

History of Catawba Nation

Early Catawba History

The Catawba Indians have lived on their ancestral lands along the banks of the Catawba River dating back at least 6000 years. Before contact with the Europeans it is believed that the tribe inhabited most of the Piedmont area of South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Virginia.

First contact with the Catawbas was recorded in 1540 when the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto marched his troops through the Piedmont while headed west looking for gold. There was little contact between the tribe and early settlers because the new colonies were barely surviving. Once the Virginia colony of Jamestown and the Carolina colony of Charles Town became more established this changed.

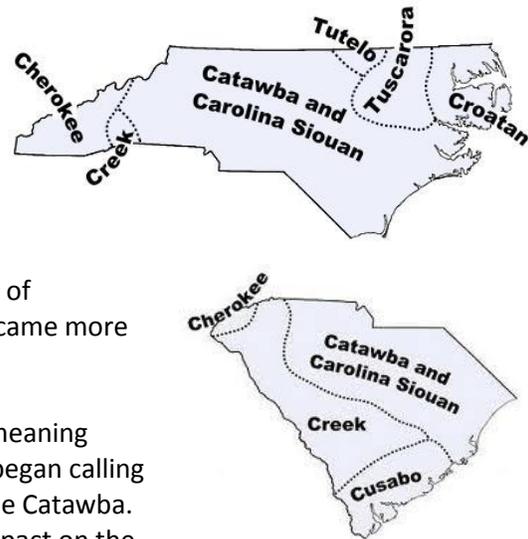
The tribal people called themselves yeh is-WAH h'reh, meaning "people of the river." The colonists who came to trade began calling all the tribes along the Catawba River Valley by the name Catawba. By the late 17th century, trade began having a major impact on the Catawba society. The Catawba traded deerskins to the Europeans for goods such as muskets, knives, kettles and cloth. The Catawba villages became a major hub in the trade system between the Virginia traders and the Carolina traders.

Settlers began to move into the Piedmont during the 18th century. The tribe always carried a philosophy of brotherly love and peace when it came to the settlers. This did not serve them well though because the settlers brought disease with them. In 1759, smallpox swept through the Catawba villages for a fourth time in a century bringing the population of the tribe to less than 1,000 by 1760. Colonists believed the tribe was dying out.



Catawba warriors were known as the fiercest in the land. The tribe claimed at least eleven other tribes as enemies. Leaders in the Carolinas knew this and kept relations with the tribe friendly. King Hagler was chief from 1750 to 1763. He is remembered as a friend to the English but also a firm defender of the rights of his people. The tribe's friendship with the English helped both sides. The colonist received protection from other tribes that may try to threaten them and the tribe received supplies that aided in their survival. In 1763 the Catawbas received title to 144,000 acres from the King of England. It was hard for the tribe to protect the land from colonists and eventually they began renting land to settlers. The first tenant was Thomas Spratt who leased several thousand acres of farmland.

Eventually the settlers who had leased land from the tribe wanted the land for themselves. They put pressure on South Carolina to negotiate with the tribe. This was during the Removal Period when many tribes were being moved west. In order to avoid this, the tribe and South Carolina negotiated the Treaty at Nations Ford. The treaty stipulated that the Catawbas relinquish to the State of South Carolina their 144,000 acres of land. In return, South Carolina promised the tribe a new tract of land in a less



populated area and to pay the Catawbas money. By 1847, South Carolina Governor David Johnson said, "They are, in effect, dissolved." However, that was not the end of the Catawbas.

The Catawba Nation Today

Of the 566 federally recognized tribes in the United States, the Catawba Indian Nation is the only one located in the state of South Carolina. There are currently over 2800 enrolled members of the Nation. The tribe has a long history and a rich culture that lives on today.

During the Franklin Roosevelt administration the federal government tried to improve conditions for tribes. Under the Indian Reorganization Act, the tribe created a constitution in 1944 to help them govern themselves. Government policy toward tribes changed in the 1950's and many tribes were asked to terminate their federal status. In 1959 the Catawba tribe was terminated in the eyes of the federal government. After some time the tribe determined that they preferred to be seen as a community and decided to fight another battle...that to regain federal recognition.

In 1973, the Catawbas filed their petition with Congress for federal recognition. They also updated and adopted their constitution in 1975. The Catawbas had a strong argument in this fight. The Treaty at Nations Ford with South Carolina was illegal because it was not ratified by the federal government. The federal government should have protected the rights of the tribe. It took 20 years, but on November 20, 1993, the land claim settlement with the state of South Carolina and the federal government finally came to an end. The Catawbas agreed to give up claims on land taken from them by the state of South Carolina. In return, the Catawba Indian Nation received federal recognition and \$50 million for economic development, education, social services, and land purchases. Congress set the service area of the tribe to be the entire state of South Carolina plus six counties in North Carolina including Mecklenburg, Union, Cabarrus, Rutherford, Cleveland, and Gaston.

Today the Catawbas provide many thriving programs for tribal members and the surrounding community. The administrative offices are located on the Reservation. This building houses the Executive Committee of the tribe as well as staff working in departments such as Accounting, Economic Development, Real Estate, Social Services, and Transportation. The administrative office has over 40 employees. The tribe also has a successful housing program, several child care facilities, a seniors program, computer lab, and transit services. There is a clinic on the reservation that is run through Indian Health Services. The tribe has helped support many tribal members in their pursuit of an education through the Scholarship and Job Placement & Training programs. The Catawba Cultural Center provides a link to the rich culture of the Nation.



Tribal leaders are always looking for opportunities to contribute to the community through economic development, helping forward the goals of the county, and sharing the culture with others. The Catawbas have proven again and again that they will continue to thrive against all odds.

References:

Hilton Pond Center. "The Catawba Indians: People of the River." Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History. <http://www.hiltonpond.org/CatawbaIndiansMain.html>

Merrell, James. The Catawbas. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.

University of South Carolina Lancaster, "Native American Studies" USC Lancaster, <http://usclancaster.sc.edu/NAS/> (accessed October 24, 2012).

Economic Impact Overview

Economic Impacts of Casinos by the Numbers

Reality: Harrah's Cherokee Casino- By the Numbers¹

Harrah's Cherokee Casino was opened on November 13, 1997 and is currently the largest private tourist attraction in North Carolina. Harrah's serves approximately 3.6 million visitors a year.

- \$300 Million: The estimated economic impact on Jackson and Swain counties in 2009.
- \$74.8 Million: Direct wages and salary disbursements paid to Harrah's employees, which make up 5% of all working citizens in Jackson and Swain counties.
- \$65.1 Million: Harrah's economic impact on Jackson and Swain counties through operational spending.

Potential: Economic Estimates for the Proposed Catawba Gaming Facility²

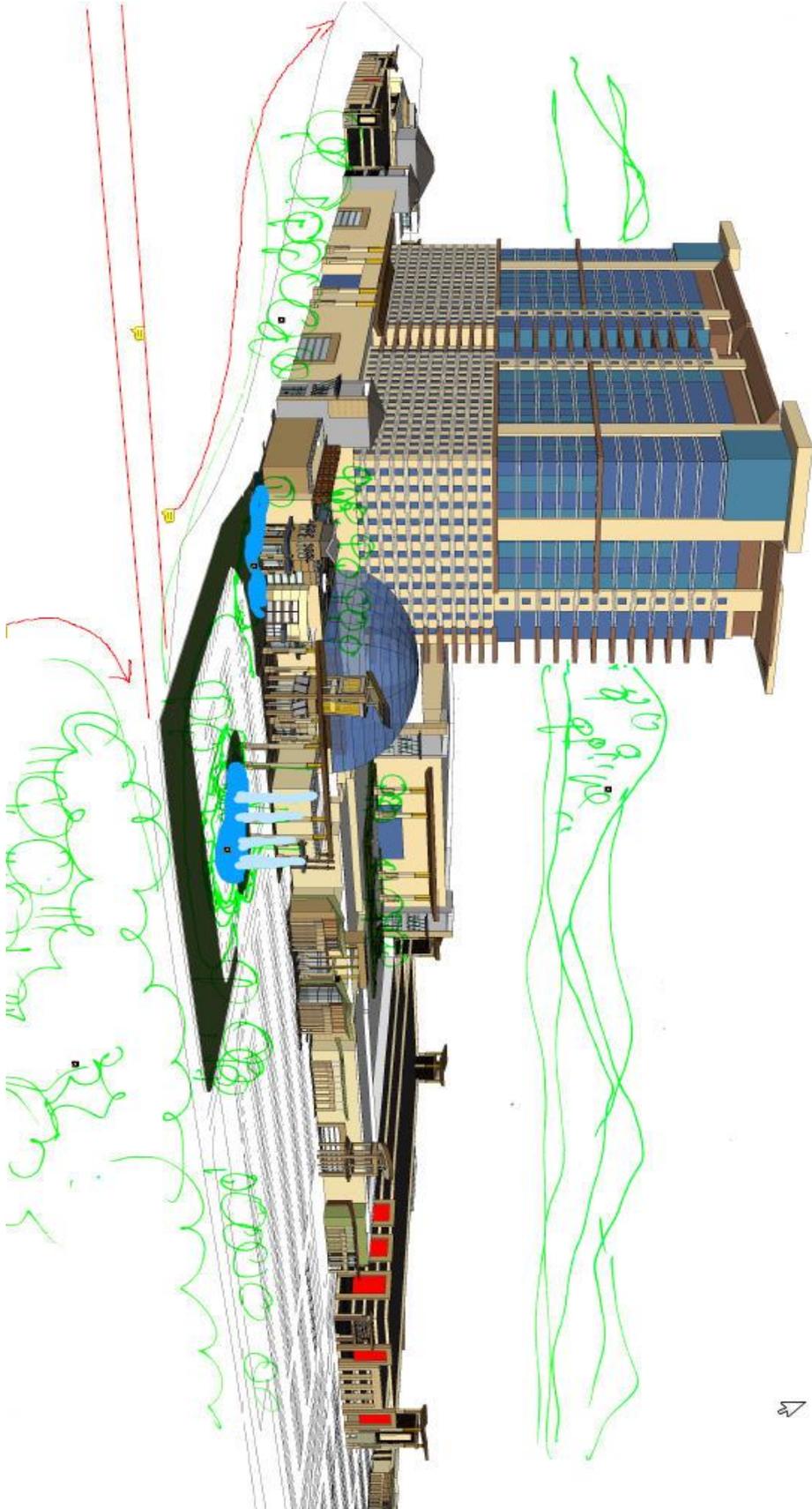
The Catawba Gaming Facility is a proposed project that will be located on the Catawba Nation Reservation property in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. This project will consist of an approximately 220,000 sq/ft gaming facility and 750 guest rooms split between two hotels.

- 9.8 Percent: The unemployment rate in Cleveland county and the surrounding area. Higher than North Carolina's 8.5% rate.
- \$339 Million: The estimated capital investment in the gaming facility and hotels within three-years
- 3,780: The number of direct and indirect jobs created during the construction phase of the facility. 3,800 jobs during construction and 1,200 additional jobs in the Cleveland County area.
- \$163 Million: Direct and indirect labor income added to the economy. \$122.5 million in direct labor and \$40.3 million in indirect and induced impacts during the construction phase.
- \$468.3 Million: Total impact on the Cleveland County area income, including \$340.5 million in direct output and another \$127.8 million in indirect and induced impacts during construction phase.
- 4,330: The total number of permanent and ongoing jobs created by the casino. This includes 3,000 direct jobs at the facility and another 1,330 jobs supported in the Cleveland County area.
- \$349 Million: The estimated yearly total impact on the Cleveland County area. \$173.5 million in direct economic activity and \$150.7 million in indirect and induced economic impact.
- \$106 Million: Estimated direct payments and sales and income taxes to the state of North Carolina made up of \$100 million in estimated gaming fees and \$6 million in sales and income taxes.

¹ Appold, Stephen J., Johnson Jr., James H. & Kasarda, John D. Assessing the Economic and Non-Economic Impacts of Harrah's Cherokee Casino, North Carolina. 2011.

² Miley & Associates, Inc. The Economic Impact of the Catawba Gaming Facility on Cleveland County. 2013.

Catawba Entertainment Complex





Letters of Support

David Dear – Cleveland County Manager



CLEVELAND COUNTY

Offices of the
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY MANAGER
COUNTY ATTORNEY
COUNTY CLERK



July 24, 2013

The Honorable Pat McCrory
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor McCrory:

During thirty-seven years of local government management experience, I have never had the opportunity to participate in a project that has the potential to positively impact a community the way that Project Schoolhouse can. This project has the potential to turn our entire local economy around. Over the last several years, Cleveland County Commissioners have been very successful in bringing new business and industry to Cleveland County. However, with all of our successes, the unemployment rate in the county continues to be above the national and state averages. The potential of 4,000 new jobs for our citizens would be extraordinary. This would not only lower the unemployment rate in Cleveland County but this number of jobs would directly affect the unemployment numbers for the State of North Carolina.

As a lifelong resident of Cleveland County, this county is more to me than just a stopping point in my career. I have thoroughly researched the impact of casino gaming on a community not only in terms of economics but also in terms of the effects it would have on crime. The economic impacts made by the construction, operation and supporting businesses will be significant. This additional revenue stream will give our community the ability to provide many new services for our residents that we have been unable to provide in the past.

With respect to crime, in 2000, the Public Sector Gaming Study Commission recognized that casinos are more of a crime deterrent than an instigator. Although video sweepstakes businesses are illegal in North Carolina, local law enforcement agencies still see these businesses as an area of concern in our community. All of our local law enforcement agencies support the theory that legalized gambling will eliminate these businesses operating around the technicalities of our laws. The security required at legalized gaming facilities and the increased presence of law enforcement in gaming jurisdictions have led to a decrease in criminal activity in communities where they are located.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of support for Project Schoolhouse. I hope that you will conclude as I have, that this project will be an economic foundation that will support many other tourism related businesses in our region. If there are any questions we can answer from a local government perspective, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

David C. Dear
County Manager

Post Office Box 1210, Shelby, North Carolina 28151-1210
Telephone: 704-484-4800; Fax: 704-484-4930
www.clevelandcounty.com

Michael Chrisawn - Cleveland County Chamber President



August 28, 2013

The Honorable Senator Kay Hagan
United States Senator
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hagan,

After many years of stubbornly high unemployment and economic challenges, Cleveland County is beginning to rebound. A new economic development project, when completed, will accelerate that recovery in a major way. I write today to ask for your whole-hearted support of this jobs-creating enterprise.

The Catawba Indian nation is seeking to build a full-scale entertainment venue in Kings Mountain. The venue, when completed, will include a casino, hotel, restaurants, retail stores and much more.

According to an economic impact study on a similar facility operated by the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation at least 1674 employees work at the casino, hotels, restaurants, and stores in Cherokee, North Carolina. These attractions draw approximately 3.5 million visitors per year to that community.

The Kings Mountain economic development project, with its strategic location off Interstate 85, promises to generate thousands of new, good jobs for local people. It will be a destination for millions of visitors from all over the world. In short, it is exactly what our hardworking and talented workforce needs, bringing prosperity to Cleveland County and the surrounding area.

Please support Cleveland County's business leaders and working families in helping make the Catawba Indian Nation's economic development project a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Chrisawn".

Michael Chrisawn
President

Main Office:

200 S. Lafayette Street · P.O. Box 879 · Shelby, NC 28151

Ph: (704) 487-8521 · Fax: (704) 487-7458

Kings Mountain Office:

150 W. Mountain Street · P.O. Box 794 · Kings Mountain, NC 28086

Ph: (704) 739-4755 · Fax: (704) 739-8149