

## Chief of Police Terry Mee from East Dundee Police Department

Unfortunately, our village has experienced a number of such ruses and scams, recently, and I am hopeful that this message will remind our residents to be cautious and report such incidents via a 9-1-1 call to the Police Department, immediately.

In one case, last week, a man came to the home of a resident, identified himself as a ComEd worker, told the resident that he was there to install an "electric pole" in the backyard and asked the resident to accompany him to the backyard to "check the work to be done". The resident did so, and, while he and the man were talking in the backyard, the man was talking to someone else via a handheld walkie-talkie.

The man subsequently left the yard on foot, and the resident became suspicious and re-entered his home to find that someone had searched dresser drawers and entered the cabinet housing a safe by breaking the locks. Nothing was found to be missing from the home, but it was obvious that the man that came to the door lured the resident outside while the man's partner or partners entered the home for the purpose of theft. No other persons or vehicles were observed at the time.

That same resident reported that, several weeks prior, he had been approached by an "older man" who solicited and then performed some "coating work" on the front stoop; and that the cost of the work "seemed high". That was likely a "home repair" scam with substandard work.

In another recent case, a resident received a phone call, reportedly from the IRS, during which the caller stated that the IRS intended to file a lawsuit against the resident for tax payment deficiencies. The resident was knowledgeable of that scam and hung up on the caller. The IRS doesn't conduct business in that manner, and, if the resident would have believed the call to be legitimate, the resident would have been led down a directional path that would have resulted in identity theft and monetary loss.

In another telephone scam, the recorded message indicated that the message was from the AARP and that the resident was eligible for a free medical alert device and \$3000.00 in food/grocery store coupons. The message asked the called person to dial 1, if that person was interested. In the present case, the resident believed the call to be a scam and didn't dial 1. That call is in fact part of a scam that, once again, is intended to lead the called person down a path of identity theft and monetary loss.

Those types of incidents normally target elderly persons, unfortunately; but the simple defense to being victimized in an intended theft from the home is to not immediately believe that a person representing himself or herself as a utilities worker (village, ComEd, Nicor, Comcast, etc.) is in fact such an employee; don't allow yourself to be lured outside; and call 9-1-1, immediately, if such a contact is made. Our Village Public Works employees will readily identify themselves and verify their employment.

In the case of home repair fraud, unless you have solicited a bid or bids for some work on the home, do not engage a person who appears at your door and solicits the work. If a person appears at your door without prior invitation and solicits home repair work, call 9-1-1.

In the case of phone notices and solicitations like the ones noted above, do not engage the caller and/or follow the directions of a recorded message. Simply hang up and report the matter via 911.

There are many more scams and ruses being practiced, but following those easy steps will protect you from being victimized.