

# Be Aware!

With the upswing in identity theft and the failing state of the economy we must all be alert now more than ever to con-artists. Each day there are more and more people trying to separate you from your hard earned money. The methods are many and varied but the end result is all the same... scamming you into giving them your money!

On Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup> I was witness to a phone call while waiting to speak to a collision repair facility owner in Stroudsburg Pennsylvania. The call was from a third party service that helps translate calls for the hearing impaired over the phone. Through the translator the caller explained that his father had been in a car accident while traveling in Tennessee. There was no insurance involved in this matter and the son wanted to bring the car back to Pennsylvania to be repaired. He had contacted a tow company who agreed to the tow but would not accept a credit card payment. The caller wanted to have the owner of the repair facility bill his credit card for \$3,000 and then send \$2,000 to the tow company in Tennessee. The remaining \$1,000 would be picked up by the driver when the vehicle was dropped off.

The shop owner started asking many questions and explained that he would not pay a single dollar until the vehicle was in his possession. The caller insisted that it must be done the way he had explained. The owner then asked for the tow company's phone number and assured the caller he would talk to them and work out any details needed to get the vehicle to Pennsylvania. He was promptly hung up on.

This was a very odd situation and signaled the owner to be careful; however the next scam may not be as obvious. In your daily business of helping people in their time of need and confusion be vigilant and don't allow yourself to fall victim to a swindler looking for a quick buck at your expense.

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