



CITY OF CORNING

TELEPHONE SCAMS

It can be hard to resist. A phone call comes from a charity seeking desperately needed funds for flood victims, endangered species, or the homeless. A postcard arrives claiming you've won an amazing sweepstakes prize if you'll just call and send an "administrative fee." Or you receive an investment offer giving you an "exclusive" chance to earn potentially enormous profits.

But Resist You Must!

These are just a few examples of the kinds of fraudulent schemes

Americans run across every day. Experts estimate that consumers lose more than \$100 billion annually to a broad assortment of frauds, cons, and scams. Fraudulent telemarketing and direct mail appeals account for \$40 billion of this total.

Taking your money is the number-one goal of the nation's scammers. Many concoct their cons just to get a credit card number so they can go on a spending spree financed by YOU. Others will bill you incredible sums for merely calling them to find out more. And still more want a check or cash as soon as possible -- by overnight delivery, by wire or even by courier -- so they have their money before you have them figured out.

The following are possible signs of a fraudulent appeal for your hard earned dollars:

Signs of Possible Scams:

High-pressure tactics aimed at forcing a quick decision.

Demands for "cash only" or special delivery/pick-up of your payment.

Companies and charities with "copycat" names; e.g., Salvation League instead of Salvation Army.

Delayed delivery of a product or a prize.

No risk, high-yield investments.

If you're suspicious, ask the company or charity to send written information before you make any commitments. And feel free to hang up if you don't feel comfortable.

What You Can Do:

If a caller asks for your credit card, bank account or Social Security number to verify a free vacation, a prize or a gift, say "No" and hang up.

If you're calling a 900 number in response to an advertisement or something you received in the mail, make sure you know all the charges up front.

Before you agree to support a charity that calls seeking money, ask for written information about its finances and programs.

Remember, if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.