



Daily Media Report
OLG Communications and
Media Relations
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ISSUES

LILLEY: We're losers in Ontario's lottery payout

Toronto sun

November 18, 2019

Brian Lilley

**Also picked up by 50+ other media outlets in Ontario*

Something is rotten with the state of lotteries in Ontario.

We have an organization in this province, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., tasked with running lotteries and casinos all to generate revenue for the province. The sad part is that while revenues went up for OLG last year, by a substantial margin, profits to pay for hospitals and other community ventures went down.

Don't worry though, the people earning big bucks at the top of the organization kept growing.

The number of people from OLG appearing on the annual Sunshine List of civil servants earning more than \$100,000 a year has grown by almost 50% over the past few years. When President and CEO Stephen Rigby was appointed to head up the organization in January, 2015, there were 286 people on the Sunshine List. There are now at least 418 people on the list.

I say at least because under Rigby, the executive ranks of OLG continue to swell. The man, who previously worked as a career civil servant for the federal government, has styled himself as if he is a minister running his own department.

Rigby now has his own chief of staff, much like government ministers, plus his own communications team and other support staff around him, rather than relying on people that serve the whole organization. A recent job posting for a "special advisor" sought a person who would be, "responsible for developing the President & CEO's communications products and material, conducting research, and providing stakeholder management and other support for the operations of the President & CEO's office."

OLG already has a senior vice president, corporate affairs named Alexandra Aguzzi earning a handsome salary of \$352,478 last year. Why there would need to be a special advisor for the CEO's office to duplicate these functions is beyond me.

And how much would that new position cost?

The VP makes \$352,478 while Rigby himself earned \$765,406 last year. So the new position would also have to be well into the six figures.

And all of this coming at a time when OLG's net profit to the province is down.

In their last annual report, OLG reported proceeds of \$8.3 billion and a net profit of \$2.47 billion. Compare that to proceeds of \$7.8 billion the year before and a net profit to the province of \$2.48 billion. Proceeds went up \$480 million while profit dropped \$15.8 million.

Have I mentioned that OLG is effectively a monopoly? Yet somehow they kinda lost money. They went from giving the province 31.8% of their total proceeds to giving over just 29.8% of total proceeds.

Last year's annual report noted that during Rigby's time as CEO, proceeds have risen by a total of 27% while profits have only risen 23.6%. If profits were growing at the same rate as proceeds, then the province would be taking in roughly \$68 million a year in extra revenue.

Where is that money going?

It's a good question. It can't all be going towards the extra staff and big salaries that OLG favours. It can't all be going to the extensive renovations to Rigby's office or the other luxuries that OLG pays for to keep their executive team happy.

Yet the money is going somewhere. Ontarians are sold on the lottery and other gambling in the province as being run by a government agency to better our communities. Right now, the balance appears to be off and it looks like OLG is there to benefit the people at the top, not the ones buying the tickets.

Reborn slots facility to open with 60 new jobs and “huge” investment buzz

sarniajournal.com

November 19, 2019

Cathy Dobson

A new Gateway Casinos Sarnia will open in late January with 150 slot machines and about 60 employees, says Rob Mitchell, spokesman for Gateway Casinos & Entertainment.

Gateway is a private company that will operate the new gaming facility under construction at Hiawatha Horse Park on London Line. It already runs the Starlight Casino in Point Edward, which is “proving to be a very successful operation,” Mitchell said.

When Gateway assumed management of the Point Edward casino it completed a \$26-million overhaul of the 19-year-old facility.

Re-opening a smaller slots facility at Hiawatha wasn't on Gateway's radar until the company was directed to do so by the Ontario government, said Mitchell.

The Point Edward and Sarnia locations are within 10 kilometres of each another.

“Reactivating Hiawatha was a decision made by the Ford government,” said Mitchell. “We are the service provider. It's not something we decided.”

Hiawatha owner Jim Henderson said he had a lot to do with slots returning to the track he built more than 25 years ago. The horse racing industry has ups and down but the best years for him and the horsemen were when Hiawatha Slots operated from the same building.

The former Liberal government abruptly shut down Hiawatha Slots in 2012, throwing about 140 people out of work and creating uncertainty in the racing community.

Last year, the Conservatives offered tracks the choice of taking cash to bolster the racing industry or get a slots operation. Unlike tracks in Fort Erie and Dresden, Henderson chose the slots.

“This is better for the community,” he said. “I could have taken the cash but there's so much happening in Sarnia right now, this was better for everyone.”

Henderson made significant upgrades earlier this year to the building before Gateway took out a \$2.9-million building permit and began retrofitting the new gaming floor in October.

This week, walls are being painted, the accessible washrooms are nearly complete and the slot machines will be installed soon, Henderson said.

“It looks really good.”

Mitchell confirmed that Gateway wants to open by Jan. 31 in approximately the same space as the original Hiawatha Slots. But it will have 150 machines and not the 450 Hiawatha had prior to closing.

Sarnia council has readily endorsed the plan. The city is in line to reap 5.25% of the first \$65 million generated by the slots.

Mitchell said hiring is ongoing and Gateway has posted 15 job opportunities on its website, including positions for auditor, cage supervisor, guest services personnel, housekeeping, server and slot technician.

A job fair might be held in January, he added.

While the municipal slot revenue and new jobs are good news for the community, Henderson might be the biggest beneficiary.

He's never seen so much interest in the London Line property, which has about 160 acres surrounding the racetrack. The return of Hiawatha Slots is already making "a huge difference," he said.

"I've got people who want to build a hotel talking to me. There's a restaurant chain that's interested and a box store.

"They've got the paperwork drawn up already, and the hotel chain is a solid company from Toronto.

"With all the stuff happening at Hiawatha and in the Valley, the hotel people say they can get occupancy several nights a week."

Henderson is so optimistic about Hiawatha's future he expanded the property by buying another 15 acres next to TJ Liquidators.

"The premier said he'd do it and he did," Henderson said. "He came here and he told us he knew the industry was messed up and that he wanted to help."

Premier Doug Ford met with Henderson in Sarnia last November. He pledged then to come back and cut the ribbon on the new Gateway Casinos Sarnia.

Council to address mill site redevelopment

kenoraonline.com

November 19, 2019

Mike Aiken

The debate over redevelopment plans for the former mill property in Kenora is set for tomorrow at city hall. The proposal is also scheduled for a special meeting of the planning advisory committee, which is set for next week. Kenora's casino project is part of the redevelopment plans, along with housing.

A petition with 700 names was presented to council last week before a packed gallery. The project is being led by Gateway Casinos and Entertainment, and they had hoped to have the building operating by early in the new year. However, they're having to work through some delays.

City council meets at noon today in council chambers at city hall. The planning advisory committee meets at the operations centre Nov. 26 at 6 p.m. on Barsky's Hill.

Garson man wins second prize in Ontario 49 lottery

ctvnews.ca (Northern Ontario)

November 18, 2019

A 63-year-old retiree, from the Greater Sudbury community of Garson, wins a \$50,000 second prize in Ontario 49 lottery.

Guy Bergeron matched five numbers and the bonus number to win his prize in the Oct. 23 draw.

"I scanned my ticket at the same store I bought it. I was shocked!" said Bergeron.

The married father of two has two grandchildren and plans to use some of the money to take his family on a vacation.

He also plans to make a down payment on a new truck and invest.

"It's amazing! Winning does happen," said Bergeron.

Ontario 49 draws take place twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The winning ticket was purchased at North Star Confectionary on Skead Road in Garson.

Garson grandpa shocked by lottery win

sudburystar.com | Sudbury Star

November 18, 2019

A Garson man is celebrating a \$50,000 lottery win.

Guy Bergeron matched five numbers, plus the bonus number, to win the second prize in the Ontario 49 draw on Oct. 23.

"I scanned my ticket at the same store I bought it," shared Bergeron, a 63-year-old retiree, while at the OLG Prize Centre in Toronto to pick up his cheque. "I was shocked!"

The winning ticket was purchased at North Star Confectionery on Skead Road in Garson.

The married father of two and grandfather of two plans to take his family on a vacation, make a down payment on a new truck and invest.

"It's amazing," he said. "Winning does happen."

Ontario 49 is \$1 per play and the draws take place every Wednesday and Saturday. Tickets are sold until 10:30 p.m.

Visit the Ontario 49 page on OLG.ca for more information.

Garson man claims \$50K lottery prize

sudbury.com

November 19, 2019

Guy Bergeron of Garson is \$50,000 richer after claiming second prize in the Oct. 23 Ontario 49 draw.

Bergeron matched five numbers plus the bonus number to win the prize.

"I scanned my ticket at the same store I bought it," the 63-year-old retiree told staff at the OLG Prize Centre in Toronto when he picked up his cheque. "I was shocked!"

A married father of two and grandfather of two, Bergeron said plans to take his family on a vacation, make a down payment on a new truck and invest what's left.

"It's amazing! Winning does happen," he concluded.

ONTARIO 49 is \$1 per play and the draws take place Wednesdays and Saturdays. Combination Play is available in five-, seven-, eight- and nine-number selections. Tickets are sold until 10:30 p.m. Visit OLG.ca for more information.

The winning ticket was purchased at North Star Confectionery on Skead Road in Garson.

OTHER

Caesars becomes Windsor's first green-powered hotel

blackburnnews.com (Windsor)

November 17, 2019

Mark Brown

Windsor-Essex's largest hotel and entertainment complex is now run on "green" electricity.

Caesars Windsor has announced a partnership with Bullfrog Power, the top green energy provider in Canada, to help power its extensive energy system. Generators provided by Bullfrog will supply clean, pollution-free electricity to the casino's energy system, to match the amount of power used by Caesars' digital screens. This, in turn, will ensure the screens are not being powered by electricity from polluting sources.

James Hollohazy, Caesars Windsor's director of resort operations, said it's the latest effort for the hotel to continue reducing its carbon footprint.

"Partnering with Bullfrog Power is important to us because we believe in doing our part to reduce our impact on the environment," said Hollohazy. "Thanks to this program, we are now able to offer our guests a more environmentally sustainable stay as part of our commitment to create a truly rewarding hotel experience."

There are 107 digital screens on the hotel property, used by Caesars for promotional purposes. To add to their environmental efforts, Caesars Windsor also has the CodeGreen program, which encourages diversion for e-waste as well as recycling.

"We have a robust landfill diversion program for our e-waste, a donation program for our linens and our hotel soaps are recycled and rejuvenated for hygiene kits," said Hollohazy.

The electricity powered by Bullfrog comes from a combination of low-impact hydro and wind energy, which comes from renewable energy sources across Canada. Bullfrog has offices in Toronto, Oakville, Calgary and Vancouver.

For complete information on Caesars Windsor's CodeGreen program, visit their official website.