



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2015

AGGRESSIVE CALLER RUNNING MULTI-STATE JURY SCAM

Tucson, AZ – A man claiming to work for local law enforcement has been making aggressive telephone calls to Pima County residents, insisting individuals missed jury duty and demanding money for a bogus fine.

Identifying himself as Lt. Tommy Donaldson, with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, the caller tells the individual he or she failed to appear for jury duty and an arrest warrant has been issued. The fictitious deputy tells the individual they can avoid arrest if they pay a fine via a pre-paid Green Dot credit card. He suggests they withdraw money from their bank and use it to buy the pre-paid card at a grocery store near their home. They are instructed to call back the phony deputy with the card number so he can access the funds. The caller generally demands between \$400 and \$1,500. So far, several dozen people have reported the calls to the Pima County Jury Commissioner's Office and the Tucson Police Department.

“No jury office staff, court representative or law enforcement officer will ever contact you by phone or email to tell you that you failed to report for your jury service and that you need to immediately go to the bank or a store to pay a fine,” said Kathy Pollard, Jury Commissioner for Arizona Superior Court in Pima County. “We also would never call and threaten or bully someone into paying a fine for any reason related to the court. These calls are completely unrelated to the court or a jury summons.”

If a person does fail to appear for jury service, they will be mailed a notice card which reads:

FAILURE TO APPEAR NOTICE: Our records indicate you failed to appear as instructed for jury service on the date noted above. SECOND SUMMONS NOTICE: You must immediately call the jury office at 724-4222 to reschedule your jury service. Failure to contact the jury office

may result in further action being brought against you by this Court as prescribed by Arizona law. WWW.SC.PIMA.GOV/JURY

In recent months, a man using a name similar to the one in the Pima County ploy has tried a similar scam in at least five other states, including California, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Indiana. He also uses the names: Lt. Tom Donaldson, Lt. John Donaldson and Capt. Mike Ring. In all instances, the caller claimed to be a member of the local Sheriff's Department.

Deputy Courtney Rodriguez, a spokeswoman for the Pima County Sheriff's Department, said a deputy will never ask for money over the telephone.

"If a caller is claiming to be from the Sheriff's Department, the person can ask for the badge number and call our main number (351-4600) and verify that is a real deputy," she said.

"If the caller is being super aggressive, don't give them any money, try to get the number they are calling from and hang up the phone," Rodriguez said.

Anyone contacted by a suspected scammer should not make any payments or provide personal information. The jury office will never ask for a social security number.

These types of calls should be reported immediately to the Tucson Police Department or the Pima County Sheriff's Department by calling 911. Individuals also can log onto the Federal Trade Commission's website at ftc.gov and click on the blue Consumer Complaint button to file an online fraud complaint.

###