

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - April 13, 2001

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## FORMER LABORER HOPES TO BECOME MILLIONAIRE LOTTERY RETAILER

(Austin, April 13) - Have you heard stories about Texas Lottery retailers who wound up millionaires because they ended up buying *Lotto Texas* tickets their customers didn't want---which turned out to be jackpot-winning tickets?

Well, here's a real switch. Tristan Tamez of Mission purchased a winning jackpot ticket and now says he plans to use some of his jackpot winnings to become a Texas Lottery retailer.

Mission resident Tristan Tamez, 51, says one of the first things he plans to do is open a convenience store with the \$4 million *Lotto Texas* jackpot prize he won on March 31st. His Cash Value Option total prize is \$2, 240, 449.60.

"My kids can work there," he said. "That way they won't have to go far from home to get to work."

Tamez is a former farm laborer who has lived in Mission since 1967 when he came stateside from Reynosa, across the international bridge from Hidalgo.

"When I first came here I worked in the fields doing everything, from driving tractors to irrigating fields at night in the freezing cold to reaping harvests," he said. "You name it, I did it, if it was ranch or farm work."

It's work he's known since he was a child.

"Since I was the oldest in my family, I had to go to work with my father," he said. "I had to help support my family."

Tamez says he enjoys playing lottery games and playing the ponies. In fact, it was on the way back from a trip to the horse races that one of his most memorable Lottery moments occurred.

"We were on the way back from the races and we got stuck in a long line on the bridge, so I wasn't able to buy tickets for the *Lotto* drawing that night," he said. "If I'd bought a ticket that night with my numbers, not a Quick Pick, I would have been one of the two winners of the \$40 million jackpot. My wife and I have talked about that drawing a lot."

María Graciela Colunga de Tamez is his wife. She told him not to lose his faith that he would one day win.

"She told me never to give up," he said. "She was the one who figured out that we had won when we were back at the house from the races, but she first thought we had gotten only four numbers. I thought, 'great, we can go play bingo next week.'" He and his wife regularly visit the Bingo Gardens hall in Mission.

Mrs. Tamez has kept the ticket in her purse since the night her husband won. "I've kept a very close eye on that ticket, it's never far from me. I knew we had won, but I put the ticket in purse and didn't say anything until we got home from the races."

Tamez says that his winnings will provide the seed money for his convenience store, and the money will also help him defray the costs of the kidney dialysis treatments he receives three times per week. He has been on dialysis for five years and hopes to receive a kidney transplant soon.

"I worked in the fields all my life and some of the chemicals with which I came into contact no doubt had a bad effect on my kidneys," he said. "Most of the people who are in dialysis with me also were field workers who, like me traveled to the north to pick vegetables."

The Lottery today presented Tamez with his Cash Value Option prize of \$2.2 million. The estimated jackpot for the March 31st

drawing was \$4 million.

The winner purchased \$15-worth of Quick Pick tickets at T-Rey Shoes and Food Store, 2502 West Highway Business 83 in Mission. The winning numbers for the March 31st drawing were 40-24-49-28-21-13.

T-Rey Shoes and Food is eligible to receive a bonus of \$40,000, one percent of the jackpot, for selling a winning ticket.

His wife, his eldest daughter Lorena Marín and his attorney, Santos Maldonado, accompanied Tamez.

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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>

-30-