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First Citizens Warns Customers of Tax Identity Theft

MANSFIELD, PA (January 2018) Tax season may just be getting started, but tax scammers have been hard at work. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has gotten thousands of complaints about one kind of scammer in particular — IRS imposters. Tax identity theft happens when someone files a phony tax return using your personal information, like your Social Security number, to get a tax refund from the IRS. It also can happen when someone uses your Social Security number to get a job or claims your child as a dependent on a tax return. Tax identity theft is the most common form of identity theft reported to the FTC.

Tax identity theft victims typically find out about the crime when they get a letter from the IRS saying that more than one tax return was filed in their name, or IRS records show they received wages from an employer they do not know.

“If you get a letter like this, do not panic,” commented Wendy Southard, Information Security Officer at First Citizens. “Contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490. If you are a victim of tax identity theft, visit IdentityTheft.gov to help you recover from identity theft.”

Another common form of identity theft occurs when scammers pose as IRS officials, who call and say you owe taxes. They threaten to arrest or deport you, revoke your license, or even shut down your business if you do not pay right away. They may know your Social Security number, or at least the last four digits of it, making you think it really is the IRS calling. They also can rig caller ID to make it look like the call is coming from Washington, DC. Before you can check out the callers, you are told to put the money on a prepaid debit card and tell them the number, something no government agency would ask you to do. Once you do it, you find out it was a scam, and the money is gone.

If you owe, or think you owe, federal taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to irs.gov. IRS workers can help you with your payment questions. The IRS does not ask people to pay with prepaid debit cards or wire transfers, and does not ask for credit card numbers over the phone. When the IRS contacts people about unpaid taxes, they usually do it by mail, not by phone.

First Citizens Community Bank is headquartered in Mansfield, Pennsylvania. They currently operate 28 offices throughout Tioga, Bradford, Potter, Clinton, Union, Centre, Lebanon, Lancaster, Schuylkill and Berks counties in Pennsylvania and Allegany County New York. For more information about First Citizens, visit FirstCitizensBank.com, or find them on Facebook.

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