

Sophisticated scam artist uses sheriff's department and captain's name, tips given to avoid scheme

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - The most recent phone scam to hit Madison County has struck a chord with the Madison County Sheriff's Office.

One elderly man lost \$1,500 in this scam, Capt. Mike Dixon of the Madison County Sheriff's Department said Tuesday. He said what makes it even more personal to him is that scam artist has used his name in the Madison County Sheriff's scam phone calls to the public.

Dixon encouraged Madison County residents to contact the phone number the scam artist is using that answers “County Sheriff’s Department”: [\(618\) 659-5063](tel:6186595063), then directs them to extension 2. He said people can say the following line on the phone number: “I am from Madison County and stop calling victims. Law enforcement is going to catch you.”

He said if enough people join in massive form and call the number, he almost guarantees the scammer will move on and stop in Madison County.

“If there was one victim in Madison County we know of, there are probably a dozen,” Dixon said of this scam. “Anytime someone calls and says they are the Madison County Sheriff’s Department, the IRS, Publisher’s Clearing House and ask for a green.com card, cashier’s check or money, it is a scam. No legitimate organization will ever ask or give you winnings or take money this way. They will get the green.com card or cashier’s check and cash it.”

Dixon said this is what happens when the scam artist contacts a Madison County phone number:

“The caller, who identifies himself as a member of the sheriff’s office, is calling citizens and telling them they have failed to report for jury duty. The caller continues by stating a judge has issued a fine and bench warrant for their arrest. Next, the caller tells the person they must pay a large fine immediately or else they will be arrested. They are then instructed to obtain a cashier’s check in order to pay the bogus fine. This scam is rather elaborate. The caller may provide a name of an actual deputy sheriff, or the name of an actual judge as being involved in the matter.

“A phone number is provided for call back, and if one were to call the number, it would appear on face value to be a valid phone number. It has a voice prompter which sounds official and gives further direction to the caller. The Madison County Sheriff’s Department said should a person receive a call in this nature, remember it is a scam. The Madison County Sheriff’s Office, or any other police agency, will not call a citizen on the telephone demanding payment.”

The most painful thing for Dixon and the other officers is these types of scam artists primarily victimize the elderly. Capt. Dixon encouraged everyone who has grandparents, who might be a potential victim, to talk to them and explain these types of scams.

“This person is sophisticated,” Capt. Dixon said. “It is hard to catch these type of criminals because they use drop phones. When they cash the cashier’s check or the green.com cards, they are often in New York City, Atlanta, or another country, with millions

of people and no one knows the picture of the person. It makes it impossible to solve the case.”

If you receive any of these calls in the future, remember: do not provide personal information over the telephone. Hang up, and call the Madison County Sheriff’s Office, or your local police department. If you have a question about jury duty in Madison County, Illinois, or if you need to speak with a Madison County Sheriff’s Deputy you can call both organizations at the below listed numbers.

Madison County Jury Commission [\(618\) 296-4392](tel:(618)296-4392)

Madison County Sheriff’s Office?Non-Emergency [\(618\) 692-6087](tel:(618)692-6087); Main Dispatch [\(618\) 692-4433](tel:(618)692-4433).