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News Release

HPD Reminds Residents to Be Aware of Scams

May 19, 2010

The Harrisonburg Police Department reminds residents of potential summer scams.

During the spring and summer months, a paving scam is common. A scammer will go door-to-door, offering to pave or seal a driveway. The end result is a job half-way finished, or not complete at all and the scammer will request the money up front. Some paving scammers will also use a water-downed product that looks good when finished but does not last.

A male has recently called local residents, posing as a representative from Publisher's Clearing House and another claiming to represent an Australian sweepstakes company. The offenders told the victim they have won a prize but they must send money before claiming the prize.

In other areas of Virginia, it has been reported that some locksmith companies have been investigated for violating regulations by using fictitious names, addresses, and other pertinent information. Companies have also given one price quote and presented a higher quote after the service is complete.

Alarm companies from out of the area have been known to go door-to-door with pushy sales. Out of state alarm companies come to Virginia to make money, while avoiding the requirements for the industry. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) regulates alarm companies and their employees. DCJS requires alarm sales representatives to have a photograph registration card.

There are also many different variations of a money scam, where a person sends a letter or calls the victim to inform them that they have won a large sum of money. The scammer will also request money for processing fees before sending any reward money.

Ways to avoid being scammed this summer:

- Always ask for identification and contact information from the business representative
- Validate the business before handing over any money
- Ask for proof of a business license or solicitors license issued through the City of Harrisonburg
- Write down the vehicle description and license plate of the vehicle if you feel it is suspicious
- Be leery of door-to-door salespeople, check with known local businesses first
- Most financial reward scams are too good to be true
- Never send money to an individual in order to claim a prize

“Residents should research and pursue a company if they want work done, not vice versa,” said Mary-Hope Vass Public Information Officer and Crime Analyst. “

The Harrisonburg Police Department encourages residents to report the information if they have experienced a scam.