

# FRAUD ALERT!

## Telemarketing/Internet Fraud Losses Increase

The National Fraud Information Center/Internet Fraud Watch reports that losses from telemarketing fraud rose 47% in 2005 and Internet fraud losses more than doubled.

Wire transfers (i.e., Western Union) have become the most common way scammers get money from victims, especially: fake checks received in the mail, lotteries, advance fee loans, sweepstakes, and Nigerian money offers. Any request to wire money should set off alarm bells. If this is part of the deal, most likely, it is a scam.

Nigerian money offers were the most expensive Internet scam at a \$7,000 average loss per victim. Foreign con artists promise to share their fortunes if you agree to transfer the funds to your bank for safekeeping. These fortunes never, ever exist.

Complaints of phony scholarships and grants soared in 2005. Crooks pretending to represent the U.S. government falsely promise victims free money in exchange for processing fees.

Phishing – when ID thieves trick people into revealing bank account numbers, Social Security numbers, etc. through e-mails or phone calls – showed the strongest increase in fraud among older adults. Magazine sales and sweepstakes scams also showed an increase among older victims.

### **To Prevent Fraud:**

- Don't believe promises of easy money***
- Don't give out personal info to anyone calling or e-mailing you***
- Don't reply to emails from people you don't know***

### **BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE- FIGHTING ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUCKS COUNTY**

Bucks County District Attorney's Office  
215-348-6344

Bucks County Consumer Protection  
215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills  
215-348-6265

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging  
215-348-0510

Network of Victim Assistance  
1-800-675-6900

Bucks County Coroner  
215-348-3852