RG&E/NYSEG have informed the town of fraudulent activities targeting energy consumers. People are contacted by email, phone, or in person, and are asked to pay current or past due charges. “Payments” end up with scammers. Utility customers are a convenient target for scammers because most people are energy customers who pay utility bills. Please take precautions to avoid falling victim. You can read a full article on the topic at www.penfield.org.

Here are a few highlights:

Always type the RG&E or NYSEG Web address when making an online payment; do not rely on links. When paying by phone, always confirm the RG&E or NYSEG phone numbers. Do not make payments by phone to anyone who has contacted you or asked you to dial a number other than NYSEG or RG&E. Do not trust links in emails when paying RG&E or NYSEG by credit card, go directly to www.rge.com or www.nyseg.com to complete credit card transactions. Never provide Social Security or credit card numbers or bank information to anyone requesting it (over the phone or in person) unless you initiated the contact and feel confident that the transaction is legitimate.

To confirm the identity of any RG&E or NYSEG employee ask for a photo ID or employee number. Contact RG&E (1.800.743.2110) or NYSEG (1.800.572.1111) to verify the individual’s identity and purpose. RG&E and NYSEG employees will happily comply. If you are concerned about a call you have received for a payment contact RG&E at 1.800.743.2110 or NYSEG at 1.800.572.1111.

The Monroe County Sheriff’s Department has asked me to make residents aware of other scams and illegal activity. The first involves burglaries of residences when occupants are attending a funeral. If you are attending a loved one’s funeral and you have been listed in the obituary, consider asking someone to keep an eye on your house and report suspicious activity to 911.

Another current scam is a phone call claiming a spouse or grandchild has been in an accident or arrested and they need money for bail or treatment. The person is urged to wire money to help. Before you consider wiring money verify the story by making a call to that loved one or call 911 for a report. Sadly, many scammers prey on our senior population. Let’s watch over aging parents, senior citizen neighbors, and other friends and loved ones to help keep them from being victimized.

Lastly, the Sheriff’s Department reminds us burglars target homes with unlocked doors and windows, so please make sure yours are locked. Be aware of unusual vehicles or individuals in the neighborhood who appear to casing homes. If you have concerns or something does not seem right, call 911 and a Sheriff will follow up. Report details like a license plate number, vehicle make and model, description of individuals including clothing, age, height and weight. Do not make yourself or neighborhood a victim.

On a lighter note, mark your calendars for the next Penfield Symphony Orchestra concert on Monday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m. entitled “All Things Scottish,” music by Bruch, Arnold and Mendelssohn at Penfield High School. Find details on this concert and the 2014 season at www.penfieldsymphony.org.

Until next week please exercise good judgment in dealing with shoveling snow, below normal temperatures, and wind chill. The days are getting longer and hopefully we soon will see more signs of spring in the coming weeks.

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