**For Immediate Release**

**Ameren Illinois Reminding Customers to Beware of Utility Scams**

*Company designates October 15-19 Utility Scam Awareness Week*

**Collinsville, IL –** In an effort to prevent residential and business customers from becoming the victims of utility scams, Ameren Illinois has designated October 15-19 as Utility Scam Awareness Week across its service territory.

Since the company began tracking utility scams in 2014, more than 4,000 customers have reported that they were contacted by a person posing as an Ameren Illinois official who threatened to disconnect the customer's electric service if the customer did not make an immediate payment (usually through a pre-paid Green Dot or MoneyPak card). Scams have cost Ameren Illinois customers more than $140,000 over the period.

As part of the week-long public awareness campaign, Ameren Illinois will be visiting small businesses throughout the territory, sharing educational materials with residential customers through social media, and working with partner organizations to educate the public about how to spot the warning signs of a scam and avoid falling victim.

"On the surface, it might seem obvious that these demands for payment are fraudulent, but scammers are using increasingly advanced tactics and they are very convincing,” said Richard J. Mark, Chairman and President, Ameren Illinois. “This week we're shining a spotlight on the problem while providing our residential and business customers with tools and resources to protect themselves from being scammed.”

While virtually anyone can be victimized by a utility scammer, the elderly and residents who do not speak English as a first language are especially vulnerable. Small businesses are also frequent targets.

Common indications of utility scams include unsolicited requests for personal information, pressure to make an immediate payment, calls originating from a non-Ameren phone number, and offers that seem too good to be true. Mark reminds customers that Ameren Illinois will never demand payment over the phone, visit a customer at home to discuss an account, or ask for a customer's personal information.

Service disconnection is always a last resort and only happens after multiple attempts to establish payment solutions. In the event that service must be disconnected, customers are notified through the mail.

If you believe that you have been contacted by a utility scammer, hang up immediately and call Ameren Illinois at 800.755.5000.

The Ameren Illinois customer care team will listen closely to your account of the situation and provide a report to Ameren Security to determine if additional investigation is needed. You can also put in a call to your local law enforcement.

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