



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RENT SCAM

On November 6, 2013, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office received a fraud complaint from a victim who was attempting to rent a residence. The victim found a residence to rent on the Zillow website and contacted the owner by email. The alleged owner indicated he was out of the country and requested the first month's rent be wired to him. The victim wired the money only to never hear from the owner again. The residence turned out to be listed for sale and was never for rent.

Citizens are asked to be very careful when buying, selling, or renting goods and/or services over the internet. Be especially leery of any requests to send money to foreign countries.

BOMB THREAT SCAM

Although there have been no known reported incidents in St. Mary's County, law enforcement has observed a trend in the use of telephonic bomb threats as a way to extort money from businesses and individuals. The scam involves a call made directly to retail stores or other entities that sell Green Dot Money Pak Cards demanding victims load at least \$500 on one or more cards. The caller threatens to detonate an explosive device if the victim does not comply. Once the card is loaded, the caller demands the card information and subsequently transfers the funds without having physical access to the card. To date, no explosive devices have been found and there have no reports of physical injury.

Law enforcement requests any businesses or persons receiving such a call treat the incident as though it involves an actual explosive device. Try to remain calm and concentrate on the exact wording of the caller, and any other details which could prove valuable in evaluating the threat. Contact local law enforcement immediately.

SMECO Warns of Payment Scam

November 12, 2013 – Post from SMECO Website

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) has been notified by a number of commercial customers that they have been targeted by a scam. Customers received phone calls and were asked to provide credit card or bank account information in order to avoid having their electric service disconnected. In some cases, customers were instructed to purchase a prepaid debit card. Tom Dennison, government and public affairs director, explained that SMECO has a set routine for collecting payments from customers. “If customers receive a phone call and they are unsure about whether or not it is legitimate, they should hang up and call SMECO directly. Our contact center is open 24 hours a day, every day. The phone number is 1-888-440-3311.” SMECO bills are issued monthly. Overdue amounts are identified on a customer’s bill. If payments are late, SMECO sends a pink termination notice. According to Dennison, “Customers can also check their account balance by calling SMECO’s automated system at 1-866-528-7757. Customer-members should never provide personal financial or electric account information to unauthorized callers.”

If you are the victim of a scam, please contact the Sheriff’s Office to file a report. Our non-emergency number is 301.475.8008. Dial 9 1 1 in the event of an emergency.

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