

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: James Hallinan

January 25, 2016

(505) 660-2216

SCAM ALERT: Attorney General Warns New Mexicans of Craigslist Apartment Rental Scams

Santa Fe, NM – Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert today in response to a recent uptick in reports of Craigslist apartment scams from consumers across New Mexico. This scam typically occurs when someone is looking for an apartment or house to rent on Craigslist. The “landlord” will not be available to show the property personally as they claim to be out of town, but they promise a great deal on the rent. Typically, the person posting the photo and ad does not own the property. The scammer will request deposit money to be sent to another state or country. Once that money is gone, it’s gone for good.

“Right now scammers are targeting college students, working professionals and families across New Mexico who are looking for a good deal on rent,” said Attorney General Balderas. “Never wire money or send prepaid debit cards in response to Craigslist ads, and never give out your financial information online. Protect yourself so you don’t become a victim.”

Craigslist can be a great place to find products or services however, it can be used to take advantage of unsuspecting victims. **Here are some helpful tips for spotting and avoiding apartment scams on Craigslist:**

- Ask to see the potential landlord’s ID – record all the information you can from it.
- Use a browser to search for the landlord’s name after you get their information. Be sure to add quotes around their name. You can add the words “fraud” or “scam” at the end of your search terms.
- Use reverse directory look up if the person has given you their telephone number. It’s important to double check that they are who they say they are.
- Visit the local county courthouse to look up property ownership for the apartment in question. Who really owns it? Is it the person who claims to be the landlord on Craigslist? Or someone else?
- Scan any provided photographs carefully. Do they match up with what you’ve seen in person? Do they look like they all came from the same place?
- If they don’t ask for an application or permission to check your credit, then that’s a red flag!
- Considering the current state of our economy and the rise in foreclosures, ask the landlord if they’re current on their mortgage payments, and then get their answer in writing.

- Consider additional methods for obtaining a rental, i.e. real estate agent, going through a rental agency, etc...

If you believe you have been a victim of a scam on Craigslist you should notify:

- The New Mexico Office of the Attorney General (505) 222-9100
- Internet Fraud Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov)
- FTC complaint form and hotline: 877-FTC-HELP (877-382-4357)

###