

Office of the Sheriff

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Rusk County

Phillip A. Grassmann, Sheriff
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Public Safety Advisory: Protecting Our Elderly from Fraud and Exploitation

Our elderly citizens are the backbone of this community. They spent their lives raising families, building careers, and contributing to the strength and stability of Rusk County. It is deeply disturbing that individuals continue to prey on them through scams, threats, and deception.

Recently, our office, along with the WI DOJ - Division of Criminal Investigation, investigated a case where an elderly resident was targeted and financially exploited through fraudulent threats delivered via phone, email, and text. The suspect, an individual unlawfully in the United States, and his coconspirators used intimidation tactics to solicit money under false pretenses. The suspect was arrested last night after a sting operation and our office has been in contact with ICE to start the detainer process.

Let this serve as a clear warning: **this behavior will not be tolerated in our community.** The Rusk County Sheriff's Office is committed to pursuing those who exploit vulnerable populations—especially our seniors. We will investigate and demand the aggressive prosecution of anyone who attempts to take advantage of our elderly residents, no matter their immigration status or method of operation.

We urge all families to have open, honest conversations with their elderly loved ones about scams. Common warning signs include:

- Threatening phone calls claiming to be from government agencies or law enforcement
- Emails demanding payment to avoid arrest or legal action
- Requests for money via wire transfer, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or direct withdrawal
- Promises of lottery winnings, inheritance claims, or urgent "help" requests from impersonated relatives

If you or a loved one believes you may have been targeted, please contact the Sheriff's Office immediately. We will respond with care, discretion, and diligence.

Together we must remain vigilant and protect our senior citizens from financial and emotional harm. They deserve our respect, not to be victims of cowardly criminal schemes.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Phil Grassmann

If you are deaf and/or hard of hearing, call us through Wisconsin Relay at 711

PROTECT & SERVE