

RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - As the state marks 10 years in the lottery business, gaming officials say they expect 2016 sales to hit the \$2 billion, with more than a half billion going to education.

"It's been challenging, it's been fun, and it's been rewarding," said Alice Garland in a news release. "What's rewarding is we believe in the cause we work for. You feel like you are doing something every day that is helping the schools and education in North Carolina."

The lottery released the following statistics in honor of the anniversary.

1. At \$2 billion in annual revenues, the lottery has grown into one of the state's most successful sales organizations.
2. Total ticket sales crossed the \$15 billion mark on Feb. 25, 2016.
3. Earnings for the state exceeded \$4.2 billion as of Dec. 31, 2015.
4. Lottery retailers have earned more than \$1 billion in commissions.
5. More than 6,850 retail locations across North Carolina sell lottery tickets, up from 5,000 the day the lottery started.
6. Six North Carolinians have won Powerball or Mega Millions jackpots, ranging from \$12 million to \$188 million.
7. The lottery has awarded a prize of \$1 million or more 330 times.
8. About 95 cents of every dollar spent on a lottery ticket cycles back into the state's economy as either a prize, earnings for education, or a sales commission to a retailer.
9. The most popular games are instant games with a total of 477 different scratch-off tickets so far.
10. The only source of funds for state's problem gambling program - \$1 million a year – comes from the lottery.