Police Seek Man in Firewood Scam

by Richard Burton

The Deschutes County Sheriffâ€™s Office is looking for a â€œperson of interestâ€• in connection with several instances of suspected theft in the Bend, Redmond, and South County areas where victims have prepaid for firewood purchases which were never delivered.

In recent weeks several people were either directly contacted by Calvin Loring Barker, 54, or answered an advertisement in a local newspaper regarding the purchase of firewood, said Sgt. Dan Bilyeu in a news release issued by the Deschutes County Sheriffâ€™s Office. Many paid Barker up-front with an agreement the wood would be delivered on a specified date, but no deliveries were made and attempts to contact the seller were unsuccessful.

The Deschutes County Sheriffâ€™s office, Bend Police Department and Redmond Police Department are now accepting theft reports in connection with the incidents.

In connection with suspected firewood scams, at this time Calvin Loring Barker is described by Sgt. Dan Bilyeu as a "person of interest" only (not a suspect).In all cases, the information regarding the â€œsellerâ€• is consistent. Barker is described as a 54-year old white male, 5-foot 11-inches tall, weighing 165 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. He may be driving a 1976 light blue Chevrolet pickup with Oregon plates, possibly with wood racks.

At this point Barker is a â€œperson of interestâ€• only, Sgt. Bilyeu stressed in the news release, as authorities have had no personal contact with him to obtain his account of these incidents.

If anyone has been the victim of a similar incident or has information on Barker or his current location, they are asked to contact the 911 Dispatch Center at 693-6911.

The sergeant reminded residents to avoid pre-paying for firewood â€œunless you know that youâ€™re dealing with a reputable business or individualâ€•.

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