



**WA State Gambling  
Commission Contact:**  
Susan Newer  
Public Information Officer  
[Susan.newer@wsqc.wa.gov](mailto:Susan.newer@wsqc.wa.gov)  
(360) 486-3466  
[wsqc.wa.gov](http://wsqc.wa.gov)  
 [WAGambling](#)



**Recreational Gaming  
Association Contact:**  
Dolores Chiechi  
Executive Director  
[DChiechi@rga-wa.org](mailto:DChiechi@rga-wa.org)  
(360) 352-0514  
[rga-wa.org](http://rga-wa.org)

**Joint Media Release:** Olympia, Washington: April 16, 2015

### **Card Room Industry Contributes A Great Deal to Communities.**

At last week's Commission meeting, Dolores Chiechi, Executive Director of the Recreational Gaming Association, gave the Commissioners an overview of Washington State's commercial card room industry and their contributions to communities. Last year, card room net receipts increased for the first time since 2006.

At the meeting, Chair Chris Stearns said, "It's great to learn how much Washington's card rooms are giving back to our communities," adding that, "It's also very encouraging to see that their net receipts increased last year." Commissioner and former Senator Julia Patterson said she was "impressed by the massive list of charities that received cash and in-kind donations from card rooms."

- **Creating Jobs:** Commercial card rooms employ over 6,000 people. About 4,600 of these employees work directly in gambling. Most jobs are living-wage jobs, because tips increase compensation by two to three times minimum wage. Another 1,400 employees work in nongambling related jobs, such as maintenance and food/beverage.
- **Helping Communities:** More than 1,000 businesses, charities, communities, individuals, and military personnel received money and in-kind gifts from card rooms. For example, in 2009, the Great American Casino in Lakewood provided free meals to law enforcement for 4 days following the Lakewood police officer shooting. In another community, a card room covered funeral expenses for an employee's mother.
- **Paying Taxes (Fiscal Year 2014):**
  - **Gambling Taxes Paid to Local Jurisdictions:** \$29.4 million.
  - **Business & Occupation (B&O) Tax:** \$3.2 million.
  - **Problem Gambling Tax:** \$280,000.

The RGA's report included statistics showing the decline of the card room industry, with about half the number of locations from its peak in 2005. Ms. Chiechi said, "Card rooms saw a small increase in net receipts last year; however, they continue to struggle. With anticipated increases in business expenses, additional closures are anticipated. As these businesses close, jobs will be lost, tax revenues to local jurisdictions will decline, and community contributions will be impacted."

#### **About the Recreational Gaming Association:**

The Recreational Gaming Association of Washington (RGA) is the trade association that represents Washington State's house-banked card room industry. Dolores Chiechi, Executive Director, manages all RGA operations and leads the association's advocacy efforts on behalf of house-banked card rooms, their employees and vendors, and the state's nontribal recreational gaming industry in general. To learn more about the RGA, visit [www.rga-wa.org](http://www.rga-wa.org).

#### **About the Washington State Gambling Commission:**

The Gambling Commission is a limited jurisdiction law enforcement agency and the only statewide agency devoted to gambling licensing, regulation and enforcement. Five citizens are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, to act as part-time Commissioners for a single six-year term. The Commission holds public meetings once a month to discuss administrative issues, approve new gambling licenses, discuss rule changes, and more. We are accredited by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. To learn more about what we do, visit [www.wsgc.wa.gov](http://www.wsgc.wa.gov).