



NEWS FROM U.S. DISTRICT COURT

September 13, 2024

Jury Scams. Recently, the Court has been alerted to several jury scams that have taken place across the district. In four separate incidents, South Dakota residents were contacted via phone and told that they were in contempt of court for failure to appear for jury duty. A Lyman County resident was instructed to travel to the Walmart in Pierre and buy gift cards from the kiosk. Fortunately, the individual contacted a court employee where he discovered that the call was a scam.

Another call involved an individual who was informed that he failed to appear for a federal jury trial in Rapid City before Judge Lange. The caller wanted the individual to post bond for failure to appear. The individual told the caller that he never received a letter or summons from the court. Fortunately, the individual verified the information with the Clerk's Office and did not send money to the scammer.

In two recent incidents, individuals were called and told that they had missed jury duty. The first person was informed that she would have to pay \$4,000 to resolve the issue and was instructed to obtain a money order from the bank. The individual was also told to provide odometer readings prior to leaving her house and upon returning from the bank. The second individual ended the call shortly after the caller threatened him. In both cases, the caller indicated that he knew where the individuals lived and claimed to know where one of them worked.

Regarding jury duty, please keep the following facts in mind:

- The court will always send a jury summons by U.S. Mail. The summons will never request a credit/debit card number, bank routing number, account number, wire transfer, or demand any type of payment over the phone.
- On the day of jury duty, if a juror has not checked-in, the Clerk's Office may attempt to call the juror and inquire about their attendance. A juror who fails to report for jury duty will be contacted via mail by the District Court Clerk's Office and they may, in certain circumstances, be ordered to appear before a judge. Such orders will always be in writing and signed by a judge.

- If a juror is summoned to court for failure to appear for jury duty, they will be given an opportunity to discuss the matter with the judge. If a fine is imposed, it will be ordered in open court and reduced to writing.

If you know someone who has been the target of this type of scam, please encourage them to report the incident to the proper authorities. If the caller claims to be from federal court, please contact the FBI office. If the caller claims to be from state court, please contact local law enforcement (Police Department or Sheriff's Office). It is a federal crime for anyone to falsely represent themselves as a federal court official.