

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: May 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Report for the May 2020 Commission Meeting

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 WJZ-TV (Baltimore), NBC 4 (Washington, D.C.), WMDT-TV (Salisbury), the Baltimore Sun, the Baltimore Business Journal, the Associated Press and Gambling Compliance. Much of the coverage has focused on the pandemic's effect on lottery and casino operations, sales and revenue.

Broadcast Opportunities:

The monthly Lottery Update segment scheduled for 4/25 was cancelled due to the coronavirus state of emergency.

Winner Interviews and News Releases:

Winner interviews were suspended beginning on 3/13 due to the coronavirus state of emergency. Communications staff issued a news release on 5/5 to provide an update on Fiscal Year 2020 casino revenue figures.

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:

The social distancing requirements implemented as part of the coronavirus state of emergency led to the postponement or cancellation of eight events where the Communications staff was planning to attend and promote the Lottery between mid-April and mid-May.

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 events that the Communications staff was planning to attend in 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 100 e-mail inquiries and letters were received and answered by Communications staff between mid-April and mid-May.

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 and distributed the May 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 continues to follow proper social-distancing protocols to ensure the safety of the drawing officials, announcers and other TV team members who are on-site at the drawings studio.

Upcoming tasks for this period:

Daily Drawings:

Members of the drawings and Communications team continue working with WBAL-TV to make any necessary adjustments to the number of on-site personnel during drawings and the contingency plans in the event that drawings must be moved to Lottery Headquarters.

COMMUNICATIONS STAFFING AND SUPPORT

Special Note:

Several members of the Communications team have been reassigned to other departments and agencies in need of some extra assistance during the COVID19 health crisis. Public Affairs specialists James Kennedy and Doug Lloyd have been temporarily reassigned to the Maryland Dept. Of Health’s Office of Preparedness and Response while Public Affairs Specialist Bryan Kelly has been temporarily reassigned to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Sean Tilson, Public Affairs Assistant, has been helping other departments from within the Agency, including the Customer Resource Center and the Facilities Operations departments.