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**FairPoint Teams with Vermont Attorney General, AARP and  
Rutland Police to Raise Awareness about Telephone Scam**

*Vermont Seniors are Targets of Lottery Scam Originating from  
Area Code 876*

**Rutland, Vermont (May 17, 2012)** – FairPoint Communications, Vermont Attorney General William Sorrell, AARP Vermont and Rutland City Police Department held a press conference today to raise awareness about a telephone scam originating from the Jamaican 876 area code that targets seniors in Vermont and across northern New England. FairPoint also unveiled a Public Service Announcement and expanded website, [www.bewareof876.com](http://www.bewareof876.com), with resources to identify and prevent phone scams.

Today's press conference was prompted by information about a Rutland-area senior who received nearly 30 phone calls from the 876 area code in less than a month's time. This is just the latest in an alarming number of cases of telephone scams originating from the 876 area code that have been reported in Vermont, according to the Vermont Attorney General's office and FairPoint Communications.

"Vermonters receiving an unexpected call from area code 876 should be on high alert. These calls are almost certainly from scam artists," said Vermont Attorney General Bill Sorrell. "We are pleased to join forces with FairPoint Communications, law enforcement officials, local authorities, seniors' organizations, and others to warn the public about so-called 'Jamaican scams.' Money sent to these thieves is gone for good. Joint efforts, like this, are key to preventing devastating losses."

The Attorney General reports that his office receives more than 1,000 calls per year on phone scams, of which approximately 20 percent involve calls from Jamaica.

Over the last two years, some Vermonters who notified his office about scams originating in Jamaica reported losses between several hundred dollars and \$18,000, with many in the range of \$2,000 to \$6,000.

While this is the first case reported to the Rutland Police of a telephone scam originating from area code 876 in Rutland, police believe there are more victims who are afraid or ashamed to come forward, said interim Rutland Police Chief Jim Baker. "If you have received suspicious calls from unfamiliar numbers please contact local authorities or your telephone provider. Together we can stop this scam and protect our seniors."

FairPoint launched the "Beware: Scams from Area Code 876" campaign in late March in response to these scams and created a website, [www.bewareof876.com](http://www.bewareof876.com) for tips on preventing phone scams. The announcement gained national and international attention, prompting additional media coverage that forced the Jamaican government to establish a task force to address the 30,000 calls made from Jamaica into the U.S. attempting to defraud American citizens every day.

An Associated Press report noted conservative estimates that put the yearly take from Jamaican scams at \$300 million, up from about \$30 million in 2009.

"We know that Vermont seniors are regular targets of scams originating from area code 876. Our goal is to help shed light on the abusive treatment of seniors and provide resources to family members, law enforcement and senior organizations to identify and prevent these scams," said Mike Smith, Vermont state president of FairPoint Communications. "We recently expanded [www.bewareof876.com](http://www.bewareof876.com) to provide additional tools and resources and have developed a compelling Public Service Announcement that is available to download."

The scam works as follows:

- Seniors receive a call from an 876 area code, which is often mistaken for a toll-free number and are congratulated for winning the Jamaican lottery, new car or new home. They are then directed to send a fee, typically \$150-\$250, according to Sorrell, purportedly to process the lottery winnings. They are told that once the fee is received, money will be wired to their bank account and the car will be delivered to their home.
- Many times the caller will tell the victim that a representative of the lottery is in the area and as soon as the process fee is received, someone will deliver a check to their home. Scammers often use Google Earth to identify local landmarks and make the scam more believable.
- A key to the scammer's success is convincing victims to promise not to tell their family members and to make it a big surprise. If the scammers feel they have a potential victim, the calls will increase in frequency, resulting in hundreds of calls.
- The money is requested through a wire from Western Union, Green Dot Card or in a creative way such as putting \$100 bills in each page of a magazine.

"We very concerned about the proliferation of new scams targeting older residents in Vermont," said Greg Marchildon, AARP Vermont state director. "Sadly, seniors are more vulnerable than others in this regard as they are more often home to answer the phone, are generally trusting of others and many times have assets they can easily access. We're pleased to help alert Vermonters as to how to avoid being a

victim, and we support the Beware: Scams from Area Code 876 campaign and any law enforcement efforts to address this problem.”

For more information about scams originating from area code 876, visit:

[www.bewareof876.com](http://www.bewareof876.com).

To report a scam, file a complaint with the Attorney General’s Consumer Assistance Program at: [www.uvm.edu/consumer](http://www.uvm.edu/consumer), or send a complaint to: Consumer Assistance Program, 146 University Place, Burlington, VT 05405, or FAX: (802) 656-1423. Call CAP toll-free in Vermont at 800-649-2424 Receive consumer protection alerts on twitter at: vtconsumers.

**About FairPoint Communications, Inc.**

FairPoint Communications, Inc. (NasdaqCM: FRP) is a leading communications provider of broadband Internet access, local and long-distance phone, television and other high-capacity data services to customers in communities across 18 states. Through its fast, reliable fiber network, FairPoint delivers high-quality data and voice networking communications solutions to residential, business and wholesale customers. FairPoint delivers VantagePointSM services through its resilient IP-based network in northern New England. This state-of-the-art fiber network provides carrier Ethernet connections to support the surging bandwidth and performance requirements for cloud-based applications like network storage, disaster recovery, distance learning, medical imaging, video conferencing and CAD/CAM along with traditional voice, VoIP, video and Internet access solutions. Additional information about FairPoint products and services is available at [www.FairPoint.com](http://www.FairPoint.com). You can also connect with FairPoint on Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/myfairpoint>) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/myfairpoint>).

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