



**For Immediate Release**

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**\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\***

### **MADIGAN WARNS CONSUMERS OF E-MAIL SCAM**

Chicago – Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today is warning consumers about unsolicited e-mails they may receive for a special invitation from *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to attend a show taping. The e-mails are unauthorized and part of a scam designed to defraud money or gain personal information from consumers.

Madigan said that “phishing” scams, which attempt to obtain consumers’ personal and financial information through fake e-mails, are becoming more frequent and creative. “An unsolicited e-mail purportedly sent by a third party that requests information such as the consumer’s Social Security number and credit and bank account information is a scam,” Madigan said.

Common “phishing” scams involve authentic-looking e-mails that ask the consumer to respond or direct the consumer to a Web site designed to look just like the site of the alleged sender. Once redirected to that site, the consumer is asked for sensitive account information to “update” or “validate” his/her account information for some urgent reason.

In this case, e-mail recipients are asked to submit personal information and told they will receive tickets to *The Oprah Winfrey Show* after verification of certain financial information and/or the wiring of money to an unknown third party. However, according to Harpo Productions, Inc., *The Oprah Winfrey Show* does not sell tickets or ticket travel packages to fans. Consumers should disregard any e-mail that purportedly comes from *The Oprah Winfrey Show* offering show taping tickets for a fee.

“With the large number of Oprah’s fans worldwide, we are concerned that their excitement at the opportunity to attend a taping of her TV show may result in fans responding to this unauthorized offer,” Madigan said. “Consumers should be alarmed whenever unsolicited e-mails ask them to divulge personal or financial information.”

Recipients of “phishing” emails are urged not to respond. Madigan said Illinois consumers who have sent money or divulged personal information can contact her office’s Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013). The Spanish-language Hotline number is 1-866-310-8398. Consumers outside of Illinois can file a consumer complaint by downloading

the complaint form at [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/conscomp.pdf](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/conscomp.pdf). In addition, Madigan said out-of-state consumers should report the occurrence to local authorities, their state Attorney General's Office and monitor their financial accounts for any suspicious activity.

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[Return to November 2006 Press Releases](#)