Yuma County Sheriff's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2020 – 10:45 AM

UPDATE

COVID-19 Scam Alert

Location of Incident: Yuma County, Yuma, AZ

UPDATE:
The Yuma County Sheriff's Office would like to make the public aware of a specific email scam that has begun circulating within Yuma County. An email link stating, "Claim your Covid-19 benefit here" is circulating with a link to a jotform.com website. The link claims to be an information request from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. This email and link is in fact a scam.

ORIGINAL RELEASE – March 30, 2020 - 8:00 AM:

The Yuma County Sheriff's Office would like to make the public aware of potential scams related to the 2019 novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019).

Recent scams including phishing links (links used to steal passwords and/or personal information) that have been sent via text and/or email that appear to be from legitimate sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Scammers may utilize emails, social media, phone calls, or text messages about COVID-19 to spread misinformation to ask for donations or sell products claiming to prevent or cure COVID-19.

Additional scams may include links claiming to have information regarding the COVID-19 benefits/stimulus package. The links are being utilized to collect personal information. The government does not collect information regarding benefits via text or email.

Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission to help you keep the scammers at bay:

- Hang up on robocalls. Don't press any numbers. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from scam Coronavirus treatments to work-at-home schemes. The recording might say that pressing a number will let you speak to a live operator or remove you from their call list, but it might lead to more robocalls instead.

- Ignore online offers for vaccinations and home test kits. Scammers are trying to get you to buy products that aren't proven to treat or prevent the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)—online or in stores. At this time, there are no FDA-authorized home test kits for the Coronavirus. Visit the FDA to learn more.

- Fact-check information. Scammers, and sometimes well-meaning people, share information that hasn't been verified. Before you pass on any messages, contact trusted sources.

- Know who you're buying from. Online sellers may claim to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health and medical supplies when, in fact, they don't.

- Don't respond to texts and emails about checks from the government. The details are still being worked out. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

- Don't click on links from sources you don't know. They could download viruses onto your computer or device.

- Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus. For the most up-to-date information about the Coronavirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov and the World Health Organization (WHO) at www.who.int.

- Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.

For additional information related to scams pertaining to COVID-19 visit www.ftc.gov/coronavirus.

For updates and current information pertaining to COVID-19 in Yuma County, please visit the Yuma County website at www.yumacountyaz.gov and click the Yuma County COVID-19 / Coronavirus 2019 link.

If you believe you have been a victim of a scam, please contact your local law enforcement agency.

Information Released By: Lt. Samuel Pavlak, Public Information Officer