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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sheriff Warns of IRS Phone Scam Don't Give Out Personal Information

Stevens Point – An aggressive and sophisticated phone scam targeting taxpayers, including many elderly residents, has been making the rounds throughout Portage County. As of 2:00 PM today, the Sheriff's Office has received well over two dozen complaints.

Callers claim to be employees of the IRS, but are not. These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They use fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest, or may claim that there is already a warrant issued for their arrest. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting.

Sometimes victims may be told they have a refund due to try to trick them into sharing private information. If the phone isn't answered, the scammers often leave an "urgent" callback request.

Note that the IRS will never: 1) call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill; 2) demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe; 3) require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card; 4) ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone; or 5) threaten to bring in the Sheriff's Office or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you receive one of these suspected bogus calls, do not call local law enforcement unless you have given out your personal information. You can file a complaint at https://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml or contact the IRS at phishing@irs.gov (Subject: 'IRS Phone Scam'), or by calling 800-366-4484.

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