

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - January 7, 2004

Contact:

Kristina Tirloni, 512-344-5144

Bobby Heith, 512-344-5210

What Every Texas Lottery® Player Needs To Know About Claiming A Jackpot Prize

(Austin, January 7) - In response to recent events in Ohio and the \$162 million *Mega Millions*™ jackpot ticket, the Texas Lottery Commission wants to reiterate to players some important information regarding claiming a jackpot prize in Texas.

"It's very important for our players to understand the steps they need to take if they are holding a potential jackpot winning ticket," said Reagan E. Greer, Executive Director of the Texas Lottery Commission. "First thing - call us. We will get the process started right away for claiming a prize of \$1 million or more."

The process starts with an initial inquiry that could rule out unqualified tickets. This inquiry does not verify a winning status, but allows the process to continue forward. A successful inquiry sets in motion contacts with specific lottery staff helping a potential winner know his or her next steps. The Texas Lottery cannot advise claimants on financial or legal matters when claiming a prize; however, staff suggests claimants seek guidance from a trusted legal or financial professional on those types of decisions.

Staff also suggests claimants place a potential jackpot winning ticket in a safe and secure location. According to lottery rules, a lottery ticket is a bearer instrument. A ticket must be signed by the claimant, and the claimant must appear with the ticket and valid identification at the Texas Lottery Commission headquarters in Austin before the 180-day claim period expires.

"Claimants have told us they kept their tickets in all kinds of places, like wrapped in plastic and put in the freezer or taped to their bodies, in cookie jars, fire-proof safes, and even their favorite book," said Greer. "There are a lot of decisions to make when claiming a jackpot prize, and we want to make sure our players have a real understanding of the process they will have to go through before getting that first big check."

"For example, we've seen claimants form all types of legal entities, such as trusts or partnerships to claim a prize. It all depends on the situation and what legal advice is received," he added.

Players who may hold a potential jackpot winning ticket may call our Customer Service line at 1(800)37-LOTTO (5-6886). Staff will put claimants in contact with necessary lottery personnel.

For more information about the Texas Lottery, please visit the official Texas Lottery Commission Web site at <http://www.txlottery.org>