



RIVER FOREST POLICE
CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

COMMUNITY ALERT BULLETIN



INFORMATION OF INTEREST IN OUR COMMUNITY

Suspicious Incidents-Telephone Scams

Over the past two weeks, the River Forest Police Department has received numerous calls from concerned citizens who reported receiving suspicious telephone calls. In most of the instances, the suspicious caller stated they were representing the IRS and demanding that the victim pay a fine to avoid an arrest. In one instance, the caller purported to be representing a “legal services” team and attempted to offer the victim services to avoid a fine. In another instance, the scammer stated the victim was going to be arrested for “drug activity” at her house. The incidents have all occurred on weekdays with times ranging between 9:30am and 3:30pm.

The incidents described above are variations of common scams that have been sweeping through the Chicagoland area and more recently, River Forest. The IRS ruse is popular among scammers around this time of year because they know people have been receiving tax documents and may become confused about whether they have missed a filing deadline. The scammer’s story and delivery is designed to invoke an immediate emotional response within the victim (fear of being arrested, loss of hard-earned savings), thus the victim is less likely to notice the inconsistencies or the implausibility of the story. The entire scam is conducted over the phone or computer, the victim never comes face-to-face with the scammer, and the victim does not realize the scam until it is over and the victim’s emotional response has subsided.

The River Forest Police Department does not want you to become the next victim! If you receive an unsolicited phone call or email, do not provide your personal information or send money to someone who you do not know. If the person claims to be representing a specific sweepstakes, company, or police agency, hang up and call that institution directly to verify the person’s story. These scams are often thwarted by third parties (friends, family, police) who are able to see through the scam because they are not feeling the same emotions as the victim; if possible, seek advice from someone else before following any instructions being given by the unknown caller or email sender.

Finally, most of these scammers complete the transfer of money by instructing the victim to purchase “GREEN DOT MONEYPAK” prepaid cards at local stores. The victim loads money onto these prepaid cards and provides the scammer with a unique code on the card, which allows the scammer to remotely remove the money from the cards and maintain his/her anonymity. If you ever receive a call or email from anyone instructing you to purchase GREENDOT MONEYPAK cards, or any other prepaid cards, that should be a major warning sign that it is probably a scam. Remember—“GREEN DOT = RED FLAG”.

Please contact Ofc. Glen Czernik #148 with questions at (708) 366-8500 x343 or email gczernik@vrf.us