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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Batesburg-Leesville Police Warns against potential Scams

Batesburg-Leesville, S.C. (October 7/15:30 a.m.) – The Batesburg-Leesville Police Department warns against scams relating to the recent flooding in the Batesburg-Leesville Community.

The Batesburg-Leesville Police Department is warning citizens to be aware of the potential for scams as it relates to the recent flooding event. During disaster events, such as this, criminals attempt to take advantage of victims who may be going through difficult situations. There are numerous types of scams to be cautious of when contacted about damage. One type of potential scam is associated with homes that have been damaged as a result of flooding, heavy rains, or homes damaged by tree limbs is a repair scam. This type will involve the scammers offering to complete repairs, however claiming to have a waiting list due to the amount of repairs required. The scammers will then entice the intended victim by requiring a deposit or money up front in order to be added to the scammer's waiting list. The scammer never returns to complete the repairs that he or she has agreed to. Another common scam will involve scammers who call by phone or arrive in person, claiming to represent various relief or government organizations. The scammer will then ask for (or need to verify) your social security number, and other personal information. The scammers will later use the information that they obtained to gain access to your financial resources by opening credit cards or similar types of accounts in your name.

To help avoid becoming a victim of a scam, such as these, there are a few things to look out for. First, be wary of persons claiming to be contractors or members of relief organizations who appear pushy or try to use pressure to obtain your personal information or a deposit in advance. Second, never give personal information or money to someone that you do not know or who you cannot confirm who they claim to be. Calling a phone number that a salesman or contractor provides may not provide you with

legitimate verification that the individual is who they claim to be. Never give cash money to anyone who you do not know for repair work. If you are contacted in person, you should never allow someone you do not know into your home. Also verify to ensure that a potential contractor is bonded and licensed to perform the repairs that they are soliciting for, as well as to ensure that the potential contractor has a business license to operate within the Town of Batesburg-Leesville. If a potential contractor becomes defensive or evasive if asked about certifications or licenses, then this would be a high indication that you might not want this particular potential contractor to perform work for you. On a separate note, if you feel inclined to donate items to support relief efforts, it is recommended that you donate items locally. Numerous local churches are assisting with this relief effort and many can provide additional resources to assist you in your endeavors.

If you suspect that you have been contacted by someone who is trying to perpetuate a possible scam, contact the Batesburg-Leesville Police Department (803-532-4408) as quickly as possible or the law enforcement agency that is responsible for the area where you live or where the scam attempt occurred. If you are contacted by someone in person who appears questionable, it is recommended that you inconspicuously take notes to include a detailed description of the person, the vehicle that they are driving, a tag number if possible, and the time that you were contacted, and relay this information to law enforcement as quickly as possible. Remember, not everyone is who they claim to be, especially on a telephone. A citizen should be reminded to take a few minutes to think about an offer or a request for money or information, and if the caller sounds too good to be true or if you suspect that it is a scam it probably is.