

State lottery attracts middle class partakers

By JACKIE KLEIN

The very rich and the very poor aren't the greatest lottery ticket customers.

The Leo Burnett Co. of Southfield came to this conclusion after conducting research for the Bureau of State Lottery.

"Suppositions that the poor might be spending their milk and bread money on lottery tickets simply isn't borne out by research," said Guy Harrison, bureau commissioner.

"Our customers tend to use discretionary income for tickets, possibly in lieu of other luxury purchases. If the lottery is a tax, it isn't regressive."

The average customer is a 45-year-old factory or office worker who lives in suburban Macomb County, according to Harrison. His wife, who probably works at least part time, is the mother of three children between the ages of eight and 18.

MAN AND wife each buy about two tickets a week, according to research. He gets his at the neighborhood hardware or drug store. She buys hers at the grocery store. Their average annual income is \$15,000 - \$25,000.

"The mythical customer is probably closer to truth than fiction based on research and contestants who have participated in super and million dol-

lar drawings or won bonus prizes," Harrison said.

Macomb County has shown an eagerness to buy tickets disproportionate to its population, according to research. As a predominantly white, blue collar, slightly upper middle class area of the state, Macomb is the best kind of market for lottery ticket sales, he said.

"Blacks and other minorities tend to be average customers," a research report states. "Ticket purchases appear to be in line with population in black communities and prizes won also closely follow population lines."

"Blacks represent about 12 per cent of the state's population and have won about 12 per cent of the prizes. Eleven of the first 100 winners of the top weekly lottery prize, \$200,000, have been black."

THE BUREAU'S appeal to ticket buyers through advertising has been low key, Harrison said, generalized in nature, and with no specific attempt to appeal to particular geographic areas or ethnic groups. "Each ticket has an equal chance to win, wherever it's sold," he added.

A total of 274,608, 767 half-dollar Michigan lottery tickets were sold for the 52 drawing dates in fiscal 1973-74. That's an average of nearly 5.3 million tickets per week, slightly above the 5.2 million average in fiscal year 1972-73.

Nearly 8,000 stores, supermarkets, party stores, restaurants, gas stations, fraternal organizations and other types of outlets sell Michigan lottery tickets. The average agent sells about 700 tickets a week.

The bureau's number one agent is Ella's Grocery in Monroe, a half-dollar throw from the Ohio border. Ella's trade includes primarily out-of-state.

The bureau's top seller in the Wayne-Oakland-Macomb County area is the owner of an interstate gas station in Royal Oak, Harrison said.

AMONG THE leading chains selling lottery tickets, Kroger's is the volume leader, followed by Farmer Jack's. The chain with the highest weekly average is Meijer's Thrifty Acres stores.

Winning in the Michigan lottery is a factor of ticket sales, Harrison said. Geographic areas where sales are brisk tend to have more winners. There are 15 Michigan lottery millionaires in 1972," Harrison said. "We tried the subscription system in which members select their own numbers and pay a fee less than over-the-counter prices. The system has great potential but prohibition of the use of

mails for lottery promotion jeopardizes the operation."

Vending machines made their debut as part of the lottery mechanics in early 1974. Though not spectacular, Harrison said, machines will have a growing role in future plans.

Where does the money go? The Lottery Act provides for all net revenues to be deposited in the state's general fund. Lottery monies aren't earmarked for a specific purpose, Harrison said. Revenues represent about two per cent of total general funds.

HARRISON SAID 44 per cent of lottery revenues go for education, 39 per cent for human services, and 17 per cent for other programs.

"The Michigan lottery has proved to be a relatively stable source of revenue during its first two years," Harrison said. "I hope we can surpass previous years' income."

All lottery states are concerned with the posture of the federal government which may determine the degree to which they can expand, he said.

"At issue are numerous antiquated federal statutes and regulations which have been in effect since before modern day state-run lotteries were contemplated. Congress is considering legislation to remove prohibitions which inhibit the lottery business."

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FARMINGTON—The Farmington Area Optimists Club will hold a benefit hockey game against the Redwing Oldtimers 8 - 10 p.m. Saturday, March 1, at the Novi Ice arena, 42300 Eleven Mile Road.

Optimist club members and coaches from the Farmington Area Youth Hockey Association will compete with the Redwings, with proceeds to benefit the Youth Hockey Association. Tickets may be purchased from Optimists, Hockey Association members, and may also be bought at the door.

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