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### JOLIET SENIORS LEARN HOW TO AVOID ONLINE SCAMS

Joliet — Seniors from the Joliet Housing Authority received training today to avoid Internet scams and better protect themselves online. Officials from Attorney General Madigan's Office educated seniors about the dangers that exist online and how best to avoid them.

The training at the Joliet Housing Authority, 2200 Oneida St., is a part of Madigan's Silver Beat initiative, a consumer education program aimed at helping seniors protect themselves from deceptive practices.

"The best thing I can do is prevent seniors from being scammed out of their money in the first place," Attorney General Madigan said. "Once you've wired away your money or given out your personal financial information, it's very difficult to undo the damage."

Madigan launched her Silver Beat program in response to con artists who commonly perceive seniors as vulnerable and relatively wealthy due to their ability to access home equity, retirement accounts and pensions, and target them for a wide range of scams, exploitation and fraud.

Silver Beat educates seniors throughout Illinois about debt settlement traps, fake check cashing scams, risky reverse mortgages and health care fraud. Silver Beat 2.0, an extension of this program, focuses on online scams, how to use social networking sites safely and the differences between secure and insecure websites.

The Attorney General's Office conducted today's training in partnership with Connected Living.

Madigan said these trainings in Joliet and around the state are particularly important now as her office has received an increasing number of calls from seniors who have reported losing thousands of dollars in savings to so-called lottery scams. These schemes promise big winnings to consumers so long as they first wire money to the con artist, who is never heard from again. Calls to Madigan's office reporting such scams have risen by more than 50 percent from January to April 2011.

To learn more about Silver Beat or to attend or host training, contact Erin Ruebelke at the Attorney General's Office, (217) 557-1982, or e-mail her at [eruebelke@atg.state.il.us](mailto:eruebelke@atg.state.il.us).

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