

MCSO warns of warrant-money scam

Written by gallupsun
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Staff Reports

The McKinley County Sheriff's Office has issued a warning to area residents about a scam. The scam entailed an individual who claimed he was a police officer and demanded money to clear up outstanding warrants he claimed the victim had.

At least one person in the area fell for the scam and local law enforcement officials are hoping anyone who receives such a phone call will get in touch immediately with either the Sheriff's Office or the Gallup Police Department.

MCSO first learned of the scam Nov. 17, when a man reported he had been the victim of a scam.

The man, who was not identified, said it all began with a phone call from a man who claimed he was "Detective Williams with the Gallup Police."

Williams reportedly told him he had two outstanding warrants and he needed to clear this up or he faced being arrested. The man said the call "freaked" him out.

He said he talked to the man for an hour and 27 minutes, and at the end was given another number to call to make arrangements to pay to get the warrants cleared up.

The victim checked the number listed on his phone as the number of the caller and it was one of the numbers for the sheriff's office. However, it is possible to get an app that allows the caller to indicate any number the caller wants to have appear.

The victim followed directions to go and obtain six prepaid cars, five for \$500 each and one for \$200. He was then allegedly told to scratch off the back and give the man the number so he

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could verify he had gotten the card.

During the time he spoke to the caller, the man said whenever he hesitated, he was asked if he was refusing to follow a direct order. He said the man who called him sounded militaristic and told him what to do step by step.

He said he also heard sounds in the background of people talking and it sounded as if the caller was calling from a police station.

Later, when he wondered if he had been scammed, the victim called the second number back and got an automated answering system. The victim told police he was tired and worn out and not in his right mind at the time of the scam, which contributed to his failure to realize it was a scam until it was too late.

Police authorities said law enforcement agencies and courts do not call people up and try to get them to pay off their warrants over the phone.



If you receive such a call, hang up and call MCSO at (505) 722-7205 or the Gallup Police Department at (505) 863-9365.