



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Internet Purchases – Think Ahead For Your Own Safety

We live in a world where buying and selling items on the internet is a frequent occurrence. “With the technology people have available to them at their fingertips, they no longer have to wait until summer to have yard sales to get rid of their unwanted belongings,” said Sheriff Jamie Patton. Buying and selling articles online can be a good thing, but it can also be a very dangerous thing. Criminals attempt to take advantage of innocent victims by using internet-based scams, fraudulent or false transactions, and even robbing them when an in-person transaction is supposed to occur. Below are several safety tips to keep in mind when meeting an unknown person to buy or sell items found on the internet:

- Always meet in a public place, if it's late be sure the area is well illuminated.
- Never allow someone to come to your residence.
- Make sure you tell a family member or friend where you are going, who you are meeting, and what you are buying.
- Keep your cellphone with you, even if you get out of the vehicle. Cell phones have the capability to be traced.
- Know the area where you are meeting, never meet at a location you know nothing about.
- Take a friend, going alone makes you an easier target.
- If you are paying cash, only take the amount agreed upon.

Fortunately, most internet created transactions will be uneventful and allow you to find or get rid of items. However, there are those individuals that seek to take advantage of the situation for criminal gain. Be cautious, know your surroundings, look for things that are out of place, and remember, if it's too good to be true, then it probably is. “Trust your senses and, if something doesn't feel right, leave the area,” concluded Sheriff Patton.

For more information, please contact the Union County Sheriff's Office and speak with Deputy Rich Crabtree at 937-645-4100, Ext. 4310.