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**SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO**  
**GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

Date: December 27, 2016

Time: 12:30 PM

Title: Phone Scams on the Upsurge Again

**IMPORTANT:** Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. –

In Garfield County we are experiencing several phone call scams designed to separate you from your hard earned money.

Today's scammers are using spoofed call back numbers to lead you to believe you are contacting the Sheriff's Office or some other legitimate Law Enforcement Office or entity such as the IRS when you return the call.

They have done their research and by checking web sites, news articles or other sources are using legitimate names of Deputies, Officers or even Commanders from various agencies or Offices to make their claims appear legitimate.

There are several things scammers have in common. The average citizen needs to know and be aware of these practices so they don't become the next "mark".

- 1) Generally speaking the scammer will contact you by phone, they may use mail but that is less likely since it is easier to trace.
- 2) They will try to insist that you owe money for something: late taxes, overdue car payment, loan etc.
- 3) They will offer you a way to solve your problem quickly by paying through a credit card, debit card or purchasing one of the various cash cards that are readily available at convenience stores and other establishments.
- 4) They will develop a sense of urgency to act immediately through threats of arrest or penalties and additional cost, often working on weekends or holidays when it is difficult to verify their claims.
- 5) They may know your name or the name of a close relative or someone else in the house you live in. Today's internet contains a wealth of information that easily compromises our individual privacy.
- 6) They might provide one or two call back numbers that answer with legitimate sounding recordings or actual people when you return the call.

Here are a few things you can do:

- 1) Stay calm and never give them any of your personal information including: names, account numbers, addresses, phone numbers, other contact points, etc.
- 2) Get their number and the name of their agency or entity they represent; then do your own research and find an alternative contact number for that agency or company and call there, if you need to wait for regular business days or business hours then do so.
- 3) Don't let them bully you or threaten you, if necessary simply hang up the phone.
- 4) Never pay with non-traceable debit cards you purchase at a convenient store, if necessary wait until the banks are open and ask them for assistance and do this only if you think the pay request might be legitimate and you have verified its legitimacy.

The real key is to stay calm, call your local law enforcement officers and verify the legitimacy of the call you received. Understand that legitimate businesses and our own government wants to work with you to resolve any money you may owe them and that resolution rarely involves an arrest. Know too that if anyone is threatening to have you arrested for a debt unless you pay immediately, they are probably scamming. If there is a legitimate warrant out for your arrest you will be contacted personally, generally by a uniformed Officer, and not over the phone.

**Additional information will be released as it becomes available.**

*The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.*

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