

# Senior**ALERT**



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

## **PHONY CANADIAN LOTTERY STEALS FROM ELDERLY**

LAST MONTH, AN ELDERLY CENTRAL TEXAS MAN was taken for nearly his entire life savings. He thought he had won the Canadian Lottery, and planned to use the “prize money” to care for his wife, who is ill. He had already taken out a second mortgage and was preparing to fly to Montreal to personally deliver \$50,000 in “tax money” when we intervened.

Unfortunately, this case is not unusual. According to the Phonebusters Program of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in the seven-week period from Dec. 1, 2002 to Jan. 21, 2003, 244 Texas victims wired almost a million dollars to Canada. These are very alarming numbers.

The scam usually starts with a call from an enthusiastic telemarketer who says you’ve won the Canadian Lottery. In some cases, the caller says you need to wire him money to pay the tax on your winnings. Any money you send will never be seen again, and the prize will never arrive. In other versions of the scam, the caller wants your bank account number so that winnings can be deposited directly, or asks for your credit card number for ‘verification purposes.’ Either way, the goal is to loot your accounts.

If you have been victimized, beware of “recovery” scams, often run by the same con artists who stole your money in the first place: no official from any legitimate government agency will ask you to pay them money to get your stolen “fees” returned. If you get an unsolicited call about a sweepstakes or lottery prize, HANG UP and report it to PhoneBusters at 1-888-495-8501 or by e-mail to [info@phonebusters.com](mailto:info@phonebusters.com). Sign up to receive E-mail Senior Alerts at [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us).

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