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## DTE Energy investigation leads to arrest in bill collection scam

DETROIT – A DTE Energy investigation into a scam that targeted small business owners has led to an arrest and the arraignment of a Detroit man.

The man, a DTE Energy employee, was arraigned in 36<sup>th</sup> District Court in Detroit on six counts of obtaining money under false pretenses and six counts of identity theft, each a five-year felony, in connection with a scam that bilked small business owners of thousands of dollars. Bond was set at \$1.5 million.

“While there have been incidents in the past in which our customers have been victimized by utility impostors, we are particularly outraged that this scheme appears to involve a DTE Energy employee,” said Michael Lynch, DTE Energy chief security officer. “We are cooperating with authorities and will do everything possible to see that this individual who has scammed our customers is prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”

The employee, Joseph Bailey, 44, has been removed from his job pending the outcome of the case.

DTE Energy does not collect money from customers at their homes or businesses for any reason. All business transactions pertaining to bill payments with the company are done either by phone, mail, online, at customer offices or with authorized pay agents.

DTE Energy field employees carry photo identification badges that identify them as DTE Energy employees. Customers who are not sure about an employee's identification, or who want to verify the nature of the work to be done at their homes, should call DTE Energy at (800) 477-4747.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy commended the Detroit Police Department for helping to solve the case.

“While DTE Energy does not collect money in the field,” Worthy said, “it is important for people when approached by others to pay a bill to demand picture ID that has the name and address of the company he or she claims to represent. As a consumer, you should never be afraid to call the company to confirm what a person is telling you.”

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