

Attorney General warns of phone, letter scams

My office receives calls and complaints from consumers who have been told they have won a prize such as cash, or a cruise, television or electronic device. These folks have been surprised to learn this because they do not recall entering the sweepstakes.



Derek Schmidt
• attorney general

Sadly, they are likely being scammed. If you receive a letter, e-mail or phone call saying you've won, be cautious. Scammers often use the lure of prizes to steal your money and your personal financial information.

I often am asked how to know if a prize you're offered is a scam. Scammers will follow the exciting news that you've won with a request that you first send them money to cover taxes, fees, shipping or other costs - even though it's illegal in most places, including Kansas, to require purchases or the payment

of fees and taxes upfront before you can receive a prize. Also, remember, the Kansas Lottery is the only legally operating lottery in Kansas. Anyone claiming you have won a foreign lottery is in violation of Kansas law.

In some cases, the scammers may send you a legitimate-looking check that is supposed to cover those so-called taxes and fees. But once you deposit the check in your account and then wire the money back to them, the check turns out to be fake and any amount you advance the scammer will be lost. Additionally,

your bank may charge you overdraft fees.

Our Consumer Protection Division staff works hard to crack down on these phony checks and fraudulent wire transfers. People are getting wiser about avoiding them, so fraud artists are coming up with other ways to get you to send them money. For example, they may ask you to order expensive items online, such as computers and big screen televisions, and have them delivered directly to the scammer. Many of these sweepstakes and lottery scams originate in other countries.

Suggestions to identify a scam:

- Never give personal information, such as your social security number or bank account number, to someone you don't know who

telling you that you "have won."

- Report possible scams to the Attorney General's Office by calling our Consumer Hotline at (800) 432-2310 or go to our web site at www.ag.ks.gov.
- To reduce the number of sweepstakes offers and solicitations you receive:
- Sign up for the Do Not Call Registry, by calling (888) 382-1222 or by going to www.donotcall.gov.
- Never agree to wire or send money in order to claim a prize. It's illegal to require an upfront fee for a prize, so anyone who asks you to pay one is a scam artist.
- Be very skeptical. If you don't remember entering the contest, it's probably a scam.
- Never deposit legitimate looking checks that come with a letter

calling you that you "have won."

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- To reduce the number of sweepstakes offers and solicitations you receive:
- Sign up for the Do Not Call Registry, by calling (888) 382-1222 or by going to www.donotcall.gov.

- Don't enter any sweepstakes or buy anything through a sweepstakes.

- Have your name taken off mail marketing lists. Write to: Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service, Box 64, Carmel, N.Y., 10512.

- Use a reliable spam filter to cut down on phony e-mails about sweepstakes and lotteries.

Two-spotted spider mites flourishing

It's smaller than a pinhead. Even so, the voracious two-spotted spider mite could be the world's poster pest for dry, hot weather.

"They're doing real damage in Kansas - even worse than we saw in summer 2011," said Raymond Cloyd, K-State Research and Extension entomologist. "Two-spotted spider mites can attack an amazing number of plants. As often as not, today's scorched-looking arborvitae foliage and yellowing rose leaves are reflecting both heat-wave stress and spider mite damage."

Two-spotted spider mites produce many generations each growing season, Cloyd added, "but when the weather's dry and the temperature's high, they can multiply really fast. Between 70 F and 85 degrees, for example, the time they need to progress from egg to adult shortens by half - from 14 to seven days."

Each adult female lays an average of a dozen eggs per day, 100 to 300 total, he said. And she doesn't even have to mate first.

As a result, infestations expand, yet include spider mites in all stages of development. The mix of stages alone makes controlling the pest difficult.

Adding to the problem, the mites have repeatedly proved they are able to develop pesticide resistance. That has eliminated many tools for gardeners, farmers and pest-control pros, Cloyd said.

"Mites aren't an insect," the entomologist said "They're in a whole different family, along with spiders, ticks and scorpions. Spraying an infested plant with an insecticide simply eliminates the mites' natural enemies. Applications of carbaryl (Sevin, Adios, and Slam) have paved the way for some notably severe spider mite outbreaks."

Some products labeled for spider-mite control can cause unwanted results. Organophosphates as Malathion, Orthene and Dursban may actually stimulate

female spider mite reproduction.

Fortunately, Cloyd said, with enough rain, a naturally occurring fungus helps keep two-spotted spider mites in check. When temperatures are moderate, beneficial insects and predatory mites also serve as a natural control. Their job outstrips their abilities, however, when the weather heats up.

"The classic test for spider mites is to shake a branch over a sheet of white paper and see what falls onto it. Mites look sort of like a typed period - a half-millimeter dot - that moves," he said. "If they move fairly slowly and leave a green stain when crushed, they're the two-spotted kind. If they're fairly quick and leave a red stain, they're the beneficial mites that eat other mites."

Human control efforts are more effective if started when an infestation is small, he said.

Unfortunately, two-spotted spider mites can go unnoticed as the growing season warms up and they become increasingly active - and numerous. The pests not only are small but also tend to congregate on the undersides of leaves.

Besides, they seem to prefer older leaves, Cloyd said. For instance, they can cause extensive damage in a dwarf Alberta spruce before they get around to attacking the external, more visible needles. (Spruce spider mites also attack these popular evergreens during spring and fall.)

On deciduous plants - pear trees, tomatoes, geraniums and the like - two-spotted spider mites' damage shows up as small silver-gray to yellow leaf speckles. The mites' mouthparts are like a blood-drawing needle. They puncture plant cells and suck out the green chlorophyll.

With enough of that damage, infested leaves yellow, turn bronze and drop. Plants can get weaker, lose large sections, become deformed or even die.

Christian musician to play in Oakley

The "Into The Light" Tour with Matthew West is coming to Oakley!

The Grammy nominated, multiple Dove award winner and multiple number 1 hit artist will perform at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Oakley High School Auditorium

Christian Contemporary artist Matthew West is best known for his previous hit songs, "Only Grace," "More," "You Are Everything," "The Motions," "Strong Enough," and his new single "Forgiveness" from his new album "Into the Light." The album releases the day before his concert in Oakley.

West and the tour joined by Mikeschair, Lindsay McCaul, and Everfound are all looking forward to the concert date. West said "We want to use this night to go deeper and connect people in need with ministries in their community to find freedom in Christ."

The concert has sparked quite a bit of enthusiasm for the residents of Oakley and the surrounding communities. Donna Corbett, Oakley resident said, "Our whole family really loves Matthew West's music. We are so excited to have him come to Oakley. What a great opportunity to have him stop in Western KS."

Matthew's new album "Into The Light" continues what he started with his last album "The Story of Your Life". He asked his fans to send him their stories and received thousands upon thousands of stories; stories

of hardships, stories with questions, and stories of healing. Using those stories he composed an eleven song record and a devotional book also titled the Story of Your Life. When the stories didn't stop coming in, Matthew felt God calling him to continue this trend with his new album "Into the Light."

This is all the more apparent with the release of Matthew West's first radio single from his new album "Forgiveness," song inspired by Renae. Renae's daughter Megan died in a car accident caused by a drunk driver. After years of speaking to school students about the dangers of drunk driving Renae felt God telling her she needed to forgive the driver Eric who killed her daughter. Renae met Eric at the prison he was in and forgave him. Renae's family then, one by one, went on to forgive Eric. Eric was blown away by this and eventually became a believer in Jesus Christ. Renae and her family then went to the judge and asked for him to release Eric from prison. Because of this Eric will be released from prison this November and will travel with Renae across the country telling people about the dangers of drunk driving. This story is one of many that Mathew West will share with us on Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Oakley High School auditorium.

For details on the concert and ticket information call (888) 882-5427 or go to www.kgcr.org.

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