



Lafayette Police Department Press Release



Lafayette Police Department
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LAFAYETTE POLICE ISSUE FRAUD ALERT

The Lafayette Police Department is warning senior citizens about phone scams promising potential lottery winnings. The caller may claim to be from *Publishers Clearing House*, *the Internal Revenue Service*, or other entities, and may pressure the elderly person to send them money to claim their prize. The caller may request some of the money be sent to locations in the United States, Jamaica, or other foreign countries, and usually involve the elderly using a commercial wire transfer company.

Please refer to the following information from the Federal Trade Commission's website (www.FTC.gov):

Phony Prize Promotions and Sweepstakes Schemes

Fraudulent telemarketers often "guarantee" that you've won valuable prizes, like vacations, cars or large sums of cash. But they want you to pay "fees" for shipping, taxes, customs or other supposed expenses. If someone asks you to pay to claim a "prize" or "free" gift, it's a trick. You may get a cheap gift that is worth far less than the "fees" you paid, or you may not get anything at all.

If you get a call from out of the blue telling you that "you're a winner":

- don't pay any money to collect supposed sweepstakes winnings. If you have to pay to collect your winnings, you're not winning — you're buying. Legitimate sweepstakes don't require you to pay "insurance," "taxes" or "shipping and handling charges" to collect your prize.
- hold on to your money. Scammers pressure people to wire money through commercial money transfer companies because wiring money is the same as sending cash. When the money's gone, there's very little chance of recovery. Likewise, resist any push to send a check or money order by overnight delivery or courier. Con artists recommend these services so they can get their hands on your money before you realize you've been cheated.
- remember that phone numbers can deceive. Internet technology allows con artists to disguise their area code so it looks like they're calling from your local area. But they could be calling from anywhere in the world.

Also, please refrain from giving out any personal, bank, or credit information over the phone. Keep in mind, most legitimate companies should have that information, they will not mind sending you something in writing, and when in doubt, talk with someone at your local bank.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is, but feel free to discuss it with a trusted family member or friend to get their opinion.

If you have been the victim of a scam, please refer to the Federal Trade Commission's website (www.FTC.gov) or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) for further information, and to file a complaint.