



For Immediate Release

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Florida Gaming Control Commission Partners with Leon County Sheriff's Office to Seize Illegal Slot Machines and Cash from Three Illegal Gambling Facilities

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — This week, the Florida Gaming Control Commission and Leon County Sheriff's Office conducted Operation Westside to shut down three illegal casinos in the Tallahassee area. Assistance from the Florida Highway Patrol and the Department of Homeland Security Investigations was also critical in carrying out the operation. Illegal slot machines and other illegal gambling machines, related equipment, and cash were seized from each location. Five arrests were also made.

Florida law strictly regulates gambling, with slot machines permitted only in [licensed gaming facilities](#), including eight pari-mutuel facilities in Miami-Dade and Broward counties and six Seminole Tribe of Florida establishments. It is illegal to operate slot machines or any other unauthorized gambling machines at an unlicensed facility in the state.

"While gambling is strictly regulated in Florida, illegal casinos continue to open and operate in our communities without regard for the law. Partnerships with law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal level are essential to ensure we keep Florida's communities safe," said **Ross Marshman, Acting Executive Director of the Florida Gaming Control Commission**. "Sheriff McNeil's leadership and the diligent efforts from the LCSO team were phenomenal in both the investigation and execution of Operation Westside. We are also thankful for the support of Colonel Howze and the Florida Highway Patrol in successfully and safely completing the operation, as well as the swift assistance from Homeland Security Investigations, as three of the individuals affiliated with these illegal casinos were not permitted to be in the country."

Legal gaming establishments ensure player protections, generate state revenue, and uphold game integrity. Those possessing illegal slot machines can face criminal charges and may incur administrative fines of up to \$10,000 per machine. Other licenses and permits may also be suspended for violating Florida's gambling laws.

"Partnering with the Florida Gaming Control Commission on Operation Westside has resulted in successfully shutting down three illegal casinos in our area, protecting our citizens from establishments that prey on their vulnerabilities and serve as breeding grounds for additional crimes," said **Leon County Sheriff Walt McNeil**. Collaborative law enforcement efforts, such as these, broaden our impact and strengthen our network."

Inside these illegal establishments, **\$92,167.10 cash** and **401 illegal gambling machines** were seized by law enforcement personnel, as well as related equipment. Locations Included:

- **Arcade 20**, 6315 Blountstown Highway. Agents seized **95 illegal slot machines** and **124 other illegal gambling machines**, as well as **\$55,962.10 cash**. A Notice to Appear (NTA) was issued to the manager for one count of Keeping a Gambling House and 86 counts of Possession of Slot Machines (first offense). A security guard was also issued an NTA for one count of Being an Agent/Employee of a Gambling House.
- **Blount's 4979, Inc.**, 4979 Blountstown Highway. Agents seized **118 illegal slot machines** and **\$16,065 cash**. The store manager was arrested for one count of Keeping a Gambling House and 87 counts of Possession of Slot Machines (first offense). He is currently being detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

- **Frontline 9 LLC**, 1907 Lake Bradford Road. Agents seized **64 illegal slot machines** and **\$20,140 cash**. Two arrests were made for gambling violations. The store owner was arrested for one count of Keeping a Gambling House and 64 counts of Possession of Slot Machines. The store manager was also arrested for one count of Keeping a Gambling House and 64 counts of Possession of Slot Machines. Both are currently being detained by ICE.

“Illegal gambling poses serious risks in our communities, and patrons who gamble at these unlawful establishments have no guarantees of fair play or consumer protections, including collecting on their winnings. One of these three facilities in Operation Westside regularly refused to pay out money, and a patron thankfully reported this,” said **Carl Herold, Florida Gaming Control Commission Director of Law Enforcement**. “Our Gaming Enforcement agents and law enforcement partners will continue to address illegal gambling to protect the safety of our communities, and we thank those who continue to report illegal gambling and illegal casinos through our tip lines.”

Citizen reports are important to share any concerns about illegal gambling – or what may be illegal gambling – activities or facilities in Florida. Report concerns online at FLGaming.gov/File-a-Report, by email at Tipline@FLGaming.gov, or by phone at 850-880-3433.

The mission of the Florida Gaming Control Commission is to preserve and protect the integrity of gaming activities in Florida through fair regulation, licensing, effective criminal investigation, and enforcement.

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