

Woman beats banking scam

by SunHerald.com

Caller asked for personal information

An 88-year-old Long Beach woman had second thoughts about giving out her banking information to a caller who said he was from Medicare and it involved an emergency.

The woman grudgingly gave out the information, then immediately called the Gulfport office of U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, where a staffer contacted a bank security officer. The woman will have to open a new checking account, but she won't lose the \$389 the man said would have to be deducted for higher costs of Medicare coverage.

"The whole time I kept thinking 'this doesn't sound right, it's always in writing' and I told him so," the woman told the Sun Herald.

"He said I couldn't go see a doctor or get prescriptions without the new card he was going to send me. He said I would have to have my old card and my new card and he wanted to send me a new card as quickly as possible."

The caller, she said, had a foreign accent. He identified himself by name. He also put another person on the line to verify her information for their records. The woman was told the money was a one-time deduction from her Social Security check, which is deposited directly into her checking account.

"He sounded so convincing," the woman said.

The caller knew how to make her feel comfortable to gain her trust, a representative of Lott's staff said.

Bank security officials maintain it is perfectly acceptable to hang up on anyone who calls wanting personal or banking information.

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