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N e w s R e l e a s e

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Phone Scam Against the Elderly

On June 16, 2014, the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office received a call from an elderly Luling woman stating that she had been contacted from an unknown male claiming that she had won \$5 million dollars from Publishers Clearing House. The male stated he would contact her at a later time with further information. A second call was received a short time later from a Jamaica Phone Number stating that the woman would receive \$2.5 million and the rest would go to taxes and that all she needed to do was meet the male subject at the Walmart in Boutte, Louisiana with \$499.00. Thankfully the elderly woman knew that this was a scam and did not meet this person and immediately notified the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Champagne would like to remind everyone to follow these few tips to avoid being scammed:

- If you get a call saying you're a winner – don't pay any money to collect supposed sweepstakes winnings. Legitimate operations won't require you to pay to collect your winnings.
- Know that wiring money is like sending cash. Con artists often insist that people wire money, especially overseas, because it's nearly impossible to reverse the transaction or trace the money. Don't wire money to strangers, to sellers who insist on wire transfers for payment, or to anyone who claims to be a relative or friend in an emergency and wants to keep the request a secret.
- Don't agree to deposit a check and wire money back. By law, banks have to make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. You're responsible for the checks you deposit: If a check turns out to be a fake, you're responsible for paying back the bank. No matter how convincing the story, someone who overpays with a check is almost certainly a scam artist.
- Don't reply to messages asking for personal or financial information. It doesn't matter whether the message comes as an email, a phone call, a text message, or an ad. Don't click on links or call phone numbers included in the message, either. It's called phishing. The crooks behind these messages are trying to trick you into revealing sensitive information. If you got a message like this and you are concerned about your account status, call the number on your credit or debit card — or your statement — and check on it.
- Report Scams – if you think you have been scammed immediately notify your local Sheriff's Office.