



Oconee County Connections Employee Newsletter

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February 2023

New Administration Building



Construction work on the new administrative building is proceeding rapidly, and we are on track for a July 2023 move in!

The 44,000-square-foot building, located across from Fire Station 1, will house the non-judicial government functions currently located in the Oconee County Courthouse and the Oconee County Annex.



Employment Anniversaries

Congratulations to everyone on our team celebrating another year of service to the residents of Oconee County! Thank you for making our organization an outstanding place to work and for your dedication to our community! We appreciate all that you do!

Administration

Tracye Bailey 02/26/1999

Animal Services

Kayla McAllister 02/13/2017

Jessica Burnley 02/16/2017

Board of Elections

Teresa Wallace 02/02/2016

Civic Center

Danny Cottar 02/25/2015

Clerk of Courts

Lesia Weaber 02/15/2000

E911/Communications

Deanna Smith 02/18/2008

Finance

Donna Norton 02/15/1999

Human Resources

Beth Armstrong 02/03/2020

Jail

Candeda Ayers 02/18/2010

Lucas Peck 02/18/2013

Clifton Ivy 02/07/2022

Law Enforcement

James Hale 02/15/2000

Scott Underwood 02/18/2002

Bradley Vaughn 02/22/2017

Parks & Recreation

Andy Dunston 02/12/2018

Nico Carter 02/13/2019

McKenzie Maddux 02/28/2020

Charles Massey 02/28/2020

Public Works

Debbie Smith 02/08/1999

Scott Willoughby 02/02/2016

Jody Woodall 02/19/2019

Doc Hudson 02/25/2019

Ryan Osment 02/24/2020

Richard Gutierrez 02/07/2022

Senior Center

Merry Howard 02/03/2014

Allison Burns 02/17/2015



Notes from IT

Beware of Common Tax Scams

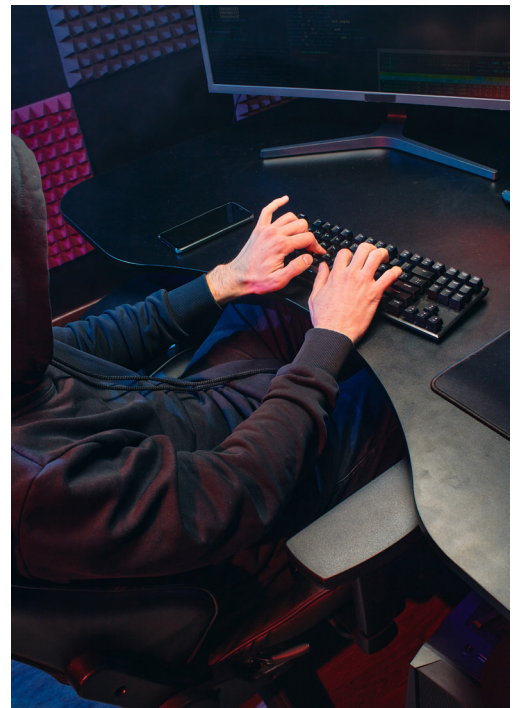
Tax season is upon us, a time of year when the scammers go into overdrive. Be extra careful while online, and avoid activities that could put your identity and finances at risk.

Cyber criminals use the same tried-and-true methods for tax scams as they do with other targeted attacks.

- **Phishing:** Using email or malicious websites to infect your device or trick you into disclosing your information. Phishing emails may appear to come from real financial institutions, e-commerce sites, charitable organizations, or even government agencies such as the IRS.
- **Phone Calls:** Making phone calls or leaving voicemails of an urgent or threatening nature. In the case of tax scams, the calls may advise you of a refund you are owed or demand that you settle an outstanding payment for back taxes. Caller ID spoofing may be used, making it appear like the person calling is from the IRS.

Scammers using these tactics generally attempt to create a sense of urgency, or have a good story that would tend to compel you to disclose personal information such as your date of birth, social security number, driver's license number, or even usernames and passwords to your accounts. Watch out for these common scams:

- **Refund Calculation Scam:** "The IRS recalculated your refund. Congratulations, we found an error in the original calculation of your tax return and owe you additional money. Please verify your account information so we can make a deposit."
- **Stimulus Payment Scam:** "Our records show that you have not claimed your COVID-19 stimulus payment. Please provide us with your information so we can send it to you."
- **Verification Scam:** "We need to verify your W-2 and other personal information. Please take pictures of your driver's license, documents, and forms and send them to us."
- **Gift Card Scam:** "You owe us back taxes and may be charged with a federal crime. You must pay a penalty to avoid being prosecuted. Purchase these gift cards and send them to us and we will wipe your record clean."
- **Fake Charity Scam:** Scammers pose as a legitimate charity, often with a similar name as a real charity, to trick you into donating money to their own cause—filling their pockets.
- **Fake Tax Preparers:** Watch out for tax preparers that refuse to sign the returns they prepare. If they gain access to your information, they may file fraudulent tax returns redirecting your refund or attempt to access your bank accounts.



Notes from IT

Warning Signs

Hopefully you have avoided the common tax scams, but the cyber criminals may have other methods of obtaining your information, such as data breaches of companies you do business with. Watch out for these warning signs that you may already be a victim.

- You attempt to file a tax return, either online or by mail, but are informed by the IRS or your state that they have already received one.
- You are informed by the IRS that an account has been registered in your name at IRS.gov even though you have never created one.
- You receive a transcript from the IRS that you did not request

How to Protect Yourself

Identity Theft Resources

- If you believe you have become a victim of Identity Theft, visit [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) to report it and create a recovery plan.
- For specific information and resources for tax-related identity theft, visit the Identity Theft Central web page on the IRS web site.
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E-mail and Internet Security Best Practices

- Never use public Wi-Fi to file your taxes or conduct other business such as online banking. Only connect to networks that you trust.
- Remember that IRS.gov is the only genuine website for the Internal Revenue Service. All Internet and email communications between you and the IRS would be through this site.
- Never send sensitive information via email. If you receive an email from an unknown source or one that seems suspicious, do not reply.
- Report tax-related phishing emails to Phishing@IRS.gov.

IRS Representatives – Know How They Operate

- The first point of contact by the IRS is typically via postal mail. The IRS will not contact you via email, text messaging, or your social network, nor does it advertise on websites.
- IRS representatives always carry two forms of official credentials, and you can confirm their identity by calling a dedicated IRS telephone number for verification.
- The IRS does not accept payments by gift cards.
- Review How to know it's really the IRS calling or knocking on your door on the IRS web site for additional information.

Notes from IT

Donating to Charities

- Only donate to charitable organizations that you trust. Beware of charities that require you to give or send cash.
- Verify charitable organizations using the Tax-Exempt Organization Search web page on the IRS web site.

Using Tax Preparers

- Beware of tax preparers that only accept cash payments or offer to claim fake deductions to inflate your tax refund.
- Only use a preparer that can provide you with their Tax Preparer Identification. You can verify your tax preparer through the Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications on the IRS web site.

Secure Your Identity

- Get An Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) from the IRS to prevent someone else from filing a tax return in your name.
- Check with your state to see if they offer a similar program to file your state taxes.

Welcome!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest colleagues - we are so glad you have joined us!

Senior Center

Emily Deal

Sheriff

Joshua Warren



Employee Birthdays

Happy Birthday to everyone in the Oconee County Government Family celebrating a birthday this month! You have our best wishes for a wonderful day, and we hope it's the start of a fantastic year!

Miranda Smith	02/01
Calvin Ranker	02/03
Alexus Hopkins	02/05
Danny Cottar	02/08
Robert Elder	02/08
Lucas Peck	02/10
Edwyna Arey	02/13
Andrew Henderson	02/13
Jonathan Sturm	02/13
Stacy Carson	02/14
Pat Sebring	02/14
Brittney Turner	02/15
Alexis Gainer	02/16
Matthew Lariscy	02/16
Amanda Mauldin	02/19
Caitlin McCain	02/21
Kim Mitchell	02/21
Linda Patterson	02/21
Richard Gutierrez	02/22
Donna Norton	02/22
Shawna Benson	02/23
Tyler Hartzog	02/23
Josh Cartey	02/23
John Ogle	02/24
Diane Baggett	02/26
Bethany Williams	02/27
Deanna Smith	02/28



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