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SCAM ALERT!



A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



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"Advance Fee Scams"

DON'T SEND A STRANGER MONEY TO GET MONEY!

One of the most prevalent scams is the "Advance Fee Scheme." An Advance Fee Scheme is when an individual is asked to pay money in anticipation of receiving something of greater value. Examples include offers of investment opportunities, loans, gifts, or trips.

The varieties of these scams are limitless. They can occur through the mail, over the phone, or via the internet. Sophisticated scam artists often offer a service contingent on an upfront fee. For instance, an offer to find inexpensive loan arrangements for consumers where the consumer is obligated to pay a "finder's fee." The scammer then has

the finder's fee paid upfront prior to any benefit received by the consumer. Predictably, the consumer is told on a later date that they do not qualify for financing and have no way of recovering the fee already paid. Another type of this scam is you are told you have won a cash prize, but to collect you need to send money for taxes or are asked to pay a service fee.



HOW TO REDUCE RISK:

The best way for consumers to reduce risk is to know who they are dealing with. If an offer appears too good to be true, it is! This is especially true when the offer was unsolicited by the consumer. Always be leery of businesses that solely operate from P.O. Boxes or request monetary transfers directly into PayPal or Venmo accounts. Realize that you are giving your money prior to receiving any benefit. Under that circumstance, do the research to insure you are working with a legitimate service provider.

IN THE EVENT YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING SCAMMED, CALL:

The Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-4747.



The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Melnick, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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