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Illinois Lottery Encourages Responsible Gift Giving *Remember the Legal Gambling Age for Players is 18*

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (December 18, 2008) – As people scurry to finish up last minute shopping, lottery products, such as scratch-off tickets are often popular stocking stuffers or easy choices to slip into someone’s holiday card. Lottery tickets are generally affordable, colorful and easily available, which makes it easy to purchase a handful for friends or family members.

This is why it is important to remind Illinois residents during this gift-giving holiday season that players must be 18 years or older.

According to a recent national study, 30 percent of high school students received one or several lottery products as a gift during the past 12 months. This, coupled with the growing concern of adolescent problem gambling, prompted the National Council on Problem Gambling and the Youth Gambling Centre at McGill University to work together this holiday season to increase public awareness about not offering lottery products as gifts to minors. The Illinois Lottery supports these efforts and encourages players to give responsibly.

“Holiday-themed scratch-off tickets are a popular gift this time of year, but we want them to be given responsibly,” said Illinois Lottery Acting Superintendent Jodie Winnett. “Given the research on youth gambling, we urge parents to avoid giving lottery tickets as gifts to minors during this holiday season.”

If you believe you or someone you know has a gambling problem, crisis counseling and referral services can be accessed by calling 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537). The Illinois Department of Human Services offers outpatient counseling, case management and early intervention services to individuals with problem gambling disorders.

About the Illinois Lottery

Founded in 1974, the Illinois Lottery is a state agency with annual sales over \$2 billion. Since its inception, the Lottery has contributed more than \$14 billion to the state Common School Fund to assist K-12 public schools. Players must be at least 18 years old. For more information on the Illinois Lottery please visit our Web site at www.illinoislottery.com.

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