

State suspends Tripper's charity poker license

Profits from games might be in question

By Steven R. Reed
srreed@lsj.com

The state's largest charitable gaming supplier systematically and illegally diverted \$1.6 million in profits to a Lansing sports bar, a Northville race track and to a consulting company, the Michigan Gaming Control Board announced

Thursday.

The bar owner, gaming supplier and an ex-lawmaker who runs the consulting company all denied wrongdoing Friday. The owner of the gaming supplier said she agreed to settle with the gaming board to avoid a lengthy and expensive legal battle.

As part of the settlement, the gaming board suspended the license of Aces Gaming Supply of Lansing for 30 days. Without their supplier and poker room

operator, Tripper's Bar in the Frandor shopping center and Northville Downs Race Track closed the rooms for the same period.

The ownership of Tripper's received approximately \$562,000 from 2008 to 2010 in violation of the state Bingo Act, the gaming board said in a news release issued Thursday. Northville Downs received \$525,000 and former Sen. Doug Cruce was paid \$516,000.

Cruce, who represented the

ONLINE EXTRA

» Find related documents at www.lsj.com.

Troy area in the Legislature and who now lives in Williamston, described the gaming board investigation as part of an effort to demonize charitable gaming and to criminalize those who operate it.

"This is by and large a harmless operation that does have

some weak spots that could be dealt with and fixed if they wanted it to continue, but it is apparent this governor and his staff don't want it to continue and the question is why?" said Cruce, who founded the Michigan Charitable Gaming Association when poker games exploded across the nation several years ago.

Cruce said restrictions against charity poker games

See TRIPPER'S, Page 5A