



For Immediate Release
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MADIGAN CO-SPONSORS "SHRED DAY" TO HELP ELIMINATE ID THEFT

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today said Metro-East residents will have an opportunity to have confidential documents shredded free of charge on **Saturday, April 1**, at two area locations. This will be the first “Shred Day” sponsored by the Better Business Bureau of Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois (BBB) in cooperation with Madigan’s office, the Missouri Attorney General’s office, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

St. Louis Data Destruction is donating its services and will have a mobile truck with a shredder on site at the **St. Louis Galleria on Brentwood Boulevard, in Brentwood, Missouri, from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 1, and at St. Clair Square in Fairview Heights, Illinois from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. that afternoon.** Consumers and businesses are invited to bring up to three boxes of confidential documents, including check stubs, bank statements and credit card offers, which will be shredded for free. Information on protection from identity theft will be available at the event.

“Shredding financial documents is one way to protect against identity theft. In Illinois alone, the Federal Trade Commission received 11,137 identity theft complaints in 2005 with credit card fraud and phone or utilities fraud accounting for almost 50 percent of those complaints,” Madigan said.

“Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the U.S. with 8.9 million people reporting the crime in 2005,” said Michelle Corey, BBB president. “Studies show that most thieves obtain personal information through trash cans or unsecured places in the home or office, and the easiest way to protect identity is to shred personal documents. That’s why these concerned groups are sponsoring this event.”

Last year identity fraud resulted in losses of almost \$57 billion, which was four percent more than in 2004, and the average fraud rose from \$5,885 to \$6,838, according to a study by the Council of Better Business Bureaus and Javelin Study and Research. The study also revealed that a typical fraud costs \$422 and takes up to 40 hours to fix.

Some protection is provided by the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act passed in December 2003 which requires that any business with one or more

employees is required to “destroy” employees’ personal data before disposing of it.

In February, Madigan launched her office’s new Identity Theft Hotline, the first of its kind in the nation, which offers a dedicated toll-free number to help victims repair their credit, dispute fraudulent debts and prevent future victimization. Consumers can call the hotline at 1-866-999-5630 (TTY 1-877-844-5491). In addition, Madigan’s office created an Identity Theft Resource Guide which is available online at:

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov/consumers/hotline.html.

Assistant Attorney General Deborah Sterling-Scott of Madigan’s Metro-East Illinois Regional Office is scheduled to attend the event.

-30-

[Return to March 2006 Press Releases](#)