

Oregon Lottery considers offering smartphone games

A growing trend around nation, world

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon Lottery officials are considering offering traditional lottery games on mobile devices as soon as 2019.

The proposal to launch games such as Scratch, Draw and Keno on smartphones is part of a draft strategic plan to modernize the state lottery and boost state revenue.

Lottery revenue helps pay for public education, economic development, state parks and natural resources and veteran services.

“Our focus is on the opportunity for the Lottery to join the current century and engage players on a platform they want,” said Oregon Lottery Director Barry Pack. “There are lots of people playing games on mobile devices. Naturally, they would want to play the lottery there.”

At least 10 states, Canada and European countries offer lottery games on mobile devices.

Many states have turned to the option to try to appeal to millennials who play the lottery at significantly lower rates than their elders. For instance, the average age of a lottery player in Oregon is about 44.

Lottery officials started discussing joining the trend in November when Pack took over as the lottery’s permanent director and began crafting the agency’s three-year strategic plan. The plan was presented to lottery commissioners Friday in Salem.

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Oregon Lottery Director Barry Pack

“There is no decision right now,” said MardiLyn Saathoff, lottery commission chairwoman. “This is sort of a beginning of a lot of work to be done to see if the strategy is one that will work for us and one we can continue to support.”

The “iLotto” plan envisions subscription sales through a mobile app and player accounts that would allow for a personalized experience and time and money limits. It is unclear whether players would purchase tickets directly from the lottery or from retailers.

Players would be required to purchase prepaid or debit cards to pay for the tickets. Pack said he opposes allowing players to use credit cards.

The concept is still in the early stages, he said.

“There are many questions to answer. What kind of games, and what is the technology available, and what is the demand among current players and future players?” he said.

The cost of the program will depend on the scope of offerings. Lottery officials are still studying whether offering mobile games would require any law changes. Those issues could be addressed during the 2019 legislative session.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

New casino does not slow lottery

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The 3-month-old ilani Casino Resort 16 miles north of the Oregon-Washington border has slowed but failed to stop growth in Oregon State Lottery sales.

“It is a slow move downward at this point,” said Spencer Haley, a lottery senior research analyst.

Since the new casino opened in April, state lottery revenues are up 2.6 percent, or nearly \$2.7 million, from this time last year.

State economists had projected ilani would drain Oregon lottery revenue by 12 percent in the next two years. That would represent a \$220 million loss in gross receipts and \$142 million decline in net profits sent to state coffers.

It’s still too early to know whether state lottery revenue will continue to grow in the face of the nearby competition. Lottery analysts said they need at least one year and up to two years of data to observe the impact of the new casino in Ridgefield, Washington.

“That is encouraging that revenue is not falling as severely as originally predicted, but it’s still too early to know whether it’s going to be a sustained trend or just the three months,” said Oregon Lottery Director Barry Pack.

The new casino, however, has disrupted lottery sales on Hayden Island, where revenue is down 14 percent. Hayden Island’s 19 lottery retailers are still a draw for Washington state residents, but now they appear to be sharing that customer base with ilani.

Revenue growth has declined in places near the Washington state line, including Multnomah County by 3 percent, Rainier by 6 percent, the Sandy Boulevard/Interstate 205/Interstate 84 area by 6 percent and Interstate 84 East by 3 percent.

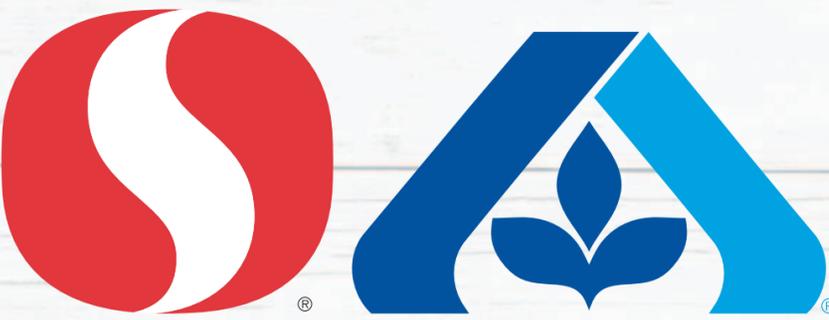
Coast Guard makes rescues over weekend

Associated Press

WARRENTON — The U.S. Coast Guard rescued a 67-year-old man whose 45-foot yacht sank about 9 miles from land after hitting an unknown object.

Officials say a helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Astoria in Oregon responded at about 10:15 p.m. Saturday to an area off Leadbetter Point State Park in Washington.

A Coast Guard helicopter crew also picked up a 65-year-old passenger experiencing possible stroke symptoms from a charter vessel west of the Columbia River so the person could get medical help.



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