

# Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency

Larry Hogan, Governor • Gordon Medenica, Director



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TO: Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission  
Gordon Medenica, Director

FROM: Carole Gentry, Managing Director of Communications

DIVISION: Communications

DATE: April 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Report for the April 2020 Commission Meeting

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Following is a status update of ongoing and special projects in the Communications Division:

## MEDIA RELATIONS

### Key accomplishments last period:

#### **News Coverage:**

More than 20 articles or segments on the Maryland Lottery and/or Maryland's casinos were broadcast and/or published online in the past two months by local/regional/industry media including WBAL-TV, WMAR-TV, Fox 45, NBC 4 (Washington, D.C.), the Baltimore Sun, the Baltimore Business Journal, the Associated Press, WTOP and Gambling Compliance.

#### **Broadcast Opportunities:**

Communications staff member Roslyn Lane appeared on the monthly Lottery Update segment on WBAL-TV on 2/29 to discuss the latest games, prizes and promotions. The Lottery Update segment scheduled for 3/28 was cancelled due to the coronavirus state of emergency.

#### **Winner Interviews and News Releases:**

Communications staff members interviewed nearly 40 winners and wrote blog posts on their winning experiences between mid-February and mid-March. Winner interviews were suspended beginning on 3/13 due to the coronavirus state of emergency. Communications staff wrote and published blog posts on 3/23, 3/26, 3/30 and 4/3 to provide players with information about the impact of the coronavirus on Lottery operations, including the closure of the Lottery's Customer Resource Center and changes to the Powerball and Mega Millions jackpots. Communications staff issued a news release on 3/5 to report the February 2020 casino revenue figures; and another news release on 4/3 to report the March 2020 casino revenue figures. Also on 4/3, a national Mega Millions press release and FAQ were distributed to lottery agencies across the country.

#### **Daily News Headlines:**

Communications staff sent daily news clip emails to Maryland Lottery and Gaming employees and members of the Commission during each day of the five-day workweek. Each email contained links to multiple media articles covering the lottery and gaming industries.

#### **Winner Awareness:**

Winner interviews and winner blog posts, media alerts and social media posts were temporarily suspended on 3/13 due to the coronavirus state of emergency.

### **Upcoming tasks for this period:**

#### **Daily News Headlines:**

Communications staff will continue to send daily news clip emails to Maryland Lottery and Gaming employees and members of the Commission during each day of the five-day workweek.

#### **Broadcast Opportunities:**

While all broadcast activities are currently suspended due to the coronavirus state of emergency, Communications continues to field questions from reporters.

## **EVENTS AND SECOND-CHANCE PROMOTIONS**

### **Key accomplishments last period:**

#### **Events and Community Outreach:**

Communications staff members planned and executed the Lottery's presence at the following community events between mid-February and early March:

- Towson University vs. William & Mary basketball game, Towson – 2/20
- Morgan State vs. Delaware State basketball game, Baltimore – 2/24
- Maryland Home and Garden Show, Timonium – 2/29 and 3/1
- Cosmic Cocktail Party, Baltimore – 3/5
- Maryland Home and Garden Show, Timonium – 3/6 through 3/8
- University of Maryland vs. Michigan basketball game, College Park – 3/8

The social distancing requirements implemented as part of the coronavirus state of emergency led to the postponement or cancellation of four events in which the Communications staff was planning to attend and promote between mid-March and mid-April.

#### **Second-chance Promotions:**

Communications staff member Gail Pelovitz continued work on procedures and fulfillment of all Lottery second-chance contests.

### **Upcoming tasks for this period:**

#### **Events:**

All upcoming events originally planned and scheduled for April, May and June 2020 have been postponed or cancelled. Shirley Hinton, assistant director of communications for promotions and events, will continue to maintain contact with operators of these events to determine potential makeup dates.

#### **Second-chance Promotions:**

Communications staff member Gail Pelovitz will continue working on procedures and fulfillment of all of the agency's second-chance contests.

## **CORRESPONDENCE, NEWSLETTERS, PIA REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Key accomplishments last period:**

#### **Correspondence:**

More than 200 e-mail inquiries and letters were received and answered by Communications staff between mid-February and mid-April.

**Public Information Act Requests:**

Communications staff completed responses to PIA requests with assistance from the Attorney General's Office and other Agency staff.

**Newsletters:**

Communications staff members Debbie McDaniel-Shaughney and Mary Clark completed the latest edition of the Gazette employee newsletter and began planning for the next edition of the quarterly Retailer Report newsletter.

**"Retailer Corner:"**

Posted twice-weekly blog entries on the "Retailer Corner" section of mdlottery.com.

**Upcoming tasks for this period:****Correspondence:**

Communications staff will continue providing timely, accurate and complete responses to e-mail and other written inquiries.

**Public Information Act Requests:**

Communications staff will continue providing timely, accurate and complete responses to PIA requests.

**Newsletters:**

Communications staff members Debbie McDaniel-Shaughney and Mary Clark will begin production of the next Retailer Report and begin writing the next Gazette.

**DRAWINGS MANAGEMENT****Key accomplishments last period:****Daily Drawings:**

Twice-daily drawings of Pick 3/Pick 4, daily drawings of Bonus Match 5 and 5 Card Cash and twice-weekly drawings of Multi-Match were conducted successfully. The drawings team also ensured that winning numbers for those games, as well as multi-state games, Powerball, Mega Millions and Cash4Life were posted on mdlottery.com, the Lottery's mobile device apps and winning numbers phone line.

The drawings team began planning for on-site staff reductions to increase social distancing for those individuals who must report to the drawings studio. In addition, the team began working on a detailed contingency plan for relocating the daily drawings from WBAL TV studios to the Lottery Headquarters in the event it should become necessary due to the coronavirus.

**Upcoming tasks for this period:****Daily Drawings:**

Members of the drawings and Communications team continue working with WBAL-TV to reduce the number of on-site personnel during drawings. Contingency planning for moving the drawings to Lottery Headquarters are also ongoing.