

Rotary International
Club of Susitna, Alaska
Lotto Alaska - Proposal for 2025 Funding
Permit #177106
Fed Tax ID#20-8739639

I. How the Charitable Gaming Permit was utilized in 2024

The charitable gaming permit was used in 2024 to contract with David L. Lambert dba Emerald Isles Pull Tabs for the Lotto Alaska raffle and to conduct split-the-pot games of chance and a small raffle at a Rotary fundraiser in November. \$71,196.84 was raised in the second quarter of 2024 from the contract with David L. Lambert. If selected, we plan to contract again with David L. Lambert in 2025. We have not contracted with any other vendors in 2024 and have no plans to do so in 2025.

II. Narrative of How the Funds Received from Charitable Gaming in 2024 were used

The funds received by the Rotary Club of Susitna, Alaska from Lotto Alaska in 2023 and 2024 have had a significant impact on our ability to support youth-oriented projects in the Matanuska Susitna Borough that focus on water safety, literacy, and leadership skills. In addition, a portion of the funds have been used to support community-oriented events and causes in the Wasilla, Big Lake, Houston, and Willow areas.

Use of Net Proceeds from Gaming for Youth Projects

Josh the Otter school presentations

We collaborate with every elementary school in the Matanuska Susitna Borough to teach kindergarteners water safety fundamentals and introduce them to a character named “Josh the Otter” who dances and sings and reminds kids to be safe around the water. Some of the funds received have been used to purchase mascot costumes and supplies to facilitate this education to the students. In addition to the hundreds of volunteer hours needed to conduct the project, it costs thousands of dollars each year to provide a Josh the Otter book to each child attendee at every one of these interactions.

The results are worth it! Every year, we see older students in the schools and at community events who recognize “Josh” and talk about water safety. They also relay stories about reading the book at home with their younger siblings. The word is spreading and, one day,

the hope is that- in at least Alaska – “Josh the Otter” will be as well known for water safety as “Smokey the Bear” is for fire prevention and safety. This education keeps kids from drowning!

Expansion of Josh the Otter to Anchorage area

In our efforts to begin expanding the Josh the Otter program to other parts of the state, Susitna Rotary has begun pitching the idea to other Rotary Clubs in Alaska. The program was showcased to all 36 clubs in Alaska at the 2024 Rotary District 5010 Conference in Fairbanks.

This fall, we made presentations about the program to the four largest Rotary clubs in the Anchorage area: Anchorage Rotary, Anchorage International Rotary, Anchorage East Rotary and Anchorage South Rotary clubs. As an incentive for these clubs to begin the programs, the Rotary Club of Susitna will provide mentorship/training to the volunteers, a costume, and ½ the cost of the books for the first three years of the program. The clubs that participate are expected to begin rolling out their programs in spring 2025.

Josh the Otter at community events

We also take Josh the Otter and distribute safety materials to parades and local events such as the Alaska State Fair, Houston Founders’ Day, and Willow “Eggstravaganza” (safety fair geared towards youth in Willow at Easter time), Willow Winter Carnival, and various Rotary events throughout the year.

Swim for Life

A portion of the funds are used for swimming pool sessions in the Mat-Su Borough that teach children ages 2-5 basic water safety skills.

Alaska Office of Boating Safety

The Rotary Club of Susitna has supported the Office of Boating Safety by purchasing youth life jackets used as prizes for safety contests conducted by the Alaska Office of Boating and Safety. We also provide volunteers, Josh the Otter, and a canoe for the pool safety sessions in the Mat-Su Valley teaching kids basic water safety such as how to properly fit/wear a life jacket, learning to toss a life ring, getting back into a canoe if it flips, etc.

Kids Don’t Float Loaner Boards

We also have used funds to construct and maintain “Kids Don’t Float” life jacket loaner board stations at local swimming spots. We install these boards and maintain the life jackets supply and re-supply them to ensure there is never an excuse to swim in an unsafe condition.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) event

Every year, Rotary District 5010 holds a three-day RYLA event to teach leadership and teamworking skills to a group of high school sophomores throughout the state. **RYLA is a program for teens** that are high school sophomores and juniors/in grade 10 and 11. There is **no cost to youth who are selected**.

RYLA emphasizes **leadership, citizenship, and personal growth**, as participants learn about their own **qualities/skills as a leader** and the qualities of effective leaders and effective teams. The RYLA program consists of a combination of icebreaker, team building, and experiential problem-solving activities as well as group discussions and personal reflection. Participants are introduced to practical leadership topics and issues, presentations from Rotary and community leaders. Opportunities are provided to allow RYLA participants to **apply their emerging leadership skills** in a variety of challenging activities.

The event rotates around the state each. For the 2024 event in Fairbanks, the Rotary Club of Susitna sponsored the transportation of students from the southcentral region (\$2,500) as well as \$900 towards event/student sponsorship.

Use of Net Proceeds from Gaming for the good of the Community

Members of the Rotary Club of Susitna are very active in the Mat-Su Valley by serving as board members, volunteering at events and providing financial support for many community-oriented activities/nonprofits. In addition to all the youth programs discussed above, during the first 11 months of 2024, the club provided financial support using the net proceeds from gaming for the following:

Willow Winter Carnival (WACO)	\$2,500
Wasilla Area Seniors (WASI)	\$1,500
Houston Founders Day	\$1,000
Christmas Friendship Dinner	\$1,000

In 2023, Susitna Rotary received a surprise additional funding from Lotto Alaska and those funds were used as Christmas Miracles for multiple small community organizations. We purchased Christmas stockings and filled them with small gifts and goodies for kids at My House, a local nonprofit benefiting at risk youth. We donated to the Palmer Pioneer Home so they could buy Christmas Trees for their facility. We purchased holiday Christmas gifts for the beneficiaries of a “Young Life” program that includes a group of young single mothers and their children. We purchased gifts for Toys for Tots and a local Secret Santa program, as well as a cash donation to the Christmas Friendship Dinner to spend on food

supplies for the event. Finally, we made a cash donation to “WASI” a local retirement community for a Christmas celebration. In December 2024, we plan to use charitable gaming funds for similar types of “Christmas Miracles”.

The funds we received in 2024 will help the Rotary Club of Susitna accomplish our goals – including all the programs described above- for the remainder of the 2024/2025 school year. In addition, in keeping with our focus on youth, our Rotary Club is reestablishing an Interact Club for Mat-Su Valley high school students. Interact clubs are the Rotary International program that brings together young people ages 12-18 to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Service Above Self. The Mat-Su Interact Club was a growing vibrant club prior to Covid. The onset of Covid caused the club to go dormant. We have received a Rotary District 5010 grant of \$2,500 and will be matching it with \$2,500 from funds received from charitable gaming to launch the club in the first half of 2025.

III. Narrative of How we would like to use potential Charitable Gaming raised in 2025

- Josh the Otter water safety/literacy program
- Float for Life
- Kids Don’t Float Loaner boards
- RYLA youth leadership program
- Mat-Su Interact club
- Rotary youth exchange program (all funds spent in state of Alaska)
- Literacy programs
- Expansion of Rotary into Kotzebue

We would greatly appreciate the same level of funding in 2025 so we can both support the 2024 programs described above and continue to **expand our programs to other areas of the State of Alaska**. We have been working with multiple organizations (other Rotary Clubs, Iron Dog, Iditarod) to build partnerships to assist in bringing the same water safety education and other programs that we provide in the Matanuska Susitna Valley to the focus areas in Alaska that these organizations are involved with.

We would like to have the ability to travel, as needed, to assist with training new adopters of our model and on how to successfully work with the program and also to travel to underserved areas with Josh the Otter and personal floatation devices to encourage statewide water safety.

Susitna Rotary has more than tripled in size since it was founded in 2007 and continues to attract new members. We now have over 60 members dedicated to “service above self”. One of Rotary District 5010’s goals in 2025 is to expand Rotary into Kotzebue, Alaska. The only Rotary club that has ever existed in Northwestern Alaska is in Nome. Susitna Rotary has been tapped to lead this effort and believes that by bringing Rotary into the region we

can encourage local residents to expand their service to the community and bring programs such as Josh the Otter, RYLA, etc. to the region.

- IV. Permittee Contact Sheet (attached)**
- V. Organization Information Form (attached)**
- VI. Signed W9 (attached)**
- VII. Organization logo (attached)**
- VIII. 2025 Permittee renewal (attached)**