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MEDIA ALERT

"Consumer Alert! Scammers using Smart Chip Credit Card changes to steal ID"

"Changes to a Billion credit, debit cards may fool consumers into revealing account information"

(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Department of Commerce, announced today that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection is warning consumers to be on the alert for suspicious emails or text messages that may ask for their personal identity or account information using recent changes to smart chip credit and debit card accounts as a trap. The federal government required retailers to adopt over a billion EMV (Europay, Mastercard, Visa) smart chip enabled cards by October 1, 2015 as a way to reduce fraud. The new EMV chip technology encrypts the credit or debit card information every time the consumer uses it for an in-store transaction. Con artists have taken notice of the proposed change and are trying to fool consumers by sending messages which appear to come from a bank or credit card company. These scam messages suggest the consumer needs to provide information either via a link or by responding to the message before receiving a new EMV smart chip card.

"If you receive a message that starts out Dear Cardholder asking you to provide your account number or other identifying information, don't respond!" warned Francine A. Giani, "Contact your credit card company or bank directly to confirm the request is real before clicking on any link!"

While smart chip technology will greatly reduce credit card fraud, the EMV cards will not deter all types identity theft. Since the United Kingdom adopted EMV technology in 2004, credit card theft decreased by 75% while fraud has moved to online purchases and atm card skimming.

"A smart chip won't offer you total identity protection. Consumers should continue to use secure websites for online payments, keep a paper trail, and check for suspicious activity," advised Daniel O'Bannon, Director, Division of Consumer Protection, "An educated consumer is a scam artists' worst nightmare."

For more information on how to protect yourself from scams or to file a complaint, log on to the Utah Division of Consumer Protection website at: www.consumerprotection.utah.gov

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