

St. Andrews Village to Host Scam and Fraud Expert Martha Currier

The Attorney General's Office hears from about 12,000 consumers annually. Consistently, a quarter of those contacts are reporting scams such as the IRS scam, grandparent scam, Microsoft scam, lottery scam, grant scam, etc. Fortunately, few people report falling prey to these scams; however, they are sometimes skeptical that it is a legitimate offer and/or are rattled by the tactics used by scammers.



Last year alone, about 1,000 consumers from Lincoln, Waldo and Sagadahoc counties contacted the A.G.'s Office on all issues. The Office wants to get the word out about scams in this part of the state and let folks know that help is available.

As part of St. Andrews Village's commitment to help Maine's seniors and their families avoid fraud and keep safe, the Village will host a talk by Martha Currier from the Maine Attorney General's office. Currier will talk about efforts her office is taking to help protect Maine consumers, particularly seniors.

This highly important talk will be held at the Village on Thursday, March 10th from 2-3 p.m. Attendees will receive helpful materials and there will be time to ask questions.

Currier is the Complaint Examiner for the Consumer Information and Mediation Service in the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General and the administrator of Maine's Lemon Law Arbitration Program. In this capacity, she supervises the full-time staff and oversees the work of approximately 25 volunteer mediators. She is the host and producer of the Attorney General's television show Consumer Matters on Time Warner's public access station. Her current position builds upon a career of helping Mainers resolve their problems.

"Maine consumers are being inundated with emails, phone calls, popup messages and mail, all trying to separate them from their hard earned money. The Attorney General's Office wants to give consumers the tools they need to be aware of the different scam tactics and remind them it is okay to say "no" to any offer, especially those that are simply too good to be true," said Currier.

According to the Consumer Law Center, Inc. (CLC), Americans lose an estimated \$40 billion each year to the fraudulent sale of goods and services over the telephone. Seniors are frequent targets of telemarketing/phone frauds, medical/health insurance scams, sweepstakes and lottery scams and many more. Studies conducted by CLC reveal that "fraudulent telemarketers direct anywhere from 56 percent to nearly 80 percent of their calls at older customers. One sweepstakes-related scam detailed on CBS's 60 Minutes reportedly bilked seniors in 24 states out of an estimated \$5 billion."

The talk on Thursday, March 10th is free, however those who would like to attend are asked to RSVP to 633-0920 as light refreshments will be served.