



Clerk COMMUNICATION

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SARASOTA COUNTY, FL

DATE: August 22, 2014
FROM: Karen E. Rushing, Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller
RE: Heightened alert: NEW solicitation / citizen scam involves email

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SARASOTA, FL— The Sarasota County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller has received reports that local residents have been targeted in a new type of solicitation scam, generated by entities impersonating Clerks' offices across the state.

This newest round of scam comes in the form of an e-mail referencing a missed court appearance, and includes an attached file which contains a “Trojan Horse” virus—a virus that becomes active as soon as the file is unzipped.

Unlike past scams, these e-mails attempt to retrieve personal data forcefully, by launching a computer virus attached as a .zip file. These malicious attachments should not be clicked on or opened. The Clerk of the Circuit Court joins the Florida Clerks and Comptrollers Association in reminding residents that court-related communications are sent through normal mail. Jury summons, court appearance and failure to appear notices are not communicated via telephone or e-mail.

Important tips to remember:

1. The Clerk's office does not telephone or e-mail individuals to request payment, and does not request payment via any sort of prepaid debit or green dot card.
2. This office does not send unsolicited emails regarding jury or court-related matters.
3. On rare occasions, the Clerk's office may initiate a phone call to a citizen regarding jury or court-related matters if a serious emergency occurs. However, these calls are informational in nature, and are not for solicitation of funds. A Clerk representative will not contact a citizen by telephone or email regarding failure to appear for court.
4. Do not open an e-mail attachment from any unfamiliar source, and do not provide personal information to an unfamiliar source, either by phone or e-mail.

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