

BREMCO: New Scam Warning

Written by Steve Frank

Thursday, 19 December 2013 07:04

Blue Ridge Electric issued a new warning to members about a scam targeting its members. The release said a commonly reported scenario is for a scam artist to call a member saying they are behind on their electric bill and must make a payment immediately to avoid disconnection of their electricity service. The scam artists ask for financial information such as credit card or banking numbers as well as the member's Blue Ridge Electric account information. BREMCO says the scammers sound very realistic, the scam is organized enough that scammers are giving a number for verification being answered as if it is a BREMCO office. BREMCO said in their release that unfortunately, at least one member has reported falling victim to the scam and three other members contacted the cooperative, narrowly escaping the scam. Blue Ridge Electric asks members to be aware and to let friends, neighbors and relatives know about the scam to help avoid anyone else falling victim to this crime.

The cooperative offers the following tips to help members avoid falling victim to this scam:

- Blue Ridge Electric NEVER calls members demanding immediate payment to avoid disconnection. If someone contacts you, NEVER give out personal financial information OR your personal Blue Ridge Electric account information.
- Members are encouraged to call a local Blue Ridge Electric office or the cooperative's toll free number to check out any phone calls or contacts they receive from someone claiming to be a representative of Blue Ridge Electric: 1-800-451-5474; Caldwell: 754-9071; Watauga: 264-8894; Ashe: 846-7138; and Alleghany: 372-4646.
- Always report suspicious calls or contacts to your local law enforcement authorities and to Blue Ridge Electric.

Additionally, a past scam scenario has been for someone posing as a utility representative to visit a home or businesses asking for immediate payment to avoid disconnection of service. NEVER let anyone inside your home who claims to be from Blue Ridge Electric unless you first call one of the numbers provided above. Furthermore, please be aware that Blue Ridge Electric will never visit you to ask for payment and linemen very rarely, if ever, need access inside your home. Blue Ridge Electric employees may, on occasion, be dispatched to a member's home for unscheduled routine maintenance. If a visitor or caller claims to be associated with Blue Ridge Electric and is unable or unwilling to provide their name and employee identification card, do not let the person inside and immediately call law enforcement authorities and Blue Ridge Electric at any of numbers provided.