

**CONTACT:**

**Walt Stowe**

PIO/Community Relations Deputy

Garfield County Sheriff's Office

106 County Road 333-A

Rifle, CO 81650

Phone: 970-665-0207

Email: [wstowe@garcosheriff.com](mailto:wstowe@garcosheriff.com)



**SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO**  
**GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

Date: May 12, 2017

Time: 7:25 AM

Title: Ghosting of Official Phone Numbers

**IMPORTANT:** Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. –

The scammers continue to improve their craft, but their target is you and their goal to separate you from your hard earned money. The scams run the normal route of property taxes due, IRS taxes due, credit card or credit account payments due. You are told, in order to avoid late fees and higher interest rates you must pay immediately, often times they offer to meet you at what seems to be a legitimate location. You've heard them all if you have ever bothered to listen to one of these scammers.

They are very convincing and have their story and rationale down to where they are seamless in their delivery. Currently they are “ghosting” official numbers of the County, the Assessor, Sheriff’s Office or some other institution. This means that the number you see on your caller ID is not the number of the phone where the call is originating from.

We all enjoy the benefits of technology, but this latest twist seems to legitimize the call. Don’t be fooled. Typically the urgency of the scammer to resolve the issue immediately and by using cash or cash debit cards, or perhaps even a personal check is a great tip off that you are being scammed.

If you feel you are being scammed, get their call back number and name of the institution or entity they represent. Now let it rest, “Rome wasn’t built in a day” and a 24 hour turn time to resolve this issue will not be the end of the world. Find a different way to contact the place where you supposedly owe money, either through your account access numbers, the internet or a personal visit if it is a local bank.

Make sure, if you are making a payment, it is legitimate and going to the right place. If the other call back number you took from the initial caller is legitimate, they can verify it, if not let your local Police or Sheriff’s Office know. Be prudent and resourceful when handling your finances over the phone, especially if you did not initiate the call; legitimate companies will not fault you for being overly cautious.

Additional information will be released as it becomes available.

*The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.*

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