

Phone Scams Seek Your Money or ID

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Blowing Rock Police are reporting a number of phone scams of late. Lieutenant A. Mahaffey reported that there has been an increase lately in the number of these calls. Police say the call usually starts out by the caller telling you that you have won some contest--one that you don't remember registering for. The caller often says you have won a TV, new car, vacation, cruise or some other grand prize, but by the end of the call the caller will explain what you have to do to claim your prize, which involves sending "a small amount of money to cover shipping and handling," or worse, to provide private information such as your date of birth, social security number or bank account numbers. Blowing Rock Police say there will be no prize, and your money or your identity is about to be stolen. The other popular scam going around lately is the phone call, email or electronic message from a family member who has been the victim of a mugging or lost their wallet in another country and need cash to get home. These scams can be very convincing and play on one's desire to help a friend or family member in a desperate situation. However, chances are your family member is not traveling abroad and the only person that you will be helping is a thief. Police say these types of telephone and internet scams have been on the rise lately, probably because they work so well. Stopping these thieves is virtually impossible for local law enforcement because most of these criminal enterprises are being operated from foreign countries, and local police can do little more than take a report for victims of these crimes. Please be vigilant and remember if an offer sounds too good to be true then it probably is.