



# Fraud Newsletter

January 2009

*Sheriff Steve Mansfield*

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*"If it's too good to be true  
it normally is"*

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## **Fraud and ID Theft Information – To Better Protect the Residents of Lewis County**

**Fraud is simply a theft by trick. It can take the form of chain letters claiming huge amounts of cash to those who send money in or people claiming they will provide a service and never do.**

**Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception for economic gain. This newsletter is intended to keep the public informed of the most recent fraud schemes happening in our county. It will also provide resources to help you take precautions to protect yourself from these vicious crimes.**

### **PROTECT YOUR ID**

- 1 Always know who you are providing personal information to
- 2 If you use passwords to access accounts make sure to change them often
- 3 Never provide personal information in response to any unsolicited offer
- 4 Know the company you are dealing with when making online purchases

## **Current Scams and Frauds Hitting Lewis County**

### **Quick Money Scams**

**During this time of economic struggle everyone is looking for ways to save money, or to make it stretch just a bit more. This is the time that con artists are waiting for. All those scams involving making quick money or winning a lottery start coming back. It happens every day. People are notified by mail that they have won a free prize. Usually, it's a postcard notice that says your prize will be one of four or five "valuable" items--a new car, a vacation, a color television, or a \$1,000 savings bond. Major companies sometimes give away expensive items in special promotions, but they usually don't notify winners with a postcard. Sometimes it a letter saying that they have won a large sum of money and only have to pay a small percentage as taxes. These notices are mailed by con artists whose sole purpose is to rip you off.**

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*"Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the US"*

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### Some Tips to Avoid Telemarketing Fraud:

**It's very difficult to get your money back if you've been cheated over the phone. Before you buy anything by telephone, remember:**

- **Don't buy from an unfamiliar company. Legitimate businesses understand that you want more information about their company and are happy to comply.**
- **Always ask for and wait until you receive written material about any offer or charity..**
- **You must not be asked to pay in advance for services. Pay services only after they are delivered.**
- **Some con artists will send a messenger to your home to pick up money, claiming it is part of their service to you. In reality, they are taking your money without leaving any trace of who they are or where they can be reached.**
- **Always take your time making a decision. Legitimate companies won't pressure you to make a snap decision.**
- **Don't pay for a "free prize." If a caller tells you the payment is for taxes, he or she is violating federal law.**
- **It's never rude to wait and think about an offer. Be sure to talk over big investments offered by telephone salespeople with a trusted friend, family member, or financial advisor.**
- **Never respond to an offer you don't understand thoroughly.**
- **Before you receive your next sales pitch, decide what your limits are -- the kinds of financial information you will and won't give out on the telephone.**
- **Be wary of businesses that operate out of post office boxes or mail drops and do not have a street address, or of dealing with persons who do not have a direct telephone line, who are never "in" when you call, but always return your call later.**

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*"Vigilance is the only real protection against Internet fraud"*

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**Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers and expiration dates, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or social security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.**



The internet is a powerful tool used by both legitimate businesses and scam artists alike. Always take steps to protect yourself and your personal information as you would protect your home or car.

#### Other Resources

Phone Busters (Canadian Link) - <http://www.phonebusters.com/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center -  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm>

The Federal Trade Commission - <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

The FBI Fraud Information page -  
<http://www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm>

The Internet Crime Complaint Center - <http://www.ic3.gov/>

#### Lewis County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

To make a positive difference for members of our community by seeking and finding ways to affirmatively promote, preserve and deliver a feeling of security, safety and quality service.



**Sheriff Steve Mansfield**

*Committed to make a difference.*