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**CASINO EXECUTIVE AND MILLE LACS BAND MEMBER RECEIVES ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY'S *GRADUATE OF THE LAST DECADE* AWARD**

ONAMIA, Minn. – Joe Nayquonabe, corporate vice president of marketing for Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Grand Casino Hinckley, received St. Cloud State University's Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) award at a banquet on Friday, October 9.

The Graduate of the Last Decade Award recognizes undergraduate alumni of the past decade who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their professions or in service to the university and/or community.

“In the time that I have known Joe, he has demonstrated a strong drive to succeed while continually supporting and encouraging those he works with,” said John Dunkley, commissioner of administration for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the nominator of this award. “His leadership and integrity continue to amaze leaders in our community as he brings forth new ideas, enthusiasm, and dedication to every aspect of his work.”

At Grand Casino, the 27-year-old Nayquonabe oversees the central marketing efforts for both Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Grand Casino Hinckley. This also includes oversight of Grand Casinos' Brooklyn Park office that focuses on marketing efforts in the Twin Cities. Prior to his move to central marketing, Nayquonabe worked as the director of marketing for Grand Casino Mille Lacs.

Nayquonabe has also been recognized outside of the area. Last November, he spoke at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) conference in Las Vegas about managing and marketing casino slot hosts. G2E, an international trade show and conference, draws tens of thousands of gaming executives each year. Nayquonabe represented Grand Casinos and spoke to marketing executives, general managers, and casino owners from across the world.

Most recently, Nayquonabe was named a 2009 “Forty under 40” award honoree by the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*. He was the youngest of 211 candidates to be nominated for this award which is given annually to 40 people under the age of 40 who have been successful in their careers and communities.

**About Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Grand Casino Hinckley**

Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Grand Casino Hinckley, which are owned by the Corporate Commission of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians, are two of Minnesota's premier entertainment facilities, offering gaming, accommodations, dining, conference and banquet facilities, live entertainment, and the Grand Harmony Spa at Grand Casino Hinckley.

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