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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Santa Skips Joe's Houses This Year: "Joe Lottery" Becomes "Joe Scrooge"**

*Chicago, Illinois – February 7, 2006* – Independent Lottery Research (ILR), a research company specializing in helping lotteries increase sales in an ethically and socially responsible manner, has found that consumers' lukewarm spending this past holiday season did not bode well for holiday lottery ticket sales.

This past holiday season found almost half (49%) of households spending less than they did in 2004, the largest cutback in consumer spending in more than ten years, despite increases in income and confidence in the economy.

Holiday lottery ticket purchases did not make up for prior lost sales due to rising gas prices as hoped. Only one in seven (15%) "Joes", or current lottery players, bought tickets as gifts this holiday season. This is a significant decline in the number of current players who planned to purchase tickets as gifts (29%) when polled in December 2005. In essence, only half of current players who intended to purchase lottery tickets as gifts this past Christmas did so.

However, the percentage of "Jacks" (people who play the lottery, but are not regular core players) who bought tickets as gifts was 5%; very close to the December estimation of 6%.

The monthly poll data, which comes from a nationally representative sample of consumers, also reveals that the proportion of women who currently play the lottery is significantly lower than men. However, during the holiday season, the ratio between men and women players evens out. Also, the dominant age segment for typical lottery players is between 35 to 54 years. During the holiday season, ILR has found that spenders tend to be either under 35 or over 55 and are less likely to have children. Furthermore, consumers under the age of 35 spent an average of \$50 to \$59 on tickets versus the \$20 to \$49 spent by the 35 to 54 segment.

As previous ILR research indicates, "Joes" are impacted to a much larger degree in their lottery purchasing by events beyond a lottery's control. The impact of gas prices, as noted by ILR as early as October, on lottery sales was felt around the country and has been a widely cited reason for missed sales estimates. The reliance on "Joes" as a core player group has limitations, especially during periods of rising consumer costs and economic uncertainty.

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This month's data confirms ILR hypotheses based on previous research, which indicated a dramatic decline in the intent to buy among "Joes" and a reduction in amounts spent on lottery products, specifically holiday games, as well as recognizing the sales potential of expanding a lottery's user base.

Those interested in more information on ILR may call 312-546-5925 or visit the firm's website: [www.ilresearch.net](http://www.ilresearch.net)

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