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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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Beware: Internet Love Scam!

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum has a warning for people looking for love online. That soldier who's been professing devotion via email may actually be a con artist looking for cash.

Internet scammers posing as romantically minded members of the U.S. military are conning people out of millions of dollars. Complaints to local law enforcement about the soldier scam are increasing in frequency. In one recent case, a Hillsboro woman lost more than \$750,000.

Attorney General Rosenblum advises Oregonians to always maintain a healthy skepticism. The anonymity of the Internet means that you cannot be sure of the real name, age, marital status, nationality, or even gender of your new "heartthrob."

The con artists are often from foreign countries using untraceable email addresses. Once these "soldiers" make a connection, they begin asking for money for transportation, medical bills, cell phone and internet charges -- even the cost of a wedding.

They route accounts through numerous locations and utilize pay-per-hour Internet

cyber cafes, which makes finding the scammer and recovering the money extremely difficult.

To stay safe keep the following tips in mind:

- Do not wire money to someone you have not met in person. Be wary of warp-speed proclamations of love, particularly if they are accompanied by pleas for cash.
- Be suspicious if you never get to actually speak with the person on the phone or are told they will not receive letters in the mail. Legitimate servicemen and women serving overseas will often have an APO or FPO in their mailing address.
- Do not send money or ship property to a third party or company, especially to parties or companies in an African country.

If you think you have been scammed by an individual claiming to be a member of the U.S. military, contact the Oregon Department of Justice online at www.oregonconsumer.gov or call 1-877-877-9392.

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