



Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2023

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CASINO ARIZONA, TALKING STICK RESORT AND SRPMIC FIRST CASINO PROPERTIES IN ARIZONA TO BE CERTIFIED FOR TRAINING STAFF TO IDENTIFY AND REPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY, ARIZONA –Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort, in partnership with the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network ([AATN](#)), Arizona Attorney General’s Office, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Investigations-Phoenix have announced the completion of hotel and casino-wide staff training on how to identify, prevent and report human trafficking. This initiative is part of the SAFE (Safeguarding All from Exploitation) Action Project program of the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network.

"Educating people within the hospitality and tourism industries at all levels on how to identify and report sex trafficking crimes is one of the best hopes we have to achieve our goal of an Arizona where no one is bought, sold or exploited," said AATN's President and Board Chair John Meza. "Our partnership with the AAGO, HSI, Talking Stick Resort, Casino Arizona and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community has made a great impact on combating the exploitation of vulnerable individuals in our community."

Starting January 13th, 2023 SAFE and Casino Arizona/Talking Stick Resort security personnel began training more than 3,100 Talking Stick Resort and Casino Arizona employees across all departments on how to identify and report human trafficking. Now that well over 75% of employees have completed the training, Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort have received the SAFE Action Project Certification.

Arizona has documented cases of sex trafficking statewide in rural and urban communities. Due to the nature of trafficking crimes, the hospitality and tourism industries have a vital role to play in combating commercial sexual exploitation. According to Polaris, a nationwide NGO that conducts research on human trafficking and operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, approximately [75% of trafficked individuals report coming into contact with a hotel or motel at some point throughout their victimization.](#)

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Trafficking can vary depending upon the community and venue in which the crime is occurring. Misinformation about trafficking crimes can cause reduced identification of potential victims and trafficking suspects. Training helps the community recognize the realities faced by victims and empowers employees and the public to move from awareness about the issue to action.

"I commend Casino Arizona, Talking Stick Resort, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for their commitment to combatting human trafficking," said Attorney General Kris Mayes. "Training staff to identify and report potential trafficking crimes is essential in protecting vulnerable individuals and ensuring that Arizona remains a safe place for everyone – but especially vulnerable communities. The Arizona Attorney General's Office is proud to partner with the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Investigations-Phoenix to prevent exploitation and bring traffickers to justice."

In the U.S., 4 in 5 Indigenous women have experienced violence in their lifetime. Compared to women of other ethnicities, Indigenous women and girls are at higher risk of experiencing violence, including sexual assault, domestic and family violence, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). As a result, it is suspected that American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) populations may experience trafficking crimes at higher rates than other groups, making the partnership with Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community a critical priority.

"Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for guests to enjoy world class gaming, dining and entertainment. We are honored to partner with Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network to combat this serious problem and I am proud of our team for their commitment to educating all employees across both properties. " -John Dinius, President-CEO, Casino Arizona/Talking Stick Resort

As a direct result of the indicators of trafficking provided by the SAFE Action training, SRPMIC-Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort have implemented new protocols and practices for engaging with those on their properties, casino floors and hotel grounds. This change has already led to the recovery of a juvenile female who had been reported missing from the Navajo Nation.

The SAFE Action Project program equips hospitality and tourism businesses with the knowledge and expertise to combat commercial sexual exploitation. This is accomplished through profession-specific training on human trafficking crimes, which includes information about what to look for, risk factors, reporting procedures, and overview of common myths and misconceptions. All program activities are offered free of charge. To date, in 2023, the SAFE Action Project program has trained over 3,800 hotel, hospitality and tourism professionals statewide.

Hospitality and tourism businesses that are interested in free training can request assistance [here](#).

For more information about the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network, visit our website at aatn.org.

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