

TouchPlay Machines' Swan Song

By Mark Geary, Reporter

A Polk County judge said he will not reconsider his ruling, so all of the state's TouchPlay machines are now disabled.

Machines all over the state are singing the blues. The melodies they used to play have been replaced with the sound of silence.

"We all knew it was coming. Like I said, it was a short-lived idea for the state of Iowa, and we'll just go back to business as normal," Clarion Hotel General Manager Sue Hutchcroft said.

Business owners earned hundreds of thousands of dollars from TouchPlay. They said it will be nearly impossible to replace the machines with a new game.

"I can't see it happening. Customers came in that never came in before," bartender Dianna Hansel said.

But owners are still trying to think of a way to make up for the loss.

"We'll have a poker round on Sunday. We may do more dart tournaments, bowling tournaments, something like that," Freeway Express Bar owner Julie Burnside said.

In the final hours of the game, players gathered around machines, trying to win big one last time.

"I just wager \$20. If I don't win anything, I quit," TouchPlay player Jim McDaniel said.

It will take about a week for distributors to remove all of the games. The machines can't be used for anything else. So from now on, the only sound you'll hear around them is the "saran wrap serenade."

Players have until Thursday to collect prizes of \$600 or smaller at the machine location.

You can claim larger prizes at a lottery office until August 29.

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