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EPIC Alert:

Scammers call with phony winnings con

LIBERTY—Older adults in Clay County are getting phone calls from scammers claiming the recipient of the phone call has won either the Publisher’s Clearinghouse prize or an out-of-state lottery says Clay County Prosecutor Dan White.

“We’ve had calls about someone claiming to be ‘Seymour Butte’ calling one of our older citizens and threatening them with lawsuits, threatening to turn them over to the FBI, and calling them names because the older adult wouldn’t part with her hard-earned money,” said White.

The calls are a scam. “If you actually win a prize, you don’t have pay to take possession,” said the prosecutor. “Any taxes or associated fees are withheld from the prize proceeds – you don’t have to front them.”

White said the party’s phone number appears to be from out of state, and that the older woman who received the call became suspicious early.

“When ‘Seymour’ told her that she’d won the Publisher’s Clearinghouse prize, she got his callback number then called Publisher’s Clearinghouse. The people there had never heard of her.

“He called again. I guess he forgot who his victim was because this time good old Seymour told her she’d won the Nevada lottery. Our would-be victim has never bought a ticket nor participated in a Nevada lottery,” said White.

When the older would-be victim declined to be scammed, the caller “turned belligerent.”

“He called her names, told her he was going to sue her for using up his time on her phone. He also said he was going to turn her over to the FBI and was overall, very verbally abusive. His true colors came out,” said White.

White warned people who get such calls to “never, under any circumstances whatsoever” send any amount money.

“They usually ask for funds through some means that ensures immediate electronic transfer of the funds,” said White. “They can be quite persuasive but all they’re interested in is the money they want you to send.”

White said other persons who get such calls should notify their local police agencies. More information on how to avoid being a victim of conmen and scammers is available through EPIC – the Elder Protection Initiative in Clay County – at (816) 792-7666. EPIC speakers can detail scams and cons that are in the news, and provide ideas and suggestions on how to preserve assets.

“The most important thing is to never under any circumstances deliver money to someone you don’t know for something you didn’t buy or acquire,” said White. “I’ve heard of individuals who – based on a phone call about off-shore winnings – sent tens of thousands of dollars they could ill-afford to lose to cover phony ‘taxes’ or other fake expenses.

“Like we say in our presentation: If you haven’t been to Canada, Nigeria, South Africa or the Netherlands, then there was no way you could have won the Canadian, Nigerian, South African or Dutch sweepstakes.”

White said groups interested in scheduling a speaker can either call EPIC at (816) 792-7666 or contact the program via email to epic@claycopa.com.

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For more information, contact Dan White or Jim Roberts at 792-7657.