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Scam Alert – March 2008

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IRS Warning - Rebate Scams to Steal Your Identity

Identity thieves are at it again and the tax season is giving them the opportunity to trick you into revealing your personal financial information.

As part of an economic stimulus package, tax rebates of up to \$600 for individuals and up to \$1,200 for married couples were approved by the House. There was an additional rebate of \$300 per child approved as well.

It appears that people are receiving phone calls in which they are informed that they are only eligible to receive the rebate if they provide their personal bank account information for direct deposit.

As reported by Associated Press Writer, Jim Abrams, "the tax agency stressed that it does not collect information by telephone and that no legislation has been enacted that would allow it to provide advance payments to taxpayers or that specifies the details of those payments."

Another way of perpetrating this scam is when the caller claims to be an IRS employee and states that you have not cashed your refund check. They then ask you to verify your bank account number.

One of the ways that the scam is committed is by e-mail. You receive an e-mail which appears to have come from the IRS asking you to enter your personal information on a form in order to obtain a tax refund.

Another scam is by e-mail. You are told your tax return will be audited and instructions are given to click on a link to complete the necessary forms by giving your personal and account information.

Individuals are not the only ones being targeted. Accountants and businesses are also receiving emails in which they are instructed to download new tax law changes. Clicking on the links could actually download what is called "malware" onto their computers. This malware will give the identity thief access to the computer hard drive.

The IRS has advised people not to click on any link from an e-mail purporting to come from the tax agency. People receiving questionable e-mails can contact the IRS through phishing@irs.gov.

*******NOTE:** Rebate reminders will be mailed out the week of March 3, 2008, by the IRS entitled "Economic Stimulus Payment Notice", they should not be confused with any scams that are arising at this time of the year. These valid letters are being sent out as part of an extensive outreach effort by the IRS to make sure that everyone that is entitled to the rebate, does not miss out on it. The letters will just be a reminder to file your 2007 tax returns so you will be eligible to receive the rebate that you are entitled to.

~IDENTIFY A SCAM BEFORE A SCAM IDENTIFIES YOU!!~