

## **IRS TAX SCAM SNARES LOCAL VICTIM**

I've written several times about the IRS tax scam. It's the number one scam I'm getting calls on right now, and it's been in the number one position for six months. So far in 2015, ninety-three people reported receiving calls or messages from callers claiming to work for the IRS, and threatening lawsuits and arrests if they did not pay thousands of dollars in back taxes. It's all bogus, and up until today, I was able to tell people, I did not know anyone who fell victim to this particular scam. Well...not any more. A local woman reported she lost \$4400 in the scam. After these threatening calls, she sent the money via Moneygram, a wire transfer service. We're working on the details, but I need to make a couple of points (ok, three points) here:

1. If you get a message to call the IRS before they file suit against you, or arrest you, or someone calls you and tells you the same stuff, it is a scam. EVERY. TIME. ALWAYS. The Internal Revenue Service does not make phone calls to warn you of issues. They communicate through the US Mail.
2. If someone calls you and wants you to go to a wire transfer agent, such as Moneygram or Western Union, and send money, assume this is a scam. I cannot think of any situation I've heard of when it was not a scam.
3. When you get these kinds of calls, warn others. Tell your friends, relatives, neighbors, your walking buddies, your coffee-drinking friends. We need to alert anyone who will listen, about these scams. Pass on what you know!

## **DOOR TO DOOR MEAT SALES**

A rural Sabula woman got a visit from a man driving a 2015 silver Dodge truck, with a chest freezer mounted in the cargo bed. He offered for sale frozen meat. He told the woman, his meat delivery truck broke down, and "the boss" wanted him to market this meat to folks in the neighborhood.

Judging from the number of times I heard this story over the years, the countryside must be littered with broke-down frozen meat delivery trucks. These guys always use this same story.

Now the Sabula woman actually snapped a photo of this truck as it left (she declined to buy any meat), and recorded the license plate. I checked it out and found it leased from Enterprise. Enterprise gave me the customer's phone number, and I called the woman. She confirmed she leased the truck, but, for the life of her, did not know who drove the truck as we spoke. And for sure, whoever drove it, did not sell meat door to door, "because you need a permit for that."

What's the lesson here? Anyone selling door to door needs a permit. And for something as perishable as meat, do you really want to buy this product from someone who tells phony stories to their customers and law enforcement?

## **OTHER SCAMS**

There's plenty of other cheating and scamming going on:

- Three businesses, two dental offices and a hair salon, reported last week they received phone calls from someone posing as a collection agent for Alliant Energy. The caller told the businesses to expect a disconnect of their power within one hour if someone didn't pay up. This is not too unusual for scams. Several months ago, restaurants here were the target. If you run a small business and get such a call, call the utility provider directly to see what is happening.
- An 85-year old Clinton woman lost \$480 to the grandparent scam. I'd not heard of anyone here losing money to this scheme for over a year, but the scam still works. The woman received an unexpected phone call from someone posing as a grandson. He needed money after a car accident involving drinking in Atlanta, Georgia. This grandson held a sensitive position in the military, so she decided to send the money to keep his record clean. The money went to the Dominican Republic via Western Union. This is a great example of what I wrote before, to assume anyone telling you to send money via wire transfer is a scammer.
- A Clinton woman alerted me to an ad running in the Dewitt Observer, offering a mint condition 1969 Pontiac Firebird for sale. The woman expressed interest and got a long email back with a heart-warming story about this car and its owners, and why they needed to sell. But the car was in South Carolina, so the money transfer was going to be a little complicated...The woman smelled a rat and contacted me. I

contacted the newspaper, and they pulled the ad. They told me they get many requests to post classifieds which they know are scams, and they refuse those. Just because a classified appears in the local newspaper, it doesn't necessarily mean someone local posted it. Our newspapers are pretty good at weeding out the crooks, but nothing is 100%.

Let me know about scams, fraud, or other crookedness you run across. Most of what I learn, I learn from you. Contact me at Seniors vs. Crime, Clinton County Sheriff's Office, 563-242-9211 extension 4433, or email me at [randymeier@gapa911.us](mailto:randymeier@gapa911.us)

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