March, 2008

FRAUD ALERT!

INTERNATIONAL LOTTERY SCAMS

"Congratulations! You may receive a certified check for up to $400,000,000 U.S. CASH! Your odds to WIN are 1-6." "Hundreds of U.S. citizens win every week using our secret system!
Sound great? It's a fraud!

Scam operators — often based in Canada — are using the telephone and direct mail to entice U.S. consumers to buy chances in high-stakes foreign lotteries from as far away as Australia and Europe. These lottery solicitations violate U.S. law, which prohibits the cross-border sale or purchase of lottery tickets by phone or mail. Still, federal law enforcement authorities are intercepting millions of foreign lottery mailings sent by the truckload into the U.S. And consumers, lured by prospects of instant wealth, are responding to the solicitations that do get through.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), says most promotions for foreign lotteries are likely to be phony. Many scam operators don't even buy the promised tickets. Others buy tickets, but keep the "winnings" for themselves. Lottery hustlers use victims' bank account numbers to make unauthorized withdrawals or use their credit card numbers to run up additional charges.

Below are a few tips for consumers who are thinking about responding to a foreign lottery:

- If you play a foreign lottery you're violating federal law.
- If you purchase one foreign lottery ticket, expect many more bogus offers for lottery scams. Your name will be placed on lists that fraudulent telemarketers buy and sell.
- Keep your credit card and bank account numbers to yourself.
- Ignore all mail and phone solicitations for foreign lottery promotions. If you receive what looks like lottery material from a foreign country, give it to your local postmaster.

For more information or to report a scam in Bucks County-
contact any one of the Task Force members:
BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE-
FIGHTING ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUCKS COUNTY
WWW.CRIMESAGAINSTOLDERADULTSBUCKS.ORG **1-800-490-8505**

Bucks County District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344
Bucks County Consumer Protection
215-348-6060
Bucks County Register of Wills
215-348-6265

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510
Network of Victim Assistance
1-800-675-6900
Bucks County Coroner
215-348-3852