

## State's wagering numbers increase

Delaware State News DOVER — NFL betting has given Delaware a boost of more than \$800,000 in revenue and spurred an increase in slots play since it started in September.

Thomas J. Cook, the state's acting secretary of finance, released numbers this week that told a story of continued interest in parlay betting.

There have been 470,726 bets placed since the state's three casinos started offering sports betting on Sept. 10. The average bet is about \$14.

"It shows there is a demand for this type of entertainment," said Mr. Cook.

The state's share currently stands at \$830,612. The state has had just one losing weekend — \$306,355 in the eighth week — when 11 of the 13 favorites won.

" We have a product that continues to gain popularity each week, has provided new revenue to the state and most importantly, the reason why it was implemented, keeps Delaware competitive with surround-

See **Betting** — Page 4



Delaware State News graphic/ Dave Chambers

## Betting

Continued From Page [1](#)

ing competition by attracting new players to our video lottery," Mr. Cook said.

Mr. Cook said slots' net proceeds (amount wagered minus amount won) were down 5.72 percent from the previous year prior to the start of NFL betting, In the time since, it's down 1.14 percent.

For comparison, Mr. Cook points to a slots decline of 14 percent in Atlantic City, N.J., and 7.1 percent in West Virginia.

" The real purpose of this is to generate traffic into our casinos and expose people to our other products," Mr. Cook said. " This definitely (brings) foot traffic to the video lottery."

Prior to NFL betting, slots proceeds were down 6.72 percent from the prior year at Dover Downs. But, in the months following NFL betting, it has shown a slight increase, .69 percent, from the same period a year ago.

Single-game wagering on a variety of pro and college sports was originally passed by the General Assembly in May.

It faced opposition from pro sports leagues and the NCAA.

A federal appeals court in September limited Delaware to only parlay betting on three or more NFL games, similar to a betting experiment the state tried in the 1970s. Delaware is the only state east of the Mississippi River to allow legal wagering on NFL games.

" We were down," Mr. Cook said after the court ruling. "But we have to give credit to the Lottery Office and the casinos for stepping up."

Mr. Cook said it is interesting to consider what could have been gained if the state was able to offer betting on baseball with the Philadelphia Phillies in the World Series, NASCAR at Dover International Speedway and more. But, he said, the state is doing the best it can with what it can offer.

Under parlay betting, bettors must pick the correct outcome of at least three NFL games for any of their bets to pay off. The minimum amount bet on any game is \$2.

In 2010, the General Assembly is expected to debate the merits of adding table games at the state's three casinos.