

# Message from Chairman Mike Leara



The end of Fiscal Year 2021 resulted in a milestone for the Missouri Gaming Commission. We reached the \$1 billion mark of money contributed to worthy causes. The Veterans Capital Improvement Trust Fund, Missouri National Guard Fund, Access Missouri Financial Assistance Fund and the Compulsive Gambler Fund are the recipients of the important admissions taxes from Missouri's riverboat gambling casinos. A \$2 per two hour charge is paid by the casinos for each patron accessing the gaming floor. Half of these monies go to the home dock cities and/or counties where casinos are located. The other half goes to the Missouri Gaming Commission Fund, which pays our expenses. The worthy causes, established by the legislature, get set amounts by statute from the MGC Fund. In a post-COVID-19 year, it was exciting to reach the \$1 billion mark.

Financial numbers indicate Missouri's riverboat casinos are regaining some of their losses after the COVID-19 shutdowns. Year-over-year AGR is up 28% with admissions continuing to hold steady. Some casinos have kept various health and wellness restrictions in place with the current resurgence of COVID-19. MGC has no jurisdiction over local health and wellness directives, and we support the riverboat casinos in the efforts they make.

FY 2021's legislative session was bustling with bills for sports wagering, suspected illegal machines, video lottery terminal legislation, and iGaming. At session's end these bills did not advance. The only piece of legislation to pass was Senate Bill 26, which gives Caruthersville the ability to open a facility which will not have the liability and flooding issues as the riverboat in which they now operate. It was a prudent move and helps the community keep a valuable asset and major employer. As with each year, MGC staff is ready for any direction the legislature extends to us, and we anticipate the dialogue will continue in regard to sports wagering and other issues next session.

Charitable Bingo saw license numbers decrease during FY 2021 and we await the reopening of those organizations which closed due to COVID-19. At the start of the pandemic there were 207 Bingo licensees. Currently we have 191 regular bingo licenses and of those, 164 are currently open and conducting Bingo games. Eighteen halls have not reopened since initially closing in March of 2020. We are hoping they can restart regular operations at some point.

I'm proud of MGC staff which regulates the riverboat casinos, fantasy sports, and charitable gaming industry capably and diligently. I'd also like to thank the Missouri State Highway Patrol for their contributions to our mission. Troopers ensure the integrity of gaming in Missouri by serving as gaming agents on each of the riverboat casinos. MSHP investigators aid us in licensing employees and the many companies we oversee. We could not do our jobs without them.

Lastly, a special thanks goes to my fellow commissioners whose commitment to public service in the best interests of the people and the State of Missouri is unwavering.

I'm happy to present to you the FY 2021 Annual Report.