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MEDIA ALERT

Fake Debt Collectors threaten Utah Victims in phony phone call scam

(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection has received complaints regarding a fake debt collection scam where Utah citizens are targeted by offshore scam artists using pre-paid cell phone numbers who give verbal threats that they are going to damage a person's Social Security Number, file a lawsuit against them and other actions unless the victim sends them money. Tim Metzinger, a St. George resident who filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, reported to Consumer Protection that he received several calls from individuals with heavy foreign accents demanding money with the same threats. While Metzinger did not respond to their repeated requests, he was concerned that other citizens might cower to the scammers' demands.

"Scam artists are targeting Utah citizens who are already facing debt of their own and frankly don't have the money to lose. We want to alert the public that these fraudsters are reviewing public court records and may be contacting citizens who have filed for bankruptcy or face other financial hardships," said Francine A. Giani.

Consumers are reminded not to give our personal account information, SSN numbers or other identifying information to strangers over the phone. Also, the Division is recommending that consumers not send any money through a wire transfer service unless the recipient is a trusted and known source.

For more information log on to: www.consumerprotection.utah.gov

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