

ARIZONA LEADS NATION IN IDENTITY THEFT

AARP Bulletin Sites FTC Report Listing Arizona First in ID Theft Complaints

Arizona continues to lead the nation in the number of identity theft complaints, according to the latest figures from the Federal Trade Commission reported in the October issue of the AARP Bulletin, AARP's national monthly newspaper publication.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft nationwide was the leading fraud complaint in 2006 with over 245,000 grievances reported. Victims in the 50+ age category continued to be especially hit hard with 23% of all complaints filed in 2006 attributed to this demographic.

"There are many ways that someone's personal information can be stolen and used to commit identity theft," said AARP Arizona State Director David Mitchell. "If your purse or wallet is taken, if your mail is stolen or if someone's personal information is lifted through an online transaction, all of these tactics make identity theft one of the fastest growing crimes in the country."

The FTC indicates that there were 148 identity theft complaints reported in Arizona per 100,000 people last year.

"In some of the worst cases of identity theft, people who have had their name stolen are refused loans, have lost their jobs, have had their wages garnished or been arrested for crimes they haven't committed," added Mitchell. "And cleaning up the mess can take years and money."

Information on counseling programs and a free online seminar about identity theft provided by the AARP Foundation can be found at http://www.aarp.org/money/wise_consumer. Additional information and resources can also be found at www.pcoa.org.