

FPSC SCAM ALERT

PSC Chairman Art Graham Warns Consumers about Scams During National Consumer Protection Week

As one of his first tasks as the newly elected Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission, Chairman Art Graham created a public service announcement (PSA) to warn consumers about scammers who impersonate utility companies and to offer tips to avoid becoming a victim.

Chairman Graham's PSA aired on the PSC's website, for National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 2-8. "The NCPW 2014 message is easy to remember and one we're promoting: ***It's never too early or too late to become a more informed and empowered consumer,***" said Chairman Graham. "Another good—and probably familiar—reminder, is, 'if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is!'"

Now in its 16th year, NCPW occurs annually to remind consumers to be aware, protect identities, spend wisely, and recognize credit fraud. The PSC also has posted a [***New Scam Alert***](#) on its homepage.

Here are examples of scams occurring in Florida and nationwide:

- ◆ E-mail scammers are targeting consumers with e-mails that appear to be monthly bills from legitimate utilities. These e-mails are bogus and may contain a link directing a consumer to a site containing malware.
- ◆ Phone scammers, posing as official utility employees, demand immediate "past due payments" with a prepaid credit card or MoneyPak card to prevent service disconnection.
- ◆ In a recent nationwide phishing scam, scammers advised utility customers that a third party—in most cases the Federal Government or President Obama—would pay their utility bills through a new federal program.
- ◆ A recent aggressive energy marketing scheme targeted utility customers to offer fake energy audits.

During NCPW, the PSC held community events throughout the state to help Florida consumers get the resources they need to avoid becoming victims of fraud or scams and to provide tips for energy and water conservation to help manage their utility bills. The PSC held events in Mount Dora, Lake Panasoffkee, Madison, Jasper, and Deland.

For more information on recent e-mail, phone, phishing, and marketing scams and for tips on how to avoid becoming a victim, visit the PSC's website at www.FloridaPSC.com, or call the Commission's toll free number, 1-800-342-3552.