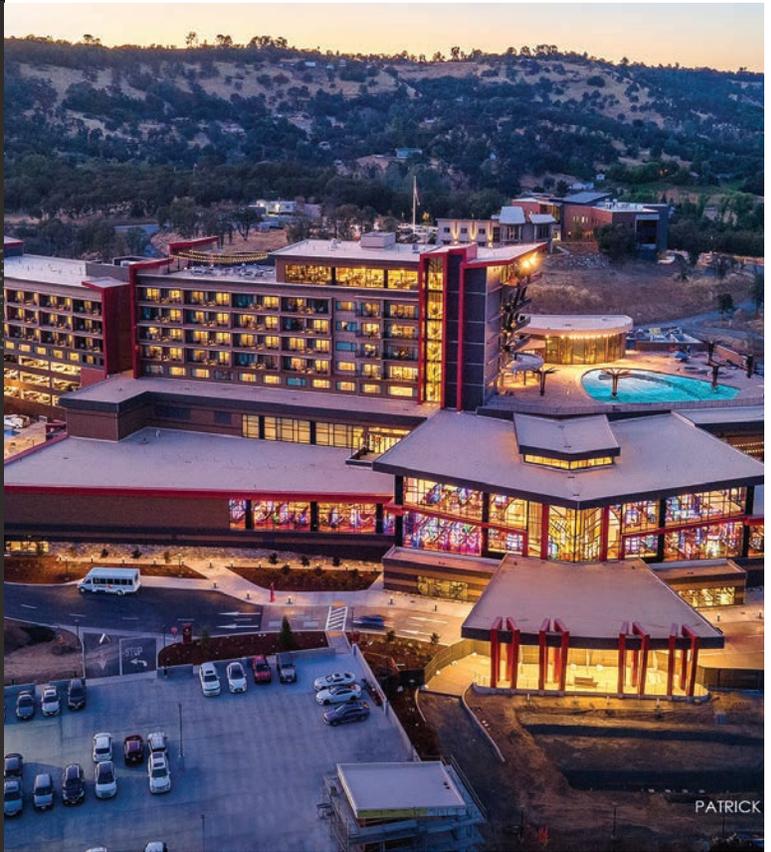# CHICKEN RANCH RANCHERIA TRANSFORMS GRANT MANAGEMENT WITH NETSUITE AND PYANGO

Introduction

The Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians is a sovereign Native American tribe in Tuolumne County, California. Three main entities drive the tribe's success, each playing a critical role in governance and economic development:

- **Tribal Government:** Oversees the well-being of tribal members, managing healthcare, housing, education, and more.

- **Tribal Gaming Agency (TGA):** Operates the Chicken Ranch Casino, which includes a casino, resort, and conference center in Jamestown, California.

- **Chicken Ranch Economic Development Division (CREDD):** Focuses on expanding the tribe's economic base beyond gaming by pursuing opportunities in real estate, agriculture, and hospitality.

> "The biggest benefit for us is that it stops program managers immediately when they try to input expenses that aren't approved or allowed under the grant."
>
> **Tammy Issa,** CFO, Chicken Ranch Rancheria

> "It was a game changer because we no longer waste time chasing down program managers to ask, 'Why did you make this purchase, and what was it for?'"

Tammy Issa, CFO, Chicken Ranch Rancheria

Challenge

While these various activities contributed to the tribe's overall success, they also led to complex financial management challenges. Tammy Issa, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Chicken Ranch Rancheria, describes the situation:

"We operate the casino and several other entities. These were on a single enterprise resource planning system (ERP) but very different. Some are enterprises, some are governmental, and others are non-profit. Then, we have the hospitality aspect as well. Over at the casino, some directors weren't satisfied with the flexibility of purchase orders and wanted changes."

Seeking more adaptability for diverse financial processes, Issa chose NetSuite as the new ERP solution for all entities except the casino, which retained its existing system.

"It was a long process involving much tweaking, adding, and building," Issa says. "We had to customize the purchase order process extensively, but we're now very happy with it."

However, this NetSuite implementation revealed another significant challenge: the increasing need for grants management. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the tribe received a sudden influx of grants and lacked the necessary infrastructure to handle them:

"Before COVID, we didn't have many grants," Issa recalls. "Then we had up to 37 at one point, and we didn't have the staff or systems to manage them. We needed better controls."

Solution

Facing an overwhelming volume of grants, Issa initially relied on spreadsheets—but these proved unsustainable:

"We were receiving significant grants, and it became too risky to rely on spreadsheets. We needed a dedicated grant management solution."

Issa's team evaluated multiple programs and ultimately selected PyanGo, a grants management and budgetary control solution native built inside the NetSuite platform. PyanGo's seamless integration and robust features made it a strong fit for Chicken Ranch Rancheria's needs.

Implementation

From the start, Eide Bailly provided overarching project management to ensure that NetSuite and PyanGo integrated effectively, avoiding system conflicts:

"Typically, when we extend a solution with NetSuite partners like PyanGo, we understand the customer's overall requirements and where gaps exist in NetSuite to meet their requirements," says Haberman. "And because we understand NetSuite very well, the value we provide is giving additional context to the PyanGo implementers—to make sure that anything they do the requirements aligns

"PyanGo gave us the time we needed to develop a comprehensive grants management program within our organization fully."

Tammy Issa, CFO, Chicken Ranch Rancheria

with the broader environment," explains Eide Bailly's Ethan Haberman.

Eide Bailly's involvement continues today, supported by a managed service contract. "They have a managed service contract with us, so they get a dedicated block of hours every month," says Eide Bailly's Mark Poole. "We do a lot of ad hoc report customizations, support requests, and script development. The PyanGo side just works—and if any issues come up, we have the relationship and expertise to tackle them quickly."

Results

The implementation of PyanGo quickly solved one of the tribe's most significant challenges: overspending on grant budgets. Previously, program managers might unknowingly exceed the amounts allocated to a specific grant.

"We didn't have the staff to catch these oversights until it was too late," Issa notes. "We'd find out during our quarterly or annual reports, and by then, it was a mess."

PyanGo's "allowable charges" feature now automatically flags expenses that exceed grant budgets:

"If a program manager tries to charge $1,000 to a grant with only $800 available, the system stops them," Issa explains. "They can't overspend on that line item, forcing them to either renegotiate the budget or find

another solution. It's been a game-changer for our organization."

Because of Eide Bailly's guiding role, the specialized grants solution continues to run smoothly:

"They don't have any issues with PyanGo— everything works well," Eide Bailly's Mark Poole points out. "Often, I only hear about things when there's a problem. The fact that they're not calling with PyanGo issues really shows how well it's been working for them."

Empowering Employees

Before PyanGo, the finance team spent considerable time chasing after program managers to explain expenditures and uncover missing documentation. According to Issa:

"Our previous process was messy. We'd have to track down program managers to determine why they made certain purchases and whether those expenses were allowable under the grant."

Program managers directly enter their bills and link expenses to the appropriate grant, empowering them to become more engaged in the financial side of their programs:

"They know how much the grant is for, how much has been spent, what's left, and when it expires," Issa says. "They also handle their financial reporting, including filing their own

425s. This level of ownership has made a huge difference across the board."

Saving Time

Another major benefit of PyanGo is the significant time savings. Issa and her small department found manual grant tracking to be labor-intensive:

"It was just me and two other people, and we were drowning in spreadsheets. I spent days reconciling data, filing reports, and figuring out reimbursements."

Determining which expenses were reimbursable under a specific grant was incredibly tedious:

"One of our accountants would spend up to two days each month just figuring out what could be reimbursed and which grant those charges applied to—and we needed mountains of backup documentation."

With PyanGo, the time spent on grant management has dropped from several days to roughly 9–10 hours per month:

"The system has automated many of the tasks that once consumed our time," Issa says. "Instead of being buried in manual processes, we can focus on more strategic work."

This represents over a 60% reduction in time.

Moving Forward

As a result of this streamlining and ongoing collaboration with Eide Bailey, Chicken Ranch Rancheria has built a robust, scalable grants management program.

"We just had to stop applying for grants because we couldn't manage them. And I felt unprepared for the requirements of

larger grants." Recalls Issa. "But now, with the systems in place from PyanGo inside our NetSuite ERP, we've restructured our entire grants management approach."

The tribe is now confidently poised to manage the increased complexities of higher-level grants. The infrastructure created by PyanGo has empowered the tribe to move forward with a full-fledged grants management program. "We have the tools, the team, and the organization ready to manage whatever grants come our way."

Conclusion

Issa credits PyanGo—and the seamless collaboration facilitated by Eide Bailly—for transforming Chicken Ranch Rancheria's grants management capabilities:

"I recently completed a grant management certification course, and whenever the topic of grant management software came up, I couldn't help but recommend PyanGo. It's a robust, easy-to-use program with fantastic support."

By combining NetSuite, PyanGo, and Eide Bailly's expert coordination, Chicken Ranch Rancheria is poised to manage its expanding grant portfolio confidently and efficiently.

Company Snapshot

Company: Chicken Ranch Rancheria

Location: Tuolumne County, California

www.chickenranchrancheria.org