



Alberta Horse Racing Sector Timeline

April 21, 2021

- **1905:** First recorded horse race in Millarville, Alberta in 1905.
- **1962:** *Alberta Racing Commission Act* proclaimed.
- **1989:** Bill 10 establishes the Alberta Lottery Fund. The first horse racing simulcast is run at Calgary's Trout Springs.
- **1992:** The Video Lottery Terminal Program is officially introduced.
- **1995:** The Alberta Racing Industry Renewal Initiative (RIRI) was created as a means of supporting the horse racing industry. Under the terms of the initiative, government approved the development of Racing Entertainment Centres (RECs) with electronic gaming located at racetracks. HRA received 51.66 per cent of provincial slot proceeds at RECs and 5.4 per cent of the pari-mutuel handle (bets wagered on a race). This level of funding continued until 2016 when the Horse Racing Alberta Funding Agreement replaced RIRI in an attempt to decrease industry reliance on government.
- **1995 (July):** Government of Alberta accepts plan from Alberta Racing Commission to renew horse racing governance. The Government of Alberta states its intention is to reduce Government involvement and streamline operations. Douglas Mitchell is the chair of the Alberta Racing Commission.
- **1995 (October):** Bill 49, *the Racing Corporation Act*, is introduced by the Government of Alberta. It repeals the *Alberta Racing Commission Act* and *Pari-Mutuel Tax Act*.
- **1996:** *Alberta Racing Corporation Act* proclaimed.
- **1998:** Community Lottery Boards are established by the Alberta Government to oversee distribution of an additional \$50 million in lottery funds. The Alberta Racing Commission passed a resolution to utilize 20% of gaming proceeds to grow and market the horse racing industry.
- **1998:** The Chair of Alberta Racing Corporation is Dr. Pat Brennan, DVM (until 2002).
- **1999:** Rick Curtis, General Manager of the Alberta Racing Corporation, resigns.
- **2000:** Auditor General confirms that Alberta Racing Corporation received 33.3% of net revenues from slot machines at Northlands Spectrum in Edmonton and Rocky Mountain Turf Club in Lethbridge as allowed by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) drafted agreements. The ARC distributed between 80%-90% of these revenues to racing purses. The remainder was retained by the ARC for the marketing of horse racing throughout the province as outlined under the government-approved Racing Industry Renewal Initiative.
- **2000-2001:** Government completes an extensive review of the Alberta horse racing industry. The process is led by Minister of Agriculture Shirley McClellan. Agriculture Deputy Minister Brian Manning is tasked with developing a report recommending a path forward. *Alberta Horse Racing Industry Review June 29, 2001* (Report results in the first Horse Racing Alberta Act, see 2002.)

- **2001:** Dr. David Reid is named the first Chair of Horse Racing Alberta. Andy Bryant is named Chief executive Officer.
- **2002:** *Horse Racing Alberta Act* passed. Horse Racing Alberta replaces the Alberta Racing Commission. (This is the last formal governance legislation.)
- **2002:** Bill 16 amendments expand the Board of the industry's governing body from seven to 12 members to bring on additional representatives from key stakeholder groups not currently represented on the Alberta Racing Corporation Board. Alberta Racing Corporation's name will also be changed to Horse Racing Alberta to reflect the new, integrated governance structure for the industry. These changes were requested by the industry to assist in meeting its goal of a stabilized, enhanced, and growing horse racing and breeding industry.
- **2005 (April):** Dr. David Reid is reappointed as Chairman, with the added title of Chief Executive Officer (until 2008). Andy Bryant's term as President and Chief Operating Officer is extended until the end of 2008.
- **2005 (July):** The Policy and Procedure Manual was approved July 11th, 2005. The manual places responsibility on the Manager, Finance and Business Operations to be responsible for the creation and maintenance of HRA policies and procedures.
- **2008:** Shirley McClellan joins the HRA Board and is subsequently named Chair. Dr. David Reid remains as CEO.
- **2009 (June):** HRA Board advised to establish terms of reference for committees.
- **2009 (July):** CEO Dr. David Reid retires. Shirley McClellan becomes interim CEO.
- **2009:** George Cuff conducts a review of HRA. Following the review, a Memorandum of Understanding is modified and is valid for 10 years.
- **2011 (May-June):** Shirley McClellan resigns as Chair, becomes CEO in June.
- **2011 (July):** Peter Bidlock becomes interim Chair.
- **2011 (December):** Rick LeLacheur appointed Chair of HRA for a term of three years. Shirley McClellan remains as CEO.
- **2014:** The *Horse Racing Alberta Amendment Act* (called Bill 4) is approved in 2014 but never proclaimed. Amendments would have brought HRA under the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* and would have restructured the Board so that half of the members would be from the public. Under APAGA, HRA's budget would have also been included as part of Alberta's consolidated financial statements.
- **2016 (March):** Government of Alberta and HRA sign a new 10-year funding agreement replacing the RIRI funding agreement, aimed at supporting rural communities and the agriculture sector. The agreement replaces a previous 10-year funding arrangement. That arrangement supported the industry using a portion of slot machine revenues from racing Entertainment Centres. Under the RIRI, HRA received flow-through funding from the Alberta Lottery Fund equivalent to 51.66% of the net revenue from slot machines. Under the new agreement, the percentage was gradually reduced over three years to 40% (in 2018-19) and for the remainder of the 10-year term ending in 2026.
- **2015 (April):** Century Downs Racetrack and Casino opens in Calgary, Alberta.

- **2016** (September): HRA Board announces that Century Casinos Europe GmbH is the successful applicant to own, build, and operate an "A" Track Horse Racing Facility in the Edmonton market area.
- **2017** (May): HRA Board extends President and CEO Shirley McClellan's contract to June 2018.
- **2018:** Gill Hermanns replaces Rick LeLacheur as Chair. Kent Verlik replaces Shirley McClellan as CEO.
- **2018-2019:** The Government of Alberta (led by the New Democratic Party) starts a search for members to fill a restructured Board, but the process is halted as changes were not made before the NDP was replaced by the UCP (United Conservative Party) as the Government.
- **2019** (April): Century Mile Racetrack and Casino opens in Edmonton, Alberta. Northlands Park in Edmonton closed, and its REC licence was transferred to Century Mile.
- **2020:** Responding to industry pleas for help, the Government of Alberta (led by the United Conservative Party) provides a \$7,000,000 loan to be repaid on a monthly basis until March 31, 2023 and raises HRA slot revenue share from 40% to 50%. (Changing the funding agreement set out in 2016.) This loan was approved in response to a request for financial relief due to the COVID-19 global pandemic causing delay of the 2020 racing season.
- **2021:** Government of Alberta launches HRA Governance industry review conducted by Marcomm Works/Parlee McLaws LLP.

(Various years, Serecon produces reports outlining economic impacts of the horse racing industry in Alberta. The last one was in 2019. <https://thehorses.com/files/HRA-Economic-Impact-Update-2019.pdf>)