



NIAGARA COUNTY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNTY CLERK WARNS AGAINST PHISHING SCAM:
'DMV' EMAIL HOAX LANDING IN AREA INBOXES

LOCKPORT—The Niagara County Clerk warned county residents about a new email scam preying on county residents after being notified about fraudulent emails purporting to be from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

"This new predatory scam has the potential to bilk unsuspecting county residents out of their paychecks," County Clerk Wayne F. Jagow said Wednesday afternoon after conferring with several counterparts from around the state. In Niagara County and most other New York counties, DMV offices are overseen by county clerks.

Jagow said the scam comes in the form of an email claiming to come from either the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles or the New York State Police and warning a recipient of an unpaid motor vehicle fine. The email subject line has been some variation of "Uniform Traffic Ticket (ID: 1731700)," and the body of the email contains a message saying "the person described above is charged as follows" and then includes a date and time and describes an alleged infraction.

The email then provides instructions to print out an enclosed traffic ticket and send payment to a town court. "However," Jagow noted, "the address given is a P.O. Box."

Right now, Jagow says, the emails that his office has been made aware of all ask recipients to send payment to be an address in Chatham, N.Y.

Jagow is adamant that recipients of the email need to be vigilant.

"This is a scam," Jagow said. "We're advising residents to disregard the email."

Jagow noted that such confidence schemes often appeal to recipients' respect for, or fear of, legitimate authority, such as the state police and the DMV.

"It's a real shame that the technology that is improving our lives can also use our trust against us," Jagow said. "These scams tend to prey on the vulnerable and elderly, but even young people fall for them. Right now, we're asking our residents to be vigilant, and reminding them that government rarely contacts people by email unless they're seeking specific information from a government agency."

In the meantime, Jagow is taking precautions to protect area residents, and has turned over all materials related to the scams to Niagara County Sheriff James R. Voutour and the New York State Police. Jagow also indicated that his DMV staff are monitoring the situation and would report any further attempts to victimize county residents to him.

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