



Texas Lottery
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NEWS

from the Texas Lottery Commission

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AN EXERCISE IN HYPERVENTILATION ACCOMPANIES NEWS OF \$1 MILLION MEGA MILLIONS® PRIZE

(AUSTIN) –What was supposed to be a routine Internet check of the May 9 *Mega Millions*® drawing results turned into an exercise in uncontrollable hyperventilation for Randall D. Ackerman of Baytown.

Up to that moment, he'd forgotten about those tickets that were stashed in his nightstand, as there had been something else happening in his life that had demanded all his attention.

"My father, who had suffered with cancer for eight years, died on May 15," Ackerman said. "He was a big fan of the Lottery and always enjoyed buying tickets. During the last few years, he used to ride shotgun with Teresa, my wife, when she was out on her sales runs. He'd go drink coffee while she was talking to her clients."

Naturally, she was the first person he called when he saw that the numbers on one of his tickets matched the numbers on the Lottery homepage. Those numbers were 16-31-43-46-56, and the Mega Ball was 26.

"She and my daughter, Autumn, were shopping in Houston," he said. "Of course, she didn't believe me, but because I was hyperventilating on the phone, she called our son, Paul, to come over and check on me. I asked my wife where she was and could she please sit down, even though I'd just spoken to her 45 minutes earlier. I was still trying to breathe. Then, my daughter got on the phone to tell me to make sure to call my son, Paul."

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission, News Release, continued)

While his wife and daughter were speeding back to Baytown from the Cheesecake Factory at the Galleria, Paul was at home with his wife, relaxing on the couch and in front of the TV.

“The news that I thought I’d won \$1 million made him sit up really fast,” he said. “In the excitement, he practically shoved his pregnant wife off the couch. I told him he had to come over.”

Ackerman and his family first thought they’d won \$1 million, but then thought the prize was \$500,000 because there had been one other winner of the same prize the same night.

“We looked on the Lottery Web site, and when we saw the photo of the other winner holding the big \$1 million check, we realized we really did win \$1 million, too,” Ackerman said.

By now, it was night. Ackerman and Teresa said they were so worked up, they couldn’t think about going to sleep. They called their other two children, Jeremy and Allison, who, like everyone else in the family up to that point, didn’t believe what they were hearing.

The 53-year-old Ackerman, who is a shift supervisor at an Exxon-Mobil plant in Mont Belvieu, never went to sleep that night.

“I got ready at 4 a.m. and went to work,” he said. “I’ve been there for 27 years and have known the guys I work with almost all my life, so we’re like family. We’re all grown men, but sometimes we act like kids. A group of them pool their money to buy Lottery tickets every week. I think they were just excited to know someone who won a big prize.”

“One of the best things about winning this prize is seeing the enjoyment that others have gotten out of it,” he said. “We plan to use this money to pay our bills, help our kids with their bills, help other family members and give to our church.”

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission, News Release, continued)

“Our father has always given everything he has to his family, and now he finally has received his reward,” Autumn said, speaking on behalf of her siblings.

“Our winner today has chosen to put family and faith first, sharing his prize to make life a little easier for those closest to him,” said Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director, Anthony J. Sadberry. “We’re grateful to Mr. Ackerman and his family for allowing us to publicize this win. This serves as a reminder to the public that real people do indeed win at the Lottery, and that the proceeds from our games benefit public education in Texas.”

“This was a spur of the moment thing, since I don’t play unless the jackpot is over \$100 million,” Ackerman said. “I had gone to the Cove Country Store to get gas for the lawnmower, spent \$14, and used the change from a \$20 bill to buy three Quick Picks, which I also Megapplied. It’s just surreal to think that those numbers came out of that terminal at that moment and that I won this prize. This is like a dream come true.”

He was accompanied at Lottery headquarters in Austin by his wife and their children, Allison, Jeremy, Paul and his wife, Sydni, David and Autumn Lewis and their sons, Hunter and Dylan.

The family will have a celebratory barbecue dinner tonight at the Salt Lick outside Austin.

The Cove Country Store is located at 6013 FM 565 S Ste A in Cove.

Tonight’s *Lotto Texas*[®] jackpot is estimated at \$4 million. Friday’s *Mega Millions* jackpot is worth an estimated \$36 million.

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

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Note to editors: A photo of Mr. Ackerman is available in jpg format by calling Leticia Vásquez at 512-344-5208 or by email at

Leticia.vasquez@lottery.state.tx.us.