

Complaints Regarding Charitable Scams on the Rise

RICHMOND, VA - October 10, 2001 - In the shadow of recent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Internet Fraud Complaint Center (IFCC) reports a spike in the number of complaints it has received regarding fraudulent e-mail solicitations. Fraudsters are using the Internet to prey on the public and their desire to help victims and donate money to organizations providing relief to disaster recovery efforts.

Consumers need to be on alert for these new fraud scams. "On behalf of state and local law enforcement agencies, we're communicating this new trend. We know from past experience that the way we can curb its effects is with prevention," said Glen B. Gainer III, West Virginia State Auditor and Chairman of the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) Board of Directors. "The heart of any prevention effort begins with awareness and we are urging the public to have a heightened sense of caution when asked to respond to any unsolicited e-mail."

Consumers and businesses should visit the IFCC Web site at www.ifccfbi.gov to report an Internet-based charitable scam victimization or fraud. The IFCC Web site provides a convenient and easy way to alert authorities of a violation. For law enforcement and regulatory agencies, the IFCC receives, reviews, and refers all fraud complaints. It also acts as data repository for complaints related to Internet fraud and uses the information to quantify fraud patterns. A 12-month data trends report recapping trend information for the IFCC's first year of operation is expected to be released within the next thirty days.

The IFCC has expanded its information intake to serve as the single on-line portal for the public to report information regarding the September 11 terrorist events. In a statement made by Attorney General John Ashcroft on October 4, 2001, the IFCC Web site had received more than 110,000 tips.

"With the help of the NW3C and its programs, law enforcement is in tune to, and continues to be educated on, the increasing and serious threat of Internet fraud," said Andrew Russell, Commanding Officer of the Computer Crimes and Electronic Evidence Unit for the Connecticut State Police. "We know what consumers are facing, and are working on many fronts toward the best possible methods of prevention, investigation, and prosecution of these crimes."

About the Internet Fraud Complaint Center (IFCC)

The IFCC is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National White Collar Crime Center and began operating in May 2000. The IFCC Web site is located at www.ifccfbi.gov