

Fraud Alert! -- Economic Stimulus Check Scam

Most of us have heard about the Economic Stimulus checks; unfortunately our many industrious con-artists have as well and are taking full advantage of it. These con-artists are calling, emailing and writing people saying their check is ready; but they need to verify some information and confirm how much you are to receive. Once the unsuspecting person gives the o.k. the con-artist begins by confirming your mailing address and quickly moves onto your bank account and other information.

The most important thing to remember is:

- The IRS will not contact you about the Economic Stimulus check.
- The only way you will receive this check is if you file a 2007 Tax Return.
- The IRS will use the mailing address you place on your return.
- The checks will not start going out until May 2008.

There are more scams concerning our tax returns circulating involving rebates, audits and variations of the IRS name with companies or individuals using the IRS acronym, but with different words (ex. Internal Refund Service).

Remember:

- The IRS will not contact you via the telephone or e-mail.
- If you are contacted by someone claiming to be with the IRS, hang-up and call the IRS at 1-800-366-4484.
- If you receive an email from someone claiming to be from the IRS forward the email to phishing@irs.gov.

To learn more about scams involving the IRS go to www.irs.gov. For more ways you can protect yourself from con-artists contact the Lee County Sheriff's Office Community Relations Division at 477-1477 or by email at communityrelations@sheriffleefl.org.

For help determining if you have received a call, email or mail from a con-artist call the Sheriff's Office Fraud Line: 239-477-1242

CASE, Communities Against Senior Exploitation, is a partnership between the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the community to prevent elder financial exploitation

Media inquires should be directed to Community Relations Manager, at (239) 477-1481