

Nigerian scam has a wrinkle

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

E-mail scams coming out of Nigeria lately include a new credit card wrinkle that Sherman County Sheriff Kevin Butts says has shown up here.

"I think the person involved thought they were really doing something good," Sheriff Butts said, "but as it turns out they are being used as a middle man in what the FBI believes is a stolen credit card scam."

As a general rule, officials say, if an offer or request seems unusual or too good to be true, like a lawyer offering to split \$10 million which someone he has never met, then it's probably a scam. Especially if it comes from Nigeria.

The recipient could wind up dealing with the FBI or having his or her bank account cleaned out.

Butts said the contact received an e-mail saying that the sender was having trouble shipping packages to Nigeria, and asking if a package could be shipped to the victim's address and then to be shipped to an address in Nigeria.

"The FBI says they have a large file on scams out of Nigeria," Butts said, "and this appears to be one of the many out there."

He said the contact has received packages, and had shipped several to the address in Nigeria. Butts said the FBI believes the person running the scam has several stolen credit cards, and uses contacts here to have packages delivered so they cannot be traced back to him.

He said that the Nigerian government is not cooperating in the investigation of these scams, and that gives the scammers free reign.

"I think people who receive any e-mail from Nigeria should understand it is most likely a scam," Butts said.

He said the contact here is working with the FBI on this most recent scam.

"The person who receives the packages is not really doing anything illegal, but the same person has been receiving other calls from people from Nigeria wanting them to help cash pay checks for a company in Nigeria where he worked."

The Nigerian scams have been notorious over the years, and continue to show up in e-mails.

The Goodland Star-News got a similar e-mail in October and forwarded it to the Kansas attorney general. Within a day, there was a response.

"The material which you tendered for our review is simply one of the thousands of different types of scams directed toward Kansans on a daily basis. Congratulations on

recognizing it as just that. We have logged this information in our files, and you have aided this division in its goal of educating the citizens of Kansas as to this type of fraud."

The e-mail was supposedly from an attorney (barrister) in Nigeria who was in desperate need of help to save his clients \$10 million:

"DEAR SIR/MADAM,

"I am BARRISTER ROBERT MAXWELL, an Attorney at Law and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (S.A.N.). I am the Personal Attorney to Mr. Hans, National of Germany, who used to work with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) here in Nigeria. On the 21st of April 2001, my client Mr. Hans, his wife and their three Children were involved in a fatal car Accident along Sagamu Express Road here in Nigeria. All occupants of the vehicle unfortunately lost their lives.

"Since then I have made several inquiries to German Embassy to locate any of my client's extended relatives but this has also proved unsuccessful. After these several unsuccessful attempts, decided to track his last name over the Internet, to locate any member of his family but could not locate them.

"I have contacted you to assist in repatriating the money and property left behind by my client before they get confiscated or declared unseizable by the security company where this huge deposits were lodged.

"Particularly, the Europe based Security Company where the deceased had deposited about (US\$10M) Ten Million United State Dollars has issued me a notice to provide the Next of Kin or have the funds confiscated within the next 21 working days.

"Since I have been unsuccessful in locating the relatives for over eight months now, I seek your consent to present you as the next of kin of the deceased so that the proceeds of this account valued at (US\$10M) can be paid to you and then we can share the money. All necessary legal documents will be in place that can be used to back up any claim we may make.

"All I require is your honest cooperation and transparency to enable us see this deal through. I can guarantee that this will be executed under a legitimate arrangement that will protect you from any breach of the law.

"Once I have your consent and trust then, we can proceed immediately. Your anticipated response is urgently needed so as to stop further contacts.

"Kind Regards,
"BARRISTER ROBERT MAXWELL."

corrections

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Mueller Grain moves into new building

Kevin Schulte (left) pulled as his brother Kyle pushed to move one of the desks out of the old Mueller Grain office. The two worked all afternoon, Friday, Nov. 12, making several trips to get

the new office at 17th and Main set up for business. Later, Kyle (above) followed Kevin as they moved boxes and furniture into the new location.

Photos by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

Volunteers make holiday gift baskets

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

Before this weekend's snowfall, with cold weather yet to settle in to the area, Christmas was here and now for the staff and volunteers at the Goodland Churches Thrift Store.

The crew has been working all year to expand a program started last year to help children afford Christmas gifts for their families, but they need more help to pull the event off.

The staff needs help from all the board members and as many other volunteers as they can get to prepare for the Kids' Christmas Shoppe, said store manager Jo Simmons.

A lot of gifts have been gathered and stored, she said, and there have been some cash donations as well as gift-wrap, ribbons, boxes and bags collected throughout the year.

Now it's time to pull everything together. Volunteers gathered in the shop last Monday, Nov. 15, to put together gift baskets. Simmons said she had help from Annette Fairbanks, Deb Boyle, Denise and Erin Floyd, Mary Ellen Coumerilh, Anita Coleman, Sister Barbara Berthiaume, Monica Hunter and Jean Windell. They put together more than 50 baskets and more than 50 gift mugs in 2 1/2 hours.

Howard Johnson's Hotel and Comfort Inn supplied coffee, shampoo and hair rinse and toothpaste for the gift baskets, Simmons said. The store will have a can out, she said, for donations to help children who don't have enough money for their gifts. The shoppe is open to children up to age 14, Simmons said, and they are to bring a list of each fam-



Monica Hunter wrapped coffee cups filled with goodies for the Kids Christmas Shoppe which will be held on Saturday, Dec. 11, at the Goodland Churches Thrift Store.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

ily member they are buying gifts for. Each child is eligible to buy one gift for each of their parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, she said.

Residents at the Good Samaritan Center and clients of Golden West Community Services cut gift Christmas cards to make gift tags last year, Simmons said, and there were plenty left for this year.

But Simmons is looking for help for other things. Right now, she said, volunteers are needed to clean toys. And as the day for the shoppe

gets closer, she said, more help will be needed.

The shoppe will be open Saturday, Dec. 11, and the store will be closed that Thursday and Friday to prepare.

The old merchandise will have to be removed and packed away, Simmons said, and the shelves cleaned in the book room, housewares and jewelry. Then the Christmas inventory will be pulled out and priced.

The gift baskets will be put out,

she said, and the jewelry case stocked with gifts. There will be a gift wrapping committee, and volunteers are needed to act as monitors and shopping assistants and to keep the flow of shoppers going through the checkout line.

The shoppe sold 600 gifts last year, Simmons said, with the help of over 60 volunteers and organizations and donations from individuals and groups. She said she believes the event will be bigger this year.

Medical center previews next year's budget

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board got a preview of the hospital's proposed budget for next year at its meeting Monday.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht used computer technology to take pie graphs from his laptop and put them on an overhead projector screen to show the board what percentages of the budget various departments use.

He also gave preliminary numbers for the budget, shown on a spreadsheet on the screen. The board expects to approve the budget at its meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13.

Among the items in the budget are equipment purchases, which Precht said the hospital is behind in. He said the hospital will be

working on paying for the needed items as its cash flow improves, rather than relying on credit as in the past.

In the review of October's financial reports, Precht said the hospital has committed about \$42,000 for minor equipment purchases that had been planned for this year. The hospital will be making the planned minor purchases for next year early, he said, and will work on the major purchases throughout the year.

Minor purchases include office equipment, such as copy machines, file cabinets and printers; IV pumps and radios for the ambulance; and a commercial mixer and a braising pan for the kitchen. Precht said purchases over \$5,000 are considered major.

Director of Patient Care Services Debbie Hickman said the hospital

has received a baby scale and fetal heart monitors.

In other business:

- Hickman said the hospital is considering changing the configuration of rooms for labor, delivery and recovery but will need to hear from an architect before deciding what will be done.

- Administrator Jay Jolly said the hospital received a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to pay for videos and glucometers for the diabetes education program.

- Jolly said a meeting of those interested in being on the steering

committee for the Kansas Rural Health Works project will be at 11 a.m. next Wednesday, Dec. 8.

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