

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - May 28, 2004

Contact:

Leticia Vásquez, 512-344-5208
Media Relations, 512-344-5131

Getting Close To The Wire, December *Mega Millions*™ Winner From McAllen Collects

(Austin, May 28) - Carlos Palacios, one of two winners of \$175,000 in the December 27 *Mega Millions*™ drawing , was a perilous 30 days away from having his five-of-six ticket wither into nothing when he claimed his prize today.

"I'm basically shy, that's why I didn't come in sooner," Palacios said. "I've been looking at the ticket since I won to make sure the numbers are the right ones. I still don't believe I won."

Palacios kept the ticket in a locked briefcase at his home in McAllen.

"Mr. Palacios likes to live on the edge, evidently," said Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director Reagan E. Greer. "Holding on to his ticket for 150 days may be an indicator of his shyness, but it also shows he's got plenty of confidence in his briefcase. We're happy he finally showed up, though."

Palacios said he didn't tell anyone about his win, except one of his three sons.

"At first I told him what I thought I'd won," he said. "Then, I told him I only had four numbers. He and his brothers are going to be surprised today."

The 65-year-old Palacios retired last year. He worked for years as a bullfight promoter for his brother, who was a bullfighter in Mexico. He also worked in real estate and sales.

"I was born in Mexico, but I've been here since 1974," he said. "I became a citizen of the United States last year, in fact."

Palacios says he's thinking of buying a home for himself.

"This is a lot of money, and I'm thinking of how best to use it," he said. "I'm probably going to buy a house. Whatever I have left, I'll help my sons."

The new winner said he doesn't have big plans to celebrate, although, he said, "I'll probably buy some Lottery tickets for tonight and for tomorrow's *Lotto*."

As of today, two other *Mega Millions* tickets from December 2003 drawings remain unclaimed. Each is worth \$175,000. A ticket purchased in Brownsville for the December 12 drawing expires Wednesday, June 9. Another ticket bought in Houston for the December 30 drawing expires June 27, which is a Sunday. The claimant must present the ticket at anyone of the 16 Lottery Claim Centers throughout the state before 5 p.m. Friday, June 25, to claim the prize.

Tonight's *Mega Millions*™ jackpot is worth an estimated \$42 million. Saturday's *Lotto Texas*™ is worth an estimated \$70 million and is the largest lottery jackpot currently offered in the U.S.

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