

Lynn hopes for better luck

Philip Smith had led the Lynn High softball team to the state tournament in Montgomery on two previous occasions. On both trips the Class 1A Lady Bears came up empty handed. Smith and the Lady Bears hope the third time is the charm. / C1



Clinton wins W.VA. primary

Hillary Rodham Clinton coasted to a large but largely symbolic victory in working-class West Virginia on Tuesday, handing Barack Obama one of his worst defeats of the campaign yet scarcely slowing his march toward the Democratic presidential nomination. / A5



Rebuilding unlikely

No government money will be awarded for rebuilding any of the 114 homes leveled by a deadly tornado that tore through one of the nation's most polluted areas, state and federal officials said Tuesday on a tour of the region. / A8

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ELECTRONIC BINGO

Fielding getting training to deal with bingo



Randy Fielding

By ED HOWELL
Eagle Senior Writer

Walker County Sheriff's Deputy Randy Fielding is spending the week in Las Vegas — but if he has his way, what happens in Vegas won't stay in Vegas.

Fielding is getting training in Las Vegas to deal with Walker County electronic bingo hall rules, with plans to also soon delve into financial records.

While April was the time for

reports to be turned in by bingo halls, the county's new rules will allow Fielding to come by accountant offices later to check on records. In the meanwhile, the new deputy in charge of enforcing electronic bingo is still working after nearly three months to get up to speed on an industry that bloomed overnight a year ago.

Fielding, who got his new assignment Feb. 4, said he had a

couple of financial reports turned into his office, and even they are not sufficient to meet rules.

"What the county commission and the sheriff has done is they've taught those folks to keep their financial reports at their accountant's office," Fielding said by phone from Las Vegas Tuesday. "The designated accountant that the county commission is going to hire will go on site. To comply with the rules,

you'd have to back a dump truck up to the sheriff's office and dump tons of paperwork for each one of them. We decided we don't want their paperwork. We just want the detailed reports."

Each bingo hall accountant must also be available to the Sheriff's Office during normal working hours.

"They can't deny us access to that paperwork when they are open 8-to-4 or whatever their

hours are," he said.

Fielding said he started making inspections at local electronic bingo halls two weeks ago, but found out about an all-week conference in Biloxi, Miss., last week, which interrupted his work so that only five were inspected. He came back Friday and then flew to Las Vegas Monday for a certification conference, sponsored by Gaming Labs

See FIELDING, A11 ►

WALKER COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

BEVILL STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ride for

Blue Creek teams and Bevill State's blue and green teams.

Coal Association. Russell said its important

from time to time," he said. "They learn teamwork out

each event will be announced.

Fielding

From A1

International (GLI, at www.gaminglabs.com) and paid for on his part by the county.

"I'm out here to go to school to see that these the machines are doing what they are programmed to do," Fielding said. "GLI is) an independent certification laboratory. They inspect the machines to comply with the regulators' criteria.

"Obviously, we don't have any criteria in Walker County, but they have basic standards that they will allow us to adopt that they have already written," he added. "It's a combination of different jurisdictions all around the world. We're looking at adopting their GLI 22, which is their basic standards. They've already got them written."

Fielding said he is studying the GLI 22 and learning how to look at the machines to see if they comply with what Walker County officials want. The GLI Web site has for download the 56-page GLI 22 standards, which indicate they are written for Class II electronic bingo systems.

He said local officials can rewrite the GLI 22 to specific details they want, but it would be better to "not reinvent the wheel" by starting from scratch.

When he returns to the county, Fielding will first resume inspections of the bingo facilities. That is because he is finding some bingo halls have not paid

their machine licenses. The fees are \$500 a machine and will go to \$1,000 a machine by this fall. Once he completes his inspections, he will go back to each bingo hall to make sure they have made corrections and paid their machine license fees. If not, that is when Fielding will declare them not in compliance.

"I've been giving everyone of them 10 days to fix what is wrong, but then I found out about the conference in Biloxi and that threw my schedule off. When I go back, I'll just complete the inspections and say, 'You've had three weeks to fix everything. Where are you at?'" he said.

Once he completes that, then he wants to visit the accountant offices and ask for certain data, noting he wants the material at this point so that he, as a non-trained accountant, can understand it.

While he is not pushing for the bingo halls to bring paperwork to his office, he said all the charities who participate in electronic bingo will not have massive paperwork. Those charities should turn in paperwork to the Sheriff's Office.

The charities are supposed to provide a financial disclosure of the money each received and how they spent it by April 15.

"I can look at their documents and see what they've done," Fielding said. "But the bingo halls have so much paperwork. If you've got 500 or 600 machines and

you have to do a daily printout of each machine, for 365 days, it will take weeks and months to go through that, especially if these folks are smart and they put all these receipts in one box or a bunch of boxes and they shake them all up so you don't know which machine it came out of. Then you'll have to organize everything before you can look at it."

The problem with the charities is that many of them didn't know they are supposed to provide that financial disclosure. Fielding is having to take time to instruct many of the charities what they are supposed to do to be in compliance and is creating a Web site to help with that need.

While Fielding has wanted an accountant to tell him what information should be asked for from bingo hall accountants, he knows he wants to find out about last year's revenue, itemized reports on how much was spent on payroll, machines, utilities and other expenses.

He said to do a proper job, it will take someone who is fully dedicated to going through the paperwork.

"I'm sure there is money not being reported, and I don't have the expertise to figure that out," he said.

Fielding said that while he will return Friday, it would be better for charities and bingo halls to contact him next week with any questions.