

From the Office of the Sheriff:

It seems that this year has been the worst in the numerous scams that target each of us every day. From text messages that your bank account is frozen or a phone call that you won millions in the Canadian lottery, they continue to grow because their working. These scams used to target the elderly but now are non-discriminate. How about the letter from the Nigerian that stated he wants you to assist him in transferring his recently inherited million from his country to ours and he needs your help? The letter promises a huge payoff for your help. Did you ever wonder how he got your name? Wouldn't you think any American bank could help him with his financial dilemma? Yet, people are still falling for this scam.

Many scams take on a local flavor to make it seem more legitimate. Recently the West Bend Savings Bank name was used to contact many people. The message claims their account was frozen and you need to call a number, provide some bank account information and the next sound you hear is "whoosh". That is the sound of your money being stolen from your account. People are still falling for this scam, even those whom have never banked at West Bend Savings.

Other scams that are popular and working are related to online purchases and the buyer sends you a check that just happens to be several thousand dollars more that you are owed. He apologizes for the mistake on the money order and instructs you to deposit it and quickly send him the difference. By the time your bank tells you the money order was a forgery, he has already cashed the legitimate check you sent him and he is gone.

The challenge with these scams is they are impossible to investigate, track down, or charge. Not only do they cross several state lines, many originate outside the U.S. To help us combat the stealing of your hard earned money you must start to question these suspicious mailings, phone calls, and emails. Give it the common sense test. Is it too good to be true? If the answer is yes, find the shredder.

Other "scams" and am not very fond of is telephone solicitation for money and donations. Law Enforcement and the military purposes seem to be the tool to pull on your heartstrings and reach into your wallets without much question. They will tell you they are raising money for our wounded warriors or the families of law enforcement officers hurt or killed in the line of duty. Though one dollar of your hundred may go to those causes, it is the other ninety-nine that you must question.

I have always warned and advised the public to disregard these calls. This money does not directly benefit local law enforcement. If you feel you want to contribute, drive down to the police station and write a check. At least you know the money will stay in your community. The Sheriff's Dept. has never, and never will under my leadership, conduct telephone solicitations for money. It's just wrong!

Lastly, contractor scams are on the rise while we traverse these tough economic times. If you are dealing with any type of contractor get references and check them out on the internet. Negotiate term of payment and put them in writing. Never pay for work that has not been completed. Never pay in cash. When you do pay make sure you get receipt to show the contractor paid for the materials they used on your property as well as a lien waiver. Thanks for listening  
[tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us).