



# SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

## The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission cares about the communities it serves

**B**ILL ROBINSON HAS DEDICATED his entire working life to serving the communities he has lived in.

A decorated veteran RCMP member who has held high-ranking posts in rural and urban centres across Canada during his 34-year career (including the Major Crimes Unit in Edmonton), Robinson brings many transferable skills to the helm of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC),

and a deep understanding of what can go wrong when alcohol consumption and gaming are not kept in check.

“When I came here, I wanted to make sure that the policy and regulation we created not only drove revenue and allowed the industries to flourish, but also that the programs we put in place really drove a responsible use of those products by the citizens of Alberta,” says Robinson, the AGLC’s president



Choices Albertans can trust

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 8,627

liquor licences were in effect in Alberta as of March 31, 2015.

# More than 2,000

liquor retailers offer choice of more than 20,000 products, including spirits, beers, wines and coolers.

# \$766 MILLION

in liquor revenues were transferred to the Government's General Revenue Fund in 2014-15.

# 92%

The average rate at which VLTs in Alberta are programmed to pay out versus credits wagered.

# 13,585:

The number of gaming terminals located in casinos and Racing Entertainment Centres as of March 31, 2015.



and CEO. "I was really excited when I saw the opportunity at the AGLC because they have a strong social responsibility program."

The AGLC is a Crown commercial corporation and an agent of the provincial government, in charge of administering the *Gaming and Liquor Act* and related regulations and policies. The AGLC's main responsibilities include regulating Alberta's charitable gaming activities, conducting and managing provincial gaming activities, and controlling the manufacturing, importation, sale, purchase, possession, storage, transportation and use of liquor in Alberta. The AGLC also generates revenue for the provincial government through its liquor and gaming operations.

"We provide over \$2.2 billion in gaming and liquor revenue to the Alberta Lottery Fund and the General Revenue Fund annually," says Robinson, who took the lead role of the corporation in 2012. "We produce a lot of revenue and want the general public to understand how important that is. The money they spend, whether it is in a casino or through the use of liquor products, goes right back into the community.

That, for us, is an important message."

The AGLC also works closely with not-for-profit organizations as part of Alberta's charitable gaming model. "The whole gaming program is really built in support of it," Robinson says. "Charities will volunteer in a casino for a couple of days, conduct a bingo event

**"Last year, we enabled charities to earn over \$342 million through charitable gaming activities. This money helps charities continue to do great work in Alberta communities," says Bill Robinson.**

or raffle, or sell pull tickets to earn money. Last year, we enabled charities to earn over \$342 million through charitable gaming activities. This money helps charities continue to do great work in Alberta communities for numerous causes, including medical relief, nature conservation, arts programs and seniors services."

**ALBERTA'S LIQUOR MODEL IS ALSO LIKE** no other province in Canada, and for that reason it continues to contribute significantly to the economy. In 2014-15, sales from more than 20,000 available liquor products (which is more selection than in any other jurisdiction) provided \$766 million to the

government's General Revenue Fund. "In 1993, Alberta moved from a government-run to a privatized liquor retail model," notes Robinson. "Government allowed people to open their own liquor stores and really opened it up to a free-market economy. I think it's a strong model in Alberta because the marketplace drives pricing and the marketplace drives innovation and performance."

Front of mind for Robinson since he was appointed three-and-a-half years ago has been purposely engaging staff in all areas of the business of the AGLC, and ensuring the corporation remains as transparent to Albertans as possible. One of his approaches is hosting regular "Breakfast with Bill" meetings, where dozens of staff and their ideas are welcome. "You can be a front-line service provider, a call-centre operator or an executive in the company," he explains. "Once a month I host a breakfast in the boardroom and it's a relaxed opportunity that allows our people to hear from me, but also a chance for us to have a casual conversation about anything that's on their mind. People open up and they really hear what's going on in the company – which is very important to me." Robinson also hosts staff town hall meetings a few times throughout the year, and has an open door policy for staff members at all levels.

The AGLC has invested significant resources in building a high-quality management team in an effort to promote leadership and foster a sense of culture from within. "We have a strong culture at the AGLC. In my view we have the best employees in the industry and they are very professional in supporting programs right across the province. Everything flows from a well-educated and well-prepared workforce," says Robinson.

The corporation has teamed up with the University of Alberta to create a professional manager training program for the AGLC, which will see 100 managers participate over three years. "We are proud – we just had the first 25 employees go through the program," says Robinson. "We have really focused a great deal on our upper- and mid-level managers to ensure they understand our mission, vision and values, and understand the strategic direction of the organization and are influencers of people. For me, it's all about the people – and we have strong people here."

### AS A FORMER POLICE OFFICER, ROBINSON KNOWS FULL

well that gambling and liquor consumption can present problems for a segment of the population. For this reason, he is active in community outreach, and one of the initiatives close to his heart is the Stakeholder Advisory Council. The council shares trends and concerns among stakeholders in the gaming and liquor industries and helps the AGLC strengthen its social responsibility framework.

Robinson has also personally sat on national committees for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and continues to work with government and the public to highlight the dangers of alcohol consumption by expectant mothers. "We are very involved and it's important to us.

## GAMESENSE AND SENSIBILITY

First created in British Columbia, the GameSense program was recently launched here by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) in casinos, racing entertainment centres and online ([GameSenseAB.ca](http://GameSenseAB.ca)), to help people gauge their gambling habits, learn more about the games they play and understand when they should seek help for problem behaviour.

"While it's targeting problem players, it's also helping reduce the stigma for all players because they can walk in and learn about the games, and it teaches them how to play the games," says the AGLC's president and CEO, Bill Robinson, who appears in a video on the website speaking to the dangers of gambling. "There are many myths around gambling, such as if you stay in front of a slot machine long enough it's going to pay off. My message to people is, 'If you are going to a casino to get rich, you are going for the wrong reason.' "

Instead, he says, "You need to go for pleasure and for enjoyment. You need to temper your expectations when you go in because, even though the pay rates are high, not everybody wins. We don't want people to go in with false expectations and get themselves in trouble. GameSense is all about describing what those myths are and the realities behind them, how the games work, and really what people should expect when they go into a gaming facility."

As part of the program, GameSense advisors roam the casino floors and have interactive GameSense Information Centres set up to give patrons information about the establishment and how the odds work in the different games. The online iteration also does the same, as well as providing tips and resources for sticking to a budget, a list of GameSense Information Centres, and tools and resources, such as a quiz to self-assess your gambling behaviour.

"GameSense is a great program because you can assess what kind of a gambler you are and how much you gamble, all online," says Robinson. "That lets you remain anonymous. Then if you think you might have a problem, help is available online or through our specially trained GameSense advisors in all Alberta casinos and racing entertainment centres."

If you gamble,  
use your GameSense

- Play for entertainment, not to make money
- Balance gambling with other types of leisure activities
- Don't chase losses. Accept them as the cost of entertainment

Learn more at [GameSenseAB.ca](http://GameSenseAB.ca)

AGLC Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission

GameSense



Choices Albertans can trust

## BY THE NUMBERS

### 2,677:

The number of Lottery Ticket Centres operating in the province as of March 31, 2015.

### 5,837:

The number of active video lottery terminals in Alberta as of March 31, 2015.

### 4,395:

The number of people who completed ProTect SMART liquor training in 2014-15.

### 45,275:

The number of people who completed ProServe SMART liquor training in 2014-15.

### 57:

The number of venues in Edmonton accredited with Best Bar None status in 2014-15. Calgary had 33, while Grande Prairie had 5.

### \$1.5 MILLION

in gaming revenues are allotted annually from the Alberta Lottery Fund to support research into gambling in Alberta.



We understand the dangers for women who are pregnant, might be trying to conceive or, quite frankly, don't realize they are pregnant."

Most of all, Robinson strives to work with the AGLC and its board to ensure that Albertans have lots of entertainment options in the gaming and liquor industries, while creating programs to help those in need when unhealthy behaviours arise. That's why the AGLC has programs like GameSense for casinos, and Best Bar None for establishments with liquor licences.

"On the floor of the casinos we have GameSense advisors, and they walk throughout the floor making themselves available. If somebody is having a rough time or feel they are in over their head, the advisors are there to direct and help them," says Robinson. Gaming staff are also required to take SMART training to help educate and inform them about responsible gambling. The same goes for liquor establishments, where employees must take online training called ProServe and ProTect to educate themselves about serving liquor in a

responsible manner and preventing over consumption, as well as being prepared to deal with situations when violence escalates.

"We can't create programs on the back of irresponsible policy because bad things happen. I think my policing background brings tremendous benefit to the way we operate," says Robinson.

**For more information, visit our website: [aglc.ca](http://aglc.ca)**

**For responsible gambling information, visit:**

**GameSenseAB.ca**

**@AGLCdotCA**

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