



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police encourage residents to be suspicious of unsolicited offers, scams *HCPD officers intervene after local woman falls victim to lottery scam*

Howard County police are reminding residents to be suspicious of unsolicited offers and scams after a local senior citizen fell victim to a Jamaican Lottery Scam.

Last month, a local bank called police when an employee became concerned that a customer was the victim of a scam. The customer, an elderly woman, was attempting to wire large amounts of money to an address in Kentucky.

Through investigation, officers learned that the woman had received a telephone call claiming she had won millions of dollars and a car in a foreign lottery sweepstakes, but had to pay taxes and fees before she would receive the prizes.

When she was unable to wire money through her bank, the victim sent \$8,000 in cash to the scammers via UPS. By working with authorities in Kentucky, police were able to intercept the shipment and recover the money.

Police are reminding the public to be wary of unsolicited telephone calls that seem too good to be true. Residents should share this information with family, friends and neighbors who may fall victim to scams and check in with them often.

The department is offering the following advice on how to recognize a telephone scam. Scammers may use these or similar stories to convince you to wire money:

- You won a prize, or inherited money, but you have to pay fees first.
- You won the lottery, but you have to pay taxes first.
- You owe back taxes to the IRS and must pay a fine to avoid arrest.
- A friend or family member is in trouble and needs you to send money.
- You got a check for too much money and need to send back the extra.

Wiring money is like sending cash. Do not wire money or send cash to people you do not know.

If you or someone you know is the victim of a scam, please file a police report by calling 410-313-2200. Unsuccessful scam attempts should be reported to the Howard County Office of Consumer Protection by calling 410-313-6420.

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