



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

Sheriff's Office Receives Report of an Extortion Bomb Threat Hoax at Local School and Hotel

Santa Maria – The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, along with a number of law enforcement agencies nationwide, received reports today, December 13, 2018, of a bomb threat hoax that was e-mailed to an elementary school in Orcutt and a hotel in an unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County near Goleta. The e-mails included an extortion demand for money in the form of bitcoin to avoid the detonation of a bomb.

The Sheriff's Office was notified of the hoax at approximately 10:10 a.m. this morning when Alice Shaw Elementary School in Orcutt received a suspicious e-mail sent with a bomb threat attempting to extort \$20,000 in bitcoin. Santa Barbara Sheriff's Deputies worked closely with the Orcutt Union School District to ensure the safety of students and staff. Deputies staged in the area and investigated the incident, noting similar threats in and around Santa Barbara County and the country. The threat was quickly determined to be part of a nationwide hoax and not credible.

At approximately 11:15 a.m., the Sheriff's Office received a report of another bomb threat e-mail that was sent to the Ramada Inn located in the 4700 block of Calle Real in Goleta. Again, that threat was also determined to be part of the nationwide hoax and not credible.

The Sheriff's Bomb Squad was in touch with both responses, as well as additional threats received in the City of Santa Barbara. The Bomb Squad monitored all of the incidents in the county, provided direction and has been in communication with the FBI.

The FBI is investigating the threats, which appear to be originating from outside the United States. The Sheriff's Office recommends that if you receive one of these threats to contact the law enforcement agency in your area.