

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - March 16, 2001

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## **AUSTIN COUPLE HITCHES THEIR 'SADDLE' TO CLAIM \$85 MILLION RECORD *LOTTO TEXAS* JACKPOT**

(Austin, March 16) - Surrounded by dozens of blue police uniforms on hand to salute one of their own, representatives of RBH CNC, Ltd., today held a news conference at the Texas Lottery Commission to discuss winning the largest jackpot-winning ticket ever sold for *Lotto Texas*!

Austin Police Mounted Patrol Officer Robert Chody, and his wife Beverly, spoke quietly and calmly as they discussed their dream come true before a crowd of more than 100 fellow officers and lottery commission employees, family and close friends.

"At first, it was just amazement," Beverly Chody said. "It's been very shocking to know that we won all that money. But I had a good feeling about it that night, and I stayed calm."

As representatives of the partnership, the Chody's chose the Cash Value Option and will receive approximately \$51.2 million (\$51,214, 323.00) before taxes. The Cash Value Option gives winners a lump sum payment, or the current net present value of the estimated jackpot amount.

Asked if he had any dreams winning this prize would fulfil, the officer replied, "\$85 million-dollars-worth of dreams," and said he and his wife haven't yet devised any long-term plans for spending the prize.

The couple claimed their record jackpot prize at Lottery Headquarters in Austin yesterday, but decided to delay holding a news conference to allow many of Officer Chody's colleagues on the Austin Police force to attend today's official jackpot check presentation.

As a packed auditorium of police officers, news reporters and lottery employees applauded, Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director Linda Cloud officially presented the oversized ceremonial check to the young couple-providing them the largest single prize payout in Texas lottery history.

Cloud also surprised the winners by presenting a birthday cake to Beverly Chody, who purchased the winning ticket and celebrated her 30th birthday yesterday when the couple claimed their prize.

"Congratulations from all of us here at the Texas Lottery Commission," Cloud said. "I am honored to present this record jackpot prize to you, and to let you both know this is the largest 30th birthday prize I've ever given away."

In addition to celebrating Mrs. Chody's birthday this week, the couple will celebrate their 12th wedding anniversary on Sunday.

The 6 of 6 winning combination was purchased less than three hours before the official close of tickets sales on Wednesday, March 7, as part of \$5 worth of *Lotto Texas* Quick Pick selections for that night's record \$85 million drawing.

"My husband and I were sitting on the bed writing the numbers separately," she said. "I told him we won and he wouldn't believe me."

The winning numbers drawn were 51-36-10-45-31-37. The jackpot-winning ticket was bought at Shoppers Mart, located at 10500 North Lamar Boulevard in Austin. The retailer is eligible to receive a bonus of one-percent of the jackpot amount, not to exceed \$500,000. This will be the fourth half-million dollar retailer bonus awarded since *Lotto Texas* started in November 1992.

Chody said he and his wife have been in hiding for nearly a week since they found out they won. He also offered potential

jackpot winners a piece of advice.

"We have been at the home of some friends," he said. "We didn't stay in Austin, but we did stay in the state. And in case somebody else wins a big jackpot, don't tell anybody, especially if you don't want the media to find out."

He also put to rest a rumor concerning this win and the Texas Lottery.

"I just want everyone to know that my wife does not work for the Texas Lottery Commission."

Despite claiming Texas' highest Lotto jackpot prize, however, Officer Chody says he has no immediate plans to retire his saddle as a mounted patrol officer for the City of Austin.

"I don't plan to retire at this time," he said. "I love working with these people."

On hand to witness today's presentation was Austin Police Chief Stan Knee. "He is a great police officer," Knee said. "If he decides on another career, we will definitely miss him. We hope he stays with us, but since I've never won \$51 million dollars in my life, I think he'll have to do some soul-searching to figure out what he plans to do."

Mrs. Chody says winning this prize has changed her life "somewhat," but that she remains who she has always been.

"Yes, my life has changed to a point, but I feel no different," she said.

She is a customer care representative for AT&T Wireless. She also declined to say if she would retire any time soon.

The *Lotto Texas* jackpot for Saturday night's drawing is an estimated \$11 million.

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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>