



What's New and What's News

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LEGISLATURE & OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

December 2007

This newsletter is dedicated to keeping the legislature and other governmental agencies informed of "What's New" in the Gambling Commission and "What's News."

Electronic Fingerprinting

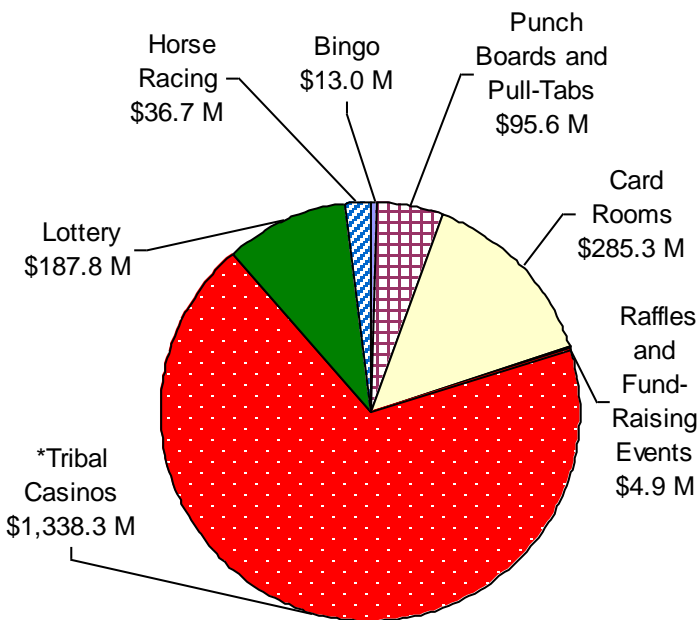


Applicants for a gambling license can now be fingerprinted electronically at our Lacey headquarters office.

We are offering this service so applicants for a gambling license don't have to go to a local law enforcement agency to get fingerprinted.

It takes approximately 20 minutes to get fingerprinted. Services are available Tuesday through Friday and the cost is \$13.

2007 Gambling Net Receipts



Total: \$1.962 Billion

2007 = 6/06 to 6/07

Net Receipts = wagers minus prizes paid

* = estimated

2008 Agency Request Legislation

The Commission has two agency request bills carried over from the 2007 session:

HB 1345/SB 5375, creates a penalty for underage gamblers (\$257 fine) and states the age to gamble, which is normally 18 with some limited exceptions.

HB 1346/SB 5374, allows the Commission to create a barring list for those with serious gambling convictions or those who have been barred in other states. Over ten other states have these types of barring lists, including Nevada and New Jersey.

We also have two new budget related proposals.

Our first proposal is for the Commission to retain the interest on the gambling revolving fund. Thirty-eight other funds retain their interest. The Governor's office has approved this request.

Our second proposal is budget related and would allow us to:

- Restructure some of our fees where we are not currently recovering our actual costs.
- Increase some small fees that we have been unable to increase for over ten years due to the usually low percentage of the fiscal growth factor.
- Restructure house-banked card room fees to have them based on gross gambling receipts, rather than on the number of tables a house-banked card room operates. We anticipate this would decrease fees for some smaller house-banked card rooms and increase fees for some larger ones. All of the Commission's other fees for operators are based on gross receipts.

With the passage of Initiative 960, our second proposal will also include general fee increases and new fees that the Commission planned to implement during this biennium using the rule making process.

Our Mission: Protect the Public by Ensuring that Gambling is Legal and Honest.

New Ex Officio Appointed

We are pleased to announce that Representative Gary Alexander (20th District) has been appointed by Speaker Chopp as an Ex-Officio member of the Gambling Commission.

Representative Alexander was born in Seattle and moved to Thurston County in 1971.

Representative Alexander is on the Appropriations Committee and is the Deputy Auditor for Thurston County.

Interesting Investigation

Recently, we were notified by a card room manager that a dealer was stealing gambling chips out of a chip tray.

A Commission Agent reviewed surveillance tapes and determined that the dealer stole chips ten times over two days.

Agents conducted surveillance of the dealer on his next shift and observed him stealing chips again. The Agent arrested the dealer and found three \$25 chips in his pocket. The dealer was transported to county jail and booked for 3rd degree theft.

Further investigation revealed that the dealer stole gambling chips at least 34 times over a four-day period totaling more than \$1,600. The dealer used a friend to cash out the chips.

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Rules Simplification Project Completed

With assistance from licensees and other stakeholders, we completed the "Plain Talk" rewrite of all our rules (WAC 230) so they are easier to use and understand. In total, we rewrote over 600 rules and reduced the number of words in the rules by more than 63,700 words or thirty-seven percent.

Rewriting our rules manual using plain English techniques was one goal of our Strategic Plan and is also in line with Governor Gregoire's Executive Order asking agencies to "Plain Talk" their communications with the public. The new manual becomes effective January 1, 2008.

Tribal Gaming Overview

The Gambling Commission's authority to regulate tribal gaming is based on the Federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act which established three types of gaming, each with a different regulatory approach.

-Class I Gaming includes traditional or ceremonial Indian gaming for prizes of minimal value. Regulatory authority for Class I gaming is the responsibility of the tribal governments.

-Class II Gaming includes bingo, bingo machines, pull-tabs, punch boards, tip jars and other games similar to bingo and poker, within specific betting limits. Regulatory authority for Class II gaming is the responsibility of the tribal governments with oversight from the National Indian Gaming Commission.

-Class III Gaming includes Nevada style gaming activities like lotteries, house-banked card games, horse racing, off-track betting, keno and machine gaming. Regulatory authority for Class III gaming is the responsibility of the tribal governments and the Washington State Gambling Commission with oversight from the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Tribal Gaming Update

The Nooksack Tribe began construction on a Class II gaming facility in Deming in early 2007. We have received numerous questions about the new facility; however, because it is a Class II gaming facility, we do not have jurisdiction or regulatory oversight at the facility. Class II and Class III are explained above.

The Snoqualmie Tribe plans to open a Class II and Class III facility in November 2008.

The Cowlitz Tribe is the only federally recognized Tribe in Washington that does not have a gaming compact.