



Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office

Jeff Wersal
Sheriff

Jeremy Brennan
Chief Deputy

Media Release

ICR: Multiple

Date of Release: 05-23-23

Incident Type: Fraud

Date/Time of Incident: Ongoing

Location of Incident: Blue Earth County

Agency Point of Contact: Captain Paul Barta

Details:

The Sheriff's Office has received two complaints of internet-related fraud over the past week.

The scam starts with a fake Microsoft popup claiming a security issue. The victim calls the number in the popup and is told that someone with their bank is stealing their money. The scammer convinces the target to transfer large amounts of money into a cryptocurrency account like Bitcoin. Once the funds are moved, the scammer instructs the victim to share the new account information and then steals the money.

Although reports of this particular scam are not numerous, the amount of money involved is significant. One victim reported losing over \$200,000 and the scammers are coaching the victims on excuses to provide if financial institutions detect fraud and try to intervene.

Investigative options in these cases can be limited because those responsible utilize online means to conceal their identities and often operate across international borders to complicate detection and avoid prosecution.

The Sheriff's Office encourages the public to be cautious of these scams and any online or telephone request for personal or account information. Local businesses can help stop these scams by staying alert and warning customers that withdraw or transfer large amounts of money under suspicious circumstances.

Additional information is available at:

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-cryptocurrency-and-scams>

<https://www.ic3.gov/>

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