



Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 3 Number 2

Cons and Frauds: How to Reduce the Threat (Part II)

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes there is, affecting over half a million people every year. Many cons and frauds are sophisticated and can fool even the smartest people. Therefore, it is important to be aware of what different scams are out there.

Pop-Up Fraud: Recently, users of the American Express website were potential victims of a new fraud: pop-ups. The scam is dangerous because it is so believable. The pop-up only occurs when users are logged into the official American Express website. The pop-up claims to offer a service or verify client information. If the link is clicked, information the users provide does not go to American Express, but to thieves who can now use the information for identity theft. Although American Express seems to be the first large company targeted, we can expect this fraud to become more common.

Always be suspicious of any unsolicited request for personal information!

Avoid being a victim:

1. **Never** respond to any pop-ups that ask for personal information, even if you are on an official company website.
2. If you would like to check the information, call your company directly from a phone number you have in your own records or go to the company's official website. Never click on a link embedded in the pop-up.
3. To stop pop-ups from occurring, engage the "pop-up blocker" on your computer.

Tax Refund Scams: Each tax season brings a new wave of refund request phishing schemes. Often, the victim receives an official-looking email informing them of their right to access a secure website to find out if the IRS received their return and whether their refund was processed. Victims are also informed that they can correct or change their mailing address. Victims are told they will be asked to provide their name, social security number, and credit card number. An IRS statute is provided. However, the link embedded in the email does not go to the IRS, but to a fraudulent website hosted abroad. The victim's information can then be used to commit identity theft.

Check your Credit

Keeping a close eye on your credit report is one of the best ways to detect identity theft early. The only authorized source for free credit reports is www.annualcreditreport.com or calling 1-877-322-8228.

Avoid being a victim:

1. The IRS does not send out unsolicited emails asking for personal or financial information.
2. Credit card information, ATM pins or any other similar information aren't needed to look up the status of tax returns.
3. Delete any email that claims to offer tax refund assistance.
4. If you would like to know the status of your refund, contact the IRS directly by calling 1-800-829-1040 or going to the official IRS website. (Resource: www.scambusters.org)

Crime Alert: Distraction Thefts

Thefts of credit cards from purses are on the rise again. When shopping, keep your purse closed and never leave it in the basket of your shopping cart! Be especially aware whenever an unknown person attempts to engage you in conversation while shopping. It is a common distraction technique.

Plymouth Police Explorers Named State's Top Explorer Post

Plymouth recently sent 3 teams to compete at this year's State conference, April 27-30, 2006. Plymouth Explorers had their most successful year in the Post's 22-year history, taking home the following awards: 1st place in Resiliency in Law Enforcement (Academic), 1st place in Special Response Team-Dynamic High Risk Entries (Academic), 1st place in Domestic Crisis response (Practical), 2nd place in Traffic Stops (Practical), 2nd place in Crime Scene Search (Practical), 5th place in White Collar Crime (Practical), 5th place team in shooting, 5th place individual slow fire shooting (Nick Flies), and 5th place individual timed fire shooting (Ashley Pederson). In addition, the Post was awarded the "Don Cup", which is awarded to Minnesota's top Explorer program.

Up next for the Explorers is the National Law Enforcement Explorer Conference in Flagstaff, Arizona July 10-15, 2006. The National Conference is a great opportunity for more experienced Explorers to showcase their accomplishments and meet Explorers from all over the nation. Abby McNeil, Dan McCullough, Ashley Pederson, and Kurtis Nusbaum were chosen to represent Plymouth at this year's National Conference. Nationals are held every other year, and due to cost, this will be the first time in a decade that Plymouth Explorers will attend. Participation in this year's conference is being made possible by the support from the Plymouth Crime and Fire Prevention Fund.

Join Now!

The Explorer program is designed to introduce young people to the career of law enforcement. Explorers interact with police officers on a regular basis and learn first hand what the duties and responsibilities are of police officers. Applications are now being accepted. Call 763-509-5147 for more information or to request an application.

Minimum eligibility:

- Between the ages of 14 and 20 years old.
- No past criminal police contact
- No more than 2 violations on their driving record

Plymouth Citizens Public Safety Academy—Fall 2006

The Plymouth Police and Fire Departments are again offering the Citizens Public Safety Academy. The academy gives attendees insight into the day-to-day world of Plymouth police officers and firefighters. Sessions will cover diverse topics, including fire operations, crime lab, SWAT, investigations, auxiliary services, and dispatch. Students also will learn about the challenges facing these professions. The academy will feature: classroom instruction on methodologies, laws, equipment and technologies; field experience; and personal interaction with department members. The 13-week academy is offered on Tuesday evenings from 7-10 PM, beginning September 12, 2006. Class size is limited to 30 students. Interested persons, 15 years old or older, may call 763-509-5160 for more information. The application process will include a criminal history check on each applicant.

Helpful Reminders:

Fireworks:

Any fireworks that explode or go up in the air are ILLEGAL!

Seatbelts:

Seatbelts are required for all front seat passengers and children under the age of 12, anywhere in the vehicle.

All children under the age of 4 *must* be secured in a safety seat that meets federal standards.

Street Parking Restrictions:

Vehicles cannot be parked on any public city street between the hours of **2:00-5:00 AM**. To request an overnight parking permit, contact the Police Department at 763-509-5160.

**If you see suspicious activity,
please call 9-1-1 immediately.**

Featured Crime Prevention Program: McGruff Truck

Where should your child go if they are in need of assistance and they don't see a police officer? Have them look for McGruff on City of Plymouth vehicles. McGruff is a safe place for your child to be while waiting for police for assistance.



Along for the Ride

Tune in to "Along for the Ride" Wednesdays at 8:30 PM on cable Channel 20. Get to know the Plymouth Police Department in a whole new way!

Emergency: **9-1-1** Non-emergency: **763-525-6210** Crime Information Line: **763-509-5177**

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, 763-509-5147 or at ahaseman@ci.plymouth.mn.us. Thank you!