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SHERIFF-CORONER SANDRA HUTCHENS

**NEWS** 

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Law Enforcement Phone Scams Soliciting Money**

**YORBA LINDA, CA** – (November 19, 2013) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department advises the public to be aware of phone scams involving subjects pretending to be law enforcement personnel. Several instances of this type of fraud have been occurring throughout Orange County.

On Tuesday, October 29 a male subject, fraudulently identifying himself as Lieutenant Mike Stevens with the Orange County Warrant Division, called Lorraine Johnson, 69, of Yorba Linda, and told her that an arrest warrant had been issued for her failure to appear in court on a traffic citation. Stevens told her the violation was captured by a traffic camera in Yorba Linda. He also told the victim there was a glitch in the system and the notice to appear in court was never mailed to her. Stevens told her the bail amount was \$365 and that he could help her pay her bail. Stevens instructed Johnson to purchase a "MoneyPak" card and provide the card number to him so he could pay her bail. He also advised the victim to stay on the phone with him while she purchased the card just in case she was pulled over by a police officer. He said he could explain to the officer what she was doing so that she would not be arrested on the warrant.

A more recent case in Laguna Hills involved a victim being contacted on his cell phone and advised that he owed back taxes to the IRS. The caller fraudulently identified himself as Assistant Sheriff Mark Billings with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and stated that he was working with the IRS to collect the debt. The caller told the victim that if he did not purchase \$4000 in "MoneyPak" cards and give him the numbers, the SWAT team would be forced to raid his home and arrest him. The caller ID number on the phone call fraudulently indicated the call was coming from the Orange County Sheriff's Department's non-emergency phone number.

The public is advised that the Orange County Sheriff's Department does not solicit by phone. If anyone receives similar, suspicious calls do not give out any personal information such as social security number, bank account numbers, etc. and report the call to the Sheriff's Department at (714) 647-7000.