

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cheque scams again flooding B.C.

Burnaby, February 18, 2008: The B.C. Crime Prevention Association has been advised that the B.C. area is again being targeted by Nigerian scammers operating both "Payment Processing" and Counterfeit Cheque scams. It is believed that B.C. alone was targeted for over \$ 200,000 while Canada in total was targeted for over \$ 350,000. These counterfeit cheques are being sent via UPS, FedEx and standard mail.

The victims have indicated that they were enticed with job offers to process payments from suppliers or customers and payments for goods the victims were selling. While the scammers primarily communicated by email with the victims, many of these victims had actually spoken with the scammers via phone.

Scammers change their names frequently and the following should be considered as only a partial list of names they are using: James Robertson, King Ado, General Robert Kwame, Mary Earl, Abbey Adegoke, Dennis Alarpe, David Smith, Hopper Williams, Toyrah Cole and John Roberts.

Valerie MacLean, Executive Director of the BC Crime Prevention Association points out that "These scams are easily recognized by most consumers and therefore preventable but there are still some victims who fall for them."

Before jumping headfirst into what will become a very painful experience, consumers should ask themselves the following questions:

- Why would someone agree to buy what I am selling sight unseen?
- Doesn't it seem too good to be true that the buyer is sending a cheque for an amount in excess of the asking price?
- Why would someone overseas, who doesn't even know me or my employment experience, offer me a job processing payments?

Jeff Burton, the Association's Manager of Programs and Projects says "Even if a victim misses all these cues and deposits the cheque at their bank, there is still one final opportunity to prevent catastrophic loss and that is to wait until the cashier's cheque has been cleared by ALL banks involved. Just because your bank removes the "hold" on the deposited cheque does NOT mean that the cheque is legitimate."

Consumers must resist any pressure to wire transfer money to the purchaser BEFORE the cheque is cleared – it may take up to two months but the wait will make the difference between financial disaster and peace of mind and a healthy bank balance.

To learn more crime prevention tips, visit www.bccpa.org.

-30 –

This news release is one of a series in which the BCCPA offers advice under its Crime Shield banner to give the public the tools they need through education and awareness to protect themselves against crime.

Our new Ask an Expert column is an additional resource for crime prevention information pertinent to British Columbia. The column can be viewed at www.bccpa.org. Topics will be frequently updated and refreshed depending upon response.

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