

MEDIA RELEASE

SCAM ALERT

JANUARY 31, 2013

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office warns the public of a recent "telephone scam."

At about 11:00 AM on January 31, 2013, the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office was notified by a citizen that she was the victim of a fraud.

According to the citizen she had been called numerous times today from a male stating he was an agent of the FBI; the caller was saying that she had won \$600,000 from Publisher's Clearing House in 2009, but the money had been stolen and was now in Mexico. The victim was told that she would be receiving more calls from him.

About 30 minutes later, the "agent" called the victim back and said he was able to get her money and would call back with more details. About 30 minutes later, she received another call from a male identifying himself as "Sheriff Ben Wolfinger". During that call, the male identifying himself as the "Sheriff" said he had been in contact with the "FBI Agent" and that everything was "legitimate" and the agent would be calling her shortly.

About 15 minutes later, the "agent" called back, saying she needed to send \$1,800.00 to an address in Mexico as an "Insurance Refund Policy." The "agent" said he would call later to verify that the money was sent.

The victim contacted her son and told him of the telephone calls. After calling around to verify that "Sheriff Wolfinger" had indeed been the person that verified the legitimacy of the claim, she was directed to contact the Sheriff's Office. Fortunately, the victim did not send any money. This is yet another version of similar scams that have been occurring for years, where the caller tells the victim they have won money and in order to collect it, they need to send funds to secure the money and/or pay associated transfer fees. Law Enforcement does not call individuals to verify these types of scams are legitimate. If you have been the victim of this type of crime please contact your local law enforcement agency. You can also report these types of telephone scams to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) via their website at www.ic3.gov

Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff

By: Lieutenant Stu Miller