



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
700 W. STATE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
P. O. BOX 83720
BOISE ID 83720-0031
Website: www.idahofinance.com

Contact:
Kelly Robison
Bureau Chief
Financial Institutions
(208) 332-8005

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 20, 2000

IDAHOANS ARE WARNED: AVOID NEW, "IMPROVED" NIGERIAN MAIL SCAMS

FRAUDULENT MAIL, AND NOW E-MAIL, SCHEMES CONTINUE TO PROLIFERATE

Boise, Idaho Gavin Gee, Director of the Idaho Department of Finance, warned Idaho residents today that Nigerian financial opportunity letter fraud has resurfaced and not to fall for fraudulent mail or e-mail schemes. Idaho businesses and individuals continue to receive official-looking letters containing promises of easy riches for engaging in possibly illegal conduct. In addition, similar schemes have begun to appear in unsolicited e-mails to some Idaho businesses. Gee reported that various federal agencies are maintaining an active interagency task force whose mission is to prosecute Nigerian con artists operating both in the United States and abroad. In addition, an association of advance fee fraud victims and near-victims has organized a website on the Internet called "The 419 Coalition". The number "419" represents the Nigerian criminal code which deals with financial fraud. The Internet address for the coalition is <http://home.rica.net/alphae/419coal/index.htm> . It provides links to the U.S. federal agencies who are working to stop these operations including the Secret Service and the State Department.

An Idaho business has provided the Department with copies of the most recent appeal being made to businesses and individuals. The letter bears the following letterhead: "Federal Government of Nigeria, Financial Disbursement and Review Committee". The letter requests several items of personal information such as the individual's name, beneficiary, telephone number(s), address, and

Banks & Savings Banks (208) 332-8005
Credit Unions (208) 332-8003
Securities (208) 332-8004
Money Transmitters (208) 332-8004

PHONE: (208) 332-8000
FAX: (208) 332-8098
Director's Fax: (208) 332-8097
Securities Fax: (208) 332-8099

Supporting Services (208) 332-8001
Mortgage Companies (208) 332-8002
Finance Companies (208) 332-8002
Collection Agencies (208) 332-8002

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

banking information. This appears to be a flagrant attempt at identification theft. Once the victim provides the requested information regarding bank names, account numbers, phone or fax numbers, the accounts are cleaned out and the con artist disappears. Information sent by the victims is often used for letters-of-credit fraud, unemployment insurance claims, credit card and welfare fraud. These swindlers are persistent and innovative.

Any persons who have been contacted by Nigerian representatives soliciting any type of "business arrangement" are encouraged to contact the Department of Finance at (208)332-8002 or toll-free in Idaho at 1-888-346-3378.

* * * * *

Department of Finance Press Releases and other information can be found on the Internet via the worldwide web at <http://www2.state.id.us/finance/dof.htm> and may be obtained by contacting the Department at (208) 332-8080 or Idaho toll-free at 1-888-346-3378.