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Reported by Jeremy Tucker Sports Betting Gives Bump to Harness Racing

Updated: Nov 25, 2009 07:30 AM EST



The sports betting parlor at Dover Downs Hotel and Casino (Photo: WBOC)

DOVER, Del.- Delaware is making more money than predicted from sports betting.

Acting Secretary of Finance Tom Cook said that as of October, the state has made nearly \$500,000 from sports betting since the start of the NFL season. State officials predicted that Delaware would make \$500,000 over the entire fiscal year.

Dover Downs Hotel and Casino CEO Edward Sutor said bets at his facility have increased for the past 11 weeks. Cook said last week 55,000 bets were placed across the state. He said bettors wagered \$763,000.

Sutor said he was surprised by the strong start.

"We weren't expecting this at first, but we are delighted it's headed in this direction," Sutor said.

The popularity of sports betting has had another unexpected side effect. Sutor said more people have also been betting on horse racing.

And sports betting may also be helping to boost revenues generated from slot machines. Cook said that before sports betting began in September, overall revenues from the video lottery were off more than 5 percent. Now, however, Cook said revenue is just down slightly compared to last year.

And for bettors, it is all about the thrill of winning.

"I won the first two weeks, then it was pretty slow. And last week I won \$130," said Donald Jewell.

In an effort to entice more bettors, several new sports betting games were announced last week by the state. Now, with a \$5 bet, you have a chance to win \$100,000.

"As long as they keep bringing them out, we expect the people to come. We're glad we have sports betting," said Sutor.

Sutor said the average bet is just \$15 or \$20. The latest revenue numbers are due out next week.



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