

House Action on "Sweepstakes" Pay-Offs Set for Tomorrow

Written by Steve Frank
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One of the pieces of legislative business still remaining from the short session of the state legislature is the ban on "Internet Cafes" or so-called "Sweepstakes" businesses. Representative Cullie Tarleton said yesterday that the house will take up the bill—probably Thursday—and should completely concur with the senate version of the ban that passed last month.

Tarleton said there should be little or no need to have the houses confer over their versions and will probably pass the senate version and send it on for the Governor's signature—which is expected to come quickly. The "Sweepstakes" gaming has sprung up out of a loophole in state law in which pay-offs are allowed using phone card credits. But lawmen say that there are off-shore accounts that further skirt state video poker laws and pay cash. Gaming is springing up in full-fledged cafes and as a sideline for some convenience stores. At least four are running in Boone and Watauga County. Tarleton said that even with legislators hoping to wrap up their session by Saturday, the measure should be passed and on the Governor's desk.