

DCSO warns of scams hitting businesses

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is warning business owners to be cautious of another scam targeted at service-type businesses like hotels and restaurants.

A suspect contacts the business via email or phone call, and attempts to make reservations for multiple overnight stays or meals for a large group, then requests to pay for the hotel/meal reservations in advance.

The suspect requests to send the business a check issued for more than the cost of the hotel/meal reservations, and directs the business owner to deposit the check, deduct the cost of the services plus a "processing fee", then send the remainder – usually several thousand dollars – back to the suspect.

This is a new twist on an old ploy where a suspect agrees to purchase an item that is listed for sale in an online classified ad (usually listed on e-Bay or Craigslist) by paying more for the item than it is listed for. Payment is made via check, and the suspect directs the seller to deposit the check and send back the overage. The check is then later discovered to be fraudulent, and the victim is out the money they sent back to the suspect.

Sheriff Ron Pierini reminds the public to be wary of scams. Methods used by scam artists vary, but the intended result of separating you from your money remains a constant. Most important, never deposit funds from any unconfirmed source, nor pay money to an unknown/unsolicited entity based upon some promise of monetary gain or return.