



Mary Todd's Workers Bar and Grill

By NOEL THOMAS
For The Daily Astorian

I've always been drawn to (no pun intended) Mary Todd's — it's a great old Union-town building with all those angles and textures — the light-reflecting windows, power lines, and hunky utility meters contrasting with and complementing the old horizontal drop siding. It leans a little this way, a little

that, somehow always in motion. It has atmosphere, and a heartbeat.

I've drawn it before, thinking about it, so one morning I packed up my folding chair, drawing pad, pens and pencils, and set up camp across the street in front of Suomi Hall. This was done on an overcast day — the gray sky emphasizing the tangle of utility lines in a way I'd never seen before.

Sketching has always been somewhat of an obsession for me, but in recent years, it's

become a necessary part of my daily life, like eating and sleeping. When I start, I don't try for perfection or a finished work, just a chance to see what I can do. It's play. I sketch anything and anyone, and at the end of the week I get to look back at a visual journal of where I've been and what I've seen.

Noel Thomas is an Astoria artist whose work may be seen and purchased at the RiverSea Gallery, 1160 Commercial St.

Lottery retailers' cut to be left unchanged for next five years

By PETER WONG
EO Media Group
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SALEM — The cut that more than 2,200 retailers receive from video lottery proceeds will remain unchanged for the next five years.

The Oregon Lottery Commission voted Friday to leave in place two compensation plans that retailers can choose from, one rewarding low-volume retailers and the other high-volume retailers. The plans net them a commission average of 23 percent.

The new contracts with retailers will end in June 2020.

The vote was 4-1. The lone dissenter was Chris Telfer, a member who is a certified public accountant in Bend and a former state senator.

Telfer said afterward she had no big objection to what the commission did.



But she said she voted no because she was willing to consider a different plan, laid out by Oregon Lottery Director Jack Roberts, that would have let some retailers keep more money as an incentive to increase video lottery sales and earn more for the state.

That plan would have set a 27.5 percent cut for the first \$175,000 of video lottery sales, 23 percent on sales between \$175,000 and \$475,000, and 20 percent on sales of more than \$475,000.

However, during the last major debate about retailer rates more than a decade ago, education and social services groups advocated a flat rate of 15 percent.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said many lawmakers also would have raised concerns about such a plan, even though the Lottery Commission is largely independent of the Legislature.

"I feel like they are doing this on their own and forgot to ask us," Kotek

said at a Jan. 20 meeting with the Portland Tribune editorial board.

"If we do not raise any more money, but we are going to pay them (retailers) more money, that is less money from the lottery coming into the state budget — and less on which we can bank on."

The commission heard public testimony in December.

A long history

According to the Oregon Lottery's financial statement for the 2013 business year — the latest available — retailer commissions for all games accounted for \$204.9 million, an expense second only to prizes at \$206.8 million.

Net proceeds transferred to the state for various purposes, including education, were \$546.9 million for the year ending June 30, 2013.

Since the Oregon Lottery started video operations in 1992, first with vid-

eo poker and then with other electronic games in 2005, they have accounted for about 70 percent of lottery proceeds.

The machines are owned and serviced by the state, but they sit in private establishments.

Until 2010, when the commission left them unchanged, retailer compensation rates had been whittled down from their initial 35 percent set in 1992.

A slight upswing

During its meeting, the commission heard financial reports that Oregon Lottery sales — and specifically video lottery games — are on a modest upswing for the business year that will end June 30.

Compared with the previous business year to date, total sales were up 2.63 percent, and video sales up 5.04 percent. Sales of traditional products, such as scratch-off tickets, were down by 2.87 percent.

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