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MEDIA ALERT

"A con artists' New Year's resolution? Fool consumers into 6 scams in 2016"

"Utah Division of Consumer Protection lists 6 scams that continue to target consumers"

(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection is highlighting 6 scams that continue to target consumers and their wallets. While the New Year may bring new resolutions for consumers, fraudsters remain focused on trying old scams to bait new victims into giving up their money, account numbers and personal information.

"While you are busy celebrating 2016, con artists are making resolutions to find new victims to pitch old frauds and steal your hard-earned money," warned Francine A. Giani, "Be aware that these schemes continue to circle the state and remember, an educated consumer is a con artists' worst nightmare."

Consumer Protection Alert: 6 Consumer Scams for 2016

1. **Dubious Debt Collectors:** It may be a telephone message from someone who claims to work with your utility company, a political survey or call for jury duty pressuring you on the spot to take action either by paying an overdue bill or giving up your identity.
2. **Phony IRS phone calls:** Caller claims you owe back taxes and you better pay up or face an arrest warrant or worse! Odds are it's a fake call and you don't owe anything. Unsure? Call the Internal Revenue Service directly to find out the real story.
3. **"Hello? Computer con artist calling!":** Your phone rings and the caller claims they are from a computer or software company and need to help you update your personal computer or "fix" an alleged problem on your

machine. Don't fall for it! These callers try to steal your passwords, get you to load malicious software or reveal personal information. If you still have questions, contact a trusted computer company.

4. **Social media family scams:** Late night phone calls alert your relative that a family member has landed in jail in a foreign country and needs bail money sent immediately through Western Union, Green Dot or other money transfers. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media can provide everything a fraudster needs to trick Grandma or Grandpa into pulling out their wallet. If you get a distressing call about a loved one, contact your family first before responding to anyone with such claims.
5. **Bank or Credit Card "Smart Chip" Offers:** New federal bank card and credit card regulations mean consumers need "smart chip" cards to shop in stores nationwide. Con artists may try to fool you into paying money for a new card or demand you provide account or personal information via email, text or phone call. If you receive any suspicious communication, contact your card issuer directly.
6. **Alarm company security "upgrades":** A technician rings your doorbell claiming to be from your alarm system company and needs to "upgrade" your equipment right away. What many don't realize is that this technician is really your alarm company's competitor and you will end up with two alarm company contracts. Don't fall for the bait! Call your alarm service provider to report the visit and verify any equipment upgrades.

To file a consumer complaint or to find out more information about the Utah Division of Consumer Protection, log on to; www.consumerprotection.utah.gov

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