

Corporation Commission

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PUBLIC UTILITY DIVISION DIVISION



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MEDIA ADVISORY – NEW UTILITY SCAM HITS OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) and Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company (OG&E) are warning Oklahomans to be on guard against a sophisticated consumer scam that is targeting utility customers in Oklahoma and most likely in other states as well.

The scam begins with a very realistic-sounding phone call to a utility customer warning of an overdue payment. There is a call-back number, and when that number is called the consumer hears a greeting that is identical to the real greeting used by the utility company. In fact, it is probably the actual greeting used by the utility, and recorded by the scammers for their use. The consumer is then put in touch with a “customer service” person, who will request a credit card number.

OCC Public Utility Division (PUD) Director Brandy Wreath says the scammers are well-versed in details regarding the utility.

“We spoke to these fake “customer service” reps as part of our investigation. They even knew the location of OG&E headquarters,” Wreath said. “The tip-off is that they will ask for the last four digits of your account number, and for a credit card number. Real utilities already have your account number, and any initial contact regarding past due accounts is done by mail.”

The scam was uncovered as part of a regular audit the OCC Public Utility Division does of social media looking for signs of deceptive practices and consumer scams. Wreath says in this case, it appears the scammers have moved on, apparently concerned over the attention given them by PUD investigators.

“The greeting on the number now is not the OG&E greeting, but rather that of an out-of-state utility,” said Wreath. “But there’s no doubt they may try again in Oklahoma using another utility name.”

Utility customers with questions about service and billing can contact PUD Consumer Services at 405-522-0478, or outside the OKC metro area at 800-522-8154. Emailed inquiries can be sent through the “Complaints” tab found at www.occeweb.com.

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