

Kewanee man wins \$1 million on \$5 Illinois Lottery scratch-off before birthday

by Jennifer Born, Illinois Lottery Communications
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CHICAGO — Birthday celebrations came a little early for Steve of Kewanee, Illinois, after he scratched his way to a \$1,000,000 top prize on a \$5 *Onyx* Instant Ticket just days before his birthday.

“This win came just in time,” said Steve. “I’ll tell you what—this is the best birthday gift I’ve ever gotten.”

Steve purchased the winning ticket at Beck’s North, located at 401 E. 2nd St. in Kewanee. For selling the winning ticket, the retailer will receive a \$10,000 bonus—equal to 1% of the prize amount.

The million-dollar win came just weeks after Steve narrowly missed out on another big prize.

"A few weeks ago, I was debating between two \$5 tickets," he recalled. "I picked one that didn't win, but my coworker bought one of the other ones and won \$10,000."

When Steve returned to the same store recently, he shared the story with one of the workers.

“He asked me, 'Will this one be the winner?' I took that as a sign when I bought this \$5 ticket— and that decision made me a millionaire."

Steve discovered his life-changing prize during a quiet evening at home.

"I was watching TV and scratching the ticket with one of those vintage coins," he said. "I told myself, 'This will be my lucky token today'—and it sure was."

After revealing the winning prize, Steve downloaded the Illinois Lottery app and scanned the ticket to confirm the \$1 million win.

As for what’s next, Steve plans to invest in several home improvement projects, including building a new garage. He also has his sights set on buying another car.

“But most importantly,” he said, “I’m looking forward to spending more time in Arizona during the winter. My son lives there, so it’ll be great to visit him more often."

Already this year, nearly 33 million winning Instant Tickets have been sold, with players statewide claiming more than 897 million in prizes.

The Illinois Lottery currently offers a range of Instant Tickets priced from \$1 to \$50, available at approximately 7,000 retail locations across Illinois.

Instant Tickets b-roll, available for use by the media, download [here](#).

The Illinois Lottery reminds players to play for fun, not funds. Be Smart, Play Smart®. Must be 18 or older to play. Game odds available at [IllinoisLottery.com](https://www.illinoislottery.com).

About the Illinois Lottery

The Illinois Lottery, founded in 1974, has contributed over \$26 billion to the State's Common School Fund in support of K-12 public education in Illinois since 1985. The Common School Fund is the Illinois Lottery's primary beneficiary, receiving nearly 99% of Illinois Lottery proceeds. The Illinois Lottery also supports various specialty causes as described in the Illinois Lottery Law (20 ILCS 1605/21.4). For more information about the Illinois Lottery and the causes we support, please visit [IllinoisLottery.com](https://www.illinoislottery.com).