

Consumer **WARNING**

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN

SCAM ARTIST ALLEGEDLY TRIES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MILITARY IN IRAQ; E-MAIL IS NEW TWIST ON SO-CALLED "NIGERIAN" RUSE

In a new twist to the old so-called Nigerian scam, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned Illinoisans not to be duped by an alleged U.S. "soldier" who claims to be serving in Iraq and is sending e-mails asking consumers to provide their telephone and fax numbers to help him move cash he claims once belonged to Saddam Hussein out of the country.

A recent e-mail brought to Madigan's attention by Rep. Patricia Bellock (R-Hinsdale) was sent by a person identifying himself as Sergeant Mark Dang. The e-mail, full of misspellings and grammatical errors, told the recipient he was serving with the National Guard's 248th Engineer "corp" in "ar-ramadi" in Iraq. The e-mail went on to tell of \$25 million in U.S. dollars, mostly in \$100 bills, which he wanted to "move...out of iraqi."

According to Madigan, misspelled words and inaccuracies of facts are common signs of fraudulent e-mail messages.

"I would be very surprised if this con artist is a member of our military, which is serving so courageously in the Middle East," Madigan said. "This seems to be a new twist on a very old scam."

Madigan said this e-mail is similar to the enduring so-called Nigerian scam in which someone poses as a government official, businessman or woman or a surviving relative of a government official and offers to transfer money into a consumer's bank in exchange for a small fee and personal information including bank account numbers. Madigan warned that once such information is provided, it can be used to bilk consumers out of thousands of dollars and create countless identity theft situations.

Madigan urged consumers to ignore e-mail solicitations to be safe. Consumers also can visit Madigan's Web site for more identity theft prevention tips at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov or call the Consumer Fraud Hotlines:

Chicago: 1-800-386-5438 and 1-800-964-3013 (TTY)
Springfield: 1-800-243-0618 and 1-877-844-5461 (TTY)
Carbondale: 1-800-243-0607 and 1-877-675-9339 (TTY)
Spanish-language hotline: 1-866-310-839

