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News Release

Scammers pretending to represent contest officials active in area

ACPD warns of phone calls from Publishers Clearing House impersonators

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (May 7, 2020) — The Arkansas City Police Department is warning citizens of recent financial scams conducted by imposters pretending to represent Publishers Clearing House (PCH).

“Our investigators quickly learned this is a national problem and the imposters take a great deal of time to build trusting relationships over the phone with unsuspecting victims,” said ACPD Capt. Eric Burr.

He described a scam in which potential victims are contacted via telephone by individuals claiming to be from Publishers Clearing House who will make multiple phone calls to the victim over a period of time, often calling several times per day. The scammers attempt to earn the victim’s trust over this time.

Victims might be told they have won a large amount of money or a vehicle, and will be asked to send money as part of the “taxes and fees.”

Requested payments may be in the form of wire transfers, checks, money orders or cash.

The money often is sent to other victims, who are unaware that they are being scammed, as well.

These unwitting participants then will forward the money to others, until it reaches the scammers.

Common warning signs of scams include an individual claiming to work for a well-known, legitimate business or company; promising a reward, prize or sweepstakes; asking for money; delaying arrival of prizes due to more fees; and building trust over a period of time. If contact is suddenly terminated with the scammers, sometimes they may call or even text repeatedly to re-establish contact with the victims.

“Scammers count on seeming legitimate and believable to their victims, and use that to their advantage,” Burr explained.

The Arkansas City Police Department encourages residents to be cautious in accepting calls from unknown numbers and strongly urges them not to send money to anyone they have not met in person.

For immediate release

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Prize winners of large amounts are always notified in person, not by telephone, and there are no fees, taxes or strings attached to the prize money, according to the official Publishers Clearing House website (www.pch.com). In the case of small prize amounts, they also may contact winners by mail.

“It appears that scammers are targeting the elderly,” Burr said.

“If you or someone you know has been in contact with individuals via telephone claiming to be from Publishers Clearing House, or if you have sent money to Publishers Clearing House individuals, please contact the Arkansas City Police Department at [\(620\) 441-4444](tel:6204414444) to make a report.”

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