

Sheriff Brown Warns Residents Of Jury Scam Fraud

On January 10th, Sheriff Fred Brown was made aware of several phone calls being made to residents with threats of potential arrest for failure to appear at court via jury summons, unless fines were paid immediately.

The scam artist would claim to be from a Sheriff's Office, a fake phone number to the office was given, with instructions to purchase a pre-paid debit card for payment of fines and to call the Sheriff back, eliminating the arrest warrant.

Freeholder John E. Lanza, Sheriff's Office Liaison, commended Sheriff Brown for his quick action to warn Hunterdon County residents about the jury scam. Freeholder Lanza said, "Sheriff Brown not only warned potential victims, he was instrumental in assisting residents who had already been contacted and halted transactions that were already underway. We are grateful for his assistance in notifying Hunterdon County residents of the dangers from this scam."

Sheriff Brown activated the reverse 9-1-1 system, alerting everyone to the Jury Scam call, and notified everyone that at no time would a Sheriff's Officer ever call and ask for money over the phone.

The Jury Scam alert was posted to multiple Facebook accounts, and it was shared by several other County departments and residents. The Sheriff's Office sent an email blast to all Hunterdon County staff notifying them of the dangers as well.

Sheriff Brown's notifications through social media, the reverse 9-1-1 system and email, alerted potential victims and lessened the amount of money taken under the guise of jury fines to avoid jail time.

Sheriff Brown is commended for his quick actions which reduced the number of residents being victimized and empowered those who were called to gather information to help catch the person(s) behind the scam.

Freeholder Lanza pointed out, "The reverse 9-1-1 system, known officially as the Everbridge public notification and warning system, is a key resource for the County. It enables the County to reach out to residents with vital emergency information within a very short timeframe.

The system was employed over 200 times in 2017, by both the Office of Emergency Management and the Health Division. Best of all, the \$23,000 annual maintenance fee for the system is paid for through a state Homeland Security Grant obtained through the work of our OEM staff and the Prosecutor's Office."