

# Charities could get slot funds

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slots, argued Mike Shepherd, treasurer of the Bingo Association.

He said that while overall bingo profits are up this year, there has been a steep decline since the slots came to Mohawk.

"Studies we have indicate there is an impact," he said.

According to that data, revenues have plunged by 25 per cent, or \$30,000, since the slots came to town.

"Our belief is that the funds from the slot machines should be allocated to organizations directly affected," said Mr. Shepherd. "We're looking to protect post-revenue streams."

Oddly, though absolute numbers are down, those who come out to bingo have been spending more since slots arrived.

"Average spending, which we can't explain, has increased," admitted a mystified Mr. Shepherd. "We don't know what to make of that."

And he remained optimistic that the decline in profits would eventually reverse.

"We're hopeful the situation is temporary, that the novelty of the slots will wane and our customers will find their way back again," said Mr. Shepherd.

## Town scratches recommendation

In a staff report, it was stated that slot funds shouldn't be set aside for charity groups since other programs, such as Grants to Groups, are set up for that purpose.

And the provincial Trillium Fund has \$8 million in the kitty for non-profit organizations in Halton and Peel.

But council voted to scratch that and allow charitable groups in as a potential source for slot revenues.

But it backed a staff recommendation that a slot revenue reserve be created to hold the funds before any spending policies are made.

And that shouldn't happen before next fall, said Mr. McQueen.

"We need to see what kind of revenues we're getting here," he said. "I feel we should have 12 months of revenues before making firm policies."

But waiting any longer than next September could prove fatal to charity groups, worried Councillor Ron Furik.

"What concerns me is if we wait, it may be too late," he said.

And the public should have a say in how slot profits are spent, said Councillor John Challinor.

"There has to be a broad community involvement in this process," he said. "We need to know what community expectations are."

Council agreed, and made a public consultation part of its recommendation.

# Second bill aims to cut taxes by 15 per cent

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Under the new legislation, cabinet ministers will be docked 25 per cent of their pay if they fail to balance the budget.

But though the legislation applies to any Ontario government, other parties can choose to repeal the bill without penalty or a vote from the

people.

"Some government may rescind it but it would take a lot of guts," said Mr. Chudleigh. He then cracked, "You'll just have to re-elect us."

The tax-slashing mood continued in Queen's Park last week with the introduction of a bill promising to cut taxes by a further 15 per cent

over the next four years.

If passed, that will be tacked on to a 5 per cent decrease which took place in July.

The Harris government has never drawn up a budget that didn't house an income tax cut, said Mr. Chudleigh.

The cuts inject life into the econo-

my by encouraging industry, jobs and increased consumer spending, he said.

"It's important to us. That's what makes the world go round," said Mr. Chudleigh. "It makes this a place where governments are seen to be pro-industry and pro-business. All the good things."

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