Lotteryâ€™s new ad part of larger â€˜play responsiblyâ€™ strategy

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Newspaper advertising and 30-second television and radio ads that the Oregon Lottery began running Monday are probably the nationâ€™s first warning frequent gamblers about the dangers of electronic gambling machines, says Jeff Marotta, problem gambling services manager in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS).

â€œThis is a major step for a state lottery to take,â€• Marotta said Monday. â€œSome state lotteries have responsible gambling campaigns but those efforts fall short by placing the entire burden on the players through messages like â€˜keep it funâ€™ or â€˜play responsibly.â€™ This campaign takes the extra step of educating the public that the games themselves influence a playerâ€™s behavior.â€•

The â€œthree-headed manâ€• ad, airing on TV and radio and running in newspapers this week, shows a man deeply absorbed in playing a video game when a second head appears and encourages him to stick with his budget and time constraints. Then a third head appears arguing that he has plenty of time and is about to win.

The tagline of the ad, which coincides with National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, tells viewers, â€œGambling can put you at odds with yourself. Set a time limit. Stick to a budget. And donâ€™t let the game play you.â€•

The ad will run through Saturday and again March 25 through April 1.

â€œThis is the just the latest effort in a long line of ad campaigns addressing problem gambling and responsible play that have been produced by the Oregon Lottery,â€• Marotta said. â€œThe lottery has also taken a number of other steps to reduce harm caused by excessive gambling such as increasing the education and outreach portion of its marketing budget, putting clocks on video line games, portraying bets and winnings as dollars rather than credit points, putting the 877-MY-LIMIT phone number on every terminal and being a staunch supporter of problem gambling treatment.â€•

Marotta said a Canadian study showed that one in 28 players of video line games developed related problems, and that the incidence rises to one in six among people who gamble at least once a month. Games are designed to promote play and to reinforce maximum bets through more frequent paybacks, he said, although the irony is players who consistently bet the maximum usually wind up losing more money.

The Oregon Lottery, begun as a result of a 1984 voter-approved initiative, introduced video poker in 1992 and video line games in May 2005.

The DHS problem gambling services program, which also offers free treatment, is financed by 1 percent of Oregon Lottery revenues and is among ODHS services to prevent and treat addiction. People interested in more information about treatment may call toll free 1-877-MY LIMIT (1-877-695-4648).

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