



Business Watch Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 1 Number 5

Think Before You Give: Charitable Giving Scams

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, many Americans want to help the victims of this devastating natural disaster. Many people have already generously donated much needed money and necessities. Many more people will donate in the coming days and months. However, not all of the donations made will make it to hurricane victims. In times of crisis, many criminals also take advantage of the generosity and goodwill of our citizens to line their own pockets or steal personal identities. Many fraudulent scams typically arrive via mass email mailings. The fraudulent organizations usually have names very similar to reputable organizations. The solicitation is designed have individual donate by using their credit card, thus obtaining personal and credit card information. Some of the fraudulent mailings may also contain hidden viruses, Trojan horses, Spy Ware, or other malicious code designed to obtain information off the individual's computer needed for identity theft.

Remind your employees to always be careful when making donations, especially on-line. Do not feel pressured to give without further research into the organization. Reputable organizations will still need the donations in the next days, weeks, even months to come. Things to remember are:

- ✓ How experienced is the organization in carrying out relief efforts? Many new charities may have good intentions, but may not be able to effectively get the assistance to those who need it.
- ✓ Know exactly where your donation is going and what it will be used for. Where will excess donations go to after the charity ends its relief involvement?
- ✓ Make donations by check or money order made out to the organization. Do not give cash and do not make your check out to the individual who is collecting on behalf of the organization.
- ✓ Be careful about donating in response to unsolicited phone or email requests. Do not give out credit card information over the phone or via email in response to these requests. Ask for written information about the charity and it's financial statements. To find out more about the Standard of Charity Accountability, see the Better Business Website www.give.org.
- ✓ Remember, not all donations are tax deductible. Only donations made to 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable organizations are deductible. To find out if your gift is deductible, go to www.irs.gov.

Please continue to assist in whatever way you can. The victims need you help. However, taking a few minutes to know who you are donating to can help ensure your donation is going to help the victims and can help prevent you from also becoming a victim—of identity theft.

For more information about charitable giving scams and to obtain a list of reputable organizations, go to www.give.org or www.fema.gov

Robbery Prevention

Armed robbery is one of the most serious and dangerous crimes faced by businesses. Two robberies have recently occurred at businesses here in Plymouth. All businesses should take steps to reduce the chance of being the victim of a robbery. In addition, businesses need to train their employees what to do in the event of a robbery. No amount of money is worth a human life. Knowing what to do during and after a robbery is essential in keeping your employees safe. To schedule Robbery Training for your business, contact Officer Angela Haseman at 763-509-5147.

Notes from the August Business Watch Meeting

At the August 2005 Business Watch meeting, participants learned about narcotics in the work place. A representative from Partners in Prevention: Communities for Chemically Free Youth spoke about the problem of underage drinking, smoking, and drug use. Recent school surveys show that half of all 12th grade students are drinking underage and one third regularly smoke marijuana and tobacco. Partners in Prevention stressed the importance of employers communicating with young employees that illegal drug use and underage smoking or drinking is unacceptable in the workplace. They provided a resource guide for developing model workplace policies for employers. For more information about Partners in Prevention, please contact Jan Hofmann at 763-745-6988 or at jan.hofmann@wayzata.k12.mn.us.

Plymouth Police Sergeant John Sigfrinius, supervisor of the Northwest Metro Drug Task Force, also spoke about narcotics. Sgt. Sigfrinius spoke about drug use in the metro area, especially the rising popularity of meth. Sgt. Sigfrinius talked about signs that may indicate an employee is using drugs, as well as what other consequences drug use has on businesses. The next Business Watch meeting will be November 15, 2005.

Along for the Ride

The Plymouth Police Department invites you to join us on a monthly virtual ride along. Tune in to our new TV show, "Along for the Ride." "Along for the Ride" will air on local cable Channel 20 Wednesday evenings at 8:30 p.m. and on cable Channel 16 Monday evenings at 6:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings at 6:00 a.m. Each month, we will highlight different police activities, services, programs, and safety topics. Get to know the Plymouth Police Department in a whole new way!

We welcome your input! If you would like to see a topic covered on "Along for the Ride" or have a question or comment about the program, call 763-509-5139 or go to alongfortheride@ci.plymouth.mn.us.



Who do we call?

Imagine: It is 2:00 am and there is an emergency at your business. Who do the police contact? The Plymouth Police Department would like to remind businesses to keep their "on-call" lists up-to-date! The dispatch center keeps a list of contact phone numbers for use in an after-hours emergency. It is very important that the list is kept current. To update the emergency contact information for your business, contact Officer Haseman at 763-509-5147 or ahaseman@ci.plymouth.mn.us. Thank you for your assistance!

Helpful Reminders:

Street Parking Restrictions:

Vehicles cannot be parked on any public city street between the hours of **2:00-5:00 AM**. To request an overnight parking permit, contact the Plymouth Police Department at 763-509-5160.

Hennepin County Curfew:

Under 15: 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Sun-Thurs)

11:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Fri/Sat)

15-16: 11:00 PM to 5:00 AM (Sun-Thurs)

Midnight to 5:00 AM (Fri/Sat)

Age 17: Midnight to 5:00 AM

*Business Watch meetings are held the
3rd Tuesday of February, May, August,
and November.*

10:30 to 11:30 am.

*Refreshments served compliments of the
Plymouth Police Department.*

Reducing False Alarms

The majority of burglary alarms police respond to are false. Not only do repeated false alarms cost your business money through fines, but false alarms also cause mistrust of the system. When you cannot trust your alarm to do what it is designed to do—detect criminal activity—it loses its effectiveness, making your business vulnerable to burglary. In order to make sure this does not happen to you, training is key.

Employees must be trained (and regularly refreshed) on how to operate the system, when to activate the system, and how to cancel a false alarm. By taking these steps, you can protect your investment and keep trust in your alarm system.

Emergency: **9-1-1** Non-emergency: **763-525-6210**

Crime Tip Line: **763-509-5177**

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, or 763-509-5147 or at ahaseman@ci.plymouth.mn.us. Thank you!