

# **\$300 MILLION ? NOT EVEN CLOSE !**

By Forrest Claunch

**THE CLAIM:** Lottery proponents say Oklahoma would receive \$300 million every year from an Oklahoma state lottery, and that figure is probably conservative.

**THE REALITY:** Oklahoma has approximately 3.4 million residents, and of that number, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Commerce, 892,360 are under the age of 18. The remaining 2,507,640 residents would be of legal age to buy lottery tickets.

To receive a thirty-five percent return of sales available to be spent by the state equal to \$300 million, Oklahoma would have to sell \$857,142,580.00 in lottery tickets, or an average of \$341.80 per person every year. If only half of the people bought tickets, it would be \$643.60 per person per year - a ridiculous expectation.

Kansas is a fair comparison for our region considering area, population as adjusted, and the lottery proceeds transferred to the state. With a population in Kansas of about 2.5 million people, and assuming a similar under 18 population, Kansas has sold lottery tickets amounting to \$70.55 per capita annually to sustain actual receipts to the state of \$39,021,425 average each year over a fifteen year history<sup>1</sup>.

So Oklahoma is going to sell FIVE TIMES the per capita sales of Kansas? Not likely. Kansas has a fifteen-year experience of averaging \$39,021,425 per year in proceeds (and Oklahoma is going to get \$300 million?). Oklahoma should not expect to do much better than our neighbors to the north.

**PEOPLE FROM OTHER STATES WILL BUY OUR TICKETS:** Why? There is no credible data to indicate people from Texas, Kansas, Missouri, or other regional states will opt to buy Oklahoma tickets, much less in quantities to sustain proposed receipts. With 20 million people, Texas can always offer bigger and better; Kansas and Missouri share a greater concentrated border population than Oklahoma; only portions of west Arkansas can be considered a viable potential source of buyers.

**PROMISES BUT NO FULFILLMENT:** A lottery, like liquor sales, liquor by the drink, bingo and pari-mutuel gambling, will fall miserably short of the promised windfall of new money for Oklahoma. How many failed claims should we believe?

*Forrest Claunch is the Oklahoma District 101 Representative.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Kansas Lottery Today, Dec. 9, 2002