

# Media Release

## Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

**Scott Mascher – Sheriff**

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September 6, 2016

### ***Due to the IRS Scam Epidemic, YCSO will issue a “Code Red” Emergency Notification Alert tomorrow***

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Even with successful media and community outreach campaigns by YCSO and our local law enforcement partners regarding the IRS impersonation scam, YCSO continues to receive reports from residents victimized by these scammers. In just the past few days, a 32-year-old Prescott resident lost \$4,000 dollars in the scam when she bought several iTunes gift cards in order to settle a so called “tax debt.”

Many Yavapai County residents who have contacted the Sheriff's Office to report scam calls, indicate that because of the educational bulletins they knew to hang up on the scammers. Unfortunately, there is still a segment of our community that is not getting this information. **As a result, Sheriff Mascher has authorized the use of the Code Red Emergency Notification System to warn residents throughout the county. Tomorrow, Wednesday, September 7, 2016, at 11AM, a 'Code Red' alert will be sent to all subscribers.** The 35 second message will provide a reminder that the IRS will **NEVER** call to demand tax payment by way of gift cards, ITune cards, or similar payment methods. Those receiving these calls will be urged to simply hang up.

YCSO will also encourage current “Code Red” subscribers to share the message with those who have not signed up for the system and urge them to consider subscribing for future “Code Red” alerts.

If we can prevent even one victim from losing thousands of dollars by way of the notification, the effort will be a success.

YCSO has also been in contact with the IRS Public Information Office in Phoenix and they endorse our outreach effort. The IRS also recommends that anyone receiving these impersonation tax scam calls should take the time to fill out an online form found here: [https://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact\\_report\\_scam.shtml](https://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml). This allows investigators to track these crimes and develop leads to identify suspects and how they operate.

*And finally, we would like to urge business owners who sell gift cards and handle money orders to educate their employees about this scam. Your employees have the opportunity to stop this scam in its tracks through a polite inquiry with a customer purchasing large amounts of gifts cards in one transaction. Most of the victims will be of senior age and display some sense of urgency as they attempt such a purchase. We have had several reports from victims who were extremely appreciative when alerted to this scam during contact with a proprietor which in turn prevented the loss of thousands of dollars.*

Remember, the IRS will **NEVER -**

- *Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.*
- *Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.*
- *Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.*
- *Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.*
- *Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.*

*Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:*  
[www.ycsoaz.gov](http://www.ycsoaz.gov)