

## with AI, financial scammers are on the rise

**Best advice: don't be forced into a false sense of panic**

**Paige Gross  
The Kansas Reflector**

It started with a seemingly routine reminder for Nancy Hall to update her Norton antivirus software. The 69-year-old Philadelphia resident sat down at her laptop to file her taxes recently and was prompted to call a number that was said to be the software company's cus-

tomers support. She had been hacked, the message said.

"It said, 'you must call Microsoft right away, or else, you're in danger of losing everything,'" Hall said.

A man on the line claimed to be in talks with her bank, saying hackers managed to download child pornography to her computer and transfer \$18,000 to Russian accounts overnight.

He told Hall he was transferring her to the fraud department at her bank, where she spoke to someone who knew

**One of the most current, wide-spread scams are texts and alerts from toll payment agency E-ZPass, asking a user to pay an outstanding bill at the included link. Last year, E-ZPass said the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center had received more than 2,000 complaints about the texts.**

details about her local branch. After verifying personal details, that person asked her to come in to make a cash withdrawal that she could then use to purchase cryptocurrency at a specific ATM.

The pair told her she was at threat of being arrested by Homeland Security for what was found on her laptop unless she obliged.

After a few stressful hours of trying to sort out the situation, something clicked, Hall said a friend was scammed out of \$800,000 in retirement savings last year after being persuaded to purchase cryptocurrency in an emergency. Hall hung up the phone, then blocked the number when it continually called her back.

Financial crimes, or scams like these, have always been around, experts say. But the rise of artificial intelligence, access to sensitive information on the dark web, and a lack of federal oversight for these crimes means it's never been easier to be a scammer, security experts say.

"AI has made these things so believable," said Melissa O'Leary, a Portland, Maine-based partner and chief strategy officer at cybersecurity firm Fortalice Solutions. "Sometimes you can't

tell, 'is this legitimate or not?'"

Scammers often pose as trusted corporations, government departments or as someone a victim knows. Many companies that have been spoofed, like Norton, put out warnings about these scams.

They also use heightened emotional responses and a sense of urgency to get you to transfer money or release personal details, cybersecurity experts say.

"Now I look back on it, I'm like, 'How was I so stupid to say stay on (See SCAMMERS on page 23)

### Scott Co. LEC Report

**Week of April 13-20  
Police Department**

**April 15:** 10:40 a.m. Officers investigated a report of a criminal threat towards the school. Upon investigation, it was determined there was no validity to the threat.

**April 17:** 12:25 p.m. A resident at 412 College reported that telephone harassment from a known individual is continuing.

**April 18:** 6:15 p.m. Jason R. Young, 38, was arrested at 1720 Main Street for theft and transported to the LEC.

**April 19:** 12:59 a.m. A juvenile was arrested for DUI.

**April 20:** 8:28 p.m. Laura M. Hickert, 41, was arrested for DUI, violation of driving restrictions, no proof of vehicle insurance and illegal vehicle tags. She was transported to the LEC.

**Sheriff's Department**

**April 18:** 4:35 p.m. Deputies conducted a welfare check at 10631 South US83 Highway.

### Public Notice

(First published in The Scott County Record Thurs., April 24, 2025; last published Thurs., May 8, 2025)3t  
IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF SCOTT COUNTY, KANSAS  
In the Matter of the Estate of MANUEL CASTILLO, Deceased

Case No.  
SC-2-25-PR-000003  
(Petition Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 59)

**NOTICE OF HEARING**  
THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are notified that a Petition has been filed in this Court by Elizabeth Castillo one of the heirs of Manuel Castillo, deceased, requesting: Descent be determined of the following described property: One fifth interest in real estate described below

A parcel of land in the Southwest Quarter of Section 33, Township 17 South, Range 31 West of the 6th P.M., in Scott County, Kansas, being further described as follows:

Beginning at the West one-quarter corner of Section 33, T17S, R31, thence S 89°31'01"E on the North line of the Southwest quarter for a distance of 992.15 feet; thence S01°44'21"W for

a distance of 824.15 feet; thence N89°01'52"W for a distance of 992.00 feet to a point on the West line of the Southwest quarter; thence N01°44'21"E on said West line for a distance of 815.74 feet to the Point of Beginning, and all personal property owned by decedent at the time of death. And that such property and all personal property owned by the decedent at the time of death be assigned pursuant to the laws of intestate succession.

You are required to file your written defenses to the Petition on or before May 30, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. in the city of Scott City in Scott County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

Elizabeth Castillo,  
petitioner

LAW OFFICE OF  
DALE E. PIKE, Chtd.  
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Dighton, Kansas 67839  
(620) 397-2523  
dpike4@hotmail.com

(Published in The Scott County Record on Thurs., April 24, 2025)1t  
City of Scott City • 221 W. 5th • Scott City, Ks. 67871  
**TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2025, THRU MARCH 31, 2025**

FUNDS	Jan. 1, 2025	EXPENSES	RECEIPTS	March 31, 2025
General Fund	\$ 1,954,278.85	\$ 1,007,081.16	\$ 1,739,991.72	\$ 2,687,189.41
Employee Benefit	56,849.75	95,771.84	289,512.75	250,590.66
Transient Guest Tax	70,151.17	8,911.63	18,706.48	79,946.02
Insurance Proceeds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fire Equipment	20.18		8.84	29.02
Municipal Equipment	111,766.58			111,766.58
Airport Enterprise	100,262.52	2,869.53	5,673.45	103,066.44
Airport Sinking	372,031.48	28,716.00	84,687.79	428,003.27
Special Highway	34,177.55		26,315.03	60,492.58
Street Imp. Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Police VIN	13,723.51		1,650.00	15,373.51
911 Fund	219,838.50	2,635.75	18,392.21	235,594.96
Special Parks	10,715.14		2,306.32	13,021.46
American Rescue Plan Act	181,212.89			181,212.89
Water Utility	1,365,555.84	208,939.46	263,258.58	1,419,874.96
Water Reserve	350,000.00			350,000.00
Sewer Use Fee	377,046.85	51,291.57	16,769.70	342,524.98
Sewer Reserve Fund	350,000.00		(69,000.00)	281,000.00
Kansas Fights Addiction	23,264.28		636.85	23,901.13
Capital Improvement	443,330.84	310,910.15		132,420.69
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 6,034,225.93</b>	<b>\$ 1,717,127.09</b>	<b>\$ 2,398,909.72</b>	<b>\$ 6,716,008.56</b>
			AVAILABLE CASH	\$ 6,716,008.56

I, Tamara L. Rice, hereby certify that the above statement is correct

*Tamara L. Rice*

Tamara L. Rice  
City Treasurer

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1	4		3					
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answers on page 25

## Horizon

(continued from page two)

think the governor's been pretty consistent in her message that we need to be showing fiscal restraint and making sure we have a good handle on expenditures and don't grow them unnecessarily."

Proffitt said the projected \$800 million decline in state budget ending balances in fiscal years 2027, 2028 and 2029 would leave the state in dire financial condition. An unknown for forecasters - which won't be known for another couple of months after the tax season ends - is the influence of retroactive income tax cuts approved by state lawmakers in 2024.

In addition, he said, the forecast changes didn't take into account the influence of tax bills on Kelly's desk nor possible federal policy shifts.

Shirley Morrow, director of the nonpartisan Kansas Legislative Research Department, said the solution to the state's future budget predicament was obvious.

"The simple answer - and this is going to be too simple - is increase revenue and decrease expenditures," she said.

Morrow said forces that could influence the state's bottom line were tied to volatility in the U.S. economy.

"The reoccurring theme throughout the forecast cycle is an increased volatility in the state's economy," Morrow said.

She said the Kansas inflation rate in 2025 has been raised from 2.3% to 2.9% while the estimate for inflation in 2026 was raised from 2.2% to 2.5%.

In terms of agriculture, she said, crop producers continued to struggle with low commodity prices and high input costs.

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