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Social Security officials announce new scam reporting system

Reporting system seeks to protect seniors from fraud, scammers

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, and Gail S. Ennis, Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, announce the launch of a dedicated online form at oig.ssa.gov to receive reports from the public of Social Security-related scams. These scams - in which fraudulent callers mislead victims into making cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for purported Social Security number problems - skyrocketed over the past year to become the #1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission and the Social Security Administration.

ministration.

To combat these scams, Social Security and the OIG will use the new online form to capture data that will be analyzed for trends and commonalities. The OIG will use the data to identify investigative leads, which could help identify criminal entities or individuals participating in or facilitating the scams. Ultimately, these efforts are expected to disrupt the scammers, help reduce this type of fraud, and reduce the number of victims.

"We are taking action to raise awareness and prevent scammers from harming Americans," Saul said. "I am deeply troubled that our country has not been able to stop See SCAM on other side



Sweets

Alan Foster, 7, and Audra Powell, 9, decorate cookies at Saturday's Magical Express, sponsored by Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce. Scores of youngsters converged on McFerren Park Civic Center to visit with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus and take part in other activities, including face-painting, writing letters to Santa. The event was also the kick-off for Light Up McFerren Park. Lighted decorations will be lit each evening through the holidays.

A.J. Garrison 217-918-8491

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Cheeseburgers in Paradise
 From 5 p.m. - close every Tuesday, we're donating \$5 of each dine-in cheeseburger meal to a local church.
 This week's church is
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Danville
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Briefly

Meetings

Hoopeston City Council, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Hoopeston City Hall

Spirit store to be open

The Cornjerker Spirit Store will be open from 5:30-7 p.m. December 4. Everything will be 20% off, including gifts, stocking stuffers, and apparel. We will be printing sweatshirts and t-shirts, so come choose your design. Please enter through the high school library in the back of the school.

At the library

Upcoming events at Hoopeston Public Library include:

Cooking the Books Holiday, 6-7 p.m. Thursday. Bring in your favorite holiday recipe for us to copy to share with others. Make your dish and bring back to share. Bring serving utensils. Drinks and table service are provided.

Lunch Menus

Hoopeston Area Grade Schools

MONDAY: Hotdog/bun, fries, cucumber slices, applesauce, milk

TUESDAY: Pizza rolls, baby carrots, salad, peaches, milk

WEDNESDAY: Chicken pot pie, biscuit, celery sticks, pears, milk

THURSDAY: Taco, chips & salsa, baby carrots, salad, pineapple, milk

FRIDAY: Hamburger, baked beans, Cherry Star juice, mixed fruit, milk

Hoopeston Area Middle School

MONDAY: Chicken patty/bun, broccoli/cheese, salad bar, applesauce, milk

TUESDAY: Country fried steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, pineapple, milk

WEDNESDAY: Taco Max Snax, chips & salsa, pears, milk

THURSDAY: Mini corn dog, baked beans salad bar, peaches, milk

FRIDAY: Pizza, salad bar, mixed fruit, milk

Hoopeston Area High School

MONDAY: Chicken patty/bun or stir fry, broccoli/cheese, salad bar, applesauce, milk, juice

TUESDAY: Country fried steak or Hot Pocket, mashed potatoes, green beans, pineapple, milk, juice

WEDNESDAY: Taco Max Snax or pork BBQ/bun, chips & salsa, pears, milk, juice

THURSDAY: Mini corn dog or cheeseburger, baked beans salad bar, peaches, milk, juice

FRIDAY: Pizza or fish sandwich, salad bar, mixed fruit, milk, juice

A **55-year-old** Hoopeston woman reported at 12:31 p.m. Wednesday that she was the victim of debit card fraud. After an investigation, police arrested William Johnson, 28, of Hoopeston, on charges of debit card fraud and theft. He was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Jeanean Vogel, 71, of Hoopeston, was arrested after an accident at 5:29 p.m. Wednesday in the 800 block of East Penn.

Police said Vogel, in a 2004 Chevrolet utility vehicle, was eastbound when she struck a parked 2014 Chevrolet owned by Larry Coon, also of Hoopeston.

Vogel was charged with driving while license suspended and was released on a notice to appear in Vermilion County traffic court.

Elizabeth Vaughn, 23, of Hoopeston, was arrested after a traffic stop at 12:57 a.m. Thursday in the

Scam continued from other side

these crooks from deceiving some of the most vulnerable members of our society.”

Saul and Ennis encourage the public to use the new online form to report Social Security phone scams including robocalls and live callers, as well as email, text, and in-person scams. The form allows people to create a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN), so if OIG contacts a person about their report, they will know the call is legitimate.

“Awareness is our best hope to thwart the scammers,” Ennis said. “Tell your friends and family about them and report them to us when you receive them, but most importantly, just hang up and ignore the calls.”

Social Security employees do occasionally contact people - generally those who have ongoing business with the agency - by telephone for business purposes. However, Social Security employees will never threaten a person, or promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money. In those cases, the call is fraudulent and people should just hang up.

Generally, the agency mainly calls people who have recently applied for a Social Security benefit, someone who is already receiving payments and requires an update to their record, or a person who has requested a phone call from the agency. If a person is not in one of these situations, they normally would not receive a call from the agency.

Social Security will not:

From the Blotter

200 block of East Penn. Police said a search turned up a controlled substance and drug paraphernalia.

Vaughn was charged with possession of both and was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Seth Gredy, 34, of Hoopeston, turned himself in to police at 2:16 p.m. Thursday. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant, he was released on bond with a new court date.

Casey Leemon, 41, of Hoopeston, was arrested after a traffic stop at 2:54 a.m. Friday in the 300 block of West Orange. Found to be driving on a suspended license, he was charged with that and also possession of methamphetamine.

Leemon was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Matthew Hofer, 36, of Hoopeston, was arrested

- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Contact you to demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Require a specific means of debt repayment, like a prepaid debit card, a retail gift card, or cash.
- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.

If there is a problem with a person’s Social Security number or record, in most cases Social Security will mail a letter. If a person needs to submit payments to Social Security, the agency will send a letter with instructions and payment options.

People should never provide information or payment over the phone or Internet unless they are certain of who is receiving it.

The Social Security OIG will also continue to take reports of fraud, waste, and abuse in Social Security’s programs and operations. A separate online form for those reports remains available [at their website](#).

Weather

Chance of snow showers, then partly sunny today. High 37. Tonight partly cloudy. Low 25. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy. High 40, low 28.

after a traffic stop at 8:49 a.m. Friday at Rt. 1 and Honeywell. Charged with driving while license revoked, he was released on a notice to appear in Vermilion County traffic court.

David T. Cannon, 40, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were called at 3:15 a.m. Saturday for a noise complaint in the 700 block of South Second Ave. He was charged with breach of peace constituting disorderly conduct and released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

Classifieds

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