

## Scams against consumers proliferate in uneven economy

Written by

Tuesday, 22 June 2010 13:49

---

New scams are targeting Minnesota consumers and they're using the Better Business Bureau's name to attempt to convince people into believing they've won prizes such as new cars or millions of dollars – and to convince them to wire hundreds of dollars to the scammers, or provide them with their bank account information.

Consumers have contacted the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) to say they're receiving calls from a company called Global International. The callers tell people they've won \$8.5 million dollars and then give them a 'BBB Code of Approval,' which they say they will need to claim their prize. However, the Better Business Bureau is not affiliated with any lottery or sweepstakes and there is no such thing as a 'BBB Code of Approval.' It's simply a combination of letters and numbers likely invented by the scammers. One of the bogus codes, given to at least two potential victims, is 0054-JL. Two consumers who reported this scam to the BBB have stated the scammers were also fraudulently claiming an affiliation with Bank of America.

Several BBB's across the country have Reliability Reports on Global International, including the [BBB of Cincinnati](#) and the [BBB of Honolulu](#).

Another consumer recently informed the BBB she had been contacted by a mystery caller saying they were with the BBB and telling her she had won a new car. Soon after giving the consumer that exciting news, the caller asked for their bank account information, which the consumer elected not to provide.

"Consumers should be aware that if they ever receive a call from someone claiming to be with or associated with the BBB, telling them they've won a prize, it's a scam 100% of the time," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota.

In a twist on the scam above, a consumer who had been targeted the day before by someone claiming to be with Global International was contacted by Global International Sales Services. The consumer was told a courier was at Customs Services at the Minneapolis International Airport with a check for \$1.5 million dollars. However, before the money could be released to them, they would have to wire \$175 to an address in Jamaica, where many scams like this originate. Wisely, the consumer called the BBB first and decided not to send requested funds to the scammers.

Consumers should never allow themselves to be pressured. If a caller you're not familiar with is pressuring you to send them money immediately, contact the Better Business Bureau. Another warning sign consumers should always be on the lookout for in regard to calls like this is if they're asked to wire money to pay fees on their 'winnings.' Fraudulent promoters will ask people to wire money or send a personal check back to them to cover what may seem like legitimate fees, such as processing, insurance, administrative, handling or tax fees. They also may instruct people to call a separate number to claim their winnings. When they do, scammers will try to get them to send money or ask for personal identification information that will

## Scams against consumers proliferate in uneven economy

Written by

Tuesday, 22 June 2010 13:49

---

undoubtedly be used for identity theft purposes.

The BBB advises all consumers to be wary in regard to phone calls and notifications they receive telling them they've won something, be it cash or prizes, and remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it is

The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to promote, through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct; and to instill public confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, protect and assist the general public. Our hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact the BBB at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

or 651-699-1111, toll-free at 1-800-646-6222.