



Central Electric Membership Corporation

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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STAY ALERT FOR CRIMINALS ATTEMPTING TO SCAM MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY

Sanford, N.C. (May 27, 2016) – Central Electric is urging members of the community to be on high alert for criminals posing as utility employees. Recently, the cooperative has been contacted by several individuals informing receipt of a threatening phone call stating their electric service is in immediate danger of being disconnected.

The caller associates themselves with a local utility company, such as Central Electric, and warns the individual that a payment must be made immediately to avoid a disconnection of service. Various payment options, including prepaid credit cards and other personal information, are requested within a short window, usually a few minutes, or the service will be shut-off.

As recently as May 16, a local business in Lee County reported to Central Electric a scam attempt coming from a caller ID telephone number of 1-800-SERVICE. The male caller identified as a Central Electric employee and demanded payment of \$1,100 for overdue utility bills. Without payment, the caller threatened disconnection of service.

It's really important for members of the community to remain vigilant against scam artists attempting to steal personal information. These criminals are very savvy, they create a sense of urgency and try to catch individuals off-guard in a quick moment of panic. In that brief moment of panic, numerous individuals in the past have been lured into providing credit card and other personal information to the criminals. Due to the nature of the crime, it is often tough for individuals and law enforcement to recover any lost money.

Central Electric reminds everyone that the cooperative will never call and demand an instant payment or ask for personal information to prevent immediate disconnection. A mailed notice will be sent advising of an overdue account, followed by a second mailed notice around two weeks later restating any overdue balance. You may also receive a phone call from an automated system the night before a disconnection as a reminder of the overdue balance.

If you are ever unsure of the status of your account or the party you are speaking with, hang up and call Central Electric or your utility company immediately. Never give your personal information to anyone you feel uneasy about, especially if a threat without payment is made.

Central Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative based in Sanford, NC, is a not-for-profit electric utility serving over 22,000 members in Chatham, Harnett, Lee, Moore and Randolph counties. Should any member of the community receive a suspicious call from an individual identifying with Central Electric, the cooperative has customer service representatives ready to assist 24 hours a day by calling 1-800-446-7752.

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