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Oregon Safe Cyberspace Initiative Launched

United States Attorney Karin Immergut and Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers, joined by 20 private and public sector partners, announced an initiative today to clean up the Internet. U.S. Attorney Immergut and Attorney General Myers announced the Oregon Safe Cyberspace Initiative, a public service project designed to educate Oregon users of the Internet about the critical need for personal computer security and empower them to increase their online security. The project arose from a desire to prevent economic harm to Oregon consumers from computer fraud, and to reduce the damage caused by breaches in computer systems. Although the initiative was just announced, it is already gaining national recognition. In public comments last week, Federal Trade Commission Chair Deborah Majoras stated that she hoped and expected that the Oregon Safe Cyberspace Initiative would serve as a model for other states.

This past year millions of consumers have been victimized and billions of dollars have been lost due to breaches in computer system security. The Oregon Safe Cyberspace Initiative aims to cure those breaches through consumer education and new technology. The project involves the creation of a network of technology and Internet access providers, consumer protection organizations, industry associations, and law enforcement leaders. This network will create public service announcements about computer security, provide speakers for public service presentations about computer security, and disseminate information to assist consumers in keeping information on their personal computers secure. In addition to raising awareness about the need for computer security, the network also intends to influence consumer action by creating technology which will make it easier for consumers to enable security applications on their personal computers.

In announcing the initiative, U.S. Attorney Immergut expressed appreciation “to this incredible partnership for its public service in creating the possibility of a safer digital environment.” Oregon Attorney General Myers expressed confidence that “this tremendous partnership will empower Oregon consumers to increase their online security.” Both suggested that the initiative would serve as a model for other states to follow. Andrew Plato, President of Anitian Enterprise Security, provided a computer hacking demonstration during the announcement to highlight the critical need for computer security. He stated that “Information is one of the most valuable commodities. Yet we entrust its storage and distribution to insecure and often unstable computer systems, usually due to human error. There are vast armies of bots, worms, and spyware constantly roaming the Internet looking for a computer to infect and corrupt. The best way to secure a computer is with multiple protection systems that should include anti-virus, anti-spyware, and a personal firewall.”

U.S. Attorney Immergut and Oregon Attorney General Myers also promoted a public service announcement developed for broadcast media promoting a new consumer security website, www.staysafeonline.org. The public service announcement was developed in partnership with the Federal Trade Commission and the National Cyber Security Alliance.

Partners in the initiative include the AARP, Anitian Enterprise Security, Comcast, the Cyber Security Industry Alliance, the Federal Trade Commission, Feeney Wireless, the Information Systems Audit and Control Association, the Information Systems Security Association, Internet Security Systems, McAfee, Microsoft, the National Cyber Security Alliance, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services, the Oregon Department of Justice, Qwest, the Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory, the Small Business Administration, Symantec, the United States Department of Justice (including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Attorney's Office), and the University of Oregon.

Should consumers want to learn more about cyber security, Internet sites for children include <http://ikeepsafe.org> and <http://cybersmart.org>. Internet sites for home computer users include <http://www.onguardonline.gov> and <http://staysafeonline.org>.

For further information, contact Jan Margosian, Public Affairs Officer, Oregon Department of Justice, at 503-947-4333, or Diane Peterson, Public Affairs Officer, United States Attorney's Office, at 503-727-1066.