

DARE to CARE

National Fraud Awareness Week (July 9-14)

Through a partnership with the Wisconsin Bankers Association, the Waushara County Sheriff's Department has a powerful new tool to combat the steady growth of financial crimes in Wisconsin. It's called FinCrime—the Midwest's leading anti-financial crime network.

FinCrime allows law enforcement and financial institutions to stay a step ahead of the increasingly sophisticated, brazen and unconscionable financial criminals by rapidly sharing information through Email alerts. Reportable crimes through the network may include check fraud, counterfeit schemes, descriptions of bank robbery suspects and identity theft scams. The alerts have proven to be highly effective in reducing monetary losses and increasing arrest rates in the 15 states where it is in use.

Statistics from the Wisconsin Bankers Association and Federal Trade Commission show that all forms of financial crimes are increasing in Wisconsin. Protect yourself from falling victim to a financial crime, like identity theft, by remembering these tips:

- Never give out your personal financial information over the phone or the computer, unless you were the one to make the first contact. Banks will **never** ask you to “verify” your financial information via an Email or over the phone.
- When sending credit card number electronically, make sure the site is secure and reputable.
- Check your credit card and bank account statements regularly and look for unauthorized charges, even small ones. Report these discrepancies immediately.
- Document all your credit cards and account information, along with the card issuer's contact information. If anything looks suspicious or you lose your credit card, contact the issuer immediately.
- The safest way to make Internet purchases is by credit card. If something is wrong, you can most easily dispute the charges.

For more information on how you can protect yourself from becoming a victim of financial crime contact your local bank or police agency.

Sheriff David R. Peterson