

Electric bill phone scam continues in state; NPPD warns customers not to fall for demands

Columbus, Neb. – Nebraska Public Power District officials are keeping a watchful eye on continued attempts by individuals contacting utility customers and businesses demanding that they pay their electric bill or face shutoff within 20 minutes.

On Monday, NPPD reported that the phone scam was occurring in Norfolk and based upon past history, other communities across the state could be targeted within the next few weeks. “Once the public recognizes the ploy, the scammers will take advantage of another community in the state. We expect similar calls may begin occurring in some of our retail communities such as Kearney and Scottsbluff, but this deceitful scheme may not be isolated to just larger communities,” said NPPD’s Customer Care Business Manager Robyn Tweedy.

The Ruse

The individuals, posing as representatives of the power company, will tell the customer that they are overdue on their electric bill and must pay up within 20 minutes or be disconnected. They are then instructed to purchase pre-paid cards in order to make immediate payment.

Tweedy said that several local businesses in the Norfolk area were unfortunate victims of the deception with the calls coming at busy times of the company’s operation

NPPD’s Practice

“NPPD does not do business this way,” said Tweedy. “If a customer is overdue on their electric bill and subject to disconnection, it will be printed on their monthly bill with instructions on what they can do to settle the account. They should call the number printed on the bill, not the phone number of the individual making the phone request.”

The malicious practice is not affecting NPPD alone. It has happened in other states with other utilities, and has occurred in Nebraska several times in the past, as recently as last year. If an individual or business not served by NPPD receives a call demanding payment on their electric bill, they are encouraged to contact their local electric provider to check on their account before making any attempt to pay.

Any customers that receive such a call should not attempt to make a payment and contact local law enforcement.