

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - March 12, 2002

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Poynor Man Doesn't Let The Grass Grow Under His Feet – Claims *Lotto* Jackpot From Last Saturday's Drawing

(Austin, March 12) - – Not one to let time slip away from him, Thomas L. Grayson of Poynor decided today would be a good day to claim his \$4 million jackpot prize from last Saturday's *Lotto Texas* drawing.



"Now, we'll take one day at a time," said Grayson. "Like a river, go whichever way it flows."

The soon-to-be 54-year-old Poynor resident is a regular *Lotto Texas* player. According to Grayson, he spends \$5 every Wednesday and Saturday, and only misses a drawing every once in awhile.

The winning Quick Pick ticket was purchased at Judy's Kountry Kitchen located at Highway 175 at east intersection 315 in Poynor. The store is the only lottery retailer in Poynor, which has a population of just over 250 people. For selling the jackpot-winning ticket, Judy's Kountry Kitchen owners are eligible to receive a bonus of one percent, \$40,000.

"I went to Judy's on Sunday morning, and they had a printout that read one winning ticket had been sold in Poynor," Grayson explained. "I got a printout of the numbers and compared them to my ticket and then told everyone in the store, 'It was me – I won it.' "

It's hard to keep such good news under wraps in this small town. The storeowner immediately went across the street and told Grayson's son and daughter-in-law.

Grayson then told his mother and second son about the family's windfall; he drove to his third son's house and told him; then went to his own home to let his only daughter know. All this time Grayson still hadn't told one important person – his wife, Lois Gardiner Grayson.

"I was at the hospital in Palestine waiting for a family member that was having a baby," said Lois. "He never called to tell me what was going on."

Instead, Grayson told everyone else not to tell, and showed up at the hospital with a video camera. Most of the family already knew about the winning ticket and managed to keep the secret.

"I wanted to get the whole thing on tape, her reaction when I finally told her," said Grayson. "She didn't believe me at first though because I'm always pulling practical jokes."

Grayson's wife kept asking him, "What's the joke, what's wrong with the ticket?"

"I kept waiting for him to tell me it wasn't real," Lois said. "He just kept saying, 'We won.' "

After the disbelief went away, the reality set in. The family called the last member not present for the entire event. The Graysons have a son-in-law in his final stages of Army training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

"He thought we were joking, too," said Grayson. "Me and him always play jokes on people."

Grayson chose the 25-year annuity payment option. He will receive an initial payment of \$160,000, and will receive the same amount every March 15th for the next 24 years. The winning numbers drawn were: 42-34-33-06-48-41.

Asked about any other plans for the future, Grayson told lottery officials, "Keep all this on file, it'll all be same a couple of months from now when we win again."

"The only difference is she'll know sooner," he added and pointed to his wife.

Wednesday's *Lotto Texas* jackpot is worth an estimated \$4 million.