

Sheriff works to alleviate scam victims

(KNZA)--As scams continue to circulate across the region, a local sheriff's office is providing resources to help residents from falling victim to scammers.

Brown County Sheriff John Merchant, citing "the alarming rate of unscrupulous individuals trying to scam people out of their hard earned money," is making available identity theft information booklets. They can be picked up, at no cost, in the lobby of the Brown County Sheriff's Office, located in Hiawatha.

The resource is made available as Merchant is made aware of another round of scam phone calls, including one falsely claiming that social security information has been compromised.

Another resurfacing scam is one where residents receive a phone call claiming that a grandchild has been arrested in a foreign country. "Folks are getting called. [The caller says] that their grandchildren have been in a jail in Mexico, and that they need some money wired to them right away, and they seem very frantic when they call. The folks are very concerned, and when they followup, they find out that really, in fact, their grandkids aren't down there."

Another scam is being reported that involves the false claim that the IRS is owed money. "We've had calls from people getting messages from people eluding the fact that they are IRS representatives and if they don't send x number amount of dollars right way, they will issue warrants, or people will lose their jobs, or something, if they're not complying with the IRS. If the IRS wants to contact you, they will contact you by mail, not by phone."

Merchant says the safest way to handle such phone calls is to hang up quickly, and provide no information.

If someone feels they may have fallen victim to a scam, Merchant says they should call his office, or other local law enforcement, immediately.

Many Signals Communications