

Scammers Target OPPD Customers

(OPPD)--Omaha Public Power District continues to receive reports from customers of phony bill collection calls. And, those calls are picking up steam approaching the holidays, as thieves get more desperate to bring in money.

Friday alone, OPPD received 55 reports from customers who received phone calls from the scammers. That makes nearly 70 reports already in November, more than twice the number reported during this entire month last year.

This con has targeted utility customers across the region and the nation for several years, now, with several variations. Generally, the callers falsely tell customers they are overdue on bills. They instruct customers to purchase a payment card of some sort and call back with the numbers. They claim service will be disconnected if customers fail to comply.

If past trends hold true, the calls could increase from Thanksgiving through the end of the year. The con-artists may be trying to take customers' money to increase their own holiday spending budgets, or they could simply be taking advantage of families and businesses that don't want to be without power during this busy time of year.

OPPD stresses these callers do not work for the utility. Authentic call center representatives would never cold call a customer, demanding immediate payment. If customers were truly overdue on their bills to the point where service could be disconnected, they would receive written notice first.

With regards to these con attempts, OPPD advises residential or business customers to never give personal or financial information to a stranger during an unsolicited telephone call.

If such a person should appear unannounced at your door claiming to work for the utility, do not allow them to enter. Always ask for identification or verification. OPPD employees always carry identification. Failure to produce identification should always be a tip-off to the customer that something is wrong.

Customers with any questions about making a payment, or on their account in general, should always call OPPD directly. Within Omaha, the number is 402-536-4131. As always, any customer service inquiries may be addressed with the local rural offices during business hours, as well. After hours, or outside of Omaha, customers may also call 1-877-536-4131.

Many Signals Communications