

Speaking Notes
Minister of Gaming Gordon Graydon

Alberta Roundtable on Violence In and Around Licensed Premises

Tuesday, November 22, 2005 (8:05 a.m.)
Edmonton House Suite Hotel
Edmonton, AB

(check against delivery)

Introduction

- Thank you, Mark.
- Welcome to all participants and thank you for coming to take part in this roundtable discussion.
- I know many of you have travelled some distance to be here and it is appreciated.
- Minister Cenaiko and I are both pleased to see this event happening.
- This is an important first step in bringing stakeholders together to share experiences and ideas for change.
- Change that is needed to address the increasing violence in, and especially, around licensed establishments.
- This has all of us, and the public, concerned.
- For government, ensuring the safety of our citizens is of the utmost importance, including liquor licensees, staff and patrons.
- The solution to this problem may not be easy but, collectively, we can and we will address it.
- In Alberta, this problem of violence is not unique.
- Jurisdictions across Canada are also experiencing this.
- We can all agree though, that the choice to consume alcohol is an acceptable, adult activity.
- However, the prevalence of violence is not acceptable.
- We all play a part in this issue.

- Government works to ensure legislation and policies are in place to protect the public in all their daily activities, whether it be while driving on the roads, purchasing a home, or visiting a local lounge or bar.
- Inside a licensed establishment, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission enforces liquor legislation and policies, including ensuring minors or intoxicated individuals are not served alcohol, and the hours of operation, are adhered to.
- Outside the establishment, the local police authorities are responsible for enforcement of municipal, provincial and federal laws.
- As part of providing service to customers, licensees want to offer a welcoming and safe environment.
- Municipalities want their citizens to be safe.
- It is clear, any individual or business not following legislation or policy will be dealt with.
- But beyond this, what else needs to be done? How can we join forces and tackle this situation?
- With media coverage highlighting these incidents it seems like there is more violence than ever.
- I believe that there is not necessarily more violence, but an escalation in its severity.
- Incidents have changed from years ago when arguments consisted of a fist fight...which was serious enough...to now having a weapon involved, leading to severe consequences that are often irreversible.
- That is why it is so important that we have a mix of participants here today: licensees, police agencies, municipalities, government, industry associations, and AADAC.
- Not one stakeholder can fix this alone.
- By pooling all of our knowledge, skill and experience, we can come up with suggestions that make sense and fit within the framework of social responsibility.
- Government is committed to ensuring that social responsibility is addressed in all industries.
- Yes, government has already worked on some initiatives to tackle this issue.

- Many of you are probably aware of the Alberta Server Intervention Program, which trains staff on the responsible sale and service of alcohol.
- The strength of this program lies in the fact that all staff of licensed establishments across the province will be trained under the same program.
- We know there are many great programs and initiatives out there.
- I've seen firsthand the benefits of the Grande Prairie Safe City Nights program in my home community.
- I know there are other programs and initiatives out there.
- So I challenge you today to share your ideas.
- Roll up your sleeves and let's get to work on this problem.
- And today, we are fortunate to have one of the leading experts on this issue, Dr. Graham, who will present us with some interesting insights into alcohol-related aggression and the social context.
- Dr. Graham's understanding of and research into the various aspects of this issue will help us to better understand the issue and develop strategies.
- The knowledge that we take away from this event will form a basis for a greater understanding of the issue, our roles, and opportunities for improvements.
- I look forward to seeing the results of this workshop and learning about your suggestions for change.
- Thank you.

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