

Phone scammers targeting Washoe County

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office warns area residents about an emerging phone scam in which people are posing as local law enforcement personnel to money from innocent victims.

"Our Office has received a number of calls in the last couple of days about scammers, using names of legitimate law enforcement personnel, who use the threat of imprisonment unless the victim pays," Undersheriff Tim Kuzanek said in a statement.

Kuzanek said that scammers tend to target vulnerable people such as the elderly and those who are new to the country. Scammers telephone potential victims and identify themselves as a representative from a local law enforcement agency such as the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. They may represent themselves as being with other local law enforcement agencies as well. The scammer tells the person there is a warrant out for their arrest for a certain amount of fine. The reason for the warrant is represented as being anything from a traffic violation to failure to pay full income tax requirements to the Internal Revenue Service.

"Although the Washoe County Sheriff's Office will sometimes make calls to inform someone about a warrant, we never ask for payment over the phone or negotiate for payment in lieu of arrest," Kuzanek said.

Anyone who has been a victim of this scam, or who receives such a call, is encouraged to take down as much information as possible, such as a name and call back number, without giving any information away. Then contact the Washoe County Sheriff's Office at 775.785.9276.