



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Postal Service Officials Caution Against “Fake Checks,” ID Theft *National Consumer Protection Week Launch*

What: Postal Service officials will host an awareness event to celebrate National Consumer Protection Week. Officials will distribute DVDs and brochures warning against fraudulent financial schemes and tips to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft.

Who: Delores J. Killete, Vice President, Consumer Advocate, U.S. Postal Service
Kenneth R. Jones, Deputy Chief Postal Inspector, U.S. Postal Inspection Service

When: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET
Monday, March 3

Where: National Capitol Station
Post Office (Lobby)
2 Massachusetts Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002-9997
Parking available on-street and at Union Station

Background: National Consumer Protection Week, set for March 2-8, is a national program led by the Federal Trade Commission to draw attention to issues and ideas that help customers become smarter consumers of products, materials and services and improve their knowledge of how to combat fraud of any type.

The U.S. Postal Service Office of Consumer Advocate and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service are working to educate consumers about fraudulent schemes and to provide them with the tools and information needed to combat “fake check” scams and protect personal information to prevent identity theft.

The facts are telling: According to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center, the number of reported fake checks is increasing, from an average of 593 per month in 2004 to an average of 787 per month in 2007. The amount of reported losses from fake check scams has also quadrupled over the past three years. According to the National Consumers League, victims of fake check scams lose an average \$3,000 to \$4,000.

The Postal Service will point customers to the website established by the Postal Inspection Service and its business partners, www.FakeChecks.org. Information to combat identity theft can be found at www.ftc.gov/bcp/consumer.shtm.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation – 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.