

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - July 9, 2001

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## A TICKET OR A TACO? FINAL DECISION PAYS OFF FOR RAYMONDVILLE RETAILER

(Austin, July 9) - It was turning into a tough decision for Ismael "Smiley" Moreno, owner of Smiley's Ice House in Raymondville.

"I didn't know whether to get a ticket or a taco," Moreno said. "I was a little hungry, but that *Jackalope Loot* ticket was hanging there in the dispenser, and I thought I better get it."

Moreno bought the instant ticket and started scratching the surface slowly.

"I saw a 'one' and I thought I might win \$10 because I still had more to scratch in the same space," he said. "Then I saw all those zeros and I ran outside. I don't know why, but I had to run outside."

The 35-year-old storeowner called his wife to inform her that he had won \$10,000.

"When Sandra came to the store, she gave me \$50 and took the ticket away from me," he said. "I used the \$2 in my pocket to buy the ticket, so I had nothing left to buy the taco."

The Morenos are leaving with their children, Cody and Tyann, next week for Disney World in Florida.

"We had been saving, all of us including the kids for the trip to Disney World," Moreno said. "So with the \$10,000, my wife and I might take a trip later to the Virgin Islands because that's where she wants to go."

Besides being one of the owners of Smiley's Ice House, Sandra Moreno also runs an adult day-care facility in Raymondville.

Recently the Morenos and his in-laws rented a large bus and took 45 elderly clients on a weekend trip to Louisiana.

"We sold barbecue plates at the store and put in some of our money so we could get a trip together for the folks that come to the day care center," he said. "It turned out to be a great trip, everybody had a lot of fun."

Moreno says he's feeling lucky. Last week, his son won a calf in a raffle. The calf has taken up residence at Moreno's in-laws' ranch.

"I'm going to keep playing my same *Pick 3* numbers every day," he said. "Someday, those numbers have to come up."

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The Texas Lottery, the 4th largest selling lottery in North America, is "Focusing on the Future of Education, One Ticket At A Time." By providing the 'Games of Texas' for more than 10 years, the Texas Lottery Commission (TLC) has generated more than \$10 billion for the state and paid nearly \$17 billion to players in prizes. For more information about the TLC, please visit the official website at <http://www.txlottery.org>

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