



NEWS

Mega Million winner location: Shopper at this Neptune store hits billion-dollar jackpot

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NEPTUNE - Check your lottery tickets! You could be New Jersey's newest billionaire!

Tuesday night's winning \$1.13 billion Mega Millions lottery ticket was sold at ShopRite Liquors on Route 66, lottery officials said.

The winning numbers drawn Tuesday were 7, 11, 22, 29, and 38 and the gold Mega Ball was 4, according to the Mega Millions website. Only one ticket matched all six numbers.

The winner has not yet come forward, but New Jersey Lottery Executive Director James Carey advised New Jersey's newest billionaire to immediately sign the ticket, put it in a safe place, and then contact a lawyer and a financial adviser about what to do with their newfound wealth.

He said the winner selected the numbers, rather than use the Quick Pick feature where the computer picks the number. The winner also selected to get their prize annually, over 30 years, rather than in one lump sum. But Carey said the winner could still change their mind about payments.

At a press conference at ShopRite Liquors, Carey presented the retailer with a bonus check for \$30,000 for selling the winning ticket.

Richard Saker, president and chief executive officer of Saker ShopRites, said at the news conference he will donate the bonus money to Fulfill Food Bank, located just down the road from the store on Route 66.

"We are thrilled for the state of New Jersey, we are thrilled for this community," Saker said.

The winning ticket was sold Tuesday night by Neptune Mayor Tassie York's niece, lottery officials said.

TiYahna Bambaata, 27, of Neptune, said she sold the ticket sometime between 6 and 7 p.m. last night. She said she doesn't have the exact time and doesn't know who the winner was.

"I'm really honored to have sold the ticket in my hometown," said Bambaata, who has worked at the store for almost 4 years and has been doing lottery sales for about a year.

The jackpot is the fifth largest in the history of the game. It ranks as eighth overall largest jackpot in U.S. lottery history.

The grand prize ticket holder is not New Jersey's only winner. There were 190,508 other players in the state who took part in Tuesday's drawing who took home an estimated \$806,876 in prizes ranging from \$2 to \$400, lottery officials said.

Jackpot: Mega Millions winner! \$1.13B winning lottery ticket sold in NJ for March 26 jackpot

Because jackpots are always based on actual sales, the official jackpot amount will be determined after sales from all 47 participating jurisdictions are finalized this morning, the website said.

As it stands now, the estimated prize is \$1.13 billion, with a cash prize of \$537.5 million.

Prior to Tuesday's drawing, the most recent Mega Millions jackpot won in New Jersey was on July 24, 2020.

The last Mega Millions jackpot was struck on Dec. 8, 2023 for \$394 million (\$186.6 million cash) and was shared by two lucky ticket holders in California.

Kathleen Hopkins, a reporter in New Jersey since 1985, covers crime, court cases, legal issues and just about every major murder trial to hit Monmouth and Ocean counties. Contact her at khopkins@app.com.