



August 9, 2012

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN WELCOMES STATE FAIR VISITORS TO
THE "HOUSE OF HAZARDS"**

State Fair Tent Highlights Dangers "Known & Unknown" in Illinois Communities

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today unveiled the "House of Hazards" in her Illinois State Fair tent that will provide information and raise awareness for fairgoers about the work her office does to promote safe communities and healthy homes.

"At this year's State Fair, we're highlighting the dangers lurking in our communities, behind our computer screens and in our homes," said Madigan. "From our efforts to combat the spread of synthetic drugs, our training for parents, teachers and kids about online threats, to our advocacy to promote product safety and recall effectiveness, my office works on many fronts to help Illinoisans stay safe and informed."

Synthetic Drugs

The Attorney General's tent, located across from the Grandstand, will illustrate the dangers of synthetic drugs which contain toxic substances that are both against the law and a health hazard if smoked or ingested. Marketed with exotic names like K2 or Spice, synthetic drugs are chemically laced substances similar to marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine that are illegal but are still too often sold behind the counter at convenience stores, gas stations and tobacco shops throughout Illinois.

Attorney General Madigan has worked with local, state and federal law enforcement to increase awareness of the dangers of synthetic drugs and remove them from store shelves. In December 2011, Madigan's office spearheaded "Operation Smoked Out," a statewide initiative designed to eliminate these dangerous drugs from retail stores in Illinois. In nearly 40 operations, more than 31,000 packages of illegal products have been relinquished with an estimated street value in excess of \$688,667. In June 2012, Madigan hosted a joint meeting with the Indiana Attorney General to share information and experiences encountered by law officers in the border states. And last month, investigators from Madigan's office participated in the first-ever nationwide takedown of synthetic drugs. Additionally, Madigan drafted a new law that defines a "synthetic drug product" as one that contains a controlled substance not regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

Product Safety

One of the biggest challenges surrounding product safety is awareness, particularly when toys, cribs and strollers are everyday items in homes, daycares and pre-schools. Attorney General Madigan has been a leader in the call for stronger regulations to increase product safety and consumer confidence. Last year alone, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recalled 121 children's products, covering 11.6 million units, because of dangerous defects. In a lighthearted look at a serious subject, the House of Hazards will feature "Find the Flaw," a display where fairgoers can inspect recalled products. In addition, visitors to the tent will have the opportunity to sign up for email notification of future recalls.

Internet Safety

Attorney General Madigan's office, with a grant from the Department of Justice, runs the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, which investigates child exploitation crimes and trains law enforcement agencies. Since 2006, Madigan's ICAC Task Force has been involved in more than 450 arrests of sexual predators. Two years ago, Madigan also launched "Operation Glass House," an initiative to locate and arrest the most active Internet child pornographers in the state. In late July, a Glass House arrest netted a central Illinois individual alleged to have downloaded the most child pornography in the state for the 30-day period prior to the arrest.

In addition to her enforcement efforts, Madigan promotes Internet safety for children, parents and educators through the ICAC Task Force, having provided Internet safety training to more than 244,000 parents, teachers and students, and more than 14,200 law enforcement professionals. Madigan emphasizes the importance of Internet safety, particularly in today's world, when most people—especially children—communicate online and with cell phones. However, without proper guidance, these types of technologies can be dangerous to a child's physical and psychological well-being if they are exposed to inappropriate material, whether they are surfing online, sending e-mail or using social network sites. The best defense against inappropriate material and online conduct is to set and discuss family rules for Internet use. Madigan's State Fair tent features a video quiz highlighting safety tips to help families learn how to surf safely.

Fairgoers visiting Attorney General Madigan's tent will also find a variety of other resources and activities designed to educate and protect all Illinoisans, including resources related to preventing mortgage foreclosure and ensuring nursing home safety. Computer stations also will be available to check current listings on the Illinois Sex Offender Registry.

Attorney General Madigan is scheduled to appear at the Annual Twilight Parade on Aug. 9. The parade begins at 6 p.m. at the intersection of 9th and N. Grand and ends at the Grandstand inside the Illinois State Fairgrounds. This year's Illinois State Fair runs from Friday, Aug. 10, until Sunday, Aug. 19 in Springfield.

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