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## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 11/20/18

### **PCSO Reminds Community to Stay Cyber Safe This Weekend**

PUTNAM COUNTY, TN –November 20, 2018, the Putnam County Sheriff's Office wants to get you prepared for the upcoming holiday weekend with tips to keep you digitally secure.

Digital spending is on the rise. Most people are aware that millennials and gen-z will make a majority of their purchases with smartphones and laptops, but according to AARP, senior citizens will make twice as many purchases over the phone than other groups. The Better Business Bureau's numbers for last year's consumer spending on Black Friday was \$7.9 billion, and Cyber Monday brought in \$6.6 million.

Unfortunately, this means that digital crime and fraud are on an upswing as well. In fact, experts expect fraud attempts to increase by 33 percent statewide and 3.27 percent nationally this holiday season. Scammers prey on the fact that retail offers are time sensitive and that people are in the mood to contribute to charitable organizations. It creates a perfect storm of urgency and split-second decisions. The use of chips in credit cards has curtailed the ability of these thieves to duplicate credit cards and use them in stores, but online or on a mobile device is a different story. They can use today's technology to hide their phone numbers and locations while stealing your identity or credit card information.

What's a digital consumer to do? Fight back by making yourself a difficult target.

**1. Update anti-virus software.**

Ensure your computer and mobile devices are protected. Personal information can be accessed through mobile devices too.

**2. Refuse to use insecure websites.**

Only share personal information or credit card numbers with sites that are 'https' and that have a security lock icon in the task bar. The extra "s" stands for secure.

**3. Do your spending homework in advance and take your time before confirming purchases.**

Research special offers and charitable organizations, especially during the holiday season.

**4. Remember that "No" is a full sentence, and it's ok to verify information.**

It's okay to say "no" to giving your financial information to anyone over the phone, ever.

***"Earning the Public's Trust Every Day!"***

Anyone who requests your personal information should be understanding of any attempts you make to verify that they are who they say they are.

**5. Track your holiday spending and gift information.**

Check your bank account balance regularly. Many banks and credit cards make this easier by allowing customers to view their purchases digitally. Print or save your purchase confirmation and delivery information. That way you can verify any future emails regarding those purchases.

There are “buy online, pick up in-store”, fake shipping notifications, look-alike websites and “your credit card did not work/was declined” scams already circulating this holiday season. The look-alike websites are commonly used for charity or non-profit websites. There is even a “Secret Sister” scam that has resurfaced on Facebook and Twitter promising gifts.

For a more complete list of scams or to report one, visit one of the links below.

BBB Scam Tracker.

<https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker/us>

Common Scams and Frauds

<https://www.usa.gov/common-scams-frauds>

Federal Trade Commission

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts>

Sheriff Eddie Farris and the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving! Please stay safe and enjoy your time with family, friends and loved ones.

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