

Mega Millions Mania

Growing Numbers Pursue Jackpot Of \$640 Million

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press

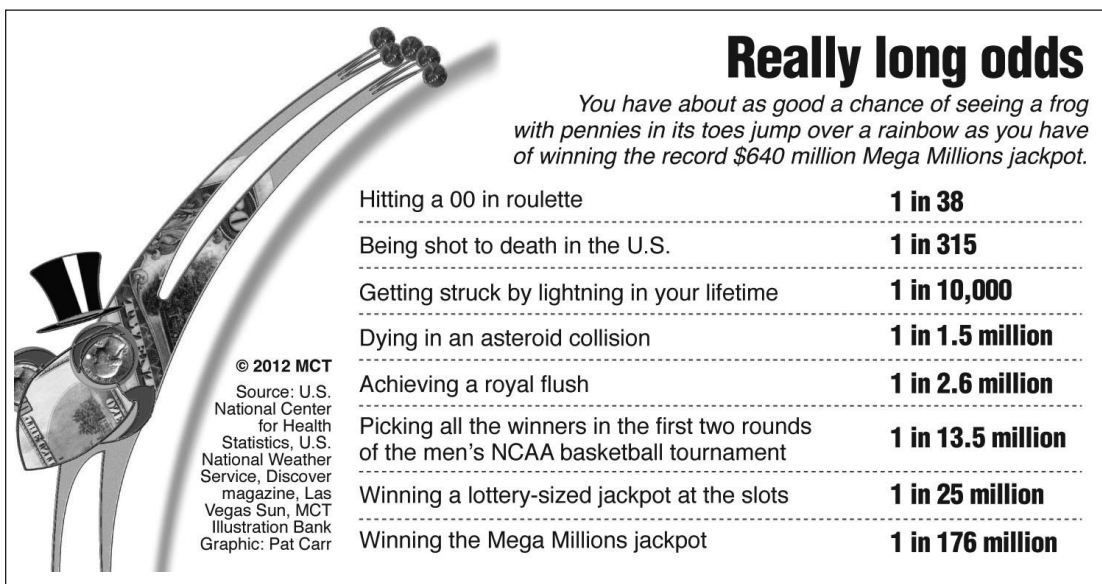
OMAHA, Neb. — Lottery ticket lines swelled as the record Mega Millions jackpot grew to \$640 million, thanks greatly to players who opened their wallets despite long odds of success. Officials estimated ticket-buyers will have spent more than \$1.46 billion on the jackpot by the time Friday night's numbers are drawn.

A cavi worker in Arizona reported selling \$2,600 worth of tickets to one buyer, while a retired soldier in Wisconsin doubled his regular weekly ticket spending to \$55. But each would have to put down millions more to guarantee winning what could be the biggest single lotto payout in the world.

"I feel like a fool throwing that kind of money away," said Jesse Carter, who spent the \$55 and donated the last two tickets he bought at a Milwaukee store Friday to a charity. "But it's a chance you take in life, with anything you do."

The jackpot, if taken as a \$462 million lump sum and after federal tax withholding, works out to about \$347 million. With the jackpot odds at 1 in 176 million, it would cost \$176 million to buy up every combination. Under that scenario, the strategy would win \$171 million less if your state also withholds taxes.

Laura Horsley, who does communications and marketing for a trade association, bought \$20 worth of Quick Pick tickets at a



Really long odds

Hitting a 00 in roulette	1 in 38
Being shot to death in the U.S.	1 in 315
Getting struck by lightning in your lifetime	1 in 10,000
Dying in an asteroid collision	1 in 1.5 million
Achieving a royal flush	1 in 2.6 million
Picking all the winners in the first two rounds of the men's NCAA basketball tournament	1 in 13.5 million
Winning a lottery-sized jackpot at the slots	1 in 25 million
Winning the Mega Millions jackpot	1 in 176 million

downtown Washington, D.C., liquor store Friday. But Horsley, who said she won't buy a lottery ticket unless the jackpot tops \$100 million, remained realistic.

"I don't actually think I'm going to win, and I don't believe in superstitions or numbers or anything like that," she said. "I just figured it's right around the corner. I'd be crazy not at least to give it a shot."

Thousands of players — who converged on convenience stores in 42 states and Washington, D.C., where Mega Millions tickets are sold — agreed.

Kelly Cripe, a spokeswoman for the Texas Lottery Commission, said that as of Tuesday, nationwide sales for the Mega Millions drawing totaled more than \$839 million. Officials projected an additional \$618.5 million in sales ahead of Friday's drawing, however, for a projected total sales figure of more than \$1.46 billion.

"This is unprecedented," Cripe

said Friday by e-mail.

Some Indiana players managed to get freebies, as Hoosier Lottery officials gave away one free Mega Millions ticket to each of the first 540 players at several outlets around the state Friday — a plan announced before the jackpot grew by \$100 million.

In Indianapolis, college student Chris Stewart said he showed up at the lottery's headquarters at 6:30 a.m. to be first in a line.

"I've never seen a jackpot like this before," said Stewart, who bought five additional tickets. "If I won — I mean wow! I just don't know what I'd do. I'd really have to think what I could do with it."

The lines were out the door at Rosie's Den cafe in the rural northwestern Arizona community of White Hills, 72 miles southeast of Las Vegas and one of the closest points to Nevada — which doesn't offer Mega Millions — for buyers to get in the game.

Rosie's worker Christine Millim

said it's been nonstop for four days.

"In one step I sold \$2,600 worth so, that was one person," she said.

Mike Catalano, chairman of the mathematics department at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, S.D., concedes the math is clear: The more tickets you buy, the better chances you have of winning. Better long-shot chances, of course.

"You are about 50 times as likely to get struck by lightning as to win the lottery, based on the 90 people a year getting struck by lightning," Catalano said. "Of course, if you buy 50 tickets, you've equalized your chances of winning the jackpot with getting struck by lightning."

Based on other U.S. averages, you're about 8,000 times more likely to be murdered than to win the lottery, and about 20,000 times more likely to die in a car crash than hit the lucky numbers, Catalano said.

South Dakota

Proposal Would Create Tribal National Park

BY KRISTI EATON
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — Officials from the Badlands National Park in South Dakota and the Oglala Sioux tribe are hoping a meeting Friday with Interior Department officials will move them one step closer to creating the country's first tribal national park.

The U.S. government's War Department took what is now the South Unit from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to establish a practice bombing range in the 1940s. It was returned to the Oglala Sioux tribe in 1976 and has since been co-managed with the National Park Service. In 2002, disagreements arose between the tribe and the National Park Service over plans for the land and the tribe began pushing for greater control.

The plan on how to move forward with management of the South Unit has been under development since 2005, with the preferred alternative being the creation of a tribal national park, to be managed and administered

by the Oglala Sioux tribe. The South Unit is mostly undeveloped and less traveled compared to the North Unit.

"This is wildly different. I've been at this for 26 years now, and I've never seen a general management plan that ever had a management option, because it's understood that it's a national park service operation," said Badlands National Park Superintendent Eric Brunemann. "This unit sits on land that is tribal."

Officials on Friday will discuss moving forward with the plan. If approved, they can start dis-

cussing what the tribal national park will include, Brunemann said.

John Yellow Bird Steele, the president of the Oglala Sioux tribe, already knows the park will offer one thing much sought after on the reservation: jobs.

"For a few of our people, it would be creating careers in archaeology, anthropology, paleontology," he said.

Congress would need to approve such a park — a step that could take years — but Oglala Sioux and park officials are moving forward with intentions of

bringing more tribal awareness at Badlands.

The tribe recently hired Gerard Baker as executive director of the Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority to fill in for the previous executive director who took a leave of absence.

Baker, the former superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Memorial, has created a new Department of Tourism within the organization and said he has many plans for how to increase visitors to the South Unit, including guided tours, more events and extended hours.

Neb. Unemployment Hits 4 Percent In February

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's unemployment rate hit 4 percent in February, dropping slightly from the month before and remaining less than half the national rate, according to state Labor Department data released Friday.

The statewide jobless rate was 4.1 percent in January, according to revised figures, and 4.5 percent in February 2011. The national unemployment rate remained at 8.3 percent last month.

"Compared to last year, the Nebraska economy continues to show growth," Nebraska Labor Commissioner Catherine Lang said. "We continue to see job increases in manufacturing, as well as business, health and education services ... while unemployment claims are down from a year ago."

The number of unemployed people in Nebraska was estimated at 40,875 last month, down from an estimated 41,242 in January.

Challenge To Neb. Youth Sexting Law Rejected

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A judge has rejected a challenge to Nebraska's sexting law that makes it a crime for an 18-year-old to have explicit pictures of a 14-year-old.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that the ruling came in the case of Nathan Wiesen of Lincoln.

He was charged last April after a 14-year-old girl's parents found explicit photos of their daughter she had emailed to Wiesen.

He was charged with possession of child pornography by a defendant under 19, which carries up to five years in prison.

His attorney challenged the law because it makes one person more culpable than another depending on the age of the sender. Judge Robert Otte says the Legislature intentionally carved out narrow exceptions to constitutional equal protections to keep children safe.

S.D. Forest Fire Burns 546 Acres; No Injuries

CUSTER (AP) — Officials say they hope to have a Black Hills National Forest fire in southwest South Dakota 50 percent contained if conditions remain favorable.

A Forest Service spokeswoman says no structures have been threatened and no injuries have been reported in the Apple Fire, which was started by lightning on Wednesday.

It is the largest wildfire so far this season in the Black Hills.

Spokeswoman Beth Doten says the fire covered 546 acres and was 15 percent contained at noon Friday.

Doten said the fire is being fought on the ground and in the air, with 132 personnel.

Corn, Soybean Acres Expected To Rise In S.D.

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Acres of both corn and soybeans are expected to rise this year in South Dakota.

The Agriculture Department says in its annual spring planting report that South Dakota farmers intend to plant 5.5 million acres of corn, up 300,000 acres from 2011, and 4.3 million acres of soybeans, up 200,000 acres.

Spring wheat acres are pegged at 1.1 million, down 12 percent from last year, and durum wheat acres are unchanged at 8,000. Winter wheat acres seeded last fall totaled 1.35 million acres, down 18 percent over the year.

Acres of sunflowers, sorghum, oats, barley, flax and dry beans all are expected to be up in South Dakota this year.

Couple Convicted In Marriage Fraud Scheme

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A woman from Mexico and an Omaha man she paid to marry her to obtain lawful residency in the United States have been convicted of marriage fraud.

Twenty-four-year-old Juana Tapia-Borjas, of Mexico, and 32-year-old Jesse Lopez, of Omaha, were convicted of felony conspiracy to commit marriage fraud.

U.S. Attorney Deborah Gilg says Tapia-Borjas was involved in immigration deportation proceedings in February 2010 and married Lopez in August 2010. Authorities say she paid Lopez \$2,000 to marry her to obtain resident status and relief from deportation.

Tapia Borjas was sentenced to time served on Feb. 27 and released to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation.

Lopez was arrested last October and sentenced on March 19 to 7 months in prison and a three-year term of supervised release.

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