

Iowa Lottery Terminals Can Be Another Tool For I.D. Checks



Scanning a driver's license with the Wave terminal.

A two-year project by PMCI, the Iowa Lottery and Iowa Department of Transportation has produced an additional tool that can enhance existing procedures to fight the under-age sale of alcohol, tobacco and lottery tickets.

In addition to their primary function in selling and cashing tickets, Iowa Lottery terminals in many instances now can be used to scan Iowa driver's licenses and identification cards for age verification.

"We hope this can be one more tool in the age-verification procedures retailers are already using statewide," Lottery CEO Terry Rich said. "Since PMCI members initially approached us about the idea, we've concentrated on maximizing our equipment's read rate for I.D.s and we've seen good success in many locations."

Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III said he is pleased that the DOT could be part of a process focusing on a better-equipped retail network and stronger age enforcement.

"Everyone involved in the discussions had a unique, solution-oriented perspective," Trombino said. "We hope we can take the lessons learned from this project and apply them in other situations."

When the lottery began to discuss the new system of terminals and communications equipment it ultimately would deploy in July 2011, members of the PMCI Retail Committee asked if it could include an age-verification feature. While it sounded like a fairly simple add-on, lottery officials soon discovered the process would be more challenging.

"The project was a huge learning opportunity for us through public-private collaboration," Rich said. "We understand and are supportive of retailers' efforts to have the strongest age-enforcement procedures possible."

Lottery officials learned from the Iowa Department of Transportation that there are two different designs among the licenses and identification cards currently being used by the state's 2.4 million driver's license holders and thousands of I.D. card holders. The different versions are the result of a card-design upgrade that occurred in April 2010. The improved materials and features in the newest design have produced longer-lasting cards that are more resistant to fraud and tampering.

The old fleet of cards will continue to be replaced as people renew or replace their licenses. With a maximum five-year renewal period, that process should be complete in mid-2014.

All of the licenses and I.D. cards have two bar codes on the back. It is the 2D bar code, which is somewhat taller and has a complex pattern, which contains the relevant information



New Iowa driver's license (top) and old Iowa driver's license (bottom).



for age enforcement. The current bar codes in use in Iowa conform with national and international standards for identity-document construction and security.

By March of this year, lottery testing had determined that the different versions of the cards could be read by lottery terminals, but with some difficulties. To improve scanner read rates, the lottery designed and produced special white plastic sleeves that have been distributed to retail locations.

Driver's licenses and I.D. cards should be inserted into the sleeve before scanning. The sleeve covers the small bar code at the top of the license and improves the scanner's ability to detect and decipher the 2D bar code. To help retailers use the sleeves effectively, the lottery has developed a training video.

In addition to the video, the lottery offers these scanning tips:

- **The new licenses and I.D. cards can be read with the scanner normally used to cash instant-scratch tickets.** The scanner is a separate device that sits just beside the lottery terminal. To cash a scratch ticket, hold it under the scanner's red beam. It's a similar process if you want to verify a customer's age. Slip the person's driver's license or I.D. card facedown into the white plastic sleeve from the lottery. Then, leaving the scanner in its holster, hold the driver's license under the red beam so the 2D bar code on the back of the license can be read. In many instances, it works best to hold the license at an angle towards the scanner.
- **Older licenses and I.D. cards, which have a magnetic stripe as well as two bar codes on the back, also can be read with the scanner, but the success rate is not as high.** To attempt to read the card, follow the same process described above. However, if your business has a mag-stripe reader, you may want to continue using it for the older cards.

When the lottery terminal has successfully read a driver's license, it displays a simple message stating the exact age of the person whose license has been read, such as: 22 years, 341 days. If a record of the verification is needed, the information on the screen can be printed from the terminal. The message will be printed on the same paper used to produce tickets in lotto games such as Powerball® and Mega Millions®.



An example of the display after scanning a driver's license on the Wave terminal.



Iowa driver's license and the Iowa Lottery sleeve to aid in scanning.

Rich emphasized that the lottery's terminals have only been programmed to read Iowa driver's licenses and I.D. cards, as license designs vary from state to state and the computer coding required for additional states' licenses could slow the lottery's network, compromising its ability to sell and validate tickets. Scanning Iowa licenses will cover the vast majority of those presented in our state, Rich said.

He also emphasized that to comply with privacy requirements, the lottery's terminals do not retain the information on driver's licenses – once the

age verification is complete, the details from that particular card are automatically cleared out of the terminal.

“We know retailers are always looking for new tools they can use for age-verification purposes, and they’ve faced some steep costs for new equipment,” Rich said. “We hope this additional use of our lottery terminals can be an aid in many locations.”

And in another proactive step, after officials at the DOT were alerted that the design of Iowa’s newest driver’s licenses was causing scanning difficulties for the lottery’s equipment, the DOT began to investigate whether the licenses can be redesigned to move the bar codes further apart. No decision has yet been made, but Director Trombino said his department is glad to continue to work on it, with the expectation that a change in card design would occur at the next security upgrade cycle, likely in 2015.

Rich said he is pleased to see a continued focus on improvement.

“As driver’s license technology advances, we hope we can simplify the process even further and continue to strengthen age enforcement in Iowa,” he said.

A two-minute training video is available under the “For Retailers” tab on the lottery website at http://www.ialottery.com/Retailers/Retailers_main.aspx; on the lottery’s YouTube channel at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azRbfy8GBtQ&feature=player_detailpage; and through the Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa and the Iowa Grocery Industry Association. The lottery has provided to Iowa retailers a printed brochure about the age-verification process utilizing its terminals and also will add the training video to terminals statewide, likely in mid-October.