



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2013

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Attorney General Bruning Issues Consumer Alert: Lottery Letter Scams Prove Unlucky for Victims

LINCOLN – Attorney General Bruning today issued a consumer alert for Nebraskans to be wary of claims related to unexpected lottery winnings.

“In the past 90 days, our Consumer Protection Division has received more than 450 calls or complaints regarding fraudulent lottery letters targeting Nebraskans,” said Bruning. “These hucksters hide behind fake titles to convince victims they’ve won large sums of money. They require victims to pay related ‘fees’ by wiring money or sending pre-paid charge cards. Unfortunately, once the money is sent, it’s nearly impossible to recover.”

Fraudsters use different means of communicating to convince victims to give up their hard-earned money. Whether the offer is made by phone call, email, postal mail or fax, it can often seem legitimate. Devious scammers may add to their credibility by claiming to work for a government agency like the FBI or IRS.

Most fraudulent lottery scams originate from foreign countries. Much of the time, the scammer claims the award is the second or third tier of the contest.

Here’s how it works:

- Victims receive a call, email or letter claiming they have won a large sum of money from a lottery or contest.
- Reference numbers, official contact information and deadlines are provided with instructions on how to claim the prize.
- Victims are required to keep their good fortune a secret until the money has been received.
- Victims are told to send money via wire transfer or pre-paid debit or charge card to cover fees or taxes related to the cash prize.

- There may be several levels of contact, each requiring an exchange of more and more money until the victim realizes it is a scam.

Bruning urged consumers to be skeptical of promises of financial windfalls.

“No one is looking for ways to give you money. And, you can’t win a contest or lottery you haven’t entered.”

Remember these tips:

- Never wire money or send pre-paid charge cards to someone you don’t know.
- Never give or pay money to receive money.
- Protect personal information like bank account and Social Security numbers.

Keep updated on the latest scams and fraud by following the Attorney General’s Office on Twitter @NEConsumer.gov or visit www.ago.ne.gov. For more information, contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 727-6432.