

Joanne Collins to Chair Problem Gambling Alliance

Joanne Collins, a member of the Board of Commissioners for the Port Authority of Kansas City, recently was named chairperson of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling.

Collins, a former member of Kansas City's City Council, was elected for the one-year term last week to replace outgoing chairperson Kevin Mullally, executive director of the Missouri Gaming Commission. Keith Spare, president of the Missouri Council on Problem Gambling Concerns Inc., was named vice chairperson of the Alliance. Spare is the program director at Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center in Kansas City.

As chairperson, Collins will oversee the Alliance's participation in the planning of the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, Aug. 16-18, in Kansas City.

"Research on problem gambling issues in Missouri is vital to improving the services currently offered to Missouri residents,"



Joanne Collins

Collins said. "Through a study of the state's Disassociated Persons Program and additional studies scheduled this year, we hope to learn more on how we can reach out to help problem gamblers and their families."

Collins said the Alliance will continue to increase its awareness and educational efforts throughout the state. She also said that the Alliance is planning to expand its prevention efforts in Missouri schools through grants currently being offered by the Port Authority of Kansas City.

Collins currently chairs the Port Authority's Problem Gambling Committee. She served on Kansas City's City Council from 1974 to 1991 and currently is a member of more than 40 not-for-profit organizations. She also holds presidential, gubernatorial, regional, county and local appointments. She has worked in the fields of banking, insurance, real estate sales, postal services and community building.

Illegal Gaming Machines - A Growing Concern In Missouri

Thousands of Missourians participate in a variety of legalized gambling venues in the state of Missouri, including the Lottery, riverboat casinos, bingo and raffles conducted by religious and charitable organizations. All of these entities are regulated by the state and promote responsible gaming and free treatment programs for problem gamblers. However, one form of gambling that is widespread in Missouri, but is illegal, unregulated, untaxed and offers no protection for problem gamblers, is "gray-market machines."

"Gray-market machines," sometimes known as "video poker" or "slot machines," are located outside of licensed casino properties; they are most commonly found in bars, lounges, hotels, restaurants, truck stops, pool halls, convenience stores, bowling alleys, private clubs, fraternal and veterans' organizations, smoke shops, arcades and amusement parks. Machine profits are usually split between the game supplier and retail location.

"Many illegal machines are labeled 'For Amusement Only' or have signs saying they are legal under the state gambling laws or because of some court decision," said Ernie Raub, gaming enforcement manager with the Missouri Gaming Commission. "Unlike gaming that has been approved by voters

and the Missouri Legislature, there are no regulatory controls over illegal gambling. Some machines are equipped with 'skill stops,' so the operator can claim they are a legal game of skill when, in reality, wins and losses are controlled by a computer set by the operator of the machines.

"Payouts on the machines are usually well below the minimum payout percentages

that licensed casinos must meet," Raub said. "Players are at the mercy of a machine operator who has already chosen to engage in an illegal activity. Because there are no loss limits, players' losses can be significant, and with no age restrictions, minors have easy access. Families and children become the victims of what many like to call a 'victimless crime.'"

One central Missouri man, who requested anonymity, said it was these illegal devices that caused his family to declare bankruptcy and nearly ruined his marriage.

"My wife was going to the local convenience store on most days to play this machine," the man said. "In fact, every one of the convenience stores owned by this family has a machine, and they pay out money. It has resulted in a personal bankruptcy. It has also resulted in marital counseling and personal counseling for me.



Illegal gaming machine recently confiscated from a bingo operator by the Missouri Gaming Commission.

Problem Gambling Research Will Be A Focus In Coming Year

We are beginning to receive research results, which while somewhat contradictory, gives us an indication of areas needing our attention. For instance, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) conducted by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services included problem gambling questions for the first time in 2004. Their finding shows about 32 percent of Missourians engage in gambling activities. A small portion of those surveyed encountered financial problems (.9 percent) or family, work or personal problems (1.3 percent). At the same time, recent Missouri Lottery telephone surveys show that 60 percent of Missourians have purchased at least one lottery ticket in the past year. It appears that some individuals don't consider the lottery, bingo, raffles or other types of gaming activities as gambling. Compare the findings with a survey conducted in Massachusetts which found 33 percent participated in the state lottery, 16 percent visited casinos in neighboring states, 8 percent gambled at nonprofit events and 9 percent visited Las Vegas-gaming facilities. Nearly one-quarter of those surveyed knew someone who had a gambling problem. Do they have more problem gamblers in Massachusetts, or do respondents report more realistically?

Regardless of which survey is correct, the mixed results give the Alliance some direction. We need better data on how many Missourians participate in gambling activities, how many are affected by problem gambling and how many seek help. We will obtain these data by refining the language on the BRFSS and by initiating more research into problem gambling.

Harvard Medical School, using a grant from the Port Authority of Kansas City, evaluated data provided by the Missouri Gaming Commission's self exclusion list. Phase I of their study concluded that Missouri's self-exclusion list is a valid indicator of the prevalence of problem gambling. This research can be used to assist public health planners in efficiently directing resources and programming to the areas of greatest need.

Now we need to educate the public on problem gambling indicators and communicate about treatment programs available to the problem gambler. The Massachusetts survey showed 28 percent have seen information on the state's problem gambling help line. However, only 2 percent were aware of where treatment centers were. I believe that Missourians would have similar results. For the coming year, the Alliance will continue to strive to educate the public on the effects of problem gambling and build awareness of the help line and free treatment available to problem gamblers and their family members.

I am pleased to become the next chair of the Alliance, and I look forward to serving for the next year.

-Joanne Collins

Need A Speaker?

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state on topics ranging from the prevention of youth gambling to the warning signs of problem gambling. For more information about the speakers' bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467 or (573) 522-1373.

All presentations are free of charge.

Upcoming Alliance Events

Nov. 11

Port Authority of Kansas City Request for Proposals are due

Dec. 1-3

School Health Conference in Osage Beach

Dec. 17

Ninth anniversary of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling

March 6-10

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week

Jansen Named Director Of The Missouri Lottery

The Missouri Lottery Commission recently appointed Larry Jansen, CPA, as the new executive director for the Missouri Lottery. Jansen, 49, of Jefferson City has worked as the controller/chief financial officer for the Lottery since November 1986.

"I'm proud of the support the Missouri Lottery has provided the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling," Jansen said. "Building awareness and educating Missouri residents about problem gambling issues and treatment options has been and will remain a priority of the Missouri Lottery."

Got A Story Idea?

Do you have a story idea for the next Bulletin or would you like to write a story for the next issue? There's a lot going on in Missouri concerning problem gambling, and we would like to include as much as possible in the Bulletin and on our Web site, so please be sure to pass on any ideas you may have.

To suggest story ideas for the Bulletin or the Web site, contact the editor, Shelly Perez, at perezs@molottery.com or call (573) 526-7467.

Family Member Returns From Iraq

Tanay Williams, daughter of Missouri Gaming Commission's Problem Gambling Program Assistant Annette Turner, returned in October after a six-month tour-of-duty in Iraq. Williams is an E-3 in the United States Air Force. She is currently stationed in Dayton, Ohio.

Number Of Calls To 1-888-BETSOFF

(1-888-238-7633)

	2004	2005
January	280	197
February	369	217
March	350	239
April	343	226
May	352	232
June	336	219
July	326	242
August	260	235
September	245	209

Illegal Gaming Machines - A Growing Concern In Missouri

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The whole thing is just absolutely devastating for a family, and it results in a lot of bad feelings toward the person who has the addiction. The convenience of illegal machines compounds the problem, and there's no way to prevent minors from playing. I wish I had an answer. It's very much like people addicted to illegal drugs."

There is no limit on the location or number of these illegal machines, and the state makes no revenue from sales or taxes. The Missouri Gaming Commission estimates the number of illegal machines statewide to be in the thousands. Commission findings indicate a single machine placed in a good location can earn as much as \$500 in a day and more than \$100,000 in a year; none of which is reported as income to the state.

Raub said the laws prohibiting illegal gambling (Chapter 572) are clear in the state of Missouri. Promoting illegal gambling is a Class D felony. Possessing an illegal machine is a Class A misdemeanor.

"Illegal machines are a widespread, well-organized multi-million dollar criminal enterprise that operates, for the most part, in public view," said Raub. "Since the machines are illegal, many players are reluctant to complain, even if they know the games are rigged."

According to Raub, it is the responsibility of local prosecutors or the attorney general to prosecute retailers and game suppliers. But in many cases enforcement is impacted by a general lack of understanding on behalf of local law enforcement, prosecutors and the general public about illegal machines.

"Illegal gambling devices are becoming more prevalent in Missouri and so are the problems associated with unregulated and unrestricted gambling," Raub said. "The key to addressing this issue starts with players, friends and/or family members reporting illegal gambling to their local law enforcement authorities and the Consumer Protection section of the Attorney General's Office."

Leading Experts, High Attendance Make 2005 Midwest Conference a Success

Leading problem gambling experts headlined the second annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, Aug. 24-26, in Kansas City. More than 240 people took part in the conference, which included a variety of workshops, panel discussions and keynote speakers.



Dr. H. Westley Clark

Keynote speakers at this year's conference included: Dr. H. Westley Clark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Jeffrey Derevensky, an internationally renowned problem-gambling expert, professor and co-director of the International Center for Youth Gambling, Problem

and High Risk Behaviors at McGill University in Montreal; and Joanna Franklin, a certified addictions counselor, a nationally certified compulsive gambling counselor and director of Network Development and Training at Trimeridian Inc. in Indianapolis, Ind.

Workshop presenters included addiction treatment specialists, researchers, gaming industry representatives and law enforcement professionals. Among the workshop presenters were: Deborah Haskins of Loyola College in

Maryland, Durand Jacobs from the American Board of Professional Psychology, Tim Christensen with the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling and Michael Scalise, a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration.



Jeffrey Derevensky

The conference was the result of a joint endeavor by organizations throughout the four-state region – Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling helped plan and coordinate the conference.

Many of the PowerPoint presentations from the 2005 Midwest Conference are available

for viewing. To view the presentations or for more information about the conference, visit the Alliance's Web site at www.888BETSOFF.org.

Save the Date!

The 2006 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse will be Aug. 16-18, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City.

Details will be posted on the Alliance's Web site, as they become available.



Joanna Franklin

Port Authority To Award Grants For Research, Awareness

Two requests for proposals (RFPs), issued by the Port Authority of Kansas City, are due by Nov. 11. The RFPs for up to \$300,000 in grants will focus on reducing compulsive gaming in area youth.

The grants are:

- **\$10,000-\$50,000:** To develop age-appropriate educational programs about youth gaming;
- **\$60,000-\$100,000:** To support research to investigate the age of onset and to reduce problem gaming in youth.

The grants are available to any nonprofit or university, but preference will be given to organizations in the Greater Kansas City area, according to Joanne Collins, a member of the Port Authority's Board of Commissioners. The grants will be awarded in January 2006.

"As the organization responsible for the oversight of Kansas City's casinos, we encourage responsible gaming," Collins said. "Awarding grants that fund awareness programs and research about compulsive gaming is one of many ways we take a leadership role in combating the problems compulsive gaming can cause."

The grants are underwritten by a Problem Gaming Fund, which is administered by the Port Authority of Kansas City and the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. The fund receives money from the Ameristar Casino and Isle of Capri Casino that make financial contributions to the fund as part of its agreement to locate within the city.

A study by the National Gaming Impact Study Commission (NGISC) found that youth are twice as likely to become problem gamblers as adults. The study also reports that 85 percent of youth ages 12-20 have gambled at some point in their lives.

"After realizing the startling statistics about the problem with youth and gaming, we realized something needed to be done," Collins said. "We need to be sure that compulsive gaming doesn't become a problem among Missouri's youth."

In July of 2003 the Port Authority awarded similar grants to Harvard Medical School, the University of Missouri and Tri-County Mental Health Services Inc. The grants funded problem gaming resources, prevention programs and research about disordered gaming in the state of Missouri.

For more information about the RFPs, visit www.888betsoff.org.

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Membership Is Key To A Strong Alliance

Keep informed about what's happening with problem gambling in Missouri and help develop Alliance programs by becoming a participating member of the Alliance.

Any individual or organization interested in promoting and furthering the Alliance's mission to educate Missouri residents on the potential characteristics and dangers of problem and compulsive gambling and promoting the availability of treatment can join the Missouri Alliance as a participating member.

Participating members are encouraged to:

- **Participate in Alliance meetings and events;**
- **Aid in the planning of awareness events; and**
- **Provide input to further expand the Alliance's programs.**

All memberships into the Alliance are free. For more information about becoming a participating member or to join, visit the Alliance's Web site at www.888BETSOFF.com or call (573) 522-1373.

Want To Receive The Bulletin?

In an attempt to streamline costs, the *Betsoff Bulletin* will be available through the Alliance's Web site, www.888betsoff.com. We are building an e-mail list of individuals who are interested in receiving notification when a new issue is available at the Web site, so please forward your e-mail address to: perezs@molottery.com. If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the *Bulletin* through the regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

If you received notification by e-mail about this issue, you're already on our e-mail list, but remember to send us updates on any e-mail address changes. In addition, please feel free to forward the link for the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested in reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

Alliance news and event schedules are available on the Web at:

www.888betsoff.com



Missouri Department of Mental Health



Missouri Council on Problem Gambling Concerns



Missouri Gaming Commission



Missouri Lottery



Missouri Riverboat Gaming Association



Port Authority of Kansas City, MO

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling's mission is to heighten public awareness for the dangers of problem gambling; develop prevention and education programs for gamblers of all ages; and direct problem gamblers and their families to the 1-888-BETSOFF help line and free treatment.