

Old scam is surging in Oregon

City mgr. says he dismantled gun in car on previous occasions

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Of the Keizertimes

The Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) has reason to believe that a group of scammers are setting their sights on Oregon to perpetrate “grandparent scams.” In grandparent scams, older adults are duped into handing over cash at their front door, thinking they’re helping a loved one who is in danger.

Scammers pose as panicked grandchildren in trouble, calling or sending messages urging you to wire money immediately. They’ll say they need cash to help with an emergency – like paying a hospital bill or needing to leave a foreign country. Here are some tips to avoid falling victim to the scheme:

- Resist the urge to act immediately – no matter how dramatic the story is.
- Verify the caller’s identity. Ask questions that a stranger couldn’t possibly answer. Call a phone number for your family member or friend that you know to be genuine. Check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you’ve been told to keep it a secret.
- Don’t send cash, gift cards, or money transfers – once the scammer gets the money, it’s gone.
- Never open your door for anyone you don’t know.
- Call the police immediately if you have reason to believe you’ve fallen victim to this scam or any other scam.

Victims can file a complaint online at www.oregonconsumer.gov or call 1-877-877-9392.

Keizer City Manager Chris Eppley said he was “preoccupied” when he brought a loaded firearm into the Keizer Civic Center and negligently discharged it while disassembling it for repairs.

Keizertimes obtained a portion of Eppley’s incident report regarding the situation and verified its authenticity. The part of the report Keizertimes received is Eppley’s description of what happened.

Eppley states that he had brought pieces of firearms into city hall before to perform repairs and modifications, but never a full firearm.

On those occasions, Eppley writes he disassembled the firearms in his car. On March 4, he brought a full and loaded gun into city hall. He intended to replace a part of the slide and was disassembling the firearm when it discharged under his desk. Even as he disassembled the firearm, Eppley stated “it didn’t occur to me that I was disassembling a firearm in my office instead of in my car.”

“Minor damage was done to the front panel of my desk that I will repair but no other damage occurred,” Eppley wrote.

The incident “greatly startled” another employee in a nearby office. He apologized to her and notified several other individuals including human resources personnel, the chair of the civic center safety committee and Mayor Cathy Clark.

The full text of the incident description reads as follows:

“From time to time I have brought into my office parts of a firearm, either the slide, or the grip, but not both at the same

time, so as to not have a functioning firearm in the City Hall, when wanting to do a modification or repair to a component. When I do this, I strip the firearm in half and leave 1/2 of it in my car (either the slide or the grip module) so as to not have a functioning firearm in my office. Today I received a part for a slide that I wanted to replace and I was intending to bring in just the slide to install the part and then take the slide back out to my car. I was preoccupied, however and forgot to do the disassembly in my car resulting in my having a fully functioning firearm in my office. I’m not sure why it didn’t dawn on me that I had a full gun with me. I was rushed and simply didn’t pay attention to exactly what I was doing right then. While I was disassembling the firearm, (once again, it didn’t occur to me that I was disassembling a firearm in my office instead of in my car) it negligently discharged under my desk. Minor damage was done to the front panel of my desk that I will repair but no other damage

occurred. The incident greatly startled Tammie Harmes [sic], for which I am deeply sorry for, and I am keenly aware that I both violated a City Policy and also put my fellow co-workers in danger, which is also something that I am incredibly upset about. I have notified the City Attorney, apologized to Tammie, notified Jeff Hayen [sic], Safety Committee Chair, HR (both Kristen and Machell), and also called and informed Mayor Clark as she is my direct supervisor.”

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