PHONE SCAM 5:05 P.M. 09/15/17 N. LUKASAVITZ

Six students from UWRF are the latest to report having received scam phone calls, which appeared to be from the same phone number as the River Falls Police Department.

Nathan Lukasavitz (LUKE-us-av-its) has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 58 Q: “…LUKASAVITZ.”

NATHAN LUKASAVITZ: ACCORDING TO INVESTIGATOR JENNIFER KNUTSON, STUDENTS ARE THE LATEST INDIVUDUALS TO HAVE BEEN CONTACTED IN A PHONE SCAM IN WHICH THE CALLER ID REVEALS THE SAME PHONE NUMBER AS THE RIVER FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

JENNIFER KNUTSON: PEOPLE WILL HANG UP BECAUSE THEY THINK IT’S A SCAM, BUT THEN THEY CALL THE NUMBER BACK BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE IT AS A LOCAL NUMBER, AND THEY GET THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND THEY’RE LIKE ‘OH MY GOSH MAYBE THIS IS TRUE.’

NATHAN LUKASAVITZ: THE SCAM BECOMES ESPECIALLY DECEITFUL WHEN THE CALLER ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE THE INDIVIDUAL THAT THEY HAVE OUTSTANDING FINES WITH THE CITY, WHICH IS ONE OF MULTIPLE PLOYS THAT THE SCAMMERS ATTEMPT.

JENNIFER KNUTSON: THERE’S A DIFFERENT VARIETY OF THINGS THAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING. THE MOST COMMON ONE IS THEY CLAIM TO BE THE IRS, AND THAT THE PERSON ON THE PHONE OWES THEM MONEY, AND IF THEY DON’T PAY, THE POLICE WILL BE COMING TO ARREST THEM.

NATHAN LUKASAVITZ: ACCORDING TO KNUTSON, THE RIVER FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT IS NOT ABLE TO TRACE WHERE THE CALLS ARE COMING FROM. INSTEAD, THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IS EMPLOYING A STRATEGY TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE SCAM. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M NATHAN LUKASAVITZ.

Other nearby college-town police departments are being contacted to determine if the same scam is occurring in other locations, however, none of the other police departments are reporting the same information.

###