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**STATEMENT
OF
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**Area Residents Cautioned -
Thieves Target Account Numbers Via Internet**

January 7, 2009

Our Consumer Fraud Division has become aware of a growing number of nationwide scams where thieves attempt to obtain your credit card, credit union, or other account numbers through email inquiries.

These victims have typically received an email from someone purporting to be from their bank or credit card issuer or other service provider, requesting that the victim visit their site and update their account information. Everything about this scam looks official—the email, the graphics, even the link provided. Once the victim clicks on the link and give their account information, the crooks are home free—with the victims' money.

Not only are these thieves posing as banks and credit card issuers, but also online auction services, such as eBay and government websites such as the IRS.

The best defense against becoming a victim to these scams is to remember one simple rule – never update your account information anywhere online except when you specifically type in the official website address, or better yet, go there in person. Your bank or credit card issuer will never e-mail you requesting your account information – they already have it!

If you suspect fraudulent activity or feel you may be the victim of such a scam, the Montgomery County Prosecutor's Consumer Fraud Division is here to field your questions—simply call 937-225-4747. If you simply want to check to see if an agency is legitimate, another resource is the local Better Business Bureau at 937-222-5825.