

Stalking The Wild Lotto Buck

by Jim Stiak

In the supermarket, they compete with the *Peoples*, *TV Guides* and *Enquirers* for your attention. "Play here," cry the signs. Plastic green computer boxes offer a string of numbers for a

dollar. Even a nickelnose might spend that buck, cheaper than a trip to Reno, and take a chance on five grand or five mil. But scratch off your card with a lucky penny, hoping to uncover three gold bars, and, sure as the smile on a winner's face, you walk out of there a loser.

Cheer up, bunky. You can still feel good, knowing that your insignificant greenback is being spread about this great state, from Baker to Brookings. Slice the revenue pie of the Oregon State Lottery into six approximately equal pieces, and three of them wind up right back in the public's face as prize money.

One slice goes to pay for the games—two and a half cents printing costs per ticket, two million annually for the payroll of the lottery's 85 employees, the placing of ads in newspapers and the back of buses, 5% commission on each ticket sold at over 3,000 retail outlets. And the other two slices, 34% of the lottery's intake, are earmarked for "economic development," providing jobs for construction workers, bronze sculptors, fishermen, loggers, professors, consultants—and more.

The gamblers of Oregon spent \$87 million, or about \$32 per capita, on lotto tickets in fiscal year '86. Twenty-eight of those millions were distributed for economic development, while, by contrast, one man won over a quarter that much on a lucky roll of the wheel last July.

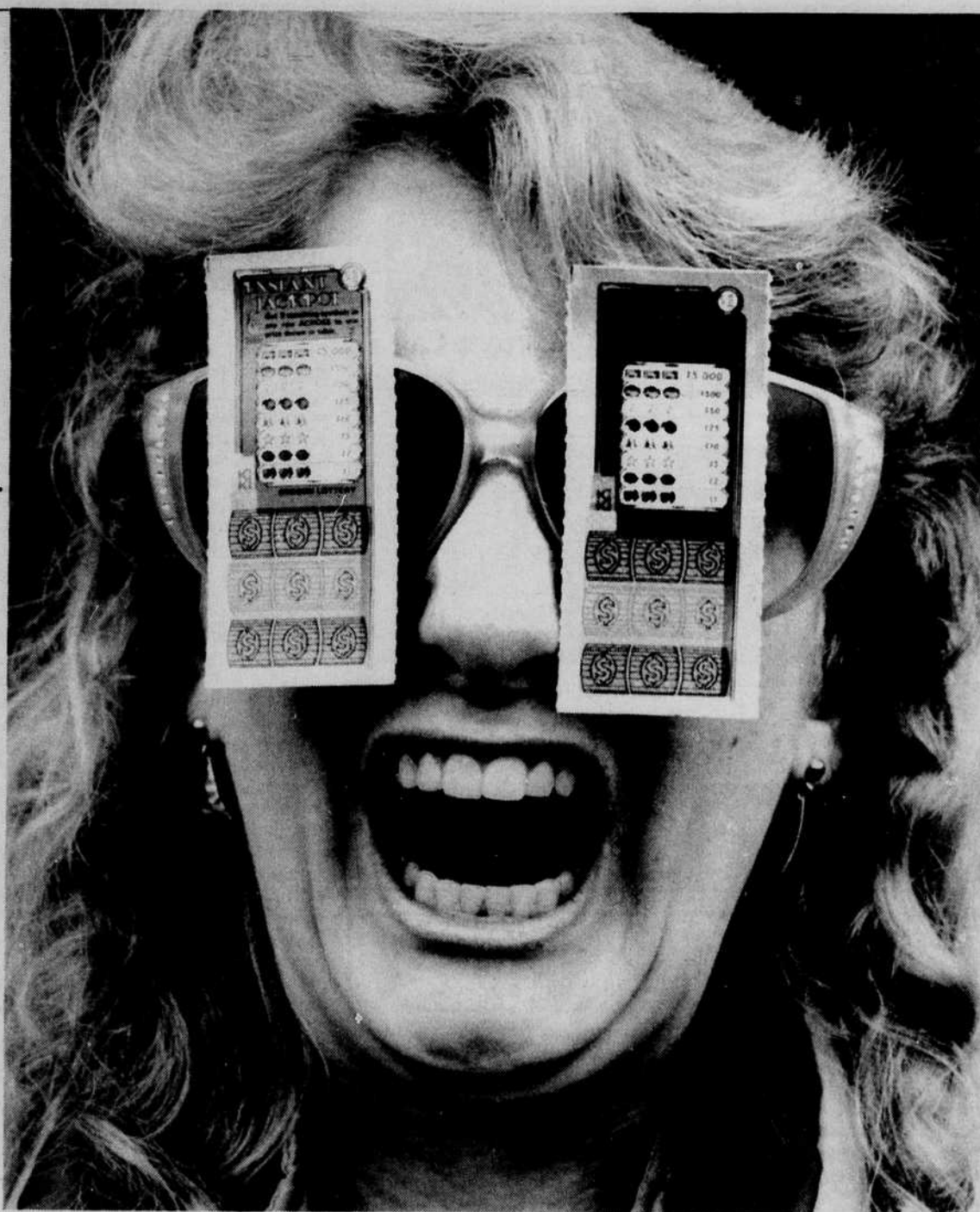
But some of the biggest winners in the Oregon lottery have never held a winning ticket in their hands. Nippon Kokan, a Japanese company, is one. They're on the bright side of a million dollar grant to provide water, a road and a cooling system for their proposed plant in scenic Millersburg. There, scheduled to begin in July of 1988, they will produce poly-

crystalline silicon, an intermediate step in the manufacture of computer chips. Polish fishermen are other winners, receiving facilities in Coos Bay because of \$190,000 of lottery money.

Three and a half million dollars, second only to Multnomah's eight, are coming to Lane County. The U of O gets over half that for a new science building and toys to study Laser Optics and Biotechnology. Mahlon Sweet gets a million, most of which is a loan, slated for new sewers and parking spaces. The next two largest Lane County grants were to LTD, \$204,376 for a new maintenance facility, and \$167,113 for street, sewer and water for the site of the ballyhooed Van Duyn Chocolate plant, which may yet someday arrive.

Since the first lottery ticket was sold on April 25, 1985, the Oregon legislature has created numerous programs to distribute the wealth. Higher education and infrastructure construction receive the largest amounts, over twenty million lotto bucks each from 1985-87. The construction of mass transit facilities is especially popular, since every local dollar spent is matched with four from the feds. The Portland area has received three-quarters of this money, with lesser amounts to the Rogue Valley, Salem and Lane County.

Most of the forty-four million given out so far has been quarterly disbursements, set by the legislature as a percentage of the total take. The Department of Fish and Wildlife, for instance, gets 3.4% of the total to maintain their fish hatcheries. The Forestry Department gets 1.1% to hire pre-commercial thinners in Veneta, Astoria, Klamath and Forest Grove. But other grants, like the one that brought the Magna Carta to town, were one-time windfalls.



Photograph by David Stein

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There's plenty of money for education, including new buildings and tools on several campuses, two endowments in medicine at Oregon Health Sciences University, and the financing of facilities to research potatoes in Redmond, sheep in Corvallis, and soybeans throughout the state.

Two funds, including one intended for women and minority-owned small businesses, finance infrastructure projects such as roads and sewers. There's also a loan fund for businesses with less than 50 employees, and 19 Small Business Assistance Centers receive partial funding from the lottery. Several grants have been awarded to workers looking to buy failing businesses. Programs which promote the sales of Oregon products have been winners throughout the state. Something called the Oregon Resource & Technology Development Cor-

poration, whose purpose is to "foster innovation and assist in developing new products and processes," has been given over three million to disburse.

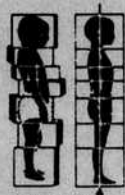
The promotion of tourism is another favorite—money has been provided for brochures about Jacksonville, Douglas and Deschutes Counties, and the state's museums and covered bridges. Two million dollars went to Oregon's exhibit at Expo '86, twenty grand for market analysis of a resort in the northeast corner of the state, and ten thousand to

study turning a Wasco County ghost town into a "major destination resort."

Two railroads were purchased, as was a form, fill and seal packaging machine. Exhibit halls, a livestock barn, a million gallon reservoir and a brine pond were built. Industrial and commercial developments, including two each in Clackamas and Washington Counties that promise thousands of jobs, have pocketed several million.

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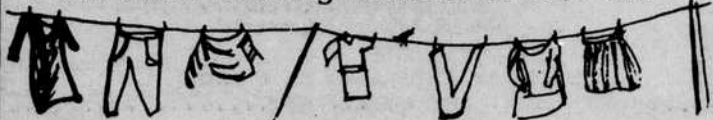
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