



Town of Farmville, Virginia Police Department

116 N. Main Street – PO Box 24 – Farmville, VA 23901
Phone: 434.392.9259 – Fax: 434.392.9901 – Internet: www.farmvilleva.com



DOUGLAS E. MOONEY
Chief of Police

March 7, 2011

For immediate release

NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

FARMVILLE, VA – The Farmville Police Department is joining with other federal, state, and local government agencies to celebrate the 13th annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 6 – 12, 2011. During NCPW, groups nationwide share tips and information that help consumers protect their privacy, manage money, avoid identity theft, and avoid frauds and scams. As a part of NCPW, the Farmville Police Department wishes to make the public aware of certain schemes that have targeted the Farmville area in the last few weeks and tips to identify them.

Victim's have reported being scammed out of thousands of dollars after wiring money, either through Western Union or MoneyGram, to unknown persons. In one instance, a local citizen wired cash to a man in Nigeria whom she had met on the internet. In another case, a local woman had advertised a product for sale. A "buyer" then contacted the woman and sent her a check for more than the value of the product. The "buyer" requested that the excess funds be wired to a third individual in another state. The check eventually proved to be counterfeit, but only after the wired funds had already been picked up, with the victim taking the loss on the counterfeit check.

In another instance, a local citizen attempted to purchase a vehicle from an ad on Craigslist. The victim was instructed to wire cash to an individual out of state, only to later discover that there is no vehicle. Both Craigslist and eBay warn their customers not to wire funds via Western Union, MoneyGram, or any other wire service.

Below are some tips to help protect yourself when conducting business through the internet:

- Wiring money is like sending cash: Once it's gone, you can't get it back
- Don't send money to someone you don't know
- Don't respond to messages that ask for your personal information
- Don't agree to deposit a check from someone you don't know or for more than an agreed upon purchase price
- Scammers are often based in other countries and do not speak English as a first language, so beware of any letters or e-mails that are filled with grammar and spelling errors
- If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is

There are tremendous advantages to the internet, but criminals will use any tool available in order to steal your money. Beware of their tactics, and use the same common sense precautions that you would if you were dealing with an individual in person.

For more information on frauds and scams you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov, the National Crime Prevention Council at www.ncpc.org, and the website of National Consumer Protection Week, www.ncpw.gov.

###

Authorized by: Chief Doug Mooney. For more information, please contact Sgt. Bill Hogan at 434-392-2126.