



Angela WONG

Director of the Montana Lottery

Be sure to check out the article *Lottery Initiatives that Reach Entirely New Consumer Groups: The Montana EZPLAY® Solution* on page 22 that precedes this interview with Director Wong.

PGRI Introduction: Angela Wong was appointed to head the Montana Lottery in February of 2011. Under Angela's leadership, the Montana Lottery has had two back-to-back years of record sales.

Angela's professional background includes business, marketing, and public relations experience in both the public and private sectors. Before her 2011 appointment to the Lottery, Angela held positions with the State of Montana for several years. Among them, she was an energy development specialist for the Department of Commerce and a brand manager for the Office of Tourism. In the private sector, Angela has assisted a number of small businesses to develop business/marketing plans. Angela graduated from Carroll College with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Since its inception in 1986, the Montana Lottery has paid over \$497 million in prizes and returned approximately \$224 million to the State of Montana. EZPLAY® instant terminal games offer a variety of Lottery and progressive play styles with predetermined odds. EZPLAY® games can be played and validated immediately without waiting for a draw, much like a Scratch game. EZPLAY is a registered trademark of the Ohio Lottery Commission.

Paul Jason, PGRI: *EZPLAY® puts Lottery into age-restricted venues like bars and taverns. That would seem to be bringing in new consumer groups, Adding incremental sales as opposed to cannibalizing or moving sales from one POS channel to another?*

Angela Wong: We have not encountered any issues or concerns with cannibalization. Because the Lottery's terminals opened new locations, we were able to increase sales as we added new locations. Montana EZPLAY® has increased our sales as well as sales for the taverns and casinos. We spent a great deal of time focusing on the consumer group and listening to what the retailer needs

to ensure we added the right product for venues that already had a long-established gaming presence.

EZPLAY® also goes into retail stores that are already selling lottery products. Are you finding that it too is attracting new players, or mostly the same people who otherwise would have bought at the clerk-assisted checkout anyway? Does the self-serve style of VLT play bring in new consumer groups even in the retail stores?

A. Wong: Currently, Montana EZPLAY® products are only sold in our tavern and casino locations that have a valid gaming license. Traditional locations, such as grocery or convenience stores, don't sell the Montana EZPLAY®

product line at this time. We are in the process of conducting in-depth research at this time and will be exploring future possibilities for selling Montana EZPLAY® in all retail environments based on research findings.

The success of EZPLAY® is wonderful. Montana has 16,000 gambling machines in a market with a population of just over 1 million people. That's a high ratio of EGM's to people, so it would seem to mean that electronic gambling machines are readily accessible to all adult consumers in this market. So how does EZPLAY® carve out market-share in this kind of competitive market?

A. Wong: As we explored venues to place our product lines, we were cogni-

WHAT IS NEXT FOR MONTANA EZPLAY®?

Montana EZPLAY®'s future is bright and will require the continued development of original game content. This content will include more licensed property games which have stood out as top performers. Working with the Lottery's vendors to identify the best possible game themes and licensed properties will optimize sales, and will continue to be a priority for the Montana Lottery.

In November 2011, Montana EZPLAY® was introduced at all locations with self-service Multi-Purpose terminals. Montana EZPLAY® instant terminal games offer a

variety of lottery and progressive play styles with predetermined odds. Montana EZPLAY® instant online games can be played and validated immediately without waiting for a draw, much like a Scratch game. Tickets are generated through the lottery MP terminal. The play style is simple and players match their symbols to see if they won. Supporting local business and making transactions for lottery products simple, secure, and fast was an important consideration when these games rolled out to the public. ■

EZPLAY® is a registered trademark of the Ohio Lottery Commission.



zant of offering something unique with a comparable payout. We wanted to ensure that players had similar winning experiences to traditional gaming machines, of around 80% prize-payout. We also offer a mix of set top prize and progressive jackpot games. Most players in these Montana venues are familiar with a progressive jackpot playstyle. In addition, we are continually designing and exploring prize structures to provide players an enjoyable winning experience, while keeping in mind profitability.

EZPLAY® is now your third highest selling game. But it's still growing faster than the others isn't it? What are the number 1 and number 2 games, and do you think

EZPLAY® will surpass them at some point?

A. Wong: Scratch and Powerball are our top two selling product lines. We are always monitoring sales and exploring tactics to increase the profits and return to the State of Montana. While EZPLAY® is very successful, it has a big gap to fill before it rivals either Scratch or Powerball sales.

Does the success of EZPLAY® cause you to explore other similarly innovative new game-styles and concepts to augment the traditional games sold through traditional retailers?

A. Wong: Absolutely! We recently launched Lucky for Life and are always open to finding new games that are a great fit for our overall portfolio, player

base, and our Lottery. We have worked on improving our Montana-specific games, and are in planning stages for future enhancements across all venues.

What's next?

A. Wong: In the current Fiscal Year we are looking at new branding opportunities for our Montana EZPLAY® games. We know that Montanans have strong state pride, so we are planning on developing a stronger, more localized feel to the Montana EZPLAY® product. This product line is significant and we want to ensure that the lineup has a strong brand presence and recognition. We are exploring logo concepts and hope to roll out a new look this year. ■