

Quick-thinking bank employees foil scam

BY JESS SULLIVAN
DAILY REPUBLIC

RIO VISTA — The former owners of a Rio Vista pizzeria were targeted last week in an elaborate scam to bilk more than \$170,000 from their bank account.

The top staff at the Bank of Rio Vista called police on the afternoon of Jan. 21 and shared concerns about a possible fraud attempt, according to court records obtained Friday. Starting

the previous day, somebody had been calling and faxing the bank trying to initiate a wire transfer of \$178,480 from Rio Vista to a bank in South Korea.

The caller identified himself as one of the restaurant owners and gave bank staff an accurate Social Security number, birth date and bank account information. The caller then told bank staff the wire transfer was to

purchase food machinery and restaurant equipment.

Rio Vista police officer Lisa McDowell called the man trying to arrange the wire transfer. Posing as a bank employee, McDowell had the man repeat the confidential identifying information he gave previously. Then McDowell arranged to have documents for the transfer faxed to the bank.

During one conversa-

tion, McDowell asked the man about the weather in Rio Vista.

"I haven't been outside at all today to see it," the man coyly told McDowell, according to the records.

Then McDowell suggested that the man pretending to be the restaurant owner come down to the bank branch. He said he had been in a recent vehicle accident and was unable to leave his home.

Then McDowell told him he would need to fax a copy of his driver's license.

"Unfortunately, due to my recent involvement in a car accident, I do not have my driver's license. My new replacement, which is a restricted license, should arrive in the mail sometime next week. Thank you for your understanding," the con man told McDowell, according to the records.

Rio Vista police contacted the phone company, which discovered that the restaurant owners' home phone line had been tampered with and all of their phone calls were being intercepted and rerouted to a cell phone -- the same cell phone the con man had used when talking to McDowell.

The investigation is ongoing and no arrests have been made.

Making cards for deployed airmen

Students at Leaven create Valentine's memories

BY SARAH DE CRESCENZO
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — For 8-year-old Ameena Long, creating a Valentine's Day card for someone in the U.S. Air Force makes perfect sense.

Her aunt was once in the Air Force, she said Friday afternoon as she stuck heart-shaped stickers on cards for deployed airmen.

Students at the Leaven program's Phoenix Drive tutoring center met with Travis airman and local officials before creating a batch of holiday cards to send to overseas troops in time for Valentine's Day.

"Probably the number one (most difficult) thing about deployment is that we end up being separated from our families," said Master Sgt. Matt Moore, with the 60th Air Mobility Wing.

He served a seven-month tour in Afghanistan.

Moore, his wife, Rochelle Moore and children, Garrett Moore, 14, and Nicole Moore, 13, received the first Valentine's card from the Leaven center students on Friday.

The ceremonial oversized card had been signed ahead of time by the students for the Moore family.

With carefully composed messages of love and caring, the children



Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic

Elian Cornejo looks at Airman 1st Class Erin Lukemire while writing a Valentine's Day card to Travis troops on Friday.

'The soldiers will feel good when they get (the cards) because we wrote nice things.'

—Alejandra Valle, 6

decorated cards with their sentiments, stickers, markers and colorful drawings.

Happy Valentine's Day, written in Spanish, was the message 8-year-old Karla Espinoza wrote on the first card she made.

Next to her, 6-year-old Alejandra Valle wrote "I love Valentine's Day" on two of her cards.

"The soldiers will feel good when they get (the cards) because we wrote nice things," she said.

Getting cards from the

United States while deployed was always a special surprise, no matter who had made them, Moore said.

"It was a piece of home," he said.

Giving the children an opportunity to give back to

the community that has assisted them is important, Leaven Director Mark Lillis said.

Fairfield Mayor Harry Price, Fairfield Councilmen Rick Vaccaro and Chuck Timm and Vacaville Councilwoman Dilena Harris attended the event in addition to about 10 Travis representatives in uniform.

Reach Sarah de Crescenzo at 427-6935 or sarahdc@dailypress.net.

Police to probe Vacaville death

BY JESS SULLIVAN
DAILY REPUBLIC

VACAVILLE — Police are conducting a criminal investigation into the death of an 80-year-old Vacaville woman last weekend.

Police found Mary Smith last Saturday afternoon lying unconscious on the floor of her East Monte Vista Avenue mobile home.

Smith looked emaciated and malnourished and had bruising and bed sores. Paramedics were called and Smith was declared dead, according to court records filed earlier this week. Detective Mark Ferrera said Smith appeared to be "severely neglected."

Police examining the trailer saw cobwebs and mold and rotting wood throughout the trailer. Police also noticed family members trying to conceal a cell phone.

One of the five family members sharing the residence with Smith said she hadn't been to a doctor in two years.

Police seized the cell phone and three computers in the trailer and will be examining them, looking for any evidence of criminal activity.

Reach Jess Sullivan at 427-6919 or jsullivan@dailypress.net.

In brief

Council to discuss league membership

FAIRFIELD — On Tuesday, the City Council will consider a resolution to pay another year's dues to the League of California Cities.

Membership for 2011 costs \$25,288, the same amount the city paid in 2010.

Fairfield has been a member of the league for "many years" and relies upon it for advocacy at the state level, according to a staff report.

Goals of the group this year include strengthening partnerships with other groups, promoting "sustainable and secure" public pension systems and using cost-effective strategies in bringing its services to California cities.

The council meets at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the City Council chamber, 1000 Webster St.

For more information, call 428-7400.

Union helps send students on trip

RIO VISTA — Service Employee International Union Local 1021 donated \$4,500 to help Riverview Middle School eighth-

graders travel to Washington D.C. and New York City.

Student Britani Munschauer, 13, went door-to-door in her neighborhood to cut grass and do other housework for donations. She went to the door of SEIU executive board member Michelle Rodriguez and the union decided to help the class, a union press release said.

SEIU Local 2021 represents 56,000 employees in local governments, non-profit agencies, health care programs and schools in Northern California. It is the union that represents the largest number of Solano County employees.

Tell us how you found love on the Internet

FAIRFIELD — Did you meet your spouse or significant other on the Internet?

Was it in a chat room? A website that matches singles?

The Daily Republic wants to hear your success stories of love online.

Please share some background on where you met online, your name, city and daytime phone number.

Send the information to Amy Maginnis-Honey by 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Flu shot clinic set for Vacaville today

VACAVILLE — People can get free vaccines today for the seasonal flu, whooping cough and pneumonia.

Solano Public Health is holding the vaccine clinic from noon to 4 p.m. at Brenden Theatres, 531 Davis St.

For more information, go to the website <http://www.solanocounty.com/healthalerts> or call 211.

Golden Gate Bridge to eliminate toll-takers

SAN FRANCISCO — The Golden Gate Bridge's toll booths will likely be empty by the end of next year.

The bridge district's board of directors voted 13-2 Friday to replace the span's 32 toll-takers with an all-electronic toll system in September 2012.

The Marin Independent Journal reports the move is aimed at cutting costs as the district seeks to close a \$89 million budget deficit.

About two-thirds of Golden Gate drivers use FasTrak transponders to pay tolls and won't be affected by the change.

Share your good news with the community

FAIRFIELD — Did

your kids just win a scholarship to band camp? Are your neighbors mowing the lawns of homes owned by people who have lost their jobs? Is your daughter a new graduate?

Do you have some good news? Let us know and we'll put it in our good news column, which runs in the newspaper on page A2 on Friday.

Send your news to Kathleen L'Ecluse, Daily Republic, 1250 Texas St., Box 47, Fairfield, CA 94533, or e-mail klecluse@dailypress.net. Put Good News on the envelope or in the subject line.

Power glitch shuts down state networks

SACRAMENTO — An electrical problem at the California Legislature's data center shut down computers and blocked public access to Websites for about five hours until it could be fixed.

Jon Waldie, the Assembly's administrative officer, said e-mails on the Legislature's computers and BlackBerries was blocked Friday in the Capitol and at lawmakers' district offices. Some telephone service also was out.

The public could not read about pending bills or log on to Senate and Assembly websites during the outage.

—Staff, wire reports

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