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Michigan Gaming Control Board executive director meets with Flint city officials to discuss ways to combat illegal gaming

DETROIT, Sept. 15, 2023 — The American Gaming Association has designated September 11-17 as “Legal, Regulated Gaming Protects Players” week and in an effort to combat illegal gaming activities, Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Henry Williams recently met with Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley and State Rep. Cynthia Neeley (D-Flint) to discuss strategies to help deter and crack down on illegal gaming operations in the city.

During their August 29 conversation, the officials also talked about the impact of storefront casinos and illegal gaming on residents and how such establishments are a nuisance for the city, tarnishing the reputations of regulated, legitimate gaming establishments.

“As a regulator, it’s important to me to have face-to-face conversations with area leaders so that we can share our knowledge and gain a more comprehensive understanding of illegal gaming issues, especially from their local perspective,” Williams said. “I look forward to working with Mayor Neeley on the city’s efforts to prevent individuals from reopening a place of business under a new name in a location that was previously cited for illegal gaming operation concerns, minimize risks to his community from such establishments, and help protect Flint residents from harm.”

A week before the leaders’ meeting, the MGCB seized 50 gambling devices and \$13,260 in suspected gambling proceeds on August 23 from an alleged illegal storefront casino that was operating under the name of The Flint Arcade, located at 3301 Corunna Road in Flint. Authorities had previously conducted a raid at the same location a year earlier, on Aug. 18, 2022, when the MGCB investigated suspected illegal gambling at The Cellular Vault. That search yielded 43 computers used for gambling and \$2,572.48 in winnings and gambling proceeds.

“It is important to protect the Flint community from predatory illegal gaming operations, and I thank Director Williams for his continued partnership in this effort,” Mayor Neeley said. “These unwelcome operations threaten public safety by creating environments where other criminal activity can thrive.”

“By working together to implement comprehensive measures — from strengthening laws and regulatory frameworks to raising awareness about the issue of illegal gaming machines — we can help reduce the prevalence of illegal gaming in our communities,” added Rep. Neeley. “I look forward to continuing this conversation with MGCB Executive Director Williams and appreciate the time he took to visit Flint and discuss this important issue, and I will do what I can to help advance any necessary changes to the law in my capacity serving with the Michigan Legislature.”

Unlicensed casinos, unauthorized online gambling platforms, underground sports-betting operations, or any other form of wagering that is not regulated by the MGCB are all considered forms of illegal gaming. As a result of MGCB investigations from January 2015 through July 2023, a total of 1,195 illegal machines and \$470,401.98 have been seized. Additionally, since November 2022, 48 locations have received cease-and-desist letters involving 105 illegal machines.

“I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Mayor Neeley and Rep. Neeley in Flint and to share information with him about how the MGCB can assist with investigations and raids on alleged illegal gaming operations,” added Williams, who was recently selected as a finalist in the Regulator of the Year category of the 2023 American Gambling Awards. “Illegal gaming is a widespread problem that is not unique to Michigan, but we are prepared to act and will hold bad actors accountable who are caught breaking the law. The agency is committed to fighting illegal online gaming, pop-up illegal casinos, and the proliferation of illegal gaming machines in gas stations, bars, and other locally owned establishments — and I look forward to seeing what the Michigan Legislature can do to help us with these issues.”

Michigan residents can report illegal or suspicious gambling activity anonymously by calling the 24-hour tipline at 1-888-314-2682 or by sending a message (not anonymous) to MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov. Written tips can also be anonymously submitted to the MGCB using an online form located under the “Report Illegal or Suspicious Gambling Activity” link of the Resources section on the homepage of the agency’s website at Michigan.gov/MGCB.

Gambling in any form is for entertainment purposes only. If someone has a gambling problem, please call the state's 24-hour, toll-free helpline at 1-800-270-7117 or the MGCB's responsible gaming section at 1-888-223-3044. You also may visit the [Responsible Gaming page of the MGCB website](#) for information on self-exclusion programs including the Disassociated Persons List and the Internet Gaming and Sports Betting Responsible Gaming Database. Also, visit DontRegretTheBet.org for additional tools to help citizens game responsibly.

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. Learn more at Michigan.gov/MGCB.



Photo courtesy of the Michigan Gaming Control Board.

Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley (left) and State Rep. Cynthia Neeley (right) recently met with Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Henry Williams (center) in Flint to discuss efforts to combat illegal gaming in the city.