

From: Attorney General
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 10:07 AM
To:
Subject: Scam Alert: Don't Fall for the V-Day Sweetheart Scam



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S

SCAM ALERT

A Consumer Protection Alert from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-877-877-9392.

Online: www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov

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Dear ,

Thank you again for joining the [Oregon Scam Alert Network](#). Please feel free to forward this email and encourage your family members, friends and colleagues to join the network too. Together we can fight fraud and help protect Oregonians from falling prey to predatory schemes.

"HE LOVES ME; HE'S TRYING TO STEAL MY MONEY;
HE LOVES ME . . ."

It's love at first type. The "sweetheart scam" is a ruthless and increasingly common rip-off perpetrated by con artists across the globe. Posting fake internet dating profiles, these con artists troll chat rooms, dating sites and social networking sites looking to cash-in on love.

With Valentine's Day around the corner, Attorney General John Kroger is warning Oregonians to exercise caution when dating online. The online dating industry is booming: an estimated 90 million Americans used on-line dating services in 2009. Con artists have taken note and are trolling these sites for personal information that will help them separate victims from their money.

No dating website is immune from "sweetheart scams." When wooing their victims, con artists use psychological tricks such as sending poetry, chocolate, flowers and other gifts, often purchased with stolen credit cards. Once the victim is hooked and thinks they have found love, the con artist will start making financial requests. Below are two classic "sweetheart scam" scenarios:

The con artist poses as an American working abroad who is having a difficult time cashing money orders. The con artist eventually sends one of these "paycheck money orders" to their target and asks the victim to cash it at their bank and wire them the proceeds. The money order will either be counterfeit or worth far less than the amount indicated, but the victim doesn't learn this until after they've wired the money and suffered a financial loss.

The con artist requests funds to visit their victim. Thinking they have found love, the victim will wire money to the con artist for a plane ticket. The scam artist will concoct reasons for delaying the visit while continuing make up justifications for more money.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of a "sweetheart scam" contact the Oregon Department of Justice Consumer Hotline at 1-877-877-9392 or www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov, or the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

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