NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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# Bid "Bon Voyage!" to Identity Theft Over Spring Break

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MADISON – Students and families go on spring break to get away from their worries, so most travelers' ideas of a relaxing vacation would not involve having the threat of personal and financial information theft hanging over their heads. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection asks travelers to follow some simple tips both during and after a getaway in order to protect against identity and financial theft.

"Recognize before your trip that you are going to be outside of your element and consider ways to minimize the exposure of your personal and financial information," said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. "For starters, mobile data users should avoid sharing sensitive information over public WiFi networks and keep the details they share on social media accounts to a minimum."

"When you return home, be proactive and run an antivirus scan on your devices and update passwords for your social media, email and financial accounts," said Frassetto.

While on vacation:

**Use caution with public WiFi.** Avoid doing any banking or transmitting any sensitive personal information online using a public WiFi network. Only enter sensitive information over password-protected networks and in secure websites (those that start with "https://" – the "s" stands for secure).

**Keep personal documents close.** Make use of a room safe when available for mobile devices, valuables and sensitive documents like passports, ID cards, credit cards and airline tickets. Do NOT pack a Social Security card unless it is necessary.

**Always keep your mobile devices in a secure location.** Your smartphone, tablet and laptop contain a wealth of personal information like your contacts, messages, media files and schedules. Know where these devices are at all times and keep them secure in public. Log out of all websites so your accounts are not accessed if your device is lost or stolen.

**Don't broadcast your trip.** Limit the info you share on social media and strengthen your account settings to only allow access to friends and family. If you share the details of your travel plans, you are providing information for scammers to use in their ploys (think "grandparent scams") and for thieves to use in determining when your home is unattended.

When you get home:

**Change passwords.** Any website you accessed on your trip was fair game for scammers, so change all of your passwords – especially for your email account.

**Check accounts.** Take a look through your bank and credit card accounts and identify any irregularities. Bring them to the immediate attention of your financial institution.

**Check credit reports.** Review your credit reports to ensure that no unexpected accounts have been created in your name.

For additional information, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at http://datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcphotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

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