

It's official: 8 WV women co-workers hit the jackpot - 3/19/08

By Anna Sale

Studio lead: It's official. Eight employees of the Monongalia County Tax Department hit the Powerball jackpot on Saturday night. The WV Lottery Commission announced the winners at a press conference in Charleston yesterday. After taxes, each of the women will pocket \$11.9M. Anna Sale reports.

Sale: This wasn't the first time the women of the Monongalia County Tax office have been lucky.

Pugh: We won \$7 once and I was out of my mind happy. (*laughs*) I couldn't believe it:\$7, and all we did was put in a dollar!

Sale: Amanda Pugh was one of the eight women who crowded around the giant check on Tuesday, made out to "The Lucky 8" in the amount of \$279M. And just 63 hours after Saturday's drawing, it was still sinking in.

Pugh: I just, I can't explain it. I just, I sit at home, I'm average Joe girl, and watch this on TV, and who would have thought someone would want to take my picture. Not me! I can't believe it.

Sale: The eight winners range in age from 27-65 years old. One of them has been working at Monongalia county tax office for 31 years. Another started just three months ago. They opted for a lump sum, and after taxes, each woman will pocket \$11.9M.

Fominko: All the ladies in the tax office and myself are very appreciate of this opportunity."

Sale: Linda Fominko bought the tickets after the coworkers pooled their money. She bought some at the grocery store, but the winning ticket came from Paula's, a video lottery parlor in Westover.

Fominko: We'd had a feeling, we just felt lucky this time. And I wanted to try something different. They had that big sign up they were doing Powerball and as an office, I thought on my way through, going home, I'd stop and do it."

Sale: The owners of Paula's received a \$100K check for selling the winning ticket. Three of the county office's employees didn't pitch into the office pool, but Fominko says they've been good sports so far.

Fominko: I would like to say those three people have been very gracious. I only wish I could be gracious, had I not won."

Sale: First Lady Gayle Manchin joined the winners at Tuesday's press conference.

Manchin: To be able to be here and award 8 WV women the winning ticket is just (*applause*) I think it's wonderful. You know, it's a win-win for everyone.

Sale: The state of WV will collect \$9M in taxes, and \$35M will go to the federal government.

Manchin: I will share with you that I did tell the women that they might want to think shoes, bling, you know, right here in WV.

Sale: For now, none of the women have plans to leave their jobs, though Crystal Magro's husband announced her retirement on Monday.

Magro: well, cause he's retiring, why would I stay home if he is. I thought, the real reason, is I didn't really want, I didn't want anything different like that. I just want to keep going to work.

Sale: She says she's looking forward to just taking care of her family. Her sons are a firefighter and a policeman, and her daughter's still at home. Powerball is played in 30 states and in Washington DC. The odds of hitting the jackpot are more than 146 million to one.

For WV Public Broadcasting, I'm Anna Sale in Charleston.