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Gale warns of growing threat from business identity theft

LINCOLN – The threat of business identity theft is a growing national problem, and Nebraska businesses should take necessary precautions to protect themselves, Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale says.

“The newest victims of identity theft in our economy are small and medium-sized businesses, including dormant or inactive companies,” Gale said. “I want to educate business owners about the problem and explore safeguards to prevent it.”

The problem is so significant that the National Association of Secretaries of State has formed a Business Identity Theft Task Force to deal with the issue.

The task force will target business identity theft prevention strategies and explore safeguards for state business filing systems.

Gale is a member of the task force. As secretary of state, he oversees business registrations and filings in Nebraska.

“Criminals look for ways to steal the identity of a legitimate business by gaining access to its bank accounts and credit cards, as well as other sensitive company information,” Gale stated.

“Thieves then secure lines of credit with banks and retailers at the expense of the victim. Banks and retailers may be left with significant financial losses,” he added.

“If you suspect that your business has become a victim of identity theft, it is important to take quick action to minimize the potential damage, including notifying banks, credit card providers, other creditors and credit reporting agencies,” Gale said.

As a precaution, businesses may go to www.sos.ne.gov to check to see if their information on file with the Secretary of State’s Office is accurate, he said. Businesses should contact the office to learn about the procedures to change their information.

There are about 112,000 business entities registered in Nebraska.

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