



PRESS RELEASE

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California Lottery Names Two Major Jackpot Winners as Tonight's Mega Millions® Jackpot Tops Half a Billion

SACRAMENTO – Loyal player Jerry Heath, who recently won a \$44.3 million [Powerball® jackpot](#), says one of the reasons he plays so often is to help support the mission of the California Lottery to raise extra money for public education.

“I’m a very fortunate human being,” Heath told the California Lottery after recently receiving his gigantic prize. Heath went on to describe his low-income upbringing, adding, “I can’t forget where I came from now that I’m a multimillionaire. I don’t really travel; playing the lottery is my only luxury.”

Heath says he is sharing his winnings with his daughter and grandchildren and that a former boss told him this big win “couldn’t have happened to a better person.” Heath said he totally supports public education, noting that he earned a business degree at Long Beach State College, now known as CSU Long Beach. Heath told the California Lottery he went on to become a decorated detective for the Long Beach Police Department and served six years in the United States Army.

Heath bought his jackpot-winning [Powerball game](#) for a drawing back in August at the Ralphs on Golden Lantern in Dana Point. Heath shared that he plays the lottery every day, and now that he’s conquered *Powerball*, he has his sights set on [SuperLotto Plus®](#), which is only offered in California.

Fellow *SuperLotto Plus* player Terry Thomas also won huge on a July jackpot drawing, matching all six numbers that night for the [\\$54 million grand prize](#). That ticket came from the 7-Eleven on Cottonwood Street in Woodland.

The California Lottery does not announce the names of winners until after they’ve come forward, been vetted by Lottery law enforcement, declared the rightful winner, and received their official prize payment.



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More California Lottery players have a chance at a massive win tonight with the projected jackpot for [Mega Millions](#) at \$541 million. That prize pot has been growing since early September when someone in Texas hit the big one. Prior to that, *Mega Millions* jackpots were hit in Illinois in June and in New Jersey back in March.

Never before have only three *Mega Millions* jackpots been won in a single calendar year, a sharp contrast to 2023 when 10 *Mega Millions* jackpots were hit.

The California Lottery has raised more than [\\$39 million for public education](#) just from this approximate 3-month *Mega Millions* jackpot run alone. Tonight's drawing is slated to happen at 8:00 pm PT, with sales closing at 7:45 pm. Tickets are \$2 each, and about 80 cents from each ticket purchased in California helps support public schools.

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The mission of the California Lottery is to raise additional funding for public education, helping to supplement school budgets for K-12 as well as colleges and universities. **The California Lottery has raised more than \$46 billion for public schools** through the responsible sale of its games since 1985. Lottery funding for schools is largely discretionary, so administrators and educators can use Lottery money for instructional programs and services they may not otherwise afford. The California Lottery features eight [draw games](#) and dozens of new instant [Scratchers](#) games each year. More than 95% of California Lottery sales revenue goes back to the community in the form of prize payments, [retailer commissions and bonuses](#), and contributions to education. More information about who benefits can be found [here](#). As jackpots rise, the California Lottery would like to remind players that gambling should be fun. Borrowing money to play, spending above a person's budget, or using money intended for other purposes can ultimately lead to significant problems for players and their families. If a player recognizes that they have a gambling problem or if someone knows of someone who may have a problem, the Lottery recommends calling the California Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-800-GAMBLER.



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