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NEWS

from the Texas Lottery Commission

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LAS COLINAS LOTTERY GROUP TRUST CLAIMS \$12 MILLION MAY 23rd LOTTO TEXAS[®] JACKPOT

(AUSTIN) –After playing patiently for 18 months, three of the 25 members of the Las Colinas Lottery Group Trust today made a long-awaited trip to Austin.

No, it wasn't a field trip to the state capitol; it was an eagerly-anticipated visit to Texas Lottery[®] headquarters, where various members of the trust as representatives of the whole, claimed the \$12 million *Lotto Texas*[®] jackpot for May 23. Their Cash Value Option prize totaled \$7,067,548.80, before taxes.

“We’ve been playing for 18 months, and we wouldn’t have been playing if we didn’t think we could win,” said Damon Sawyer, group member. “We’ve won small prizes before, but that’s all.”

The group began with a core of four members, all of whom are employees of AT&T in Las Colinas, where almost all the rest of the members also met. Each player puts \$20 every month in the pool, and the money is evenly divided between purchases of *Lotto Texas* and *Mega Millions*[®] tickets.

The first four players each chose 25 sets of numbers that the entire group still plays. These sets of self-selected numbers held the combination that was drawn on May 23. Those were 1-3-13-14-22-52.

When the e-mail went out among group members that one of their tickets had matched the numbers drawn, only a few were willing to believe it was true.

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission news release, continued)

“I’d been at the office since 6 a.m. and just back from Florida, so I wasn’t in the mood to kid around,” said Aurora Hobbs, who had joined the group in mid-May. “It wasn’t until noon that I finally believed it. They finally did right by me and let me join the group, and as soon as I did, we won.”

Hobbs had been asking her co-workers to let her join the group for several months, but had been turned down only because the group was getting too large.

“We finally let her in because we figured if we had another person, we could buy more chances to win the jackpot,” Sawyer said. “Also, a couple of people got out just before this drawing.”

“The popularity of pooling money among our players to buy more tickets for a drawing has never decreased, most especially among *Lotto Texas* players,” said Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director Anthony J. Sadberry. “This also is the kind of thing that inspires others to form groups.”

Another group member, Bethurel Griffin, will have a sweet return from his tour of duty in Iraq, where he’s been since June of last year. He will collect his share next week when his tour ends.

For one member whose name is not being released, the prize could not have come at a better time. He was diagnosed with brain cancer weeks ago and will use the money for medical and family expenses.

John Tomlinson will use his share to save for retirement.

Other group members have had their very recent retirements from the company made that much better by their share of the prize, too.

Sawyer says he’s going to buy a new car and save the rest for the family he and his wife are planning. Hobbs is going to pay her bills, invest the rest and live debt-free.

“We’re going to keep playing,” Sawyer said. “We’ve got our 10-play for tonight’s *Mega Millions* and tomorrow’s *Lotto*.

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission news release, continued)

One group member who declined publicity is in charge of purchasing the tickets and holding on to them. He bought the tickets for the group at the Ector Drive One Shop, located at 101 South Ector Drive in Euless. The store is eligible to receive a bonus of \$120,000 for having sold this ticket.

This retail location is also new to this area, having opened recently.

Some of the remaining members of Las Colinas Lottery Group Trust declined publicity, while others were unable to take time off. Those who were present in Austin today left their homes in the metroplex area at approximately 3:30 a.m., they said.

The winner was represented by Bank of Texas.

Tonight's *Mega Millions*[®] jackpot is worth an estimated \$66 million. Saturday's *Lotto Texas*[®] jackpot is worth an estimated \$12 million.

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

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