

BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Troy Heck, Sheriff
Neal Jacobson, Chief Deputy

02/23/2026

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

I am writing you today to share briefly how cryptocurrency scams have impacted my community. My office serves as the primary law enforcement agency for about half of the 40,000 residents of Benton County. On a routine basis, we take calls from people who have either been contacted in a scam attempt or been victims of financial scams. We receive about 6 such reports per month on average. This pace puts this crime consistently among the top five crimes reported to our agency.

We have made investigating scams and educating the public about scams a priority. Trying to be proactive in this fight against scams is complicated by the ever-changing landscape of the approaches used by these criminals. However, one of the constants in all these scams is the financial vehicles used by criminals to steal money from people half a world away. Gift cards and cryptocurrencies are favored methods used by criminals due to the speed with which money can be stolen and the difficulty law enforcement faces in tracing or retrieving these funds for the victims.

In our community alone, scores of people have fallen victim to scams including several instances of victims who have lost thousands of dollars to criminals who have utilized cryptocurrency scams. Dealing with victims who may have lost their life savings in a matter of moments to a criminal is a difficult reality to process. Especially when we know the uphill battle to bring any justice for these victims.

I urge the legislature to join us in making the dishonest efforts of criminals more difficult and more risk-laden by taking bold steps to place additional safeguards around cryptocurrencies. Prioritize protecting people from becoming victims and make easier the work of law enforcement in bringing justice to those who have suffered financial loss.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request and for your service to the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Troy Heck'.

Troy Heck
Benton County Sheriff