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“Scammers motivate action through emotion.”

By Attorney General Jon Bruning

A recent scam tugs at the heartstrings of grandparents while emptying out their wallets. It’s called the *grandparent scam* and it’s targeting Nebraska seniors.

Here’s how it works – victims receive a telephone call from someone claiming to be their “favorite grandchild.” The caller engages in conversation, often attempting to get the name of their actual grandchild. After rapport has been established, the caller explains they are in an emergency situation – suffering from a car accident or unexpected job loss. The caller asks grandma or grandpa to wire them money and not to tell others in the family (to save the grandchild from embarrassment). Once the money has been wired, scammers disappear with the cash. Victims have little or no recourse to recover their losses.

The *grandparent scam* is not limited to telephone calls. Nebraskans have also reported receiving e-mails with similar appeals.

Playing with emotions is a powerful tool scammers use to motivate action. When you are afraid someone you love is in danger, it can lead to rash behavior. This is what the grandparent scammers are counting on.

While everyone wants to help their loved ones, Nebraskans should always pause and think before they act. Ask a question only the grandchild would know. Ask the caller their full name and hang up if they can’t provide it.

Another sound practice is to call the grandchild back at the number the grandparent already has in his or her address book.

If you receive an e-mail requesting money, always be skeptical. Check with other family members to verify information. Finally, never send wire transfers, especially out of the country.

For more information on this and other scams, contact our senior hotline at (888) 287-0778 or file a complaint online at www.ago.ne.gov.