

Philanthropy Journal

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OF NORTH CAROLINA

Rolling the dice

Cherokee bank on gambling to counter poverty

Leaders of the Eastern Band of Cherokee expect to see an economic boom from a new electronic gambling casino slated to open next fall. Nonprofits on the reservation are hoping to reap some of the benefits.

By STEPHANIE GREER

Cherokee

The Eastern Band of Cherokee, whose reservation straddles Swain, Jackson, Graham and Cherokee counties in the western North Carolina mountains, is a nation steeped in the traditions of ancestry, culture - and poverty.

With an economy that depends mainly on the seasonal tourist indus-

try and dwindling federal and state grants, about 68 percent of the 11,000 Cherokee on the North Carolina reservation live in poverty.

Of income the Cherokee do earn, about 90 percent is spent off the reservation, says Verl Emrick, planning director for the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

Until about 50 years ago, farming was the primary means of support for the people on the reservation, says Joyce Dugan, Eastern Band chief. In the 1960s, government grants became indispensable.

Today, grant money - both federal and state - is being sliced, and tourism still does not provide enough to pull the Eastern Band out of poverty.

The reservation has nonprofits



Bingo used to be the most popular game in Cherokee, but that has changed with the building of an electronic casino.

Photo by Chuck Liddy

supported by the government and the Cherokee, such as Head Start, a food bank and a health and human services department. Tribal funds go into programs for the elderly, handicapped and the poor. But it is not enough to meet existing needs, Cherokee leaders say.

So after much deliberation, the tribe's leadership decided to build an electronic gaming casino which opened in 1995.

This fall, a bigger casino will replace the old one, and community leaders on and off the reservation are waiting to see what its impact will be on the economy.

With 60,000 square feet of gaming space, a 20,000-square-foot event

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Hard times ahead

Plant shutdown spurs action by nonprofits

The impending closing of a Dayco plant leaves Haywood County reeling - and nonprofits are springing into action to deal with the fallout.

By STEPHANIE GREER

Waynesville

Haywood County's second-largest employer will close its doors within

the next year or so, plunging about 3.5 percent of the county's workforce into joblessness and forcing nonprofit service agencies into a red-alert status.

"This is the biggest thing in the history of the county," says Leon Turner, executive director of the Haywood County Economic Development Commission.

Approximately 765 employees will be out of a job when the Dayco rubber

products manufacturing plant in Waynesville closes, putting a strain on a local economy in which jobs already are scarce and often seasonal.

Representatives of Dayco announced the closing in October but, so far, employees have been told only that the plant's final days will be in the next 12 to 18 months.

County and private nonprofit agencies are working together to

ease the transition for employees in the face of the impending closing. Through an initiative called "Project Sunrise," committees are analyzing problems that laid-off employees will face, and deciding how nonprofits can help.

Dayco is one of the county's top two corporate employers - behind Champion International Corp., a

Look for SHUTDOWN, page 22

Hunt embraces nonprofits

Gov. Jim Hunt says he will work in close partnership with nonprofit organizations to improve life in North Carolina - and he has pledged to be a better partner than he was in the past four years.

At a session Jan. 22 to brief nonprofit leaders about his legislative agenda, Hunt also announced he would launch a grass-roots initiative, based mainly in churches and other religious congregations, to improve race relations in the state.

"We have not begun to make the progress in race relations we ought to have made," Hunt told more than 150 nonprofit leaders.

Hunt said he initially would talk with civic, education and nonprofit leaders about how to build a statewide conversation on race.

He also announced that he had named Robin Britt, former state secretary of human resources, to be his nonprofit liaison. Britt also will serve as Hunt's special adviser on children and families.

Hunt said he has asked Britt to meet regularly with nonprofit leaders and with nonprofit liaisons in all government departments to "institutionalize and make sure we're having regular contact."

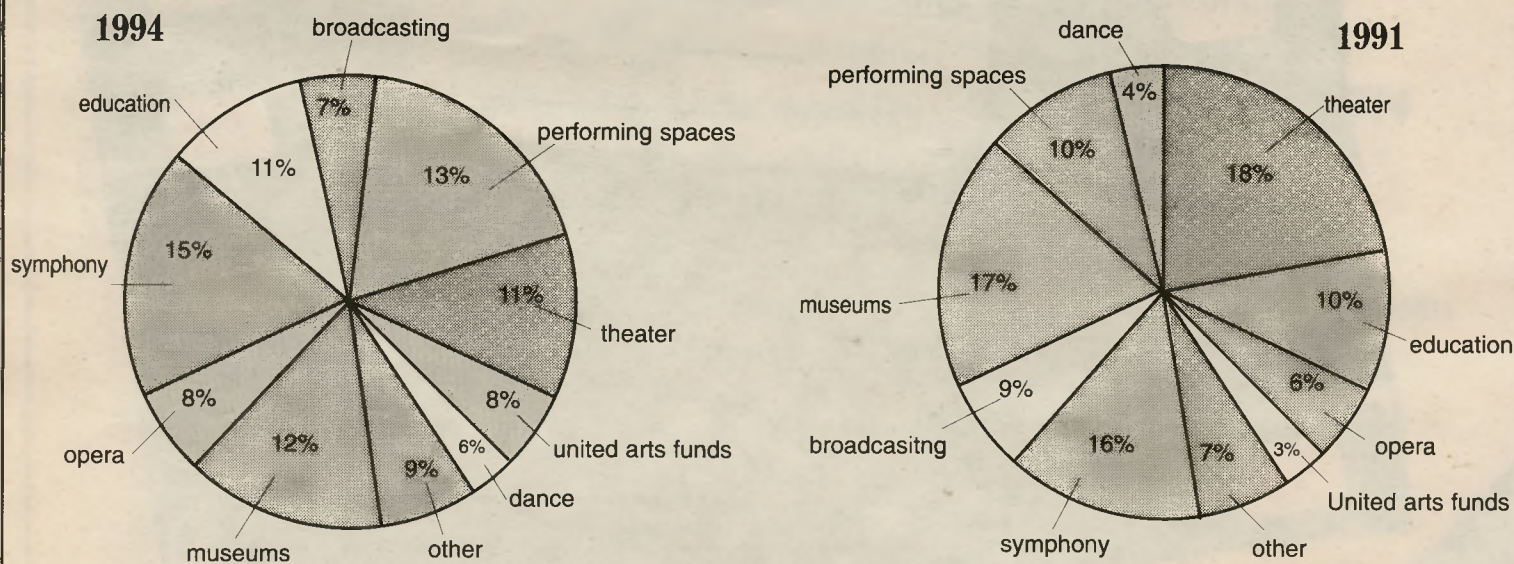
Hunt, who convened a statewide nonprofit summit four years ago at the start of his previous term and promised then to work with nonprofits, conceded "we haven't talked enough. I'll take the responsibility for that, but I want to get it right this time."

Corporate support for the arts

The New York-based Business Committee for the Arts, Inc. has been studying trends in U.S. corporate giving to the arts. The following charts are from a committee study on the topic. See story on page 12 for a description

of how North Carolina companies view giving to the arts and how arts nonprofits are responding.

Business funding of arts by arts discipline



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An empty post
Lloyd Hackley has resigned as head of the state's community college system and observers say finding a replacement will be a key challenge for the state.

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FOUNDATIONS

A welcome gift
The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro has received a gift of more than \$5 million from a retired executive that will more than double its unrestricted funds.

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VOLUNTEERS

A new source of help
The North Carolina Medical Society Foundation has launched a program aimed at encouraging more retired doctors to volunteer in their communities.

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CORPORATE GIVING

Nearing the end
Corporate gifts have made up a healthy portion of donations to the Food Bank of North Carolina's capital campaign, which is approaching the finish line.

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FUND RAISING

Facing a crossroads
The Wake Summerbridge program has reached a point where it needs to replenish grant income and other donations.

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