



CLIENT STORY WILDHORSE FOUNDATION

PROFILE

Type: Tribal Foundation

System: GIFTS

For Wildhorse Foundation, managing in-kind donations is much easier with GIFTS®

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people make up the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Since time immemorial, they have lived on the Columbia River Plateau. Specifically, their homeland is the area now known as northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. Over 2,500 tribal members make up their small group of people who continue to care deeply for and live on the land of their ancestors.

Background

Wildhorse Foundation was established January 1, 2001 for the purpose of formalizing charitable giving on behalf of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, which is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Funds from the foundation are used for education, public health, public safety, the arts, environmental protection, education or preservation, cultural activities, salmon restoration, historic preservation and gambling addiction prevention, education and treatment. Through this charitable organization, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is doing great things for themselves and for their neighbors.

The foundation's annual funding comes from a percentage of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino's net income, so as the resort's business grows, so does the foundation's giving. Last year, the foundation awarded more than \$588,000 in grants, and by all indications, is on its way to a record-setting year. The foundation kicked off 2007

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by awarding \$183,861 in grants to 22 regional organizations, the largest quarterly total in the Foundation's six-year history.

Managing a giving program amidst this type of growth requires incredible organizational skills. To help keep its process flowing smoothly at all times, the Wildhorse Foundation relies on MicroEdge GIFTS grants management software, which it has used since a year or so after the foundation's inception.

"We were using Excel to manage our grants, and it wasn't easy to look things up—you had to know exactly where everything was in order to find it," says Debby Pulse, marketing assistant for Wildhorse Foundation and the organization's primary GIFTS user. The Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde was effectively utilizing GIFTS for their Spirit Mountain Community Fund, so Debby spoke with foundation staff about the advantages that GIFTS had brought to their organization. Ultimately, after talking with Spirit Mountain and conducting their own internal evaluation, Wildhorse Foundation decided to purchase GIFTS as well.

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A Centralized Solution for All Giving

Debby finds that, "GIFTS is incredibly simple to use, and it's so much easier to find the information we need." In fact, because it's so much easier, the foundation is able to track more extensive details about its grants and grant making programs. Previously, the foundation tracked only the name of the organization and the amount of the request, with the rest stored in a paper file. Now, GIFTS retains a wealth of information electronically, such as the request, what the funds will be used for, project description, project length, meeting dates and more.



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Debby acknowledges that, “GIFTS makes board meeting preparation so much easier because I can easily run reports that provide our board members with the information they need to make decisions based on all the criteria we consider.”

For the Wildhorse Foundation, one of the most noteworthy benefits of GIFTS is the improvement in tracking in-kind donations. “Because we are the charitable giving arm of a casino, we process a very high volume of sponsorships and getaway packages to our resort,” states Debby. “We are very happy with GIFTS, and in particular with how much easier it is to track our in-kind donations.” Initially Debby wasn’t sure how to best track this type of giving within the program. MicroEdge helped her set up GIFTS so they can track donations within a customized requests tab. “It sure beats our old method of writing up letters and putting them into a drawer each month—it was so difficult to keep track of requests that had already been submitted! Now we just pull up the organization name and we have all that information at our fingertips.”

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