

May 2012, TRIAD News

Avoiding identity theft and travel safety were topics of discussion for the May 9, 2012, Radford City TRIAD meeting. Radford City Sheriff, Mark Armentrout, opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance and by introducing TRIAD coordinator, Shonna Williams, along with guest speaker, Pamela Wade from Christian Travel.

Identity theft is a concern for everyone but especially for seniors. Seniors are often targeted because criminals believe they are more susceptible to crimes of deception and the amount of money that can be stolen from a senior may be greater or exceed that of other demographic groups. Seniors rarely, if at all, check their credit report or open new lines of credit. Identity thieves know that he or she is less likely to be detected if a social security number of a senior citizen is obtained and the greater the chances are that the senior's identity can be stolen.

Sheriff Armentrout provided a handout which contained information that could help seniors reduce the possibility of becoming victim's of identity theft and how best to keep your personal information secure. Some tips for seniors are: never give out your credit card or bank account numbers unless a payment is being made and keep social security numbers confidential by asking for ID numbers or using a driver's license number as an alternative.

Seniors should also beware of imposters pretending to be from companies or businesses needing to verify personal information. Normally, companies that you do business with already have this information. Before answering any personal questions, contact the company directly and ask if the inquiry is legitimate. Also, collect mail promptly; a mail box is full of personal information. If possible mail payments from the post office or public mailbox and ask, if you are going away, the post office to hold your mail until you return.

Other suggestions would be to remove your name from credit marketing lists by calling 888-567-8688 and memorize passwords and personal identification numbers (PIN's). Keep personal information locked in a safe place not easily accessed by others and, finally, check your credit report regularly.

If you have any questions regarding the tips provided you can contact the Radford City Sheriff's Office at 731-5501. If you believe you are a victim of identity theft you can contact the Federal Trade Commission toll free, 877-438-4338, or go to www.consumer.gov/idtheft for step-by-step advice about what to do if you're a victim of ID theft.

May's guest speaker was Pamela Wade from Christian Travel located at 1129 East Main Street, Suite B, in downtown Radford. Christian Travel opened its doors in 1978 and Ms. Wade has been a part of that agency since 1989. When Christian Travel began agents primarily focused on corporate travel but now concentrates on the leisure and vacation market as well.

Traveling should be fun and Ms. Wade is adamant that there is a vacation out there for everyone but seniors should be cautious of travel scams. If you are contacted and told that you have won a free trip and asked to pay the taxes or fees associated with the trip, do not give the solicitor your credit or debit

card information. Free means free and you should not be required to pay any taxes, fees or give up any of your time to claim your trip.

If you are interested in a cruise, a trip to Disney World or even a train trip across the United States, Christian Travel can help you with your plans. Christian Travel can also help you enjoy current travel trends, such as; destination mini-vacations that double as family reunions. To arranging travel plans with Christian Travel, please give Pamela Wade a call at 639-9388 or toll free at 800-889-8235.

Sheriff Armentrout would like to invite all those who are interested in TRIAD to the next monthly meeting scheduled for June 13, 2012. TRIAD meetings are held in the large meeting room at the Radford Recreational Department at 10:a.m. TRIAD is a free program and everyone is welcome to attend.

Submitted by: Shonna Williams, Radford City Sheriff's Office, TRIAD Coordinator