

DRAWINGS – A CORNERSTONE OF MUSL SERVICES

In the ever-changing landscape of the lottery industry, there is one core function that has remained constant at the Multi-State Lottery Association, from its establishment to present day – the drawings. With product launches, expansions and promotions, what’s new and upcoming has often been highlighted, but for MUSL, the draws and their integrity are central to the very being of the Association and the foundation for all other roles and services.

“Without the drawings, the MUSL we know today, simply wouldn’t exist,” said J. Bret Toyne, MUSL Executive Director. “Drawings are so ingrained in the fiber of the Association that everything else plays a supporting role.”

Sue Dooley, MUSL Director of Draws and Productions, has overseen the progression of MUSL’s draw services since the Association’s first multi-jurisdictional game, Lotto*America, in 1988. At the time, the game’s once-a-week drawing was held in a studio in downtown Des Moines, Iowa with limited technology. The process included faxing all sales and winner information to MUSL, which required auditors at each lottery reporting site for every draw.

“If you can imagine, we had to manually enter all data, then double-check that data with each of the lottery draw staff over the phone, so we’d typically complete the draw process around 1:30 am CT,” said Dooley. “We now have the technology and automation that allows us to administer multiple drawings on any given night.”



Meghann Emery, Sue Dooley, and Michael Angersola

Since that first drawing in 1988, MUSL has gone on to perform more than 35-thousand lottery drawings. This fiscal year, the Association is on track to complete nearly 1,500 drawings – up 51% since Fiscal Year 2021. The increase is in large part due to the newly introduced Monday night Powerball drawings, the Double Play add-on feature, and MUSL providing daily draw services for the Lucky for Life game.

Remarkably, MUSL’s draw team has kept up seamlessly with the demand for additional draw services. The draw team consists of nine staff members; three based at MUSL’s new highly-secured draw facility in Johnston, Iowa and the remaining six in Tallahassee where Powerball®, Double Play® and Lotto America® drawings are held at the Florida Lottery draw studio.

In addition to its scheduled multi-jurisdictional drawings, MUSL also

offers draw services to its member lotteries for their in-state draw-based games. The services include performing draws for state games on a regular, ongoing basis; one-time draw events, such as holiday raffles; and the ability to act as a disaster recovery location. MUSL currently serves as an emergency backup draw provider for 17 member lotteries. Historically, the Association has been called upon to be an emergency backup during severe weather events, natural disasters, and even lottery office closures caused by the pandemic.

“Protecting the health of our draw staff has been one of the top priorities over the past two years,” Toyne noted. “It was absolutely critical that we were able to provide a reliable emergency draw service for our members.”

There is no additional cost to member lotteries for emergency draw services

aside from auditor fees, which are accrued when a drawing is performed and the cost of programming and certification of lottery games onto MUSL’s Origin DDS systems from Smartplay. A primary benefit for members is the cost-effectiveness of the service since the programming cost is split between all participating lotteries. MUSL staff also work with each member lottery to finalize draw procedures as they pertain to their respective jurisdictions.

The MUSL draw team is now working to build more lines of communication with draw staff at member and licensee lotteries. Beginning this spring, the MUSL draw team will host quarterly information sessions, specifically for draw staff, on the draw process and other relevant topics. The Association already hosts working groups for other lottery functions, such as information security, legal and marketing, but saw value in providing meetings tailored for draw staff.

So far, there has been an overwhelming response from lottery draw staff to participate in the sessions. A preliminary survey revealed topics for discussion include lockdown and lockdown alternatives, as well as further explanation on some draw procedures and timing differences between games on draw nights. While education will be a top priority for the sessions, MUSL is really looking to build a dialogue with draw officials across the country.

“We hope to foster conversations that will allow us to gather feedback that we can use to evolve and strengthen our draw process,” Dooley said. ■