



WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Conserving the Peace Through Values Driven Service
Sheriff Pat Garrett

PRESS RELEASE

Scams Continue to Plague Area

February 26, 2016—The Washington County Sheriff's Office and local police agencies have received numerous complaints from the public concerning a warrant, jury duty, unpaid taxes or utility bill scam. The scammer asks for a payoff to avoid arresting the person that supposedly has a warrant, missed jury duty or had other financial issues.

The scammer calls a phone number at random and identifies themselves as a Deputy Sheriff or another person from the Washington County Sheriff's Office, local police department, federal agency or Portland General Electric. Some people reported if they missed the call, the person leaves a message.

As the conversation progresses, the suspect tells the victim they will be arrested, have their power shut off, or some other negative action will take place. The suspect then tells the victim to buy a Green Dot or other prepaid card for a specified amount to pay the fine or bill. Once the victim has the card, the suspect arranges a location to meet and acquire the card to fulfill the obligation. Prior to the agreed meeting time, the suspect would call the victim back and request the "secret" number on the back of the card to confirm the funds. Once the secret number is given, the funds are taken and unable to be retrieved.

Law enforcement agencies never call demanding money. If someone calls and attempts to convince you there is a warrant for your arrest, missed jury duty or unpaid taxes, please call the agency directly to confirm the allegation.

Other local law enforcement agencies received reports with similar circumstances. These scams include variations where scammers call or email with the promise of something in exchange for cash, Green Dot prepaid cards, money wires, or any other form of payment. These are all considered attempts to cheat you out of your money. Prepaid cash cards are considered as good as cash. **Any phone solicited allegation that involves urgency is highly likely to be a scam.**

The Sheriff's Office reminds the public to never send money in any form to someone you don't personally know. Investigators are seeking the public's help regarding similar scam cases. If you have any information, or have recently received a solicitation that seemed suspicious, please call the Washington County Sheriff's Office at (503) 629-0111.