



**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
GAMBLING COMMISSION**

*“Protect the Public by Ensuring that Gambling is Legal and Honest”*

**Media Release:** Olympia, Washington: February 9, 2015

**Gambling Commission Chair Chris Stearns** invites you to take a look at some of the ways the Commission kept gambling legal and honest in 2014. Chair Stearns stated he is “proud of the Commission’s accomplishments in 2014 and looks forward to the evolving challenges the Commission will be addressing in 2015.”

The Gambling Commission is a limited jurisdiction law enforcement agency and the only statewide agency devoted to gambling licensing, regulation and enforcement.

- In May 2014, the Washington State Gambling Commission received accreditation from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. The Commission is the only limited authority law enforcement agency to be accredited. Only 20% of the State’s law enforcement agencies are accredited (56 of 276). Accreditation demonstrates the Commission meets current best practice standards in policing and:
  - Ensures compliance with current laws and regulations
  - Provides a systemized agency self-assessment
  - Intensifies administrative and operational effectiveness
  - Decreases susceptibility to litigation and costly civil court settlements
  - Strengthens understanding of agency policies and procedures by agency personnel
  - Improves agency morale and pride
  - Ensures recruitment, selection, and promotion processes are fair and equitable
- **Internet based My Account for Licensees continues to grow.** Launched in 2013, this online service gives secure access to powerful tools and customized features to help licensees do business with us easier. Through their customized My Account, licensees can renew gambling licenses, report activity, update personal information, and more. The Commission continues adding services to this online tool and about 80% of licensees are using their My Account.
- The Commission’s success at retaining staff is shown by the 37 staff recognized for milestone years of service (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years) in 2014. These 37 staff have 500 combined years of state service; 455 of the 500 years are with the Commission.
- The Washington State Auditor’s Office reported no findings during its accountability audit. The Commission has not had an audit finding for the past 13 years.

**Examples of Investigations that Keep Gambling Legal and Honest:**

- Responding to complaints by neighbors, agents investigated a cock fighting ring resulting in the arrest of a Rochester man who was charged with 3 Felonies; Animal Cruelty 1<sup>st</sup> degree, Animal Fighting 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, and Professional Gambling 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. The suspect served 21 days in jail. The case is pending in Thurston County Superior Court.

- Agents were asked by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office to assist with the raid of a cockfighting ring, resulting in the arrests of five people. Charges included Animal Fighting, Possession of Stolen Firearms, Alien in Possession of Firearms, and Professional Gambling 1<sup>st</sup> degree.
- An agent investigated the financial exploitation of an elderly man. The elderly man was being left in a hotel room, without proper care, while his caretakers gambled his money at a casino. The prosecutor charged a caretaker with Theft 1<sup>st</sup> degree and Criminal Mistreatment 1<sup>st</sup> degree.
- An agent's investigation revealed a card dealer underreported over \$12,000 in tips received while working at a house-banked card room. The prosecutor charged the suspect with 13 counts of False or Misleading Statements, a gross misdemeanor. The suspect pled guilty of 5 of these counts and was ordered to pay \$640 fines and fees to the court.
- Agents were asked by the Kalispel Tribal Police to assist with the investigation of a prostitution ring at a casino, resulting in the arrest of 21 people.

**Agents Recognized for Exceptional Performance:**

- In addition to his duties as a Field Operations agent, in 2014, an agent taught 11 Gambling Investigations classes at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Burien. During the past decade, this agent has taught over 120 Gambling Investigations classes to more than 3500 students.
- The agent that oversees the Commission's law enforcement training is also the Commission's State Agency Liaison to the Emergency Operations Center at Camp Murray, where he helped during the SR513 mudslide incident by performing administrative functions, such as scheduling personnel in logistics, transportation, finance, operations, and public information.
- An agent was recognized by the Seminole County Sheriff's Office for his help in the national takedown on Internet cafes conducting online gambling stemming out of Florida. Prosecutors charged 57 people in connection to a \$300 million Racketeering and Money Laundering scheme. The case resulted in the resignation of several public officials.
- An agent's "Be on the Lookout" Bulletin resulted in the arrest of a burglary suspect. A Community Corrections Officer involved in the case stated "Thanks to your Gambling Commission notification...the suspect was detained at the Wal-mart in possession of a firearm. Without your help, he likely would not have been arrested."

**For Questions:**

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