



FROM WELD COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY KENNETH R. BUCK
FOR THE C.A.S.E. PROGRAM

FRAUD ALERT!

PAY UP OR GET ARRESTED?



You answer the phone and the person on the other end of line tells you that: A) they are with a lawyers office and have a warrant for your arrest regarding unpaid credit card debt or B) they are with law enforcement and calling to tell you that you have won a sweepstakes prize and the officers are assisting the company in distributing the prize money to you. Two different ends of the emotional spectrum but only one outcome for the victim — fraud.

Individuals across the Front Range, including right here in Weld County, have received these calls and unfortunately some have fallen victim to the scams. To make sure you don't become a victim, review these simple steps to protect yourself from fraud.

Pay Up Or Get Arrested

Whether it is someone claiming to be a lawyer or someone claiming to be with the courts (visit our web site and read Jury Duty Scam Fraud Alert issued August 2006), do not panic if they tell you they have a warrant for your arrest. Remember, scams follow the same pattern: first, establish a relationship, trust or authority with the victim; next, create a sense of urgency; finally, offer a solution to the problem. It is during this final step, offering a solution to the problem, that the fraud takes place because the solution almost always involves the victim providing personal financial information or payment to the criminal.

You've Won, Now Pay

Money is tight for everyone these days so who wouldn't want to believe their luck has changed and they've won the big prize? Before you start counting your so-called winnings, think about the situation: if you didn't enter, you can't win; it is illegal to play (and therefore win) a foreign lottery in the United States; and you never have to pay to receive a prize.

As with any scam, whether the scam is based on creating fear or creating excitement, take some time to remove yourself from the emotion of the situation and logically think through what you have been told. If you think that there may be some legitimacy to the call, do your research. Contact law enforcement, the Better Business Bureau, etc., and find out more about the offer you were told. A few minutes of research now could save you months of headache later.

Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime.
To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.