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**\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\*****ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN ADVISES CONSUMERS TO READ FINE PRINT BEFORE PURCHASING HOLIDAY GIFT CARDS**

Chicago — With gift cards expected to be among the top choices for gifts this holiday season, Attorney General Lisa Madigan is urging holiday shoppers to be informed about gift card sales requirements before making purchases.

Illinois law requires that all gift cards purchased remain active for at least five years and that all material conditions including the expiration date and any fees are clearly displayed on the card. If an expiration date is not posted directly on the gift card, a toll-free number must be provided so the consumer can determine when the card expires.

"We have worked to create protections from hidden fees and expiration dates that drain the value of gift cards even before consumers have the chance to redeem them," said Attorney General Madigan. "But even with legal protections, consumers need to make sure they read the fine print before making a decision on whether to purchase gift cards this holiday season."

Gift cards purchased prior to Jan. 1, 2008, are not required to remain valid for five years. However, they must clearly display terms and conditions including expiration dates and fees.

Madigan encouraged consumers to file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division if they discover they have purchased gift cards that do not include the required disclosure about fees and expiration dates. To file a complaint, consumers may visit [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov) or call one of the following hotline numbers:

Chicago: 1-800-386-5438

Springfield: 1-800-243-0618

Carbondale: 1-800-243-0607

Spanish Language Hotline: 1-866-310-8398

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