



1,100 workers at its four tribal casinos were being placed on furlough.

Navajo Gaming, the casino enterprise of the Navajo Nation, announced the layoffs last night. The company owns and operates four casinos — Fire Rock, Flowing Water, and Northern Edge in New Mexico, and Twin Arrows in Arizona.

Due to the extended closure, since March 17, 2020, our business operations have been severely impacted, and as a result, we must make very difficult financial and personnel decisions,” explained Navajo Gaming Interim CEO Brian Parrish. [홀짝게임](#)

Being sovereign enterprises, the Navajo Nation does not need to adhere to state-ordered shutdowns of commercial businesses. However, the tribe has voluntarily closed its four casinos to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Worst-Case Scenario

The Navajo Nation says it will retain approximately 165 employees to maintain the casino properties. But if the coronavirus isn’t better contained in the coming weeks and months, the tribe warns that it could result in permanent closures.

The tribe has invested more than \$460 million in building the four gaming venues. Closures would result in the loss of around half of a billion dollars in annual revenue and economic output in the four towns where they operate.

“Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of the Navajo people by growing a successful gaming economy. The Nation’s vision took years to build, but the Nation has been successful,” explained Quincy Natay, chair of the Navajo Gaming Board.

“If it allows its gaming industry to fail, a permanent closure will cause a long-term setback for Navajo economic development, even if it eventually reopens,” Natay added. “The Nation has faced and overcome world wars, the Long Walk, the burning of crops and killing of herds, the theft of our land and forced relocation, the 1918 flu, Tuberculosis, and the theft of children by boarding schools. COVID-19 has had devastating costs and without Navajo leadership, it, no doubt, would have been worse. However, we are a resilient and adaptable Nation. We rise to the occasion, sacrifice, and find a balance.”

Current Restrictions

In New Mexico, where the Navajo Nation is most invested, residents remain advised to stay home except for “the most essential activities and services.”

Numerous businesses this week jointly filed a lawsuit against New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D) on grounds that she’s overreacted to COVID-19, and that the coronavirus is no worse than the seasonal flu.

Matt Bieber, spokesperson for the New Mexico Health Department, says the lawsuit overlooks the facts.

The medical profession is clear: this is the worst global pandemic in a century,” Bieber stated. “The lawsuit appears to be out of step with these realities.”

Since the pandemic began in early 2020, New Mexico has reported more than 143,000 COVID-19 cases, and 2,479 deaths.