

MISSOURI GAMING COMMISSION



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Press Release

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GAMING COMMISSION REACHES TEN YEAR MILESTONE

JEFFERSON CITY, Missouri - Tuesday, April 29, 2003, marks the 10-year anniversary of the creation of the Missouri Gaming Commission. On April 29, 1993, SBs 10 & 11 were signed into law by then Governor Mel Carnahan. That bill created the Missouri Gaming Commission and transferred regulatory authority over riverboat gambling from the Tourism Commission to this newly created state agency. Ten years, four chairmen, and three executive directors later, the Commission will pause to reflect on the past 10 years. Current and former commissioners and staffers will gather at the Commission's Jefferson City Office for an open house at on Tuesday, April 29th.

Commission Chairman Bob Smith commended former and current Commissioners for their work in establishing a strict system of regulation. "Over the years the Commission has exhibited extraordinary fidelity to the principles of firm but fair

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regulation. It has been prudent in its licensing decisions and used the full force of law in demanding high standards of conduct for its licensees. When necessary, this Commission has been willing to stand up to the biggest companies and demand compliance."

The Commission's Deputy Director of Administration, Deborah Ferguson, joined the Commission on October 1, 1993. She's the Commission's longest serving civilian employee. Ferguson said, "I've enjoyed being a part of the Commission's development and maturity over the past ten years. We've come a long way since 1993. The Commission currently has 94 civilian employees and a \$16 million budget."

Another Commission veteran is current Executive Director Kevin Mullally. He joined the Commission on November 3, 1993, as the Commission's Deputy Director of Legal and Legislative Affairs. Mullally points to the Commission entering into an agreement with the Missouri State Highway Patrol on September 28, 1993, as a significant point in the Commission's development. Mullally said, "The Patrol played an important role in allowing the Commission to move forward quickly to establish the industry. In 1993, there was a great deal of public frustration with the Horse Racing Commission's inability to move forward in establishing that industry. The combination of the Patrol and first Commission Executive Director Tom Irwin's leadership allowed the Commission to quickly establish the framework to enforce the state's gaming rules and regulations and maintain confidence in legalized gambling in the state. Chief Deputy Director Steve Johnson continues this tradition in his daily management of the enforcement unit."

Mullally also cited the Commission's leadership in problem gambling programs as a highlight of the Commission's first ten years. The author of the nation's first state-sponsored voluntary exclusion program for problem gamblers said, "We were really the first gaming commission that took an active role in problem gambling issues. Most other states left it up to a patchwork of small public interest groups and the industry. Missouri's combination of creating innovative tools for problem gamblers such as the voluntary exclusion program, along with education and outreach efforts, has made a real difference in the lives of many problem gamblers. More importantly, it has helped many people avoid problem gambling behavior."

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