

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Police Warn of Attempted Scam

SUFFOLK, Va. (September 18, 2008) – Suffolk Police are investigating an attempted scam and would like to warn citizens of the incident. Police advised that last week a citizen received a letter from the International Award Claim Department. The letter informed the recipient that they had won \$55,500 in a casino lottery.

The correspondence contained a check in the amount of \$3,955 made payable to the citizen. The check had appropriate markings and appeared legitimate. The recipient was instructed to deposit the check and send a money gram back for the amount of \$2,900 to cover taxes on the winnings.

The recipient was wise and instead notified police. While the victim in this case did not lose any money, there is concern that others may not be as fortunate.

Suffolk Police are concerned about the large number of victims, especially the elderly, who are falling victim to these types of scams. There is no way to tell exactly how many victims have fallen prey to this fraud, because when some victims realize they have been taken advantage of, they are embarrassed and don't report the crime.

Suffolk Police would like to provide the following warnings from the Federal Trade Commission's website:

- Ignore unsolicited offers from out-of-state or out-of-country lotteries, no matter how tempting it seems. Except for legitimate state lotteries, it is a violation of U.S. law to participate in foreign lotteries by phone or mail. You will also lose your money as these offers are usually a scam.
- Don't pay for a "free" prize or gift. Free is free. Mail or telephone solicitations that require an up-front fee for advance fee loans, unidentified investment opportunities, or prize promotions are against U.S. law.
- Keep credit card and bank account numbers private. Don't give them to anyone who asks during an unsolicited sales pitch.

Detective John Jones is investigating this case.

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