



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greene County Pretrial Services Warns Citizens of Phone Scam Targeting Families of Inmates

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Pretrial Services is warning residents about an ongoing phone scam targeting families of people currently in custody at the Greene County Jail. Over the past several months, scammers posing as sheriff's deputies or Pretrial Services staff have been contacting family members and demanding money in exchange for releasing their loved ones from jail, claiming the funds are needed for "home plan approvals" or "GPS monitors."

The scam is active and ongoing. Recently, two local families were targeted. One resident lost \$1,500 before realizing the call was fraudulent, while another recognized the scam and hung up.

"These calls prey on people during one of the most stressful moments of their lives, when a family member is in custody and they're desperate for information," said Laura Fehrenbach, Director of Greene County Pretrial Services. "We want every resident to know: Pretrial Services and the Greene County Sheriff's Office will never call you and demand payment over the phone to release someone from jail."

Any legitimate fees associated with pretrial supervision are handled through official channels in person or through documented court processes. Never through urgent phone calls demanding gift cards or wire transfers.

How the Scam Works

Scammers call families of inmates and identify themselves as a deputy or a Pretrial Services employee. They often use real names and titles to sound credible. Most recently, the name of Captain Jason Johnson with the Greene County Sheriff's Office has been impersonated, and scammers frequently pose as transportation deputies, civil deputies, or courthouse staff. The caller pressures the family to send money immediately, usually claiming it's needed to approve a home placement or activate an ankle monitor so their loved one can be released.

Red Flags to Watch For

- A caller demanding immediate payment to release someone from jail
- Requests for payment by gift card, wire transfer, cryptocurrency, prepaid debit card, or money-transfer app (Cash App, Venmo, Zelle)
- Pressure, urgency, or threats that something bad will happen if you don't pay right away
- Instructions to keep the call secret or not to contact anyone else
- A caller using the name and rank of a real deputy or staff member to sound legitimate
- Mentions of "home plan approval fees" or "GPS monitor fees" payable by phone

What to Do If You Receive One of These Calls

Hang up. Do not send money, do not share personal or financial information, and do not call back the number that contacted you. If you want to verify the status of a loved one in custody or check on the legitimate process for pretrial release, you can use the [inmate tracker](#) on the jail's website or call Pretrial Services at (417) 829-6012. If you have already sent money or believe you've been targeted, report it to the Greene County Sheriff's Office at (417) 380-5994 Mon.-Fri. 8:00a-4:00p (911 after hours), the Springfield Police Department at (417) 864-1810, or the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

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Greene County is the State of Missouri's fourth most populous county, serving approximately 308,000 people. Its mission is to provide all citizens of Greene County, including those in its cities, a safe and thriving community through excellent customer service, unparalleled dedication, and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Greene County Commission is the executive body of Greene County operating under guidelines established in the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri. Within that authority the Commission enacts ordinances, resolutions and policies, supervises the activities of county departments, fixes salaries, adopts the annual budget, provides for construction and other services, and conducts hearings on planning and zoning matters.

For additional information contact the Greene County Commission's Public Information Office at 417-844-4311 or pio@greencountymo.gov.