

OLG picks operator for casinos in Innisfil, Casino Rama

Gateway will also operate a future site still to be chosen between Collingwood or Wasaga Beach

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People try their hand at playing slot machines inside an Ontario casino. - Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation/Submitted

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation has picked Burnaby, B.C.-based Gateway Casinos and Entertainment to operate gaming facilities in central Ontario.

The company will take over operations of Georgian Downs and Casino Rama this summer, while also starting the process of determining the location of a gaming facility in either Collingwood or Wasaga Beach.

Gateway's Ontario spokesperson Rob Mitchell said the company's current focus will be on the transition for employees at Georgian Downs and Casino Rama, before it can establish a timeline for what might happen in Collingwood or Wasaga Beach.

He added there is still "considerable study before we land on a location and get our ducks in a row to do an analysis" of the Collingwood and Wasaga Beach markets.

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Mitchell said the company will be speaking to both municipalities about what land is available, as well as examining sites that have already been identified as potential locations.

Wasaga Beach has identified five potential sites for a gaming facility. Collingwood, while signaling its interest as a willing host, has not identified any particular properties.

Mitchell said Wasaga Beach Mayor Brian Smith has already “demonstrated his enthusiasm” for a gaming facility to locate in Wasaga Beach.

“We received a letter from him this morning, and his offer of assistance. That’s always encouraging,” Mitchell said. “The whole area is a fantastic opportunity.”

Smith was told by OLG on Thursday morning; he had to dash out of a coordinated committee meeting to take the call.

“A casino in our region means the addition of good paying jobs and economic synergies that will benefit our region for many years to come,” Smith said. “The town is prepared to do whatever it takes to have the casino locate here. We believe our community is best suited to host this facility.”

The mayor added he is excited about meeting with the company in the very near future.

“Selecting Gateway is the latest step OLG is taking as we continue to bring new jobs and economic development to communities across Ontario,” said Stephen Rigby, OLG’s President and CEO. “The investments Gateway will make in the central region will enhance the gaming experience for customers and help OLG increase its contribution to the Province of Ontario.”

“We are very pleased to once again partner with OLG as the service provider in the Central Gaming Bundle. Gateway has become the standard for gaming and hospitality in Canada and the award of this bundle allows us to build on that leadership position,” said Tony Santo, Gateway’s Chief Executive Officer. “We look forward to working with our new team members at Casino Rama Resort and OLG Slots at Georgian Downs.”

Mitchell said Casino Rama will be the company's first resort casino operation in Ontario.

Gateway, Canada's oldest gaming company, was selected by OLG to operate gaming facilities in northern and southwestern Ontario in 2016. It currently runs nine existing facilities in Ontario, with plans to build new casinos in Kenora, North Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie.



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