

Scams on rise in Brown Co

(KNZA)--Scam are on the rise again in Brown County.

That word from Sheriff John Merchant, who says in the last week or so he has taken over a dozen complaints from residents on the following scams:

SOCIAL SECURITY SCAM

County residents are being contacted by phone and advised that their Social Security has been compromised and all benefits put on hold until verification is made. I have been told that their called ID shows "SOCIAL SECURITY" so they answer. Never trust your caller ID because scammers can make any number or location appear on your screen. Social Security will NEVER call you for bank account or personal information. The caller is requesting personal financial information such bank account number and routing numbers so they can deposit late funds and to verify ownership of the account. NEVER GIVE OUT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE. If you have questions or concerns about your account, contact your bank at once and then your local law enforcement .

STUDENT LOAN SCAMS

County residents are being contacted by phone from people representing themselves as student loan debt collectors. Residents are being told they have co-signed student loans for either their children or grandchildren and the accounts are in collections and immediate payment is demanded or a warrant for their arrest will be issued. The caller is demanding bank account information so an immediate withdrawal can be made. Several resident have stated the caller has a thick foreign accent and when questioned, they become irate and state the "Sheriff is on his way to arrest you." Once again, this is a scam call intending to intimidate and coerce you in to sending your hard earned money to these unscrupulous people. Do not fall for this scam. If you receive such a call, hang up immediately. If you feel that you have been made a victim of a scam, notify your bank and local law enforcement at once.

PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE SCAM

This one is still going around and many people have contacted me this week about receiving calls from people representing themselves as publishers clearing house financial advisors. The caller ID even shows--"PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE". The caller is requesting county residents to go to a

local Wal-Mart or Dollar General store and purchase gift cards in the amount of \$500 or more to cover taxes and expenses for the new vehicle and millions of dollars you have just won. Folks, if you win the PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE SWEEPSTAKES, you will find out about it when they come to your home with a great big check. You will not be required to pre-pay and taxes or fees. I know many people could certainly use millions of dollars, but do not fall prey to this scam. I spoke with representatives from PUBLISHERS CLEARING HOUSE and they have advised me that they will NEVER call anyone about winning the grand prize. If you receive such a call, hang up immediately. Remember, scammers have the ability to make any name or number appear on your caller ID so you can not trust what you see. If something sounds too good to be true, then it most likely is. If you feel that you have been made a victim of a scam, notify your bank and local law enforcement at once.

SWEEPSTAKES SCAM IN THE MAIL

County residents have been receiving INTERNATIONAL SWEEPSTAKES GIVEAWAY brochures in the mail that are coming from out of the country. A few days after residents receive the letter, a scammer then calls them to confirm that they have received the brochure and advise they have won over \$5 million dollars and requires bank account information to process the winnings. DO NOT CALL ANY OF THE NUMBERS PROVIDED IN THE LETTER AND DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR BANKING INFORMATION. AGAIN, this is a scam and do not give out info or speak with these scammers. Believe it or not, these scammers are highly trained to find a common interest so you will continue to speak with them. The longer they keep you on the telephone, the more info you may accidentally provide them. They also prey on senior citizens who are lonely or wanting to speak with someone for company.

Merchant says please contact your bank and local law enforcement if you feel you have been a victim of a scam.

Many Signals Communications