



RIVER FOREST POLICE
CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



COMMUNITY ALERT BULLETIN

INFORMATION OF INTEREST IN OUR COMMUNITY

Suspicious Incidents-Telephone Scams

On June 27th, a River Forest resident received a call from a subject who told her that she had won a lottery and stated that the winnings would be released to her after she provided the caller with her personal information and \$2,000. On June 30th and July 1st, three separate River Forest residents received calls from a subject claiming to be "Lt. Zach Davis" from the FBI who stated they missed jury duty and would be getting a warrant for their arrest if they did not provide him with money. On July 1st, a different River Forest resident received a call from a subject who stated that her brother-in-law was the offender in a hit-and-run accident, and the accident victims were demanding \$2,000.

The above incidents are three variations of common telephone scams that have been sweeping through the Chicagoland area and have recently touched River Forest. What they share in common is that the story given by the scammer invokes strong emotions within the victim (joy of winning money, fear of being arrested, wanting to help a loved-one in danger). While dealing with those emotions, the victim is less likely to notice the inconsistencies or the implausibility of the story being given by the scammer, leading to the scammer being able to successfully trick the victim into transferring money to the scammer. The entire scam is conducted over the phone, 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, do not provide your personal information or send money to someone who you do not know. If the person claims to be calling from 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.

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 from anyone instructing you to purchase GREEN DOT MONEYPAK cards, or any other prepaid cards, that should be a major warning sign that the call 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