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MGCB Announces Successful Destruction of Illegal Gaming Machines

The Michigan Gaming Control Board (“MGCB”) Executive Director Henry Williams has [announced](#) numerous unlicensed illegal machines were recently destroyed at the City Recycling Inc. junkyard located at 1943 Mack Avenue in Detroit.

The illegal machines that were destroyed had been seized by the Attorney General during various MGCG investigations into alleged illegal gaming activities. To ensure the machines could not get reused or sold they were crushed.

“Illegal gaming continues to pose a threat to Michigan citizens and their communities, as it often leads to an increase in organized criminal activity, financial exploitation, and other related social issues. Unregulated gaming machines also result in a loss of state revenue. Operators running illegal gaming establishments are not reporting earnings or paying taxes — they are essentially robbing Michigan citizens of taxes and revenue used to support our schools through the School Aid Fund and our communities and local governments with essential state funding dollars,” Williams said.

“The machines destroyed by the MGCB are the tools of criminals, cheating their neighbors of their hard-earned money as well as the state out of gaming revenues that support our schools. Illegal gaming operations are a danger to their communities, typically becoming local hotspots for other crimes and violence. We will continue to coordinate with the Michigan Gaming Control Board to ensure our state’s gambling laws are strictly enforced,” said Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel.

“The destruction of these machines sends a clear message that the Michigan

Gaming Control Board is not playing games when it comes to upholding the highest standards of gaming regulation and enforcement,” added Williams. “The MGCB will continue to ensure that unauthorized machines are not left to chance to be repurposed and used again by those who choose to break the law.”

Illegal gaming refers to any form of gambling or betting activity — which involves the elements of consideration, prize, and chance — that is conducted outside the boundaries of the law. Michigan law prohibits accepting money or anything of value with the understanding that money, or something of value, will be paid to any person contingent upon the outcome of an uncertain event. 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.

The MGCB and the Liquor Control Commission began a joint effort in 2022 to educate the public and business owners about illegal use of gambling machines. As a result of MGCB investigations, 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.

Michigan citizens 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.

Five Individuals Arraigned on More Than 30 Charges Following Investigation of Two Alleged Storefront Casinos in Davison, Burton

According to a [press release](#) issued by the Michigan Gaming Control Board (“MGCB”), following a joint investigation with the Michigan Department of Attorney General and MGCB, five

defendants accused of operating Davison and Burton storefront casinos were recently arraigned on 31 charges in the 67th District Court.

Authorities confiscated 100 gambling devices, \$29,204 in suspected gambling profits, and 62 gift cards of varying denominations during raids conducted on April 27, 2023, at both locations: The State Road Spot at 723 South State Road in Davison, and The Bristol Spot at 1374 East Bristol Road in Burton.

“Accountability is crucial when it comes to upholding justice and ensuring a fair and honest gaming environment in the State of Michigan. While the Michigan Gaming Control Board will continue to hold those who choose to circumvent the law accountable for their actions, we also acknowledge the importance of fairness, equality, and the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise. We operate with integrity and our investigators remain committed to the foundations of due process that protects the rights of all individuals involved,” MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams stated.

In August and September, these individuals had the following charges brought against them:

- Joseph Toporek and Mary Larkin are each facing five charges: three felony counts for running a gambling operation without a license and using computers to commit a crime; one high court misdemeanor for maintaining a gambling house for gain; and one misdemeanor for keeping a gambling house.
- Shaun Bellah II, Shaun Bellah Sr., and Ghazwan Brikho are each facing seven charges: five felony counts for conducting a criminal enterprise, conspiracy to conduct a criminal enterprise, running a gambling operation without a license, and using computers to commit a crime; one high court misdemeanor for maintaining a gambling house for gain; and one misdemeanor for keeping a gambling house.

All of those accused have been arraigned, and

posted personal bond while they await their probable cause hearings.

Operator Deploys Industry’s Leading Sportsbook Technology at Island Resort & Casino in Michigan

888 and Sports Illustrated Sportsbook recently [announced](#) its partnership with OpenBet to power new retail sportsbook offering at Island Resort & Casino. Sports Illustrated, through its parent company Authentic Brands Group (Authentic), partnered with 888 in 2021 to create a world-class sportsbook. Following the success of the digital sportsbook branded by one of the world's most iconic media brands, OpenBet was selected as the partner of choice to support 888 & Sports Illustrated as it expanded into the retail space. OpenBet is a leading content, platform, and service provider in the sports betting industry and is part of the global Endeavor network.

Within Michigan’s Island Resort & Casino, the operator’s suite is powered by OpenBet’s world-class retail solutions. This solution includes state-of-the-art betting counters and self-service kiosks, providing customers with a wide range of betting options.

“We are delighted to partner with 888 and Sports Illustrated Sportsbook to power their first-ever retail launch. Customers at the Island Resort & Casino in Michigan can now immerse themselves in the ultimate sports betting experience in a safe and secure environment. Delivering this landmark retail platform for such an iconic brand is a significant milestone for OpenBet and underscores our commitment to ensuring our partners are equipped with cutting-edge technology and unrivalled content. We’re excited about the future and eager to see the successes this launch will bring” assured Deb Krupinski, U.S. Vice-President at OpenBet.

“Our alliance with OpenBet to power Sports Illustrated Sportsbook, celebrated with this launch, paints a promising future for the retail betting landscape in Michigan. As we stand on the

culsp of this exciting new chapter, our collective vision and expertise are set to redefine customer experiences,” commented U.S. President at 888holdings, Howard Mittman.

MGCB Public Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, October 17

The Michigan Gaming Control Board (“MGCB”) will hold a regular public meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at the MGCB’s Cadillac Place Office, 3062 W. Grand Boulevard, Suite L-700, Detroit, 48202-6062. The meeting will begin at 9:30 AM and will also be accessible via [Zoom](#).

The meeting is open to the public, and comments from the public are welcomed and encouraged during the public comment portion of the meeting. The MGCB asks you to [submit this form](#) to MGCBweb@michigan.gov by 9:30 AM, Tuesday, July 15, to notify them you plan to address the Board during public comment. Please include your telephone number on the form. You also may use the Q&A in the Zoom meeting to indicate you wish to speak during public comment. Please provide your name and telephone number, and you will receive a call placing you in the queue.

The [meeting](#) will also be accessible to the public via Zoom at this [link](#).