

\$1,000,000 Winning Powerball Ticket from Bonner County Claimed by Mail

David Workman/Idaho Lottery

BOISE, Idaho – It all comes down to trust. Trust, faith, and integrity in the system by those who use it. Mailing in winning Idaho Lottery tickets is a common practice for many players who live in northern Idaho. The Idaho Lottery, though had never received a ticket worth \$1,000,000 through the US Postal Service until last week when a regular player from Sandpoint did what he's done every other month for many years – mail in a batch of winning tickets, both Scratch and Draw Games, for payment.

Randy Branum is Idaho's newest millionaire. The long-time Sandpoint resident claimed the \$1,000,000 winning Powerball ticket from the September 23, 2015 draw via the US mail. He received his actual winning check, along with the large oversized souvenir check, from the Idaho Lottery during a press event at the Waterfront Express Conoco in Sandpoint where he purchased his ticket.

“I usually wait a month or two, sign all the tickets I have, and then mail them in,” explained Branum, a retired contractor who usually checks carefully for winners. “This time I had two or three tickets left and just signed them and sent them off. I figured there might be some \$7 winners in there.”

When the package arrived at the Idaho Lottery, the tickets were verified for winners by Idaho Lottery Security. That's when they discovered the \$1,000,000 winning ticket from back in September signed by Branum. The Idaho Lottery immediately contacted Branum.

“When they called, I thought I'd maybe won the Bronco Bowl Bash, the trip to see Boise State's Bowl Game this year,” said Branum of the initial call from Idaho Lottery Security. “Instead they told me I'd won \$1,000,000. I couldn't talk.”

Branum told his wife, Colleen, the news. Still in disbelief, the couple called the Lottery back.

“I was convinced it was a friend of ours playing a hoax on us,” said Colleen, a retired school principal. “Once we talked to everyone at the Lottery again, though, well, I guess Santa's coming early this year.”

“I put my faith in the Idaho Lottery and the US mail that when I send my tickets, they are going to a safe place,” said Branum about the Idaho Lottery's integrity. “I trusted them with a \$1,000,000 winning ticket and they were honest about it.”

“This is truly a windfall, a gift, holy cow,” exclaimed Branum. “You work hard, you pay your bills. It's something you never think is going to happen and then it does. It's exciting to play and win.”

“We're going to enjoy this,” added Colleen. “We might celebrate and go for sushi. And maybe buy some new tires for Randy's truck.”

The couple will celebrate 50 years being together and their 47th wedding anniversary at the end of November. Branum added the couple already has plans to invest their winnings and enjoy their retirement.

“We can live to be 90 now,” said Branum. “And, I’m going to keep on mailing in my winning tickets.”