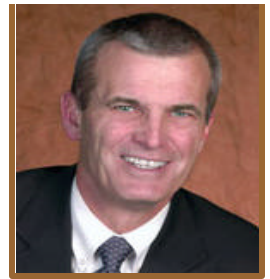


# **CONSUMER ALERT!**

From the Office of Jefferson/Gilpin Counties  
District Attorney Scott Storey



## **"DON'T GET CAUGHT!"**

Fishing in the high country of Colorado is a great experience; throw out a line with enticing bait, hook a fish, and reel it in!

'Phishing' is when crooks do the same...only with people as the target. These con artists make phone calls, or send an E-mail or piece of 'hard' mail, dangle bait, hope the hook catches, and then reel in a victim.

So what is the bait that hooks people? It may be the hope of winning a lottery or sweepstakes. It may be a message of fear: you've missed Jury Duty or your car warranty is out-of-date or a grandchild has experienced an emergency and needs money wired immediately. It may be the promise of a special vacation, gift certificates, or some other offer that requires an immediate response; the crook hopes you react NOW and think later.

When I'm fishing for real fish, I change the lure when I believe the fish have become alerted to my efforts. Crooks will change the bait occasionally as well; especially if a particular scheme seems to be gaining attention and people are becoming alert to it. But 'Phishing' will not stop! Unfortunately, it works. With poor economic conditions, 'Phishing' may become more effective. Let's talk about general protective hints regardless of the bait:

- ✿ If it's too good to be true...it may be 'Phishing';
  - ✿ If the offer is 'Something for virtually nothing,'...it may be 'Phishing';
  - ✿ If it raised the need, particularly an emergency need, for money to be wired or a Money Order sent...it may be 'Phishing';
  - ✿ If personal information, such as your bank account number, a credit card account number & security code, or Social Security number are needed to complete the deal...it may be 'Phishing';
  - ✿ If you need to respond immediately for the deal to occur or the transaction needs to be 'Kept Secret'...it may be 'Phishing';
- No legitimate business or government agency will contact you by phone to conduct business or solve a problem;
  - Invest in 'Caller ID' and only answer calls from known phone numbers;
  - When an offer is made by phone, take a moment to allow adrenaline to subside; then find a manner of 'checking it out' *before* you act.

**Call to schedule a crime prevention seminar: 303-271-6970**