

Today, the Watauga Sheriff's Office has visited with the three identified Sweepstakes Game operations in the county, taking the first step to enforcing the state law outlawing the games reinstated last month. Similar action is underway in Avery and Ashe, Sheriff James Williams of Ashe saying that their notifications give the operators until the end of January to comply, while Sheriff Kevin Frye of Avery says they are looking for machines today to begin enforcement. Frye said they know of no stand-alone Sweepstakes businesses such as the three in Watauga, but action will be taken against anyone operating machines in Avery. The December State Supreme Court ruling reversed the NC Court of Appeals in the matter, and now the 20 days has elapsed before enforcement, meaning the games can now be shut down. Before noon today, Sheriff Len Hagaman visited the local video game businesses, and said two were closed—one with a sign indicating they would be closed a few days to bring their machines into compliance—and one business was locked, but the operator took the letters the Sheriff was serving on each. Reports from across the state show various actions that are now underway, Burke informing the many operators there of the enforcement with hand-delivered letters to be signed by operators before moving in to shut them down, while others will be taking action to close down the games today.