

## 2009 Midwest Conference Provides Learning Opportunities and More

Nationally renowned experts highlighted the sixth annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, which was held Aug. 12-14 at the Hilton Frontenac in St. Louis.

Hosted by the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling, the conference was also sponsored by organizations throughout the four-state region – Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska.

“The conference presented a great opportunity for people to become better informed about the significance of problem gambling and its impact on the community,” said Nora Bock, chairperson of the Alliance.

The three-day conference opened on Aug. 12 with a keynote address from Dr. H. Westley Clark, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and concluded on Aug. 14 with post-conference training on ethics and clinical supervision.

Further keynote speakers included Dr. Michael Flaherty, executive director for the Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions; Dr. Marc Potenza, problem gambling clinic director and associate professor at Yale University; and Ron Willis, mental health consultant and president of Green Porch Swing Productions.

In addition to informative and entertaining keynote speakers and programs on a variety of topics related to problem gambling and substance abuse, more than 12 continuing education credits were offered.

Additionally, the optional event, “Dinner, Music and Magic,” provided attendees with a unique opportunity to enjoy dinner, exhibits and live entertainment on Aug. 13 at the Magic House in St. Louis.

“I had a lot of fun at the optional event this year,” said Holly Koofer-Thompson, responsible gaming coordinator for the Missouri Lottery. “It’s nice to be able to gather with conference attendees in an informal environment outside of the conference.”

Plans are already underway to make the 2010 Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, which will be held July 28-30, 2010, another educational and exciting event.

For a complete list of presenters and conference information, please visit the Alliance’s Web site at [888betsoff.org](http://888betsoff.org).



*Guests at the optional event enjoying the many exhibits at the Magic House in St. Louis.*

### Proposals for Workshops, Presentations Being Sought for 2010 Conference

Proposals are being accepted for workshops and poster presentations for the seventh annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, which will be held July 28-30, 2010, in Kansas City. All proposals must be submitted by Jan. 22, 2010.

“The Midwest Conference is a popular conference for presenters and attendees from throughout the country,” said Melissa Stephens, problem gambling program administrator for the Missouri Gaming Commission and a member of the Midwest Conference program committee. “We’ve managed to keep our costs low, and we work hard at attracting the best speakers and presenters in the country.”

Several Missouri representatives are serving on the conference’s planning and steering committees. Stephens said in addition to helping select speakers and presenters, the Missouri representatives have been given the task of planning an optional recreational event.

“We think an event like this provides a great chance to socialize in an environment that is unique to the host city,” said Stephens.

Information about the request for conference workshops and presentations, as well as hotel information, will be made available on the Alliance’s Web site, [888betsoff.org](http://888betsoff.org), in the coming months.

## Bock Named Chair of Statewide Problem Gambling Coalition

Nora Bock, clinical director for the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse at the Missouri Department of Mental Health, was recently named the chairperson of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling. Bock assumed the yearlong leadership role in September.

“The Alliance has been at the forefront of addressing problem gambling in Missouri for more than 10 years,” she began. “The achievements of this group have only been possible because of the commitment of the membership. I am proud to represent the Alliance in this capacity.”

Bock said she is looking forward to furthering the Alliance’s mission to educate Missouri residents about the warning signs of problem gambling and where to find help.

“We’re very excited about the year ahead,” said Bock. “We recently updated our youth addiction prevention program, which includes a 30-minute DVD, facilitator’s guide and poster, and we began distributing the new program to Missouri schools over the summer. We’re also hard at work planning the seventh annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse. This well-recognized and respected regional conference represents strong collaboration at the national level, consistent with the cooperative efforts of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling on the state level. We have accomplished much in raising awareness about problem gambling, but there is still work to be done.”

To learn more about the Alliance, the new youth prevention program or the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, visit [888betsoff.org](http://888betsoff.org).



Nora Bock

## Reporter Honored for Dedication to Gaming Coverage

Rick Alm, former gambling and tourism writer for the *Kansas City Star* newspaper, received the 2009 Outstanding Contributor Award from the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling for his years of commitment and coverage of gambling-related issues.

Alm worked for the metropolitan newspaper for 30 years, covering many gaming topics including the activities of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling since its inception in December of 1997. For the past 12 years, since the Alliance was created, Alm wrote tirelessly about problem gambling and related topics in his weekly column in the *Kansas City Star*.

Alm also attended many problem gambling conferences and meetings, in order to better understand the issues surrounding these disorders, so he could best communicate them to the more than 250,000 subscribers of the *Star*.

In addition to his column, Alm started blogging about gambling and problem gambling in 2007, when the Lucky Numbers Web site was launched. The Web site included links to problem gambling help such as the Bets Off Web site, the Bets Off help line and others affiliated with the Alliance.

“Alm’s commitment to informing his readers about problem gambling was unsurpassed,” said Gary Gonder, director of Integrated Services for the Missouri Lottery. “He provided an invaluable service to the Alliance and its members, and his contribution will be sorely missed.”

The Outstanding Contributor Award is presented annually to an individual, group, organization or company who has demonstrated superior achievement in addressing problem and pathological gambling issues.



Rick Alm

### Upcoming Alliance Events

#### October 22-25

Missouri School Boards Association Exhibit at Tan-Tar-A in Osage Beach

#### November 8-10

Missouri School Counselor Association Exhibit at Tan-Tar-A in Osage Beach

#### November 16

Alliance meeting in Kansas City from noon - 2 p.m.

### Your Ideas Welcomed

Do you have a story idea for the next *Betsoff Bulletin*, or would you like to write a story for the next issue? There’s a lot going on in Missouri concerning problem gambling, and we would like to include as much as possible in the *Bulletin* and on our Web site, so please be sure to pass on any ideas you may have.

To suggest story ideas for the *Bulletin* or the Web site, contact the editor, Holly Koofer-Thompson, at [betsoff@molottery.com](mailto:betsoff@molottery.com), or call (573) 526-7467.

## “Beat Addiction” Director Recognized for Contributions

Frank Finley, video producer for the Missouri Lottery, was selected to receive the 2009 Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling’s Service Award for his superior vision, dedication and work on the “Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path” youth prevention video.

“Frank spent dozens of hours lining up interviews and subjects for the video, as well as hundreds of hours writing the scripts, hunting locations and props, setting up and filming the various scenes, interviewing the former addicts, editing the video footage, adding music, having it translated into Spanish and bringing it all together into one 30-minute video,” said Susan Goedde, communications manager for the Missouri Lottery.

The updated program, which is geared towards students in grades 6 through 12, began being distributed to Missouri schools in August.

In addition, the Kentucky and Connecticut lotteries also requested copies of the video, which Finley tailored to meet these states’ specific needs.

Finley also provided the video to local cable access channels that have aired the video dozens of times, gaining thousands of dollars of free publicity for the Alliance’s cause.

“I had a lot of fun working on this project,” said Finley. “It was challenging at times, but the end result was worth it. I hope this program helps students struggling with various addictions by raising awareness and showing students that they can turn their lives around.”

The award is given in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling during the course of the past year by an individual or representative of a member organization.



Frank Finley

## New Version of “Beat Addiction” Now Available

The award-winning “Beat Addiction: Choose the Right Path” youth addiction prevention program has been revised and updated.

The new program, which is recommended for grades 6 through 12, includes a 30-minute DVD featuring four personal stories from a diverse cast of youth in recovery from various addictions, a facilitator’s guide and poster. The DVD also includes a closed-caption and Spanish version, as well as the original video released in 2003.

The 2003 program, which was designed for students in grades 6 through 9, was made available for free to all Missouri schools. More than 700 Missouri schools requested copies of the video kit. The video also was used and shown in several other states and countries throughout the world.

To request a copy of the new program, please contact Holly Koofer-Thompson at [koofeh@molottery.com](mailto:koofeh@molottery.com) or (573) 526-7467.



## Speakers Bureau Educates, Raises Awareness About Problem Gambling

The Alliance provides speakers for groups and organizations throughout the state on topics ranging from the prevention of youth gambling to the warning signs of problem gambling. For more information about the speakers bureau or to arrange a presentation, please call (573) 526-7467. All presentations are free of charge.

## Publication Available Online

The *Bets Off Bulletin* is available through the Alliance’s Web site, [888betsoff.org](http://888betsoff.org). If you would prefer to receive a free printed copy of the *Bulletin* through regular mail service, please let us know by calling (573) 526-7467.

If you received this edition via e-mail, you’re already on our e-mail list, but remember to send us updates on any e-mail address changes. In addition, please feel free to forward the link for the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested in reading it.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*.

# Save the Date!

2010 Midwest Conference on Problem  
Gambling and Substance Abuse:

*Roads to Recovery*  
July 28-30, 2010  
Kansas City, MO

## Tentative Timeline/ Deadlines:

**Jan. 15, 2010:**

- Presentation, Poster Proposals Due

**Spring 2010:**

- Speakers, Workshops Announced

**May 31, 2010:**

- Late-Breaking Research Posters Due

**June 2010:**

- Hotel Room Block Reservation Deadline

**June 15, 2010:**

- Early Bird Registration Discount Deadline



**Students receive a 50 percent discount  
on the registration rates!**

*On behalf of the Midwest Consortium  
on Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse*



Missouri Council on  
Problem Gambling  
Concerns



Missouri Department of  
Mental Health - Division  
of Alcohol & Drug Abuse



Missouri Gaming  
Association



Missouri Gaming  
Commission



Missouri Lottery



Port Authority  
of Kansas City, Missouri



Recovery Community  
Member

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**MISSOURI ALLIANCE**  
TO CURB PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling's mission is to heighten public awareness for the dangers of problem gambling; develop prevention and education programs for gamblers of all ages; and direct problem gamblers and their families to the 1-888-BETSOFF help line and treatment.