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October is Cyber Security Awareness Month

Las Vegas – The Nevada Fight Fraud Taskforce wants consumers to know that October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month. Now in its sixth year, this awareness campaign is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. This year's theme is "Our Shared Responsibility", reinforcing the message that all computer users must take responsibility for protecting themselves and their families at home, at work and at school.

Internet fraud is a huge problem, especially in these challenging economic times. The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, known as IC3, is averaging 28,000 complaints a month. However, there's a lot you can do to prevent being scammed.

To start, the National Cyber Security Alliance has provided these basic tips:

- Know who you're dealing with online. Think twice about opening unfamiliar e-mails or clicking on links or opening attachments in unfamiliar messages.
- Keep your web browsers and operating system up to date.
- Back up important files.
- Use security software tools as your first line of defense.
- Use strong passwords or strong authentication technology to help protect your personal information.
- Don't provide any personally-identifying information unless you're sure of the veracity of the requestor.

Consumers should also be aware of social media scams, involving Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Social networking is a great way to connect with friends, relatives and colleagues around the world. However, con artists are always looking for new ways to separate you from your hard-earned dollar,

and they are using social media to do it. For more information these types of scams, visit <http://fightfraud.nv.gov/SocialMediaScams.htm>.

In addition, watch out for scammers who use the latest media stories to come up with new computer-based scams. For example, the 2010 Census is nearly under way, but if you get an e-mail supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau asking you personal questions, it's a scam. The Census Bureau has advised that not request personally-identifying information via e-mail. Watch out for these types of news-based phishing schemes.

If you are a victim of computer fraud, report it right away to the IC3 at <http://www.ic3.gov/complaint/default.aspx>.

To learn more about how to protect yourself, find a fraud event in your area at <http://fightfraud.nv.gov/calendar.htm>.

About the Fight Fraud Taskforce and Website

The statewide Fight Fraud Taskforce includes members from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies, the I.R.S., the Department of Justice, the Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection, the Secretary of State, the Better Business Bureau in Las Vegas and Reno, the Department of Business & Industry, the Division of Mortgage Lending, the Division of Motor Vehicles, the Federal Trade Commission, U.S.P.S., and experts from the private sector among others. The group acts as a clearinghouse for fraud information and works to educate the public on how to avoid the latest scams.

The Fight Fraud Taskforce also ensures that the latest fraud information is available on the Fight Fraud website: <http://fightfraud.nv.gov>. Consumers are encouraged to visit the site, which includes extensive tips on how to prevent fraud and provides downloadable complaint forms to help you respond effectively if you become a victim. Visit it regularly for the latest fraud alerts.

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