

## Community Crime Alert – Scammers Posing as VPD Officers and/or Ventura County Sherriff's Department Deputies Seeking Fundraising Donations and/or Bail Money



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**Incident:** Community Crime Alert – Scammers Posing as Ventura Police Officers and/or Ventura County Sherriff's Department Deputies Seeking Fundraising Donations and/or Bail Money

**Contact:** Commander Tom Higgins, 805-339-4431

**Location:** City of Ventura

**Date of Release:** February 3, 2015

**Narrative:**

Approximately over the last two and a half weeks, our department has received a handful of calls from concerned citizens informing us they had fielded fraudulent calls from individuals identifying themselves as being associated with the Ventura Police Department's (VPD) "Police Charity/Foundation", and other calls in which the individual stated he was with the Ventura County Sherriff's Office (VCSO). Although the scams vary, the premise is consistent in that in one way or another you are asked to part with your money via fraudulent means.

In reference to the two VPD calls; the caller was requesting a monetary donation on behalf of VPD Officers and/or the Ventura Police Officers Association (VPOA). In both calls neither community member fell victim and provided money; they did the right thing and hung up and called the VPD to inform us of the fraudulent call.

Community members should be aware that the VPOA did send out fundraising letters back in November, 2014 however, the VPOA is not undergoing a telephone fundraising campaign at this time, nor does the Association have any plans to commence with such a telephone program at any time in the future. If you receive a call from an individual requesting money on behalf of the VPD, or the VPOA, we urge you to not provide any money, hang up, and report the call/incident to VPD.

In the two VCSO fraudulent calls the scammer(s) called and spoke to two different women. Each time the caller mentioned that her son had a warrant that needed to be paid immediately or he would be arrested and jailed. In both cases the scammer was asking that payment be made via a "Green Dot" (pre-paid card) available for purchase from numerous retailers.

As is the case with the fraudulent VPD calls, the VCSO will never call an individual asking for money for any sort of warrant/bail release, let alone payment via "Green Dot" or other pre-paid card method.

Scams of this nature, and similarly related scams (e.g., lotto and sweepstakes claims, check fraud, mystery shopper opportunities, "Grandparent" Scam, etc.), ultimately work because they prey upon people's ambitions, vulnerabilities, and emotions.

Unfortunately we hear all too often from victims of these scams who did not realize the scam until after they parted ways with their hard-earned dollars to these ruthless crooks.

Although there is some variation to each particular scam, the premise is fairly consistent; that is, in one way or another you are asked to part with your money either via donation, send via wire, etc. Whatever the set-up, the results are always the same for the victim; they end up losing hundreds or thousands of dollars in these scams, or sometimes even having their identity compromised.

If you are the victim of a crime please immediately report it to your local police department, or if you are a resident of Ventura you can contact us at 1425 Dowell Dr., Ventura, CA, or call 805-339-4400, or 805-650-8010 (24 hour non-emergency number).

Below is information for the Ventura Police officers Association (VPOA), Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Ventura County District Attorney's (DA's) Office and other helpful fraud and scam websites:

[www.venturapoa.com](http://www.venturapoa.com) VPOA

[www.vcsd.org](http://www.vcsd.org) Ventura County Sheriff's Office

[www.vcdistrictattorney.com](http://www.vcdistrictattorney.com) Ventura County DA's Office

[www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org) (National Consumers League's Fraud Center)

[www.ic3.gov/default.aspx](http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx) (Internet Crime Complaint Center)

[www.idthefcenter.org](http://www.idthefcenter.org) (Non profit ID Theft Center)

[www.scambusters.org](http://www.scambusters.org) (Helpful Scam Buster Website)

[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) (Federal Trade Commission)

[www.fraudsandscams.com](http://www.fraudsandscams.com) (Use the Drop Down Link to Check out Many Common Scams and Frauds)