

Dear Community Partners and Friends,

Happy New Year!

It is with a heavy but grateful heart that I bid all of you farewell (sort of!). I began my leadership role as Executive Director of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling in October of 2023 with great humility and a sense of excitement at the opportunity to guide the Nevada Council into the future. As a person in long-term recovery from a gambling disorder myself, I can think of no higher honor than getting to lead an organization that has been so instrumental in my own recovery and in the recovery of thousands of others over the 40+ years of its existence. It has been the honor of a lifetime to work with an amazing staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board over the past 15 months

It was both my intent and hope that my leadership role would last for many years, but a Parkinson's diagnosis in May of this past year threw a very large and unexpected monkey wrench into my plans. I consider myself very fortunate to have received a very early diagnosis, and I have begun to engage in practices that I hope will lessen and delay the onset of symptoms and their effects on my life. However, after much thought, I made the difficult decision to step down from the ED role, in part to reduce the general stressors that come with being in a decision-making position so that I can focus on personal therapy. Also, I want to begin engaging in those activities that I have always envisioned doing in retirement now, while I am still in reasonably good health, both physically and cognitively.

A search for my successor this past fall produced several excellent candidates, and I'm happy to report that Trey Delap was ultimately offered and accepted the position. I have absolutely no doubt that the Council is in capable hands for the future, as Trey and I transition my roles and responsibilities over to him across the first quarter of this year. I will let him more fully introduce himself to you in his own words.

Those of you that know me well will not be surprised to learn that I will continue to advocate fiercely for awareness and education surrounding issues related to problem gambling and responsible gambling going forward. In fact, I plan to continue to support

the Council's efforts in Nevada roughly half-time, and am hoping to focus my efforts on building and strengthening the Nevada Council's relationships with rural and tribal communities in state. I will also continue efforts to introduce problem gambling awareness into the educational system and advocate for better responsible gambling standards and increased funding at the legislature. So, while I am bidding farewell as the Executive Director of the Council, I am saying hello as its "Director of Storytelling!" I will remain available for speaking engagements and collaborations---all of you are welcome to have the use of my brain for as long as it continues to function!

I want to once again acknowledge everyone who has been a part of my amazing journey to this point, either directly or indirectly. I will continue to call on you and answer your calls to collaborate and make this state a safer and more wonderful place for us all to live, work, visit, and play.

Most sincerely,

Ted Hartwell
Director of Storytelling