

TO: Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission  
John Martin, Director

FROM: Carole Gentry, Managing Director of Communications

DIVISION: Communications

DATE: February 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Report for the February 2022 Commission Meeting

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

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

### **News Coverage:**

More than 50 articles or segments on the Maryland Lottery, Maryland's casinos, and/or Maryland's sports wagering program were broadcast and/or published online in the past month by local/regional/industry media including WBAL-TV, Fox45, WMAR and WJZ-TV (Baltimore); Maryland Public Television; Fox 5, WUSA 9 and WTOP radio (Washington, D.C); the Baltimore Sun and the Baltimore Business Journal.

### **Broadcast Opportunities:**

Managing Director of Communications Carole Gentry appeared via Zoom in the monthly Lottery Update segment on WBAL-TV on 1/29 to discuss the latest games and promotions. Communications staff member Roslyn Lane will appear via Zoom on the Lottery Update segment on 2/26. Communications staff member Doug Lloyd participated in weekly radio interviews each Friday to discuss Lottery news on WNAV-AM in Annapolis.

Lottery Director John Martin and other Lottery staff are continuing a series of weekly video conference interviews with Nestor Aparicio for WNST/baltimorepositive.com. The recorded segments are available each Friday. Director Martin appeared on 1/14, 1/21, 1/28 and 2/13, and Communications staff member Seth Elkin appeared on 2/6.

Director Martin discussed sports wagering during several interviews with 105.7 The Fan (Baltimore) on 1/13; Maryland Public Television's State Circle on 1/21; Fox 5 (Washington, D.C.) on 1/28; WMDT-TV (Salisbury) on 2/3; and WDRE-TV (Salisbury) on 2/8.

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

On 1/5, in the interests of customer and staff safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Communications staff members temporarily adjusted their winner interview procedures. A Communications staff member greets each winner of \$20,000 or more who claims a prize at the Lottery's Customer Resource Center in Baltimore. The staff member provides the winner with a gift bag and makes arrangements to speak to the winner by phone at a later time rather than interviewing the winner in person. Winner stories are published on mdlottery.com. Winners may remain anonymous, but stories include names or photos of winners who give written consent for publicity regarding their prizes.

Communications staff issued the following news releases in the past month:

- 2/7 — Statewide news release to report January 2022 casino revenue.
- 2/10 — Statewide news release to report January 2022 sports wagering revenue.
- Every Monday (the next day if there is a holiday) — Statewide news release, “The Week in Winners,” listing each Lottery ticket worth \$10,000 or more that was sold or claimed in the preceding seven days.

### **Daily News Headlines:**

Communications staff sent daily news headline 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.

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

### **Ravens Seats for 20 Years Winner Reveal**

The Lottery and the Baltimore Ravens joined forces to successfully execute a live media event at M&T Bank Stadium to reveal the winner of the Ravens *Seats for 20 Years* promotion. Six finalists were drawn from more than 800,000 entries in the contest, which was run through the My Lottery Rewards program. Each finalist won \$10,000 and was invited to M&T Bank Stadium with a guest for a behind-the-scenes tour of the facilities before the reveal. Annapolis resident, Diane Heil was the lucky winner. Her surprised reaction was captured on camera by the four Baltimore TV stations in attendance: WBAL, WJZ, WMAR and WBFF. The event was also shown in real-time on Facebook Live.

### **VaxCash 2.0**

Members of the Communications staff played vital roles in developing, managing and publicizing the new VaxCash2.0 Promotion, a collaboration between the Lottery and the Maryland Department of Health. Announced at a press conference held by Governor Hogan on 2/8, the promotion seeks to incentivize Marylanders to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by receiving booster shots. The promotion will award cash prizes to 12 vaccinated and boosted Marylanders in weekly drawings from 2/15 through 5/3. The winner of the first drawing on 2/15 will receive a \$500,000 prize. The next 10 drawings will each award one \$50,000 prize. The final drawing on 3/3 will award a \$1 million prize. The promotion follows a similar collaboration between the Lottery and MDH for a 2021 vaccine lottery promotion that ran from 5/25 to 7/4.

The Communications team drafted copy for the VaxCash 2.0 “landing” page on mdlottery.com, including a detailed set of frequently asked questions and answers. Communications staff members also worked with the Office of the Attorney General in creating the promotion’s rules and internal operating procedures. The Communications team will guide the winners through the process of claiming their prizes. Winners will have the option to remain anonymous, and the Communications staff will handle any winner publicity in addition to serving as the main point of contact for inquiries about the promotion from the public or the media.

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

The coronavirus state of emergency led to the postponement or cancellation of many events since mid-March of 2020 where the Communications staff was planning to attend and promote the Lottery. Assistant Director of Communications for Events and Promotions Gail Pelovitz is maintaining contact with the operators of these events and is in the process of building out our Events Calendar for 2022.

### **In the past month, the Communications staff managed the Lottery’s presence at the following events:**

- University of Maryland vs. Rutgers basketball game, College Park — 1/15
- Morgan State University basketball doubleheader, Baltimore — 1/22
- Towson University vs. Drexel basketball game — 1/29
- University of Maryland vs. Michigan State basketball game — 2/1

**The Communications staff will manage the Lottery's presence at the following upcoming events during the next month:**

- Maryland Home & Garden Show, Timonium — 3/5 and 3/6
- Maryland Home & Garden Show, Timonium — 3/11 through 3/13

**Second-chance Promotions:**

Communications staff members continue to work on procedures and fulfillment of all Lottery second-chance contests.

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

**Correspondence:**

More than 100 email inquiries and letters were received and answered by Communications staff over the past month. Communications staff continue to provide timely, accurate and complete responses to email and other written inquiries.

**Public Information Act Requests:**

Communications staff completed responses to PIA requests with assistance from the Attorney General's Office and other Agency staff, and continues to provide timely, accurate and complete responses to any such inquiries.

**Newsletters:**

Communications staff members Debbie McDaniel-Shaughney and Mary Clark are completing the next editions of the Gazette employee newsletter and the Retailer Report newsletter covering April through June.

**"Retailer Corner:"**

Communications staff continued posting three to five blog entries per week on the "Retailer Corner" section of mdlottery.com.

**DRAWINGS MANAGEMENT**

**Daily Drawings:**

The drawings team successfully integrated the new Pick 5 game into the Lottery's twice-daily televised drawings on WBAL-TV. To make room for the new drawings game, the Lottery retired the 5 Card Cash game on 2/6. Pick 5 was launched beginning with the midday drawing on 2/7.

Twice-daily drawings of Pick 3/Pick 4/Pick 5, daily drawings of Bonus Match 5 and twice-weekly drawings of Multi-Match were conducted successfully. The drawings team also ensured that winning numbers for those games and 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 drawing officials, announcers and other TV team members who are on-site at the drawings studio.