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|  | PRESS RELEASE |

**Michigan Gaming Control Board**

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| **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  January 26, 2023** | **Contact: MGCB-media@michigan.gov**  **www.michigan.gov/mgcb** |

#### Location: Cadillac Place, 3062 W. Grand Blvd., L-700 – Detroit

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**For Immediate Release:**

**Pro poker player Joshua Thatcher sentenced for running an illegal gambling operation 906 Poker Social in Marquette**

**Detroit, January 26, 2023** – Pro poker player Joshua T. Thatcher, 42, of Gwinn, Mich., was sentenced Jan. 19 to 12 months of probation after pleading guilty on Dec. 2 to one felony count of Gambling Operations for his role operating an illegal poker room known as 906 Poker Social formerly located at 1200 S. Front St., Marquette. As part of his plea agreement, Thatcher agreed to forfeit to the State of Michigan all items seized from the location, including six poker tables, $13,050 in cash and other money held in bank accounts connected to the investigation of 906 Poker Social.

The so-called private poker club opened April 1, 2021, and closed July 8, 2021, following a joint investigation by the Michigan Department of Attorney General and Michigan Gaming Control Board Criminal Investigation section.

“Unregulated gambling operations do not offer Michigan residents the same protections provided through legal, regulated gambling,” said Henry Williams, executive director, Michigan Gaming Control Board. “The Michigan Gaming Control Board’s mission is to ensure fair and honest gaming in Michigan, and we partner with the Michigan Department of Attorney General to investigate and eliminate illegal gaming activities across the state.”

The Michigan Department of Attorney General prosecuted the case.

“My office remains committed to upholding business rules and regulations, and that includes our state’s gambling laws,” said Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel. “I appreciate the work the Michigan Gaming Control Board has done to protect Michigan residents and businesses.”

In published reports, Thatcher described 906 Poker Social as a private membership club where members gambled against each other. He charged members a fee based on weekly, monthly or yearly membership plus a $10 per hour chair rental fee. The location offered live poker and other games.

Thatcher also was charged in May 2022 with five other felony counts, including two counts of using computers to commit a crime, and a high misdemeanor count of permitting a gambling house for gain. The other counts later were dismissed.

Judge Jennifer A. Mazzuchi of the 25th Circuit Court in Marquette presided over sentencing.

"The Michigan Gaming Control Board shall ensure the conduct of fair and honest gaming to protect the interests of the citizens of the State of Michigan."

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