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Financial, law enforcement officials see increase in scams

"If it's too good to be true, it probably is."

Bank and police officials both quoted the saying Monday in connection an increase in financial scams.

"It seems like it's growing," said Bill Nicholls, of Community Bank, about mail and Internet fraud.

Scams vary but follow a similar pattern, said Hoopeston Police Chief Mark Drollinger. A person will be contacted by someone, either by email or mail, by a person or company, usually from a foreign country. Nigeria has been the top scam site but recent ones have also been from Canada.

Notification is often about a sweepstakes won or someone in a business wants to shelter himself from taxes by using someone in the United States. In either case, the target of the scam receives a fake check, money order or traveler's check and is asked to cash it, keep some of the money and send the rest to the scam artist. By the time the check is determined to be counterfeit, the victim is out money and sometimes, so is the financial institution.

Nicholls said recently, a scam involving traveler's checks was run and the quality of the checks was very high, looking and feeling like legitimate traveler's

checks.

Drollinger said that in the Internet variety, scam artists often go into chat rooms where they will strike up conversations and relationships with people. After a week or two, they ask their intended victim to do a favor for them involving money.

The Nigerian scam has been going on for years. Nigeria has no extradition treaty with the United States and recently, the U.S. Secret service was pulled from the country, leaving victims without hope of getting their money back, he said.

A common perception is that victims of these scams are elderly but both Nicholls and Drollinger said that is false. "Most of the people that we've seen are people who are Internet-savvy," Drollinger said. "They believe 'it won't happen to me' and that this one is truly legitimate."

While some scenarios may be legitimate, "I've never heard of any," Drollinger said. "I'm not saying there aren't some out there, but I haven't heard of any."

Anyone who receives a scam notice or who wants to verify the authenticity of an offer may call the police department at 283-5196.

Briefly

Tryouts set

Artistic Repertory Theatre will hold tryouts for the comedy, "Beau Jest" at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Academy for the Performing Arts, 203 E. Main, Hoopeston. Needed are two women, one 20-30 years old and one 45-60; 3 men 20-40 years old and one man 45-60.

Performances will be Oct. 20-22 as dinner theater.

A perusal script is available at Hoopeston Public Library.

For more information, call Kathleen Margevich, direc-

tor, at (217) 283-5216.

Bible Buddies kickoff

Antioch Church of Christ will have a carnival to kick off the new year of Bible Buddies. The event will be held 4-6 p.m. Wednesday at the church. It will feature clowns making balloons, face-painting, games, including ring toss, duck pond, bean bag toss and Grand Prize Game; balloon launch, snow cones, corn dogs, a dunk tank and more.

Bible Buddies' official start is Sept. 13.

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and on the Internet at www.justthefacts.net



Police News



Titus T. Barber, 28, of 908 W. Washington after police received a complaint that he was driving.

Barber was charged with illegal transportation of alcohol, driving under the influence and driving on revocation. He was taken to the Public Safety Building, Danville.

A **21-year-old** Hoopeston woman reported Friday that someone damaged her property in the 900 block of West Main.

A **46-year-old** Hoopeston man reported Saturday that someone broke out a window to his Dodge van and stole several items. The burglary occurred in the 700 block of East Maple.

A **keychain** with one key was found Saturday on the sidewalk across from Rt. 9 and South Third St. The

owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Police reported Saturday that someone did not pay for \$47.25 of gas at Casey's General Store, 225 E. Orange.

An **employee at** Pamida Discount Store, 1020 W. Chestnut, reported that a small appliance, set outside to air out, had been taken.

Michael A. Mills Jr., 21, of 619 W. Elm, was arrested at 5:16 p.m. in connection with the theft from Pamida. He was released on a notice to appear.

James T. Underwood, 22, of 725 W. Washington, was arrested at 3:52 a.m. Sunday in the 400 block of West Lincoln. He was charged with criminal damage to property on a complaint from a 21-year-old Hoopeston woman. He was released on a notice to appear.



I'll raze you

Workers raze the old Larimer house on East Penn on Aug. 16. Rain slowed removal efforts but the lot was cleaned by Friday, Aug. 18.

Two people were charged with criminal damage to property from an incident reported Sunday.

A 15-year-old Hoopeston boy and Michael A. Mills Jr., 21, of 619 W. Elm, were charged on a complaint from a 29-year-old Hoopeston man for damage in the 600 block of West Elm.

The juvenile was released to a guardian on a notice to appear. Mills was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville.

Fire Calls



Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 8:33 p.m. Sunday to a call at Country Terrace, 705 E. Orange.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 84. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 61. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 85, low 65.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

Classifieds

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