



Commonwealth of Virginia

Department of the Treasury

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2013

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Virginia Treasury Warns of New Scam Targeting Unclaimed Property Owners

RICHMOND, Va. (July 30, 2013) – The Virginia Department of the Treasury's Unclaimed Property Program is warning consumers of a new scam targeting potential unclaimed property owners.

According to the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators (NAUPA), a fraudulent e-mail is circulating in parts of the country claiming to be from a non-existent NAUPA regional auditor, Mrs. Alexis James. The message promises a large sum of money is waiting to be claimed from a deceased relative and can be claimed in exchange for detailed personal information.

Typical of such scams, there is no large inheritance and the personal information provided is usually used to facilitate identity theft. In some cases, the victim will also be asked to provide a sum of money up-front in order to pay for processing. Any money provided to the requestor is usually stolen. In addition, the recipient is asked to keep all communications confidential, a common tactic in e-mails targeting older or vulnerable populations in order to keep them from telling friends or family about the scam.

The Virginia Department of the Treasury would like to remind Virginians that neither the Commonwealth's Unclaimed Property Program nor NAUPA will ever contact potential unclaimed property owners in this manner.

"Virginia's Unclaimed Property Program does not solicit information from people directly through e-mail unless they have contacted us regarding a specific claim first," says Vicki Bridgeman,

Director of Virginia's Unclaimed Property Program. "We strongly advise that anyone who gets an e-mail promising a big cash reward in exchange for personal information or a processing fee delete it immediately. Anyone who wants to check if they have legitimate unclaimed property can visit our website, www.vaMoneySearch.org, and claim any property they may have at any time and at no cost to them whatsoever."

The Virginia Treasury and NAUPA encourage anyone to report suspicious unclaimed property communications to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) online at www.ic3.gov/complaint.default.aspx.

The Virginia Unclaimed Property Program is administered by the Virginia Department of the Treasury. An estimated one in four Virginians currently has unclaimed property and the Commonwealth is currently holding more than \$1.2 billion waiting to be claimed. To check for unclaimed property for yourself or your business, visit www.vaMoneySearch.org.

The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators is a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Association of State Treasurers. Their website is www.unclaimed.org.

For questions about this release or the Virginia Unclaimed Property Program, please contact Benjamin Jarvela, Public Relations and Marketing Manager, at (804)-371-0928 or by email at benjamin.jarvela@trs.virginia.gov.

