle Creek City Manager Rebecca Fleury sees the impact of FireKeepers Casino Hotel as threefold. "Certainly, it does employ people in our area and there are many people that live in the city of Battle Creek that are employed by FireKeepers." Then there are the indirect effects, as Fleury noted: "it brings people from all over the state and beyond the state of Michigan. They go to the casino, but they also come into downtown Battle Creek, they eat at local restaurants. Some of them like it so much they stay." Finally, the tribe's gaming compact with the state increased funding for local economic development in Battle Creek, with tribal casino revenue sharing being used to support public safety, infrastructure, parks, educational attainment and career pathways. "I can't think of an area that they haven't touched with the money that they share with the community," said Fleury.

"As a city manager, I'm always looking for community champions and FireKeepers is right at the top...They see that for any business to be successful, you need a variety of community partners, and they certainly have recognized that and go above and beyond."

*Rebecca Fleury, City Manager,  
City of Battle Creek*

Enabled by the casino, the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi diversified its investment in the Battle Creek area. In 2017, the tribe launched The Fire Hub – a multi-million-dollar project to renovate an old fire station into a new restaurant and adjoining food pantry for those in need, with 80 percent of profits pooled to benefit local charities. A year later, the tribe expanded its food access efforts by building a greenhouse on tribal lands to deliver fresh, free salads to local schoolchildren.

Ellen Collier, CEO of S.A.F.E. Place, a nonprofit that provides counseling, legal services, and shelter to domestic violence victims, describes her organization's connection with FireKeepers Casino Hotel as "a very comprehensive relationship as far as what they donate and provide to us... we've collaborated with them on everything from building upgrades and maintenance to volunteer work, and one of their staff is on our board as treasurer." When it comes to supporting tribal members and the Battle Creek community, Collier says the casino has been two things: "reliable and consistent."





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