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MEDIA ALERT

Utah Division of Consumer Protection warns of fake Walmart gift card text

"Utah consumers report text messages on cell phones with \$1000 Walmart gift card offer"

(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Division of Consumer Protection is warning Utah consumers about a scam text involving Walmart gift cards. Residents have reported receiving text messages on their cell phones claiming that the recipient is the winner of a \$1000 Walmart gift card but need to enter a code word on a website to receive the prize. Division of Consumer Protection investigators looked into the offer and found that once a consumer entered information into the website, it asked the user to download a free software program that would record all keystrokes on a computer. If consumers were to fall prey to the scheme, they would be giving up bank account passwords along with other identifying information through the downloaded software. The Division confirmed with Walmart executives today that the text messages were not originating from the national retailer.

"Con artists are targeting Utah cell phone owners with an attractive hook to steal your information," warned Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, "Don't let the promise of a high value gift card make you open your wallet to these fraudsters. Be skeptical of any text message offer without verifying it first with the corresponding business or retailer."

Division investigators found that the phone number sending the texts from a "202" area code was probably from a pre-paid cell phone and the website domain was registered in the Bahamas.

Consumers are reminded not to give out personal account information, SSN numbers or other identifying information to strangers. Also, the Division is

recommending that consumers not send any money through a wire transfer service unless the recipient is a trusted and known source. For more information log on to: www.consumerprotection.utah.gov

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