

Police call attention to phone bill fraud. Suggested charges so legitimate.

MARIAH MERCER, FEATURES WRITER

u get a bill in the mail, you might? Maybe not. A scam is snaking into the city to your local phone bill. Fostoria Police Department has reports of a fraudulent "bill" along with the monthly bills from Verizon and Orbit Telecommunications. Verizon Orange flyer from Enhanced Billing, Inc (ESBI) comes with a monthly statement estimate companies.

"bill" provided to the Review Times a \$14.95 charge for "Orbit Vmail monthly fee," plus \$1.05 taxes.

s needs to be a buyer-situation," said Fostoria Department Officer Shilo. The FPD has received reports, but one dutiful citizen wishes to remain anonymous.

of the charges that appeared on the bills already showed the charges that appeared.

citizen who contacted the police and reported that the bill had his name, address, Social Security number and other information to its legitimacy, but he had not entered into any service agreement with the company listed.

Someone is on a fixed income and an electronic withdrawal, these charges can sneak by every month without them noticing," said the citizen.

On the Review Times called to get more questions line enclosed in the bill, the company claimed to be "voice mail" services.

BI is a billing aggregator, as an intermediary between providers and the local phone company, contracting with the local companies to have charges on their client vendors placed on consumers' telephone bills and to the local telephone companies those charges from consumers.

The company was fined by the Federal Trade Commission in 2001 for "misleading" similar unauthorized services for a variety of services onto consumers' telephone bills and claimants consumers had to pay the fees, even though they neither used the services nor authorized the charges.

Under the terms of the FTC settlement, the company had been found to be illegally billing customers in the future.

Frankfort regarding why the company did not take any action. "And what's worse, is if it does and you don't pay it, you get the next week with 'late fee'."

Frankfort believes that the companies are targeting senior citizens because they are more likely to pay for fixed incomes. He added that it was a civil matter, not a criminal.

We want to make citizens aware of a spot any unexplained charges, a call and get them removed," Frankfort said.

For more information on avoiding this, visit www.servingourseniors.org or contact the Bureau of Concern 9-435-4357.

Frankfort hits nopper.

NEW YORK (AP) — Authorities say a woman who jumped to her death inside a busy New York City subway station.

landed on a teenager, causing injuries that sent him to a hospital. The lower level of the Queens Center Mall was packed with high school students on spring break when the woman jumped Wednesday.

Derrick Mulnoz, 17, had been lying in a massage chair with a book, "sit back and relax," on the woman landed on him.

The teen's stepbrother says the woman was briefly knocked unconscious and has a large gash on his forehead. Queens District Attorney hard A. Brown says the woman was in her early to mid-50s.

Habitat's helping hands



Photos by LINDA WOODLAND / the Review Times

JESSICA AND JASON Minard work together to clean up the outside of a Fostoria Area Habitat for Humanity home at 301 E. Center St. Wednesday. The Minards are building sweat-equity hours that will count towards the purchase of their own Habitat home someday.

Volunteers getting homes ready for new owners

By LINDA WOODLAND, MANAGING EDITOR

On a beautiful crisp Wednesday evening, people are raking leaves, pulling weeds and sweeping sidewalks while others are busy making a clean sweep from the inside for some major spring cleaning.

Not an uncommon sight for one of the first decent evenings to take place recently in Fostoria.

What is uncommon is that these people were not working on their own yard or their own house. They were preparing a Habitat for Humanity home.

Susan LaMarche, vice president of the Fostoria chapter, was in charge of approximately a dozen volunteers preparing 301 E. Center St. to become home for a Fostoria Habitat family.

"We have three families right now and only two homes," LaMarche said as she temporarily removed a hefty work glove from her hand to wipe perspiration from her face.

LaMarche explained homes for Habitat families come from donations, purchased at auction and some are built from the ground up.

"Refurbishing a home is a lot quicker than building one," she said.

Everyone seemed to know their task Wednesday as LaMarche, along with other members of the Fostoria Habitat board and a core of volunteers cleaned up a winter's worth of debris from inside and outside the two-story, three-bedroom 1,476 square-foot home that was constructed at the turn of the century, long before the underpass it towers over was built.

Nan Schuett of Fostoria was among the volunteers. She explained her grandson Josh, who was on Easter break from his school in Mansfield, was in Fostoria for a visit so she brought him along to help. The 10-year-old wasted no time getting down to business sweeping the soil left behind on the sidewalk after his grandmother raked leaves and debris across it.

The Schuett's were donating their time to a Habitat family who will need to put in 500 sweat-equity hours in order to purchase a home through Fostoria Area Habitat for Humanity.

According to a Habitat fact sheet, through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, the non-profit organization builds and rehabilitates houses with the help of partner families. Habitat houses are sold to these families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build more Habitat houses.

Also volunteering their time to the Center Street project was one of the three Fostoria Habitat families — Jason and Jessica Minard.

The young Fostoria couple were putting in sweat equity hours that will count towards a home they hope to one day own.

The Minards and their three children are living in a rental that has been put on the market for sale. The Minards put in 20 volunteer hours before they became a partner family and they were closing in on logging a total of 20 more hours Wednesday night.

As Jason lugged rolls of worn carpet out of the house and to a dumpster parked alongside the small 45- by 93-foot lot, Jessica feverishly attacked weeds along the house's foundation.

The Minards have three children under the age of 10 and are uncertain of where they will live if their rental is sold before a Habitat home is ready for them.

"My husband just got laid off from Honeywell," she said, tugging on yet another stubborn root. Jessica, who works as an aide for the WSOS program at Longfellow, said her seasonal job is grant-based.

"So you never know if the money will be there next year," she explained.

Nevertheless, she is excited at the prospects of one day owning her own home.

And even though the Center Street house she and her husband are working hard to prepare for habitation will most likely not be their home, Jessica is not disheartened.

"I look at it as I'm working for my own house someday," she said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fostoria Area Habitat for Humanity is always in need of volunteers. To help, contact Habitat for Humanity by calling 419-435-2844.



JOSH SCHUETT sweeps the sidewalk at a Fostoria Habitat for Humanity house at 301 E. Center St. Wednesday evening. The 10-year-old from Mansfield was on spring break visiting his grandparents, and joined his grandmother, Nan Schuett, in volunteering their time as sweat equity hours for a Habitat family. A Habitat family needs 500 sweat-equity hours, 40 percent of which can be worked by others and donated back to the family, in order to purchase a home.

Fostoria Area Habitat for Humanity

Fostoria Area Habitat for Humanity is always in need of volunteers. Listed below is the times and location for this month's work days:

Table with 3 columns: LOCATION, DATE, TIME. It lists work days at 301 E. Center St. for April 15, 18, 22, 25, and 29.

To volunteer, call 419-435-2844.