



PUBLIC INFORMATION DIVISION  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Service, Integrity, Leadership, and Fair Treatment to All

March 15, 2011

**Metropolitan Police Department Warns Citizens  
About Telephone Scam**

The Metropolitan Police Department, City of St. Louis (“the department”) is alerting citizens about a telephone scam that cost at least one senior citizen thousands of dollars.

An 86 year old woman was contacted by a male caller who identified himself as a St. Louis City Public Defender. The caller told the victim that one of her relatives had been arrested and was currently in jail. The victim was convinced the call was legitimate, not only because the caller sounded professional, but also because the caller gave the correct name of the victim’s relative. The victim was told to wait for a telephone call from that relative for further instruction. Later, the victim received a second call from a caller claiming to be the victim’s relative. The caller said he needed \$4,400 in order to be released from jail and that the money should be sent via wire transfer. Believing the caller was indeed the relative, the victim complied. She later learned her relative had not been arrested and that she had been scammed. The victim’s money, which was all the savings she had, has not been recovered and no suspect has been identified. The department is aware of at least one other instance where a caller attempted the same scam, only in that case, the victim recognized it was a scam before sending any money.

Requesting bail money via wire transfer is not a practice of the court system. The department encourages anyone who receives such a phone call not to send any money via wire transfer as bail for someone being held in a St. Louis City jail.

Missouri State Public Defender Director Cat Kelly advises that Missouri Public Defenders representing a client will never ask a client or client's family to pay them money directly. All Public Defender fees are to be mailed to the State Office in Columbia at the conclusion of a case and restitution payments do not go through the Public Defender’s office at all. Anyone being told to send money directly to someone claiming to be a St. Louis Public Defender should contact the local Public Defender Office at 314-340-7630 or contact the Missouri State Public Defender Office at 573-526-5210.

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