

NATI NEWSWIRE

SENIOR SAFETY ISSUES

Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Precautions

- Remove keys from the ignition and take with you.
- Lock your vehicle.
- Never hide a second set of keys in your vehicle.
- Park in attended lots and leave only the ignition/door key.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Never leave your vehicle running, even if you will only be gone for a minute.
- Completely close vehicle windows when parking.
- Install an antitheft device or system on your vehicle as an extra deterrent measure.
- Do not leave valuables in plain sight.
- Park with your wheels turned towards the curb to make your vehicle more difficult to tow away.
- If vehicle is rear-wheel drive, back into driveway to make it more difficult for a thief to tow it away.
- Garage your vehicle if you have one and always remember to lock the garage door.
- Do not leave the registration or title in your vehicle.
- Always use your emergency brake when parking, which ensures safety and also makes it difficult for a thief to tow your vehicle away.
- Etch vehicle identification number on car windows and major parts. This procedure makes vehicles and parts more easily traceable when stolen.
- Disable your vehicle when leaving it unattended for an extended period of time.
- Engrave expensive accessories like car stereos, cellular phones, compact disc changers, etc., so the thief will have difficulty disposing of them.
- Drop business cards, address labels or other identification inside vehicle doors to help assist law enforcement in identifying your vehicle or parts.
- Replace easily accessible door lock assemblies.

Fraud could draw 10 years

Star staff report—A jury late last Thursday convicted Richard Drakulich, 65, of St. Louis, Mo., of five counts of conspiracy to commit sale of an unregistered security and six counts of conspiracy to commit securities fraud, both C felonies.

“Drakulich and his partners preyed upon these seniors retirement and sold them so-called securities literally not worth the paper upon which they were written”, Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi said in a news release. According to the probable cause affidavit, Drakulich’s promissory notes purported to be issued by Realfinder, Inc. The notes were to raise seed capital to fund an Internet real estate business. Investments ranged from \$10,000 to \$112,500. The securities were not registered with the Indiana secretary of state. None of the investors ever received any interest or return of their original outlay, officials said.

Drakulichs’ two co-defendants have been convicted on similar counts. David I. Proctor, 50, of Seattle, Wash., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit securities fraud. He was sentenced to four years in prison and ordered to pay nearly \$600,000 in restitution.

Casimir C. Szpunar, 56, of Indianapolis, pleaded guilty to one count each of sale of an unregistered security and securities fraud. He received a one-year sentence and was ordered to pay nearly \$1.3 million in restitution.

Drakulich is currently serving a sentence on a federal securities conviction. Any state sentence would be served in addition to the federal time.

Officials said 19 seniors were bilked in the scam involving the sale of 47 unregistered securities.

NATI Seeks to Document Triads

823 Triads were last recorded in **47** states, with S.A.L.T. Councils in about **1,500** communities. Triad serves **16** million seniors—about half of the US senior population. The National Association of Triads, Inc., hopes to document these growing Triad numbers. Documenting your Triad is imperative for national, state, and local funding.

Please document your Triad at:

www.nationaltriad.org

On the home page, please visit “Locate a Triad”.

AARP Releases Ten Tips to Make Homes Safer

New Survey Shows No Place Like Home for Americans

According to a recent AARP study, nearly ninety percent of adults 50 and older want to stay in their current home and community as they age.

Older adults, as well as their adult children, can take advantage of the fall season to prepare home for the winter season and holiday guests. The following 10 steps can make a safer and more comfortable home:

- Install handrails on both sides of all steps (inside and outside);
- Secure all carpets and area rugs with double-sided tape;
- Install easy to grasp shaped handles for all drawers and cabinet doors;
- Use brighter bulbs in all settings;
- Install nightlights in all areas of night activity;
- Add reflective, non-slip tape on all non-carpeted stairs;
- Install lever handles for all doors;
- Place a bench near entrances for setting down purchases and resting;
- Install closet lights, as well as adjustable rods and shelves;
- Install rocker light switches; consider illuminated ones in select areas.

As people grow older, they risk physical challenges that can make it difficult or impossible to stay in their homes without some degree of change to their environment. Studies indicate that half of all falls happen at home and research suggests that one-third of home accidents can be prevented by easy home updates and preventative maintenance. Local hardware stores carry many of the products to make updates to homes. For more extensive renovations, homeowners should consider hiring a contractor who is licensed, certified and bonded to do that particular work. A Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) is a designation signaling that contractors have had specified additional training, but homeowners should still ask for documentation that the contractor is licensed or certified and bonded.

Government Publishes Consumer Action Handbook

A great resource for all ages regarding consumer awareness and frauds/scams: get information and order small quantities at: www.consumeraction.gov

If you represent an organization, like a school, a community center, or a consumer protection office, and would like multiple copies, email your request to action.handbook@gsa.gov. Please include name, organization's name, shipping address, number of copies you would like, and how you plan to use the copies.

Fraud against elderly on the upswing

By Amy M. E. Fischer

As Baby Boomers hit their golden years and human life-spans lengthen, financial fraud schemes against the elderly are becoming the fastest growing crime in the United States, according to attorney Jessica Dimitrov, whose Vancouver practice focuses on guardianship, estate planning and vulnerable adult abuse cases.

The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that only 1 in 25 financial exploitation cases is reported, suggesting an excess of 5 million victims each year. The cases typically involve family members who illegally use power of attorney and quitclaim deeds to plunder the assets of vulnerable elderly relatives, she said. The formerly financially secure victims are often left penniless and reliant on state-provided services, she said.

Perpetrators are rarely held accountable, Dimitrov said. Cases that are reported often aren't prosecuted, because courts historically have viewed them as civil matters, she said. "There's only so much anyone can do if law enforcement isn't willing to acknowledge a crime has been committed" said Dimitrov, a frequent speaker at the state and national level on issues involving financial exploitation and abuse of the elderly.

Frustrated by the lack of prosecution, Dimitrov and the Clark County Prosecutor organized the Clark County Vulnerable Adult Task Force two years ago. Since then, a growing number of other counties statewide have formed similar coalitions of law enforcement agencies, residential care services, and social and health service organizations that work together to ensure victims' safety and investigate and prosecute the crimes against them.

The National Sheriffs' Association's National Association of Triads, Inc. (NATI) has endorsed an iris biometric-based identification system – **Senior Safety Net™** – to identify missing senior citizens.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. It is estimated that 2.7 million with the disease will wander – and 1.88 million will wander repeatedly. 72,000 of those will find home without help.

Triad and BI2 Technologies have developed a pilot project that enables law enforcement agencies to use this technology to enroll seniors and raise funds.

Senior Safety Net™ uses a video camera to take a digital photograph of both irises. The system converts the photo into a 'map' for secure storage in the national registry. To verify identity, an enrolled individual simply looks into a Senior Safety Net™ camera and the system compares the patterns in the individual's irises against the templates stored in the system. If the senior has been enrolled, the identity is located in seconds and the emergency contact will be notified. Contact us below for more information.

1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-7837 phone 703-519-8567 fax



More Senior Safety related articles are located at www.nationaltriad.org; e-news section