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Fight Fraud Taskforce warns: **There are no winners in lottery scams!**

Las Vegas – The Nevada Fight Fraud Taskforce is reminding consumers, particularly seniors, to watch out for lottery scams.

These scams are not new, but they are resurging in the Las Vegas valley, according to members of the Fight Fraud Taskforce. Lottery scams, which typically target the elderly, begin with a letter, accompanied by an authentic-looking check, received in the mail. The letter tells recipients that they have won a lottery.

However, in order to claim the prize, recipients are instructed to deposit the check and wire funds back to the lottery company, supposedly to cover “taxes” or “processing fees” for the prize.

The check turns out to be counterfeit, and generally, the wired funds have been sent to another country, never to be seen again. The consumer has lost the money they’ve wired, and they are also charged a fee by their bank for the bad check. They never receive the prize.

“Our members report that the scammers are getting more sophisticated,” said Elisabeth Daniels, Chairperson of the Fight Fraud Taskforce. *“The mailings and marketing pitches are very slick. These scammers know how to convince consumers to send their money to them.”*

The fact that most of these lottery scams are based out of the country, in Canada, the Caribbean or Nigeria, make it extremely difficult for U.S. law enforcement to get consumers’ money back.

The most important thing to remember with these types of cons, said Daniels, is that you can’t win a lottery you didn’t enter. Plus, per federal law, it is illegal to enter a foreign lottery.

If you receive these mailings, tear up or shred the letter and the check.

To learn more about how to protect yourself, find a fraud event in your area at <http://fightfraud.nv.gov/calendar.htm>.

About the Fight Fraud Taskforce and Website

The statewide Fight Fraud Taskforce includes members from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies, the I.R.S., the Department of Justice, the Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection, the Secretary of State, the Better Business Bureau in Las Vegas and Reno, the Department of Business & Industry, the Division of Mortgage Lending, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Federal Trade Commission, U.S.P.S., and experts from the private sector among others. The group acts as a clearinghouse for fraud information and works to educate the public on how to avoid the latest scams.

The Fight Fraud Taskforce also ensures that the latest fraud information is available on the Fight Fraud website: <http://fightfraud.nv.gov>. Consumers are encouraged to visit the site, which includes extensive tips on how to prevent fraud and provides downloadable complaint forms to help you respond effectively if you become a victim. Visit it regularly for the latest fraud alerts.

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