

Consumer Alert

Office of Consumer Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Warns Consumers of Telephone Calls Offering Prizes

Congratulations! You have won a gift card!

Summit County residents are receiving telephone calls offering gift certificates, vacations and more! Recently a consumer reported getting a telephone call offering prizes because he had shopped at a chain store, such as Wal-Mart. In order to send the prize the caller just needed to confirm the consumer's bank card number. When the consumer started asking questions, the caller hung up.

Consumers need to use caution when an unsolicited caller asks for personal identifiable information. Con artists are using gimmicks such as prize offerings to lure consumers into believing their offers are legitimate. Often during the pitch, callers claim to have an affiliation with the government, large chain/department stores, banks, credit card companies, etc.

Luckily, this consumer suspected this was a scam and contacted our office. "Residents continue to be our eyes and ears alerting us to scams in our community," said Cynthia Sich Director of the Summit County Office of Consumer Affairs.

Protect Yourself

- ✘ Never give any personal identifiable information over the telephone unless you have initiated the call and know for certain whom you are speaking with.
- ✘ Do not pay a handling fee or provide a credit card number or information about your savings or checking account in order to win a prize.
- ✘ Do not wire a payment or send a check through an express courier service.
- ✘ Stop telemarketing calls by signing up for the National Do Not Call Registry. To register your home or cell phone numbers, call their toll-free telephone number at (888) 382-1222, for TTY – (866) 290-4236 or register online at www.donotcall.gov.
- ✘ Report scams whether or not you are a victim!

For more information on this or other types of scams, please contact the County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs at 330-643-2879, or visit our website at www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm.