

# American Place Casino Celebrates Grand Opening of Harbor Poker Room

WAUKEGAN, IL, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [American Place Casino](#) officially unveiled its highly anticipated Harbor [Poker](#) Room today with a grand opening celebration that drew community partners, business leaders, press, and excited players. The ribbon-cutting ceremony marked another milestone for the property since opening its doors in February 2023.

“

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*Andy Haugh, Poker Room  
Manager*

Festivities began at noon with a red carpet entrance, photo opportunities, showgirls, music from a live DJ, and interactive stations including a buffet, bar, merchandise booth, and registration area. At 12:45 p.m., remarks were delivered by Julie Ivic, Director of Communications, followed by Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham, and closed by American Place Casino Vice President and General Manager Jeff Babinski. The ribbon was officially cut at 1:00 p.m. by Babinski, joined by Chelsey and Andy from Table Games, Ben and Joe from Facilities, and Mayor Cunningham.

Excitement filled the event, with an ongoing line to enter the ceremony stretching from the casino floor. Guests included players, community supporters, and media outlets from both Chicago and Milwaukee. Representatives from organizations such as the Lake County Chamber, Waukegan Chamber, Waukegan Park District, Retired Professional Football Players of Chicago (including Wyndell Davis, Reggie Smith, and Gemara' Williams), as well as State Senator Adriane Johnson, Lake County Board Vice-Chair Mary Ross Cunningham, and local radio personality KB from iHeartRadio's 97.3 The Game, all joined in the celebration. Press attendance included Fox Chicago, CW18, My24, Univision, and the Lake County News-Sun.

One Vernon Hills resident, who arrived carrying a stack of cash in anticipation of a buy-in, was amazed to learn the ceremony was free to attend. He expressed excitement that poker is now available so close to home, eliminating the need to travel to Milwaukee or Des Plaines to play. Mayor Cunningham highlighted the economic impact of American Place Casino during his speech, emphasizing the partnership with the City of Waukegan to grow jobs, drive the economy, and deliver another form of entertainment to the community.

Chelsey Hughes, Director of Table Games, noted the significant hiring efforts to staff the new poker room. “We’ve already hired eleven new team members specifically for poker, with plans to add five more,” she said. “In addition, a number of existing team members are transferring into the department, learning through our Table Games School to become trained poker dealers. It’s an incredible opportunity for growth and development within our team.”

Andy Haugh, the first and only Poker Room Manager at American Place Casino, also shared his excitement. Haugh brings extensive experience from previously managing poker rooms at two of the region’s largest competing casinos. Now, he has the opportunity to open and lead his own as a full-room manager. “The support from throughout our organization to bring this room to life has been incredible. The dedication to providing our guests with what they’ve been asking for makes us all excited about the future and growth of poker at American Place Casino,” said Haugh.

The Harbor Poker Room officially opened to the public on August 9 and operates daily from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. The intimate yet energetic poker room features both Texas Hold’Em and Omaha games, with offerings based on player demand. A daily interest list helps determine which games are available, including:

- 1-3 No Limit Hold’Em, \$100–\$300 buy-in
- 2-5 No Limit Hold’Em, \$300–\$1000 buy-in
- 4-8 Limit Hold’Em, minimum \$40 buy-in
- 1-2 Pot Limit Omaha (PLO), \$100–\$500 buy-in

Additional game variations may be offered based on demand. Players are seated on a first-come, first-served basis, with waitlists available both in person and through the Bravo Poker Live app or website. An American Place Rewards card is required to use the Bravo system.

To celebrate the opening, the first 500 players who buy into a poker game will receive a \$20 free bet for Circa Sportsbook, adding even more excitement to the [gaming](#) experience.

“The Harbor Poker Room represents another step in delivering what our guests have been asking for,” said Jeff Babinski, Vice President and General Manager of American Place Casino. “Poker has been one of the most requested offerings since we opened, and we are thrilled to bring this experience to Waukegan now rather than waiting for the permanent casino.”

Visit <https://americanplace.com/gaming/harbor-poker-room/> for more information.

About Harbor Poker Room:

Harbor Poker Room is an exciting new gaming destination located within American Place Casino in Waukegan, Illinois. Since opening in August 2025, the room has quickly become an attraction for poker enthusiasts across the region, offering daily Texas Hold’Em and Omaha games in an intimate and welcoming atmosphere, with stakes designed to appeal to both seasoned players and those new to the game. Players can join games on a first-come, first-served basis or through the Bravo Poker Live app. Whether you’re chasing the thrill of competition or enjoying a night out

with friends, Harbor Poker Room delivers the ultimate poker experience close to home. Learn more at [americanplace.com/gaming/harbor-poker-room](https://americanplace.com/gaming/harbor-poker-room).

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