



Texas Lottery
Commission

PO Box 16630
Austin, Texas
78761-6630

FAX:
(512) 344-5490

NEWS

from the Texas Lottery Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, June 12, 2006

CONTACT:

Robert Elrod, 512-344-5436

Media Relations, 512-344-5131

ITCHY PALMS DON'T LIE, EL PASO *MEGA MILLIONS*[®] PLAYER CLAIMS \$94 MILLION JACKPOT

(AUSTIN) – Martha L. Cuellar always heard that if your palms are itching, you're about to come into some money, and for the first couple of weeks of May, Cuellar's palms were itching something fierce. Not anymore though, as the single mother of two from El Paso today claimed the Cash Value Option – \$53,131,991 – for the \$94 million jackpot up for grabs in the May 16 *Mega Millions*[®] drawing.

“My fiancé and I were doing our laundry the day of the drawing when I went to the store next door to buy some *Mega Millions* tickets and some scratch-offs,” said Cuellar. “I always buy three tickets because I was born in March. That day, I won \$15 on the scratch-offs, but I almost forgot about the *Mega Millions* tickets!”

The numbers drawn in the May 16 *Mega Millions* drawing were 7-24-40-48-50 and the Mega Ball was 15. Two days later, Ms. Cuellar was reminded of her tickets by the news on the radio while on her way to work as an LVN at an El Paso hospital.

“I heard them say that the jackpot ticket was sold in El Paso, and I couldn't catch all of the numbers, but I knew I had the Mega Ball, so I stopped at a store to check the results,” said Cuellar. “When I got to my car and saw that the numbers matched I started shaking, but I still couldn't believe it, so I went to work and showed it to my coworkers.”

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission, News Release, continued)

Ms. Cuellar's coworkers agreed that her ticket appeared to match, so then she called her fiancé to tell him the good news.

"I was so excited I just told him in Spanish, 'Le pegamos, le pegamos!,' which means 'We hit it, We hit it,'" said Cuellar. "He said, 'What, who did you hit?'"

She quickly explained that the only thing she'd hit was the *Mega Millions* jackpot and after a few more calls, including one to Texas Lottery® headquarters in Austin, the reality of her situation began to sink in. Ms. Cuellar soon consulted an attorney and began planning a trip to Austin to have her ticket officially validated by the Texas Lottery.

Ms. Cuellar's biggest previous Texas Lottery win was \$2,000 on a scratch-off game. This time, with more than \$53 million (before taxes) in the bank, she's decided the time is right to give up all three of her jobs and retire.

"I'm going to buy a house and a car and take care of my son and daughter and the rest of my family," said Cuellar. "And my son wants to go to medical school. I'd have taken a fourth job if necessary to help make that happen, but this should make that a lot easier!"

"Congratulations to Ms. Cuellar for her extremely good fortune, it certainly sounds as though she's earned this opportunity to slow down and enjoy her retirement with her *Mega Millions* winnings," said Anthony J. Sadberry, acting executive director for the Texas Lottery Commission. "This marks the third *Mega Millions* jackpot claimed in Texas since we joined the game in December 2003 and along with the previous two Texas claimants, Ms. Cuellar is proof that you really can win when you play the games of the Texas Lottery."

Mega Millions players choose five numbers from 1 to 56, and one Mega Ball number from a second field of numbers from 1 to 46. Each play costs a dollar. Players must match the five numbers plus the Mega Ball to win the jackpot. For an

(more)

(Texas Lottery Commission, News Release, continued)

extra dollar, the Megaplier[®] option, available only in Texas, allows players to multiply their non-grand/jackpot prize winnings two, three or four times.

Ms. Cuellar purchased her ticket at the Good Time Store #12 located at 6390 Alameda Ave. in El Paso. The retailer is eligible for a one percent bonus – \$940,000 in this case – for selling the jackpot ticket.

Tomorrow's *Mega Millions* jackpot will be worth an estimated \$25 million.

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

...

The Texas Lottery supports Texas education.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photographs of Martha Cuellar are available upon request. All photos are sent in jpg format via e-mail. Please contact Robert Elrod at (512) 344-5436 or e-mail robert.elrod@lottery.state.tx.us to make your request.