

## IN BRIEF

## State to expand lottery with slot machines

SALEM — Since 1984, the Oregon Lottery was a simple scratch-off ticket operation that generated about \$30 million a year for the state.

The lottery has expanded over the years to one that now produces \$400 million a year, mainly as a result of moves by the Legislature to draw more money from the lottery, including the 1992 introduction of the highly lucrative video poker game.

Now, Gov. Ted Kulongoski has ordered a further expansion of the lottery — and the state's dependence on gambling revenue — by adding slot

machine-type games to the lottery's video poker terminals.

The governor estimates the new games will yield an additional \$120 million in lottery profits in the 2005-2007 budget period to maintain state police patrols at current strengths.

The move dismays critics who say the state should move no further into new gambling ventures as a way to raise money to plug holes in the state budget.

"It's easy revenue, but there are social consequences," said Bob Baker of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. "This new line of video games will attract new gamblers, and for some it will lead to problems."

Kulongoski said an ailing state economy and voters' refusal to endorse new taxes have left few

revenue options for protecting vital services such as state troopers.

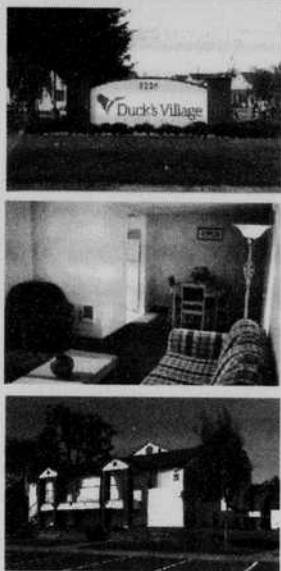
"I did not want to go there, but I was faced with this reality," Kulongoski said.

Legislators over the years have taken the same view, believing the lottery is essentially a voluntary tax. They have prodded the lottery to produce ever larger profits to pay for state services and programs.

Adding slot machine-style games to the lottery's 10,000 video poker terminals in 2,000 retail establishments will be a relatively easy reprogramming task, said lottery spokesman Chuck Bauman.

The Oregon Lottery Commission is due to talk about the expansion at its next meeting Dec. 17.

— The Associated Press

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