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FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION CELEBRATES SOVEREIGNTY DAY ON MAY 13

FORT McDOWELL, Ariz. – May 11, 2021 – On May 13, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation will recognize Sovereignty Day, a day that resonated deeply within their tribal community 29 years ago and ultimately forged their path to prosperity.

In the early morning hours of May 12, 1992, federal marshals and FBI agents raided the Fort McDowell Casino, intent on confiscating their 349 slot machines. Before they could drive away, scores of Fort McDowell tribal members blockaded the casino parking lot with their vehicles, preventing the loaded Mayflower vans from leaving. Thus began the historic peaceful standoff at Fort McDowell – an event that gained national and international attention, generated tremendous public support and respect for the Yavapai community, caused the capitulation of Governor Fife Symington, and started good faith gaming compact negotiations in Arizona.

“This was a seminal event for tribal gaming rights throughout the country,” said Bernadine Burnette, president of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. “The actions of our tribal members on that day almost three decades ago will continue to reverberate long after we’re gone.

“Each year since then, we have celebrated this historic victory, inviting the public to Fort McDowell to share in our Sovereignty Day,” added Burnette. “We would not have prevailed 29 years ago without the strong support of everyday citizens throughout Arizona and beyond. Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic prevented us from hosting public events last year, and again this year. We look forward to the day when we can return to normalcy, which we believe is coming very soon.”

In the meantime, people are invited to visit the state-of-the-art We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort, the state’s newest tribal casino. The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is very proud of their pivotal role in the development of the Arizona tribal gaming industry and the recognition of Indian Tribes’ right to engage in meaningful economic development.

Later this summer, the casino plans to add a sportsbook and new games including craps, roulette, baccarat, sic bo and pai gow.

About the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is an 880-member Native American tribe that calls Central Arizona’s upper Sonoran Desert home. Located to the northeast of Phoenix within Maricopa County, Arizona, the 40-square mile reservation is a small part of the ancestral territory of the once nomadic Yavapai people, who hunted and gathered food in a vast area of Arizona’s desert lowlands and mountainous Mogollon Rim country.

The tribe currently operates a variety of successful enterprises including the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort, We-Ko-Pa Golf Club, Fort McDowell Adventures, Fort McDowell Farm, Ba’ja Gas, Yavapai Materials and the Eagle View RV Resort.

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