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## **News Release**

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### **SPRINGTIME IS HERE; SO ARE THE CON MEN**

ATHENS, Tenn.—In what has seemingly become an annual rite of spring, Athens Utilities Board (AUB) is advising area residents to be aware of and on the lookout for con artists posing as utility employees.

Scams involving utility board imposters crop up nearly every year, said AUB's Wayne Scarbrough.

Last week in Columbia, Tenn., in middle Tennessee's Maury County, a man posing as an employee of the local water and power company gained access to an elderly couple's home and then robbed them.

"Many times the con artists work their way across the state in an attempt to stay ahead of the law—and ahead of news reports—to find new victims," Scarbrough said.

In Columbia, the con man wore an official utility company shirt complete with the company's logo.

Scarbrough said that AUB field workers always wear AUB shirts, hats, and other company clothing. Moreover, every employee carries a company identification badge with a color AUB logo, a color photo of the employee, the worker's full name, and the AUB division they represent.

Although AUB discourages employees from giving away or donating their old AUB attire, Scarbrough said it is possible for a non-AUB person to somehow get an official AUB shirt or hat.

"Anything's possible. And for that reason, even a person with an AUB logo on his clothing should be treated with caution if they ask to enter a home without an appointment scheduled by the customer," he said.

Additional tips that AUB offers area residents regarding scam awareness include:

- ◆ AUB representatives NEVER ask to come into your home unless you have initiated the visit by making an appointment through the AUB offices.

- ◆ AUB does not “cold call” customers at their home offering energy surveys, energy-saving products, or any other sales related items or services.
- ◆ If you are approached by a person purportedly from AUB who asks to enter your home and you have not asked for assistance, feel free to call AUB to verify the person’s employment status and work assignments.
- ◆ Look for AUB vehicles. Most AUB trucks are bright yellow or white with logos on both sides.
- ◆ AUB workers will NEVER ask for payment on the spot for repairs or inspections.

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