

**33 YEARS ON JOB**

# New Jersey casino veteran hired for Ohio commission

## He will serve as director of licensing

By [David Eggert](#)*The Columbus Dispatch* Thursday November 3, 2011 4:57 AM

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A 33-year veteran of regulating Atlantic City casinos has been hired for a top role in Ohio's budding casino agency.

Christopher Storcella started as director of licensing at the Ohio Casino Control Commission on Monday. He had the equivalent job in New Jersey for 27 of the 33 years he was with its casino agency.

The additions of Storcella and Patrick Martin — chief counsel for the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission who will oversee regulatory compliance in Ohio — give the agency some experienced hands in the gambling arena.

Casinos are scheduled to open in Ohio's four biggest cities in 2012 and 2013 but first need approval from the Casino Control Commission after thorough investigations.

"We're fortunate to find two quality people who have the exact experience we need to get the commission up and running," said Executive Director Matt Schuler, who announced the hires yesterday.

Schuler and top deputy John Barron came from the Ohio Senate in October with experience inside state government yet no hands-on experience regulating casinos. Schuler's priority has been recruiting top-level regulators from other states to move to Ohio.

Storcella worked at the New Jersey Casino Control Commission since 1978, when the state's first casino opened. He created and managed the unit responsible for processing employee license applications.

The Villanova University graduate became deputy director of licensing in 1981 and director of licensing in 1984, a position he held until May 2011, when he retired.

Martin, who is expected to start later this month, has been chief counsel and assistant attorney general for the Kansas agency since July 2007. He was appointed interim executive director for nine months last year after the departure of the executive director.

He has law and undergraduate degrees from the University of Kansas.

Both men will make \$105,000 a year, Schuler said.

Also yesterday, Commission Chairwoman Jo Ann Davidson told reporters she was feeling "a lot better" about the status of license applications from the operators of Cleveland and Toledo casinos hoping to open next spring.

Though she stopped short of indicating whether they will open on time, Davidson said discussions with Rock Ohio Caesars and Penn National Gaming were productive.

At their last meeting two weeks ago, members of the Casino Control Commission warned that delays in getting completed applications could affect when the casinos open. They want to open in late March (Cleveland) and early April (Toledo).

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