

Nanaimo woman loses almost \$27,000 in scam

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Times Colonist

A Nanaimo senior has been scammed out of nearly \$27,000 after being tricked into believing she had won the grand prize — including a luxury car — in a \$750-million lottery.

She has given up hope that she will ever see her money again, Nanaimo RCMP said.

The con began last month when the woman received numerous phone calls from a man who said his name was Dave Morin, police said.

He told her that she had won the grand prize in a lottery, but had to pay taxes before she

could claim it. She was told the prize included a Mercedes-Benz.

Calls kept coming in during the next three weeks. The woman was told to buy Vanilla pre-paid gift cards (Vanilla is similar to a credit card) and to send cash by mail to addresses in B.C. and elsewhere in North America.

The woman sent close to \$16,000 in cash by mail and another \$10,600 in Vanilla cards, RCMP said.

After days passed and the prize did not arrive, the woman talked to a relative about the situation.

The family member convinced her that there was no

lottery and that it was a scam.

As a result, the woman changed her phone number.

“Sadly, this happens more often than not, and in many cases, the victim only realizes that they have been scammed when the prize never comes,” said Const. Gary O’Brien.

Lottery scams can come via email, social media, phone and regular mail, said O’Brien. “If you do respond, the scammers will make every effort to keep you interested and will respond almost immediately to you.”

Some scammers have said they represent Reader’s Digest or Publishers Clearing House, police said.

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