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NEWS RELEASE

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NORTH DAKOTA CONSIDERING MEGA MILLIONS GAME

The nation's two largest lottery games, Powerball and Mega Millions, reached an agreement in mid October to allow all U.S. lottery jurisdictions to sell both games. Many Powerball states, including Minnesota, are planning to launch Mega Millions in early January 2010. While North Dakota, along with a majority of less populated states, voted against the proposal to offer both games, the motion nonetheless prevailed. Now the state is faced with whether to participate in the Mega Millions game. The decision by Minnesota to participate in both games makes the prospect more immediate.

The decision to bring Mega Millions to North Dakota was discussed at a Lottery Advisory Commission meeting on October 22, 2009. Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend the game in North Dakota, and the decision is now pending approval by Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

Cross-selling the games gives players the chance to play either or both games in their home state. The push to cross-sell came about after game officials noticed that when jackpots began to climb, players would cross state lines to purchase tickets for competing lotteries.

"For the North Dakota Lottery, the goal is to keep our players in North Dakota," said Lottery Director Randy Miller. "If players cross the border to buy Mega Millions tickets, other purchases such as fuel and groceries could also affect North Dakota businesses, especially along the Minnesota border."

Because of the heavy population base on the eastern border, the Lottery estimates a possible sales loss of between \$1.1 million and \$2.9 million annually if Mega Millions is not offered to North Dakota players. If the game is offered, North Dakota estimates an overall annual increase of approximately ten percent or \$2.2 million in sales. The state's general fund receives 30¢ of every dollar in sales. Since the Lottery began in 2004, over \$30,900,000 million has been contributed to the general fund for the benefit of North Dakota residents.

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Powerball is played in 31 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with drawings held on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Mega Millions is played in 12 states with drawings held on Tuesdays and Fridays. Mega Millions holds the record for the largest U.S. lottery jackpot -- \$390 million on March 6, 2007. The largest Powerball jackpot was \$365 million on Feb. 18, 2006. More information about Mega Millions is available at www.megamillions.com. Powerball information is available at www.powerball.com.

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