



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. MARSHALS NEED PUBLIC'S HELP TO STOP PHONE SCAMS

SOUTHEAST, GA - The United States Marshals Service (USMS) needs your help to stop several phone scams targeting residents in Coastal Georgia. United States Marshal David L. Lyons reports scammers are impersonating law enforcement officers and threatening to arrest members of the public for failing to appear in federal court. In lieu of arrest, the fraudsters then offer to collect a fictitious fine through payment by gift card, phone application or other remote means.

Unfortunately, the scheme has proven highly successful at both the local and national level. According to Marshal Lyons, fraudsters often establish credibility with callers by employing a threatening tone, providing information like badge numbers, names of actual law enforcement officials or federal judges, and by referencing real courthouse addresses. The scammers have even spoofed phone numbers to appear legitimate on caller ID.

Marshal Lyons definitively states the USMS and the federal court will never ask for card numbers, wire transfers or routing numbers over the telephone. Any suspicious phone calls should be authenticated by hanging up and calling the federal court or the USMS offices in Augusta, Brunswick or Savannah directly. Marshal Lyons expands, "The best defense to these scams is public awareness. Sharing this information with your friends and family members may prevent them from becoming the next victim."

If you have been targeted in a phone scam or other fraudulent activity, please report the information to the FBI through its Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.IC3.gov) and to the Federal Trade Commission (www.reportfraud.ftc.gov).

Additional information about court scams can be found on the websites for the United States Courts (www.uscourts.gov) and the United States Marshals Service (www.usmarshals.gov).

The USMS occupies a uniquely central position in the federal justice system. With manned offices in Augusta, Brunswick and Savannah, the nation's oldest federal law enforcement agency is involved with virtually every federal law enforcement initiative in Coastal Georgia.

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