

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Fergus, On – The Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors is asking the provincial government to carefully consider the impact of implementing some of the recommendations in The Drummond Report.

One recommendation that would specifically impact rural Ontario deals with the Slots at Racetrack Program. Without warning on February 13, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan announced his intent to end payments to racetracks arising from the Slots at Racetracks Program in Ontario. This program is the most profitable portion of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) Corporation's endeavours, generating \$1.1 billion for the province. In addition, the program generates \$78 million annually for the local municipalities' share of slots revenue. The racetrack /race purse share is the \$345 million that Don Drummond's report recommends for elimination.

What can you do? After reviewing the following facts and figures, we ask that you take a few moments to submit a letter of concern to the MPPs in Ontario via [www.value4money.ca](http://www.value4money.ca) , then click TAKE ACTION.

When the Slots at Racetracks Program in Ontario was established, racetracks provided the location and site zoning which were acceptable to the public for the expansion of gambling. In addition, tracks also provided the construction of the base building, related site amenities and a portion of the operating and maintenance costs in exchange for a 20% share of the revenue from slots. The Ontario Horse Racing & Breeding Industry entered into a revenue sharing agreement with the OLG (a crown corporation). Fifty percent (50%) of the payments made to the racetracks is distributed in purses to horsepeople competing in races staged at each racetrack.

With this program in place, recurrent annual expenditures by the Horse Racing & Breeding Industry expanded from \$1.2 billion in 2000 to \$2 billion in 2010. The industry provides 31,000 full time job equivalents which are estimated to affect 60,000 people because of the many part time jobs.

Eighty percent of all expenditures occur in rural Ontario.

More than \$382 million is paid to the federal government, while \$261 million is paid to the province in addition to the slots revenue (*as per stats from the Study of Economic Impact of Horse Racing and Breeding 2010*).

Grand River Raceway is owned and operated by the Grand River Agricultural Society. Since its construction in December 2003 (at an initial investment of more than \$20 million), the facility has hosted more than 5,500 horse races over the course of 507 race days, generating purses of nearly \$50 million.

On average, more than half of the purses paid at Grand River Raceway will be distributed to racing participants residing within a 40km radius of Grand River Raceway, thus boosting the local agricultural economy by the purchase of agricultural goods and services (*according to an analysis of 2008 figures*).

Opportunities to race determine the distribution of purse money. Grand River Raceway has added 2652 opportunities to race per annum compared to the pre-slots era. According to the Economic Impacts of Horse Racing and Breeding in Ontario (2010) study, the industry generates \$2 billion in recurrent annual expenditures, 80% of which are in rural Ontario.

280 people are employed at Grand River Raceway (full-time and part-time) between the facility's two main operations — the racetrack operations and the Slots At Grand River Raceway (operated by the OLG). Wages and benefits for these 280 employees exceeded \$8 million in 2011.

Expenses over the past five years have averaged almost \$6.5 million per year (inclusive of depreciation and lottery ticket purchases). A vast majority of goods and services were local and regional purchases.

In keeping with its mandate, the Grand River Agricultural Society and Grand River Raceway have invested over \$570,000 in funding and resources in the local community since its inception in 2003. Community involvement includes local scholarships and bursaries, sponsorship of local fall fairs, University of Guelph to develop a program to foster recruitment of students to enter the OAC program in agri-food related fields, Bissell Park Redevelopment Plan to assist in the reclamation of a brownfield site to serve as a recreational area, funding for Trees For Mapleton, a GRCA program, Equine Guelph for development of online equine education programs, Township Of Centre Wellington to help fund a food and agri-tourism initiative under the OMIF program, contribution to Beatty Corner that created a park to mark the historic presence of the Beatty Family enterprise and its contribution to agriculture in Ontario and Equine Biosecurity Initiative: In 2012, GRAS has pledged \$46,000 to provide initial funding to a biosecurity effort on behalf of the horse industry. Matching funds have been committed by the Agricultural Adaptation Council.

The Grand River Agricultural Society/Grand River Raceway seeks your support in raising awareness regarding the significant losses that the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program in Ontario will produce for all levels of Government and the significant cost of jeopardizing 31,000 full time job equivalents.

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