

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - July 12, 2002

Contact:

Leticia Vasquez, 512-344-5208

Karen Kalergis, 512-344-5436

Texas Lottery Warns Texans Of New Cases Of Latin Lotto Scam

(Austin, July 12) - Two new cases of the Latin Lotto Scam have been reported to police. In one, yesterday in Austin, and the other, which took place in Sugarland on June 24th, there's a new twist to the old scam. The perpetrators in both cases were women.

Last month, a 66-year-old woman in Sugarland was bilked of \$8,000. The victim reported that a woman approached her in the parking lot of a large grocery store and used the approach that has become all too familiar. The con artist told the woman that she could not cash her supposed winning lottery ticket because she did not have documentation to be in this country.

In Austin, an elderly Hispanic man lost \$5,000 to two women, one of whom also claimed that she could not collect her prize because she was not an American citizen. When the woman offered to sell her ticket to the victim for \$25,000, he told her he had only \$5,000, and she agreed to sell him a share of the prize.

"The perpetrators are following the usual scam pattern, approaching their victims with a phony line, telling them they can't redeem a winning ticket because they're not American citizens, and then offering to sell it," said Texas Lottery Commission Security Commander Mike Pitcock. "The only difference in these two cases is that the perpetrators are women."

Pitcock said all Texans should be wary of anyone out on the street trying to sell what they claim to be a winning lottery ticket.

"We hope all Texans, especially the elderly, keep in mind when they're out and about that this scam is happening," he said. "And please remember, if the deal sound too good to be true, it usually is."

Since the scam first began in Texas some three years ago, victims have lost more than \$3 million. As a result of a public awareness campaign launched by the Texas Lottery Commission in March, and supported by local law enforcement and the media, several would-be victims have not fallen for the scam and have been able to report information about the con artists to law enforcement.

. . . .

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>