

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - September 21, 2004

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Latin *Lotto* Scam Continues Across Texas

(Austin, September 21) - Latin American con artists continue to rob thousands from victims in different parts of Texas using a phony Texas Lottery® ticket, as recent incidents in Garland and Victoria show.

"A Garland man lost \$15,000 this weekend and an elderly couple in Victoria lost \$16,000 last month, so it's clear that these cons are still out there," Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director Reagan E. Greer said. "Texans should be wary of anyone trying to give them a deal that sounds too good to be true."

In May, a 63-year-old Victoria woman was robbed of \$30,000 by scam artists claiming they couldn't cash a supposedly winning lottery ticket in their possession.

"In each incident that occurs, the scam artists say the same thing, that they can't cash a ticket because they're from another country, or that they need money to pay a 'fee' to claim their alleged prize," Greer said. "I can't say it enough, these are outright lies. The Texas Lottery, or any lottery, never requires money to claim a prize, nor does it refuse a prize to a non-American citizen. All we ask is that our claimants identify themselves properly with a photo ID."

In every instance reported to law enforcement, victims have entered the vehicle of the perpetrators or allowed them to travel in their vehicle.

"This is what these con artists do, they worm their way into the good graces of the victim, who is made to feel so needed," Greer said. "The victim is so rushed that there is no time for him to think that he's letting strangers into his car or that he's going off with these unknowns in theirs," Greer said. "Getting into a stranger's car or letting them in yours is never a good idea, especially if they're trying to get money from you."

Since 1999, victims of the Latin *Lotto* Scam have lost approximately \$3.5 million. This number is estimated because it comes from cases reported to the police. Numerous cases have gone unreported.

"If you want a Lottery ticket, buy it from an authorized retailer," Greer said. "If someone offers you a ticket on the street and promises you money, they're trying to scam you out of your money. Walk away immediately and call the police."

For more information about the Latin *Lotto* Scam, please visit the official Texas Lottery Commission web site at <http://www.txlottery.org>

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