Valencia County
Office of the County Manager
444 Luna Avenue ◊ P.O. Box 1119
Los Lunas, New Mexico 87031
Office: 505.866.2011

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Background

In early January 2026, Valencia County was a victim of fraud through an email phishing scheme. This resulted in the loss of $2.02 million to an entity posing as a member of Bradbury Stamm Construction. Bradbury Stamm Construction is the contractor that is building the new Valencia County Hospital in Los Lunas.

The fraudulent party first reached out to Valencia County in April 2025, reaching out to both the Grants and Purchasing Department. Then, in early January 2026, Valencia County leaders were alerted by our Grants Director that Bradbury was awaiting payment on an outstanding invoice, and our Finance Director advised that payment had already been made on that invoice via the Automated Clearing House (ACH) payment system. It was then recognized by Valencia County as an instance of fraud, and we immediately reported the incident to our bank, the state auditor, and other appropriate legal authorities.

Valencia County conducted a third-party investigation to better understand the incident that occurred, assess risk, and determine mitigation for the future. The organization has a robust information technology process of training employees on how to identify phishing schemes; these escalated when the county started using an ACH payment system in September 2025.

Statement

"Even with thorough technological training, robust testing as well as internal processes, a mistake happened as a result of human error," says Jhonathan Aragon, Valencia County Manager. "We are identifying ways to improve these processes with the hope of restoring the public's trust. We are familiar with how technology can be used to mislead and misrepresent. A third party was brought in to investigate this and we are confident it is a phishing scheme and not an employee wanting to defraud the county. We will continue to update the County Commission and our community as we have available information. This does not impact the planned Valencia County Hospital where construction is expected be completed this August, with doors opening in the fall."

Contact:

If you have additional questions, please send them to vcinquiries@valencianm.gov

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Jhonathan Aragon, County Manager